

THE FIKA PROJECT

**PERSPEC
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ON

CULTURAL

LEADER

SHIP

The Fika Project.

Perspectives on Cultural Leadership

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**Edited by Karin Dalborg
& Mikael Löfgren**

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Editors' foreword

This book is part of *The Fika Project* which is supported by the EU Erasmus+ education and training programme and Region Västra Götaland in Sweden. Its aim is to develop a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) concept for international cultural leadership capable of meeting the demands of our complex and changing times. The project was initiated by Nätverkstan Kultur and its partners Trans Europe Halles, EN-CATC and Olivearte Cultural Agency. As the starting point for the work, the project group undertook an analysis of the needs of the cultural sector and a survey of existing cultural leadership training. Together with *Narratives by Cultural Change Makers*, which is being published alongside it, this book forms the analytical and empirical basis of the CPD programme for international cultural leaders that is *The Fika Project's* ultimate objective.

Perspectives on Cultural Leadership is not a manual for cultural leaders. The writers involved do not possess identical views on what cultural leadership is or does, and the book by no means covers all the areas of expertise that a cultural leader ought to be familiar with. Rather than aiming to be all-encompassing, the book seeks to open up discussion by offering thought-provoking perspectives on some of the waters that cultural leaders these days are obliged to navigate. The experiences of the project group in education and training and our active role in international cultural life have convinced us that our task in providing training is not to propose custom versions of professional roles but to draw attention to the challenges and opportunities cultural leadership are faced with. We aim also to make people aware of the hidden knowledge held by those working in the field.

In contrast to other cultural leadership training, we do not assume that the tasks and abilities required of cultural leaders are the same irrespective of the nature and size of the organisation – an assumption that in practical terms often means that larger, established arts and cultural organisations become the norm. *The Fika Project* focuses more on smaller cultural organisations that in some cases are relatively new. This does not mean that we are closing the door to participants who have ambitions to lead major theatres or muse-

ums, it is simply that we have a different norm and reference point. We welcome participants and readers from the whole of the broad arts and cultural field, making no attempt to provide precise definitions of these elusive concepts. More important for us is that participants should have a desire to achieve something with their organisation; they must be people who want to make a difference, bring about change. We believe that there is a fundamental distinction between those organisations whose main aim is to generate a financial profit and those whose main desire is to create social, cultural and artistic value. This does not mean that cultural organisations can disregard monetary issues or financial management. On the contrary, they need to be especially efficient in their management of scant resources and creative about generating income. It does mean, though, that cultural organisations and their partner organisations, users and funders must all be clear about what the essentials and non-essentials are in terms of their creation of value.

Accompanying this book is the newly-published *Narratives by Cultural Change Makers*, which consists of interviews with ten prominent cultural leaders from different parts of the world. Active in different countries, in different types of organisations and with different art forms and types of culture, they tell us about life and work, education and training, professional experiences, success and setbacks, dilemmas and solutions.

Together, these two books form the basis of our attempts to design a CPD concept that is able to respond to the demands placed on cultural leadership in an international context today. We hope that, rather than presenting role models to emulate, these essays and stories will serve as inspiring examples and thought-provoking perspectives for the reader to test against their own experience.

The project group would like to extend its thanks to the authors of the articles and wish you an enjoyable read.

Bohus-Björkö, spring 2016
Karin Dalborg and Mikael Löfgren

Karin Dalborg & Mikael Löfgren

Cultural leadership in 3D. Introduction

In 1993, a short but comprehensive paper was published in Sweden with the title *Alternativt ledarskap i kultursektorn* ('Alternative forms of leadership in the arts and cultural sector').¹ The author, Margareta Lundberg, was the head of arts and culture at the local authority in Kungsbacka, a small town on the west coast of Sweden. The background to her paper was the financial crisis in the country in the early 1990s, which led to mass unemployment and severe cuts in the public sector. Instead of despairing in the face of these gloomy developments, Lundberg sought to use her research – based on interviews with cultural leaders – to share the experience and insight she and her colleagues had gained over the years. Lundberg felt that the research then available was of little help:

“Current leadership theory is very much coloured by the prevailing approach of the business world. Leadership is often discussed from an organisational and structural perspective in terms of delegation, control measures and finance.

What is missing in my view is both a more in-depth approach to working with individuals, groups and processes, and a greater awareness of the need to develop the ability of managers and col-

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1. Margareta Lundberg, *Alternativt ledarskap i kultursektorn* ('Alternative forms of leadership in the arts and cultural sector'). Göteborg 1993.

leagues to express themselves creatively. Employees in the cultural sector very rarely have the opportunity to express their creativity and their creative powers.

It is also my contention that the public sector needs to elucidate the core humanistic values that are the basis of its work, not least because the existence of the public sector is often controlled by short-term, self-interested financial premisses.”²

There were thus three areas where Lundberg called for new thinking: opportunities for more in-depth development of the individual and groups; scope for the creativity and creative powers of managers and colleagues; and clearer links to artistic work’s core humanistic values.

In terms of literature on cultural leadership, Lundberg’s paper is an early example even from an international perspective. The 1990s, it is true, were witness to a sharp increase in academic literature on the subject of leadership, and there was an explosion in particular in articles on leadership focussing on management and psychology.³ But it was not in fact until the 2000s that the *cultural leader* became an area of interest for academia, and also for politics and civil society, as shown in the following anecdote.⁴

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2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. Mauro F Guillén, *Classical Sociological Approaches to the Study of Leadership*. in: *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*, eds. Nitin Nohria & Rakesh Khurana. Harvard Business Review Press. Boston, Mass., p. 224.

4. According to Sue Kay, “cultural leadership” became a concept in British English in “early 2003”. (Scratching the seven year itch: a commentary, p. 9. in: *A cultural leadership reader*, eds. Sue Kay and Kate Venner with Susanne Burns and Mary Schwarz.

http://ntcreativearts.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/a_cultural_leadership_reader_201007051349381.pdf.)

In many places in the world, “cultural leader” has more the connotation of “community leader”, a representative and spokesperson for a minority ethnic and/or religious group. See, for example, the American training programme Cultural Leadership: “Understanding through the African-American and Jewish Experience” (culturalleadership.org), or the definition of American lecturer and activist Toby S Jenkins: “Cultural leadership is a leadership proxy that is rooted in community, family, and cultural identity.” (<http://tobyjenkins.weebly.com/cultural-leadership.html>) The British Council’s definition is completely different: “Cultural leadership is the act of leading the cultural sector. Like culture itself, it comes from many different people and

One of Scandinavia's most successful and influential cultural leaders is Suzanne Osten. For several decades she led the work of Unga Klara, an independent part of Stockholms stadsteater (Stockholm City Theatre), which has revolutionised theatre for children and young people both in Sweden and internationally. Osten has also been an unrivalled inspiration and role model for generations of female artists and intellectuals. In an interview she talks about meeting a well-known business leader while on a flight, who told her that he regularly used her film *Bröderna Mozart* ('The Mozart Brothers') in his leadership courses.⁵ Osten comments:

“That was when I first became aware of the concept of leadership. I knew of course that I was managing the work, and I have also been aware of who my bosses were; I had my disputes with them and created an organisation for myself that suited my way of working. So I am well aware of what I have done, but I would not previously have acknowledged that I was so clearly engaged in leadership as part of the artistic process.”⁶

Historical outline

In general terms, the sudden surge in interest in cultural leadership at the start of the 21st century was due to the dramatic expansion and diversification of the cultural sector in the previous decade. This was against a backdrop of globalisation – which gathered speed after the implosion of the Soviet Empire – European integration and advances in information technology. Increased spending power and more leisure time meant that more people in more and more parts of the world were able to spend increasing amounts of time and money on the cultural sector in its broadest sense. By the early 1990s, the global cultural and entertainment industry was already making its presence felt as

can be practised in many different ways.” (http://creativeconomy.british-council.org/media/uploads/files/Cultural_Leadership_2.pdf)

5. The film was released in 1986. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090778/>

6. Uwe Bødevadt, *At lede kunstnere m.m. - 12 skandinaviske kulturlederportrætter*. Børsens Forlag, Copenhagen 2009, p. 56.

one of the most profitable and rapidly-growing sectors.⁷ At the same time, culture, in the extended sense of creative ability and expressiveness, took on an ever greater role in an increasing number of areas of work life. Robert Reich, President Clinton's Secretary of Labor from 1993 to 1997, coined the expression "symbolic analysts" and Richard Florida launched the concept of "the creative class" to describe the central players in the new economy.⁸

Globalisation is not a continuous, one-dimensional process. It is contradictory, evolves in step changes and has financial, political and cultural aspects to it. In its neoliberal guise, globalisation had been seeking since the 1980s to remove obstacles presented by the welfare state and tear down national barriers to the logic of capital.⁹ The public sector was ordered to copy the management philosophy and evaluation techniques of the private sector.¹⁰ One of the consequences of the policies of deregulation and privatisation was the blurring of the traditional boundaries between the arts and the cultural sector.

In 1997, Tony Blair's newly-elected Labour government attempted to make a virtue of what seemed to be a new financial and political reality. Under the "Cool Britannia" slogan, the Department of National Heritage, which included the arts brief, was renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In 1998, the creative industries were promoted as the future of the struggling economy. This was an optimistic, forward-looking vision that linked in with the UK's traditional

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7. The Economist 23/12 1989.
8. Robert Reich introduced the concept of "symbolic analysts" in *The Work of Nations - Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*. Alfred A Knopf 1991. Richard Florida writes about "the creative class" in *The Rise of the Creative Class*, 2002.
9. Neoliberal deregulation and privatisation policies were different in different parts of the world but generally applied to vital areas of society such as utilities, healthcare, education and communications.
10. Christopher Hood, *The "New Public Management" in the 1980s: Variations on a theme*. [http://www.drmanage.com/images/1202965572/Hood_NPM\(1995\).pdf](http://www.drmanage.com/images/1202965572/Hood_NPM(1995).pdf)

strength in popular culture while at the same time contrasting with the Thatcherist ideology that had begun to reverberate with out-dated imperialism (“Rule Britannia”). The world would now be reconquered by means of pop music and fashion, London would again be swinging, and the economy would magically recover. Almost in passing, the British discourse on creative industries – and the consultancy work that the discourse paved the way for – became export products in themselves.¹¹

The glad tidings that the old opposition between culture and capitalism had now been overcome had an appeal far beyond the British Isles. In 2006, a Belgian consultancy produced a report commissioned by the European Commission about how the importance of the cultural sector for the economy was underestimated, attracting a great deal of attention.¹² During the first decade of the 2000s, country after country assembled statistics about and strategies for their creative industries.¹³ Researchers such as David Throsby and Giep Hagoort broadened and qualified the discussion about the relationships between culture and the economy.¹⁴

But globalisation did not just mean a rapprochement be-

11. UK Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Tessa Jowell, 2007: “The UK creative industries outperform every other European state and in the 21st century they have moved to centre stage of the UK economy.” in: *Staying ahead: the economic performance of the UK’s creative industries*. http://www.theworkfoundation.com/DownloadPublication/Report/176_176_stayingahead.pdf, p. 6.

12. The KEA consultancy firm in Brussels produced their report *The Economy of Europe* in 2006. The work was based on the target adopted at the European Council meeting in Lisbon in March 2000 that required the EU to be “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” by 2010. The basis of the consultants’ report was that the importance of culture and creative industries was underestimated in this target, and this was now to be corrected. <http://www.keanet.eu/studies-and-contributions/economy-of-culture-in-europe/>

13. See for example the report on culture and creative industries in Germany: https://www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Bibliothek/culture_and_creative_industries.pdf

14. See for example David Throsby, *Economics and Culture*, Cambridge University Press 2001; Giep Hagoort, *Arts Management*, University of Chicago Press 2004.

tween culture and economics in the conventional sense. During the 1980s, the *developmental* economist Amartya Sen set out an alternative theory of welfare, which included broadening the concept of freedom to include survival, education and social security, known as “functional capabilities”.¹⁵ In 1995, the World Commission on Culture and Development, which was initiated by UNESCO, published its influential report *Our Creative Diversity*.¹⁶ The report, which argued for the incorporation of sustainability and diversity into the concept of culture, can be read as a mild diplomatic protest against the prevailing economic system’s brutal exploitation of human and natural resources. More militant disapproval was expressed in the global justice movement that came together in the World Social Forum.¹⁷ The UNESCO initiative continued with the *Cultures and Globalization Series*, an ambitious research and book project under the editorship of Helmut Anheier and Raj Isar.¹⁸ An important contribution to the analysis of the role of culture in the “informational” networked society has been made by the Spanish-American sociologist Manuel Castells in his three-volume work *The Information Age. Economy, Society and Culture*.¹⁹

Despite the expectations placed on the creative industries,

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15. The theory is called “the capabilities approach” and has inspired both developmental economists and philosophers in their approaches to combating poverty, and not least in their perceptions of the progressive role often played by women. Amartya Sen, *Development as freedom*. Oxford New York: Oxford University Press 2001.

16. http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=22431&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

17. The World Social Forum (WSF) was launched in 2001 as a grassroots social equivalent to the World Economic Forum of the economic, political and media elite in Davos, Switzerland. Under the slogan “Another World is Possible”, activists from civil society across the world gathered for the first time in Porto Alegre, Brazil. In 2016 the WSF will be taking place in Montreal, Canada. The heterogeneous movement is sometimes called the anti-globalisation movement. For a perspective on activist strands of culture, see Sandy Fitzgerald’s contribution to this book.

18. The first volume in the series, *Conflicts and Tensions*, was published by Sage in 2007. Five volumes have been published to date.

19. The trilogy was originally published by Blackwell in 1996–98.

the cultural sector has been under significant pressure since the start of the new century. This is partly due to the cost crisis that derives inevitably from the fact that cultural activity is limited in the extent to which it can rationalise and become more efficient by cutting down on staff – there are just as many parts in *Hamlet* and *The Ring cycle* today as there were when the works were created.²⁰ The financial crisis of 2008–9 and its far-reaching repercussions have also played a role. But is also due to ideologically-motivated cuts in public support for the cultural sector.

Influxes of refugees and migration prompted by poverty and the post-colonial wars in the Middle East and Africa, together with the financial crisis and increasing unemployment, have stirred up racism and xenophobia, and also provided a fertile environment for both radical nationalism and religiously-motivated extremism. The whole of Europe is witness to the rise of nationalistic and xenophobic movements and parties, which can reasonably come under the heading of *cultural* politics, i.e. the exclusionary political programmes are based on a culturally (historically, linguistically, ethnically/territorially) constructed identity.²¹

There is just as much reason today to take an interest in the situation of the cultural sector and cultural leaders as there was when Margareta Lundberg wrote her book in the early 1990s. The need for enlightenment and humanism in the Europe of today is an urgent one.²²

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20. The dilemma of the “productivity lag” and the limited rationalisation options available to the performing arts were noted by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen in *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma*. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund 1966 – a work that is considered to be the beginnings of cultural economics. See also James Heilbrun, “Baumol’s cost disease”, in: *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. Ruth Towse. Edward Elgar 2005.

21. See Lena Andersson’s contribution to this book.

22. The issues bring to the fore the discussion on values that Mikael Löfgren addresses in his contribution to this book.

Analytical framework

Although it has become more and more common in the 2000s to talk about culture as *a* sector (a tendency that is probably linked to its growing economic potential and the resultant political and bureaucratic interest), the activity brought together under the ‘cultural sector’ umbrella is almost incomprehensibly diverse. The cultural sector consists of organisations and activity that differ widely in terms of size, financial resources, reputation and seniority. Some of them are *commercial businesses* whose overall objective is to generate profit. Others are *public sector organisations* and must comply with politically-determined terms of reference and regulations. Still others have their base in the *civil society* or the voluntary sector, where they chose to be so that they could create art, have some fun or change the world – or do a bit of each. Few cultural organisations are purely one thing or the other. Almost all of them need to earn money and comply with politically-determined laws and rules to some degree, and are imbued with an ambition to create art or to make a difference in some way.²³ Every cultural organisation should clarify for itself and other people where it fits and what its overall objective is. For the sake of clarity let us distinguish between three possible *purposes* for a cultural organisation:

1. To earn money (commercial grounds);
2. To create social cohesion or employment opportunities, make a town/region attractive both for residents and for visitors (political/administrative grounds);
3. To create art and meaningful community, change the world (aesthetic/cultural/social grounds).

Some of the grounds above may seem puzzling. What organisation would want to justify its activities on bureaucratic grounds? Probably none. However, this doesn’t mean that there aren’t or

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23. See Sarah Thelwall’s contribution to this book.

organisations that in reality act as if they have forgotten all the other reasons for their existence. Neither does there need to be any contradiction between the various purposes. There are organisations that earn money by creating art. Changing the world does not need to be as revolutionary as it sometimes sounds. It may be achieved by using art or some other cultural activity to help to make life a little easier or richer for people round about you. It's the same thing whether the purpose is to create art or community or change the world, which we define as *public value*. There is no definitive definition of this concept as it will be the outcome of a negotiation between all the parties involved. The main thing in this context is that the individual cultural organisation raises awareness of the purpose of its existence and its activity both for itself and for the people around it.

It should be noted that every purpose, which is legitimate in itself, entails an inherent risk of the organisation's own goal or interest obscuring all others or those of other people. This ultimately leads to problems. A cultural organisation that is blinded by the purpose of making money runs the risk of eventually losing the ability to do just that. A cultural organisation that is only responsive to bureaucratic terms of reference runs the risk of eventually forgetting the original meaning of the group. A cultural organisation that focuses only on satisfying its own motivations runs the risk of eventually losing the ability to be relevant to anyone other than the originators themselves.²⁴

As part of the clarification process organisations should question themselves about their actual and desired reach. How local or global is the organisation and how global or local would it like to be? We call this the nature and degree of *glocality* and it encompasses relationships with users, partners and funders. There is often a tension between the aim to be, on the one hand, locally rooted and, on the other hand, to be relevant in a wider, perhaps global, context. How,

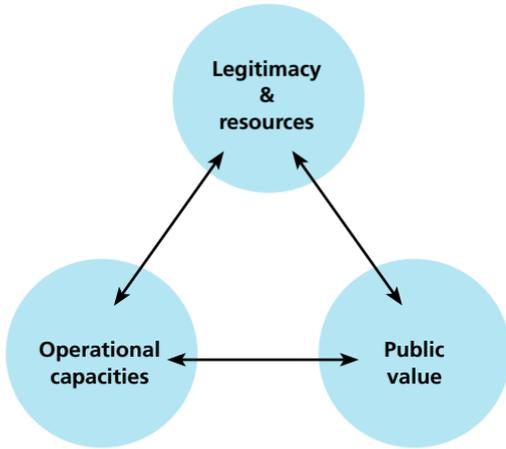
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24. We should add here that there is a difference between creating art and allowing it to be put before an audience. The former is an asocial activity that neither can nor should take account of others' perceptions. The latter is a social activity that both can and should do so.

for example, can a contemporary art organisation be both locally relevant and at the forefront of the international art scene? Is it possible, or is there a need for compromise? If so, with whom? It is not just a matter of how many people you want to reach and collaborate with; it is also about which people you want to work with and for. And what *capability* – i.e. knowledge, skills and competences – the organisation has in relation to, say, the digital domain, intercultural collaboration and intersectionality.²⁵

For a cultural organisation to fulfil its purpose, it needs to work up a well thought-out *strategy*. This will naturally vary depending on the direction and objective of the organisation, but some of the main features are suggested below:²⁶

Moore's strategic triangle



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 25. See the contributions from Rasmus Fleischer, Chris Torch and Paulina de los Reyes in this book.

26. The model, and the discussion about public value, are borrowed from Mark H Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1995. As can be seen from the discussion above, we have taken the liberty of broadening out Moore's concept of public value to include not only social value but also cultural and artistic values. The reasoning for this move can be found in Mikael Löfgren, *Inga undantag. Värdeskapandet i små och medelstora samtidskonsthallar*. ('No exceptions. Creating values in small and medium-sized contemporary art galleries.') Nätverkstan 2015, p. 75ff.

Every cultural organisation should ask itself the following strategic questions: 1) What is the public value (artistic, cultural or social) that we are striving for in our work? 2) How can we secure legitimacy and the necessary resources to produce that value? and 3) What operational capability (including investment and innovation) do we require or need to create to achieve that value?

However, it is not enough in itself for the cultural organisation's board or management or even its entire workforce to be in agreement about how to address these strategic issues. The organisation must enter into a dialogue and negotiations with all parties involved, i.e. the users, funders and any other partners. This negotiation is not something that can easily be dealt with in one sitting; it is an integral part of the organisation's ongoing work. It requires sensitivity, flexibility and an awareness that value can be realised over different periods of time – but the organisation must also have clarified for itself the reasons for its existence and the type of public value it wants to create.

So what qualities does a leader need in order to be able to lead a cultural organisation in line with the above principles?²⁷ Few social players in a patriarchal, capitalist society are as ideologised as the leader, a fact that has given rise to a veritable industry both within academia and in the form of consultancy and publishing. In the self-help literature of popular science, leadership is presented as the route to social and financial success.

In more formal contexts, it is important at the outset to clarify the distinction between a manager and a leader.²⁸ The former is a post, the latter is a capability. By no means all managers – unfortunately – are leaders (think of Ricky Gervais's character in

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27. For three perspectives on contemporary leadership in different parts of Europe see the contributions to this book by Joke Schrauwen, Annick Schramme and Jesse Segers; Lars Lindkvist; and Sue Kay.

28. See for example John P Kotter, *What Leaders Really Do*. in: *On Leadership*. Harvard Business Review Press. Boston, Mass. 2011, p. 58ff.

The Office!).²⁹ Neither do all leaders need to be appointed managers; this, though, is a lesser problem, if indeed it is one.

Scarcely any other area of society has such powerful and legendary representatives as our artistic and cultural life. They include the fabled poets and sculptors of classical antiquity, the universal geniuses of the Renaissance and the philosophers of the Enlightenment. The strongest of these myths is the notion of the romantic (male) genius who, inspired by God, sacrifices himself and often those around him to Art with a capital A. This was a notion that endured until at least the end of the last century in the shape of demon conductors like Herbert von Karajan and demon film directors such as Ingmar Bergman.³⁰ Judging by the TV series *Mozart in the Jungle*, which portrays a demonic *maestro* who communes with the dead masters, the romantic genius remains a standard in popular culture.³¹

Towards the end of the last century, the artistic genius leadership model gained some competition. The artistic director of major cultural institutions was joined by an administrative director who was given responsibility for staffing and budgets and was also the CEO. This dual command model, still in use in many institutions, has preserved the notion of inherent conflict between artistic and financial responsibility.

As a counterpart to the tendency in the business world to emphasise creativity and entrepreneurialism, the creative industries brought with them a partly new view of the cultural leader as an inventive, collaborative and communicative coordinator of

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29. This is of course a reference to Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's original British show from 2001 and not the pale American imitation. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Office_\(UK_TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Office_(UK_TV_series))

30. Jonathan Lebrecht, *The Maestro Myth: Great Conductors in Pursuit for Power*. Schuster & Schuster: London 1991.

31. The television series broadcast from 2014 is based on a documentary memoir by the oboist Blair Tindall dating from 2005: *Mozart in the Jungle. Sex, Drugs, and Classical Music*. Atlantic Monthly Press. The maestro played by Gael García Bernal is said to have been inspired by the Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mozart_in_the_Jungle

working relationships.³² But the new impetus did not come solely from the private sector. Since the counterculture of the 1960s, the voluntary sector had seen the emergence of other, more participatory, democratic ideals for artistic and cultural activity and leadership. People questioned the idea of artwork as man's work, and also queried working methods and concepts of quality. Even though the old ideals very much lived on in the tradition-bound cultural institutions such as national theatres and state art museums, they were challenged in small cultural organisations that were naturally at home in civil society. Rather than the old ideals of authoritarian, charismatic leaders, the latter practised a more democratic form of leadership, which in its most radical form advocated *participation in leadership*. With this, the exercising of leadership is not restricted to a post or a person; it denotes responsibilities, roles and tasks that are assumed and fulfilled by different workers at different times. Thus while not collective, *participatory* leadership is neither a formal position nor a set of attributes but a profession or rather a professionalism characterised by (democratic) *participation*, *reflexivity* and *capability*.

Leadership of this sort places considerable demands on the organisation, employees and its ways of working. And internally, the cultural organisation must work long-term on the strategic issues relating to the organisation's purpose – how to create legitimacy, adequate resources and operational capabilities. The creation of public value requires the application of cultural leadership and ways of working in three interrelated dimensions: *operational*, *relational* and *contextual*. These dimensions can be viewed as spheres of activity each of which require several capabilities: *knowledge*, *skills* and *competences*.³³ The *operational* dimension relates to the tools needed to enable the cultural leader to

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32. See Julia Romanowska's contribution to this book.

33. The distinction between knowledge, skills and competences relates to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), a tool to facilitate translation and comparisons between different qualification systems in Europe. See https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f%5B%5D=im_field_entity_type%3A97

work efficiently and professionally. These may include resource planning, financial management and evaluation. This is about skills. But there is also a need for competence in the shape of a readiness for action and knowledge, i.e. an awareness that no tool is neutral in value. The *relational* dimension is about the team or organisation. How can you ensure that everyone participates and is able to become fully effective and do the best work they can? How do you best manage conflict: by trying to avoid it or by learning from it? How do you counteract harmful stress? Here too there is a need for the whole set of capabilities: knowledge, skills and competences.³⁴ Finally, the *contextual* dimension requires an analysis of the context in which the activity takes place and that influences it, a context that it may to some extent be seeking to change. How do the organisational structure, ways of working and the organisation's environment influence each other? What does a market analysis look like? What skills and competences are required to put its findings into practice?

Format of the book

This view of vocationally-oriented learning determines how this book has been organised. This is not a cultural leadership manual. The contributors have been recruited on the basis of their specialist knowledge, not because we share views on what culture and leadership is or should be. Instead of defining the words *per se* we scrutinize their context. We think the best way to handle the uncertainty surrounding concepts like "culture" and "leadership" in a programme like ours is by making them subject to common reflection and discussion. The aim of which is not to define once and for all the meaning of the words, but to give every participant an opportunity to with the help of others clarify her views on the matter. As its title suggests, rather than aim-

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34. See Anna Johansen Fridén's and Kerstin Jeding's contributions to this book.

ing to be all-encompassing, the book seeks to open up discussion by offering thought-provoking perspectives on some – but by no means all – of the key challenges faced by cultural leaders today. In accordance with the theoretical framework outlined above, the editorial principles for the book have been to highlight examples of the operational, relational and contextual fields of activity in which leadership is constructed and enacted.

The book consists of three main sections: Value and Values; Work and Art; Challenges and Opportunities.

The work of Pier Luigi Sacco and Sarah Thelwall has practical, applied importance for both urban areas and regions (Sacco) and small arts and cultural organisations (Thelwall). Sacco provides a background to and a brief outline of the main principles of the new era that he calls Culture 3.0, which is in part characterised by the fact that culture plays an essential role not just for people's well-being or in terms of economic growth but for all aspects of society. Thelwall uses her experience as a consultant working with small cultural organisations in the UK and other countries to argue for the importance of creating a realistic picture of an organisation's financial situation, and how it can be affected. Her article focuses on the difficult balance to be achieved between public subsidy and earned income.

The discussion about value that has flared up in recent decades is not just about the role culture plays in the rest of the economy. It is also about other values that art and culture contribute to society and its citizens. Some of the routes taken in this continuing value discussion, which includes Mark Moore's analysis of public value, are presented here by Mikael Löfgren.³⁵

The sphere of arts and culture is an area in which traditional roles are questioned. Authoritarian leaders and hierarchical organisational structures are unthinkable for generations who have grown up in a culture characterised by digitisation's relativisation of the boundaries between originators and audiences

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 35. Mark H Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1995

and between copying and creating. Small cultural organisations in particular seem to prioritise a model based on shared leadership, and on the whole this is not for formally democratic reasons but because it produces better artistic outcomes.

In the section Work & Art we have brought together three articles about cultural leadership from different parts of Europe. Joke Schrauwen, Annick Schramme and Jesse Segers have been researching how shared leadership works in practice in the arts and cultural sector. Using empirical material from continental Europe – Belgium and France – they test the hypothesis that shared leadership is better placed to meet the increasing challenges of a rapidly-changing world. Lars Lindkvist’s article provides advice on how leadership can best be practised in cultural organisations through an analysis of various leadership models and study of a specific county theatre in south-east Sweden. Sue Kay examines a number of common preconceptions about cultural leadership by looking at how leadership is practised in the day-to-day work of three small theatre organisations in south-west England. Her article underlines the significance of size. If our understanding of cultural leadership is based on large organisations as the norm, the circumstances and ways of working of small organisations (with fewer than five employees) – the overwhelming majority of all cultural organisations in the broadest sense – are rendered invisible.

The section concludes with Julia Romanowska, a musician and researcher at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, who reports on the leadership training she has conceived that she calls “Shibboleth”.³⁶ In contrast to the business-related initiatives that like to philosophise about entrepreneurship as art, Romanowska uses art – fragments of music, literature and visual art – to improve the leadership of managers in different sectors. The

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36. According to the Bible (Judges 12:5-6) pronunciation of the word *shibboleth*, which means “ear of corn” or “stream”, was a way of determining whether someone was a Gileadite or an Ephraimite, i.e. friend or foe. In contrast to the Gileadites, the Ephraimites did not have a ‘sh’ sound in their dialect and so pronounced the word as *sibboleth*.

article provides unexpected perspectives on the issue of the values of arts and culture.

Cultural leadership does not operate in a vacuum. It is always practised at specific times, in specific places, with specific colleagues and in relation to specific users. Education and training that wishes to prepare participants for the reality they will encounter would do well to be based on real conditions as far as possible and should constantly be putting theory into practice. The 'Challenges and Opportunities' section brings together articles depicting specific environmental challenges that at the same time present challenges for an organisation's operational and relational dimensions: the ability to deal with conflict (Anna Johansen Fridén) and stress (Kerstin Jeding), the latest developments in the digital domain (Rasmus Fleischer), the concept of intersectionality that is the focus of the increasingly heated debate on identity politics, feminism and post-colonialism (Paulina de los Reyes), and intercultural cooperation (Chris Torch).

Anna Johansen Fridén is Head of Education at Nätverkstan Kultur, and an experienced trainer in group facilitation, mediation and conflict management. In her article she focuses on how to develop new approaches to conflict in daily life. While conflict is regarded as inevitable in friendship and love relationships, people at work are more likely to want to avoid it and to feel frustrated by it. By contrast, Johansen Fridén argues that conflict is essential for the creation of mutual trust and that there is much to be learned from it.

Kerstin Jeding, an Oxford-educated psychologist now active in Stockholm, passes on lessons from her research and practice about how to establish a healthy workplace and combat harmful stress. She notes amongst other things the importance of getting colleagues involved in the overall vision of the organisation – but also of ensuring that their involvement is established in a way that is sustainable in the long term. This means finding the right level of requirements and expectations, of goals that are not only inspiring but also realistic and sustainable.

With his starting point in the development of the American

company Google to date in this century, Rasmus Fleischer raises questions about the consequences of the internet being transformed from common land into increasingly closed-off, commercialised territory. What is the difference between *having* a database and *being* a database? What are the long-term consequences of public service organisations, such as libraries, outsourcing their archives and catalogues to private companies? What digital knowledge, competences and skills should a cultural organisation itself have at its disposal?

In Paulina de los Reyes's contribution, intersectionality is a concept that cultural organisations can and should use to explore and challenge inequalities and subordination based on gender, class, sexuality or ethnicity. These are not permanently fixed categories that create finished identities; they are social positions that are given meaning through people's actions in specific social and historical contexts. In this way, intersectionality is both the knowledge of these processes, the competence to identify them, and the skills to do something about them – both within an organisation and as part of its outreach activities.

Intercultural activist Chris Torch shares several formative experiences and encounters from his own lifelong work. No person is just one person; we all have several identities that we activate in different contexts. Torch sees intercultural cooperation as often the missing link in the European project. He has therefore drafted nine demanding tasks for those who wish to accept the challenge.

The book is interleaved with two essays that place the focus on art. Sandy Fitzgerald takes his own life as cultural leader and activist as the basis of a reflection on the relationship between art and political activism in recent decades. Swedish writer and opinion-maker Lena Andersson, whose novel *Egenmäktigt förfarande - en roman om kärlek* (2013) ('Wilful Disregard: A Novel About Love') has been translated into most European languages, concludes the book with a meditation on the limits of art and freedom of speech with reference to the terrorist attack against the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015.

Outlook

The cultural leaders of the late 2010s have a different world to grapple with than the one that was challenging Margareta Lundberg and her colleagues in the early 1990s. Globalisation, digitalisation and migration are exceeding their established limits. The welfare state has been more or less deregulated, privatised and segregated. There is no longer a separation between the local and the global. The world is here, and everywhere. International relations are increasingly becoming intercultural. Rather than a “computer-generated virtual reality” (Wikipedia), the virtual is becoming “real life”. Access to music, images and narratives is immediate and inexhaustible. In the digital remix culture, it is impossible to distinguish an original from a copy, or an originator from a plagiarist.

Meanwhile, new boundaries are being drawn and new walls are being put up. In the physical world, human and social rights are being made conditional on citizenship; others are left to an illegal existence, isolation and subordination. The digital common land is being fenced in and an individual’s activity is being supervised by commercial and state bodies. Unlimited accessibility is reducing education to a search function on the internet. In the face of the maelstrom of modernity, some react by cementing their identity and values to unyielding fundamentalism, assigning the realm of freedom not to the future but to the hereafter.

What is the meaning, in such a context, of ‘public value’, ‘culture’ and ‘art’? What must a cultural leader do?

Viewpoint

Sandy Fitzgerald

Art and activism

In 1984 I met Joseph Beuys. An inspiration for many cultural activists at that time, he bridged the gap between art and activism like very few before or since. During our conversation and amid trying to explain the community arts centre we were developing in Dublin I mentioned that some of our work could be described as political. He stopped for a moment and then in his very slow and heavily accented German English said ‘all art is political’. I pondered that statement for a long time afterwards and slowly came to understand what it meant: whether you are egalitarian or elitist, whether you consider art as a tool for change or something that is separate to everyday life, the very fact you exist as an artist has a political impact, because whatever your output is will have an effect. Why? Because, based on the original Greek definition of politics as ‘of, for, or relating to citizens’, admit it or not, once we intrude on the public domain (be that a gallery, a town square or a television screen) we enter the political and become not only an artist but also an active citizen. Beuys was constantly making the point that artists are one of the few categories of people that have the freedom to challenge and influence important local and world issues and, for this reason, advocated that art had the possibility to transform society. He developed what he called ‘an extended concept of art’. Through his philosophy of Social Sculpture, which he explained as ‘an artist who creates structures in society using language, thought, actions and objects’ to develop that society. More, he believed

that ‘everyone is an artist because society as a whole can be regarded as one great work of art to which each person can contribute creatively’. Above all he wanted artists to take up the baton of leadership and to create works that went far beyond just aesthetic appeal or abstract musings. With his ‘all art is political’ statement he was saying something profound: that everything we create in the world, all of our actions and choices, have consequences and with consequences come responsibilities, for the artist as for anyone else. Further, if we are all involved in creating society, just as we might create a painting on a blank canvas or a story on an empty page, then, by definition, culture is about creating the future.

This was where, for the first time, I began to differentiate between arts and culture and their meaning in relation to each other. And distinguishing between these two terms is crucial because they have become interchangeable in general discourse and are used very loosely, leading to the often wilful confusion that surrounds these designations. I say wilful because it is in the interest of the arts industry (and quite often the artist’s career) to keep art mythologised and the artist venerated, leading to better market value, easier marketing and the continuing obsession with the signature artist. In fact, what I came to understand is that the story of art cannot be separated from the social and political context of its creation, whereas culture is about the construction of this very context. This is because culture is what we create as human beings. It is about what we manifest in the world outside of nature. It is the construction of what we call ‘life’ and this creating of culture is the part of our existence that we have control over, leading to the vitally important question of how we want to live our lives and develop our futures. Art, for its part, is one of the many outcomes of culture and a tool for constructing culture, along with science, politics, religion, finance and all the other cultural manifestations created by us humans.

My personal journey to this meeting with Beuys had begun some ten years earlier when, along with some friends, we had established an arts centre in Dublin called Grapevine. To

an outside observer, this might have seemed surprising because my background and education was not in any way artistic. The arts as a career or a practice was inconceivable to my earlier self and most of my generation (I was born in 1951) but when in the 1960s counterculturalism launched its worldwide revolution against the status quo, I was ready to embrace its message. What I, and many millions more, had been seeking was a way to change our lives and to find alternatives to the previous generation's war adventures, exploitative capitalism and religious credos, the latter amounting to a de facto theocracy in Ireland. By the time I had left school at fifteen and taken up an electrician apprenticeship I had a parallel existence with like-minded teenagers playing music, writing songs and searching for the exciting new ideas floating in from abroad. By 1974 I had given up the building sites to launch the arts centre in a derelict building situated in Dublin's unfashionable North Side, with my fellow travellers. We suddenly found that we were not alone. Within nine months we had to move to a larger premises because of the numbers arriving through the door. Our policy of an open and free space attracted hundreds and then thousands of people who passionately wanted to express themselves and we didn't circumscribe what this expression might be. Yes we had musicians, poets, performers and writers but we also had bus drivers, cleaners and builders. No one was turned away and we tried, collectively, to realise as many dreams as possible. Everyone contributed what money they could to keeping the centre afloat and we were lucky enough to get a small grant from the Arts Council early on, then itself going through radical changes under a dynamic new director.

Counterculturalism, our initial inspiration, was a broad collection of ideas that embraced a wide spectrum of activists from anti-war campaigners and Black Panthers to naturalists and flower children and everything in between. But what united these disparate groups was a passion for change arising from the view that a corrupt and conservative establishment had to be challenged and ultimately, subverted. Counterculturalists want-

ed nothing short of a new society where the older generation of leaders would be swept away and replaced with a new humanity based on collectivism, peace, love and understanding. The interesting thing was that these new revolutionary leaders were not politicians or soldiers. They were artists the likes of Bob Dylan, Ken Kesey, Allen Ginsberg, John Lennon and Joan Baez and this is why we created an *arts centre* and not a political party or a protest group.

As the 1970s developed and our centre grew in size and complexity (by 1978 we had moved three times and were now occupying a 420-square meter old house in inner city Dublin), we began to attract not only participants but also the attention of the authorities. In establishing this new centre we had unwittingly created our own opposition to the status quo. This was not our original intention but it quickly became clear that creative freedom was considered dangerous (we were branded as everything from Communists to Hippies). Conformity was expected in a very conservative and traditional Irish nation, one that exercised a strict code of censorship. This atmosphere was not conducive to new ideas and artists in particular were viewed with suspicion. For instance, the now venerated James Joyce may not be thought of as a radical but in Ireland, for a time, he was seen as the greatest possible threat to the morals of the nation. For his part he absented himself from the situation, going into self-imposed exile saying “I left the Catholic Church hating it most fervently. By doing so I made myself a beggar but I retained my pride. Now I make war upon it by what I write and say and do”. Making ‘war’ on the Catholic Church was also tantamount to making war on the Irish state. Joyce was one of many Irish artists to suffer censorship and many left the country because of the policing of ‘deviant’ behaviour. As our centre gained momentum we found ourselves sometimes pitted against the powers that be and found that, yes, all art is political even if it has no original intention of so being.

Through a growing awareness of the role and impact of our programmes we were beginning to make the connection be-

tween inequality, exclusion and cultural oppression. We were reading 'Pedagogy Of The Oppressed' by Paulo Freire and discovering different cultural voices and histories, like the development of cultural houses across Europe by the emerging labour movements between 1880 and 1940 and the Harlem Renaissance in New York of the 1930s. We were becoming politicised and as our education and awareness continued, we began to forge links with like-minded organisations and activists within Ireland, Britain and further afield and around 1978 discovered a new movement called Community Arts. The genesis of this movement spoke to our backgrounds and our ideals, emerging, as it did, from the post-industrial legacy found in the working class communities of England. It was about supporting people to have a cultural voice and then empowering them to have that voice heard in opposition to the hierarchical nature of the establishment who presented a very narrow view of what constituted art and culture and which was always in line with the traditional and ruling power structures. This meant white, dominant, aristocratic or wealthy groupings and individuals, usually men, orthodox rulers who saw it as their entitlement to command and run society (a visualisation of this can be seen in banks, parliaments and cultural institutions, all linked with common Grecian Doric column façades, representative of their perceived collective supremacy). Community Arts emerged from the mass of people excluded from this ruling elite: disenfranchised communities and communities of interest, such as unemployed young people, diverse ethnic groups and immigrants, the gay and lesbian community, people with disabilities and women. In short the majority of people who did not feel they had a voice within society or its culture. One of the central tenets of Community Arts was that 'the process was equally important to the product' and that resources should be committed to empowering and developing people and communities through liberating their creative expression. This also meant that if the expertise could not be found in the community, then drawing on the skills of trained artists committed to Community Arts ideals would be sought:

designers, actors, directors, filmmakers, writers and photographers were all pressed into service. This is the point where the counterculture movement (predominantly middle class) and the working class struggle formed an alliance, out of which the Community Arts movement evolved circa 1970.

As leaders and methodologies emerged to inspire Community Arts, such as the aforementioned Paulo Freire, the movement itself produced innovative and avant-garde leaders who informed the theory and practice of the artists, arts workers, centres and projects numbering thousands around the British Isles by the end of the 70s. With groups like the Association of Community Artists (ACA) founded in 1974, conferences were held and publications began to appear (examples: 1978 Sue Braden's 'Artists and People' was published and in 1984 Owen Kelly's 'Storming the Citadels', referencing Marxist theory in relation to arts and culture, was issued). A very important book emerged in 1983 by one of the foremost campaigning theatre companies 'Welfare State International' called 'Engineers of the Imagination'. This publication became a handbook for many, as it detailed how to build and present activist street spectacle and theatre while, at the same time, placing the work in a social and political context.

Now understanding that the theory and practice of our work could not and should not be developed in isolation, international influences became more and more important. One of great significance in our development and maturing came in the form of Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre activist. Boal had devised a form of theatre that broke down the barrier between stage and audience, where an issue or challenge to a community could be addressed through play. Boal developed this method while traveling into the interior of Brazil and working with subjugated and very marginalised groups. This was at the time of the Brazilian dictatorship and Boal was arrested and tortured because of his actions and writings. Eventually going into exile in France, Boal's book 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (referencing Freire) would become a textbook for community theatre, known worldwide as 'Forum Theatre'. After the fall of the dictatorship,

Boal returned home and was elected to the Brazilian parliament, subsequently writing another book – ‘Legislative Theatre’ – about changing the whole dynamic of how governments might function. We brought Boal to our centre in Dublin for a series of inspiring workshops and forums in the 1990s and participants came from all over Ireland to experience his teachings.

Another important touchstone was the emergence of Third Cinema, a term coined in the manifesto *Hacia un Tercer Cine* (Towards a Third Cinema) published by two Argentine filmmakers, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, in the late 1960s. Opposing neo-colonial policies and exposing the capitalist and ‘brain-washing’ values of Hollywood (First Cinema) and going further than European New Wave Cinema, which was centred on the Director (Second Cinema), this manifesto had a huge effect and influenced a whole new generation of activist filmmaking in all of South America, West Africa and the Middle East. The central tenet of this approach was that films should be made as a collective response (removing the idea of the auteur artist) to cultural oppression, revealing the truth of a scenario and leading to revolutionary activism. A huge body of work was produced using this approach, attracting large audiences (over sixty thousand people would turn up for Third Cinema film festivals in Senegal alone) and its influence is still felt today in the cinema of these regions.

As the 20th century progressed, the power and momentum of forces railed against capitalism and the old centres of power were formidable. For their part, the right launched a campaign to protect its interests that had many aspects but one aim: to crush all opposition. Certainly peace and love was not a tactic in their arsenal, as can be attested to within the files of the CIA. The 1980s saw the rise of Neo-liberalism and, with the fall of Soviet Union in 1989, the socialist ideology lost credibility, unbalancing the debate and leaving the field open for the free market economy. Reagan and Thatcher fronted a capitalist return and the right quickly replaced Communism with consumerism. By the 1990s this consumerism was rampant, fuelled by immoral lending pol-

icies and laissez-faire economics, which all conspired to end the social welfare experiments of the second half of the 20th century. A good example of this is how Margaret Thatcher destroyed the Community Arts movement in the 1980s.

The attention we were attracting in Dublin from institutions of the state was reflected in England on a much larger scale. As Community Arts was aligned with the working class struggle Thatcher saw it as a threat to her ideology and her government's answer to neutralising this threat was to change the policies for arts funding. The new policy was to only give money to centres of excellence. On the face of it, who could argue with that? Wasn't excellence a good thing? The true nature of this policy move would become clear through the effects of its implementation. Since the 1960s a host of arts centres and arts labs had grown up around Britain representing intercultural, multi-disciplined, multi-use spaces, embedded in their local community, usually working class and politically to the left by definition. By their very nature, these centres symbolized citizens' concerns, hopes and dreams. Thatcher's policy demanded that you specialise in say theatre or opera or dance, and this meant you had to basically exclude a lot of people and focus on the art form, not cultural development. This also usually meant bringing in specialists rather than activists, if you wanted to keep your funding. Many places closed and many changed in order to retain their grants. The radicalism was drained away from the Community Arts movement and communities lost their possibilities for empowerment through the arts and any cultural development that might follow.

The other side of Thatcher's policies was the economic aspect and here we find the beginnings of this idea for cultural industries, creative industries or the creative economy, which focuses on economic outcomes and destroys the idea that creativity could effect change in society on the social, cultural, communal or democratic level. It was a policy shift that, again, moved away from social democracy and favoured economic drivers such as tourism and investment. This view of culture, as a loss-leader

for economic development, persisted throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium and is still embraced by governments and in particular city authorities as the way forward, with grassroots initiatives continually written out of any future planning for a neighbourhood or a region. We are back to how the future is created and by and for whom.

And what of this future now that we are well advanced into this new 21st century? What of the artist, the arts and activism now? For a while after 1989 it was impossible to speak of activism, as markets roared and the neo-liberal agenda became the political and personal credo, as the end of the 20th century approached. The pitiful reality was that the gap between rich and poor was growing, the world was becoming a more unstable and dangerous place and the destruction of the planet and its communities was advancing apace. But new activists were stepping up to the plate, with new energy and ideas. A good example of this renewed vitality was a group in Austria.

Founded in 1992 WochenKlausur (Weeks of Enclosure) began to use art as an intervention that challenged both the arts and political sectors. Their interventions engaged with very concrete issues trying always to find solutions that would have a lasting effect beyond the two to three weeks of the actual intervention. For instance, the group set up a project to bring healthcare directly to homeless people in Vienna by fitting out a bus and employing the help of doctors. A second project addressed the problem of drug addiction in Zurich, focusing on women. Again a mobile health unit was launched. In both cases the group used their artist status to employ unusual tactics and raise money (in Zurich, when funding efforts fell short, they invited relevant politicians, journalists and medical specialists onto a boat and then sent the passengers out onto the lake to discuss the plight of the women in question, refusing to let them back onto dry land until they had reached a decision. The tactic and ensuing publicity worked and the project was launched). The group has completed over forty projects like this and all under the name of art. In fact, WochenKlausur has shown its work in many exhi-

bitions and has represented Austria in the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999, this time with a project that set up language schools in Macedonia for Kosovo-Albanian refugees of the Balkan Wars.

This latest phase of arts and culture activism has emerged as a driving force after the financial collapse of 2007. When people met in the Ateneu Santboià, Barcelona, in June 2013 for the international conference ‘Ens Toca! Reclaiming Public Space Through Culture’, the issues were eerily similar to the debates of the 1960s, 70s and 80s and, in fact, the original discussions that led to the building of that Ateneu in the first place by workers back in late 19th century: the lack of facilities for citizens; investment in future generations; the rights of citizens to gather in public places without fear of intimidation; democratic participation in society; the right to a better quality of life, health and cultural expression. As the speakers and debates echoed through the Ateneu during ‘Ens Toca!’, it was clear these struggles continue. Activists emerge from the realpolitik. Circumstances dictate that you have to act. The counterculturalists of the 1960s first emerged in the USA and were driven by the realities of facing conscription to fight in the Vietnam war, brutal racism and the possibility of nuclear annihilation. In the 1970s, Community Arts in England was a reaction to the abandonment and active destruction of post- industrial communities. In South America, Africa and the Middle East the struggle emerged from the legacy of colonialism. And more recently the confrontations that we have witnessed around the world, be it Occupy Wall Street (2011), the Indignados in Spain (2011), or the Taksim Gezi Park protests in Turkey (2013). If we step back and look at the origin of such conflicts, we see the same underlying causes that have maintained over time: citizens’ rights pitted against powerful interests that have always resisted a pluralist and equal society for their own gain. A key strategy within this repression is the obliteration of any sense of culture or self expression, to destroy the possibility of any empowerment. In Paulo Freire’s words:

‘Any situation in which some men prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence; to alienate humans from their own decision making is to change them into objects’

The objectifying of other humans is always a method of control and exploitation. The opposite of this is empathy and to empathise, creating and celebrating together, is an important part of our collective development on this planet. While activism is often seen as a reaction, it is also a creation - the creation of possibility, the creation of a world that is more compassionate, more democratic and in the end, more fulfilling and more beautiful for its human inhabitants.

Back in 1974 in Dublin when we founded the Grapevine Arts Centre, we did so by establishing an open and free space, where people could enter and feel safe and inspired to explore their ideas, concerns and aspirations. This simple space created the opportunity to empower, develop and explore in depth, very complex and important questions: it offered the possibility to dream into reality new ways of living. The world has changed unimaginably since then and, in many ways, the complexity of life in the technological age makes it harder to identify and engage with issues. Information overload is a common lament, coupled with a fragmentation of society. It is hard to keep grounded and focused. On the other hand, technology has afforded us the possibility to connect globally, as never before, and to access information and engage in dialogues, as never before. Back in the 1970s we had only a small number of references to enrich our practice, whereas now it is possible to do a web search of art and activism and get thousands of references. However, there is an anomaly at the heart of this knowledge base and this is after a long history of activist art there is a weakness in the collective knowledge and possible mutual solidarity that should have accumulated over many years: it doesn't seem to be evident in documentation, analysis and supporting theory. Yes there is a long history but little of it is recorded and a lot is lost. Libraries, archives and shops are full of testaments to the fine arts, validating 'high' culture

and its existence but there is little legitimizing activist art. The reason for this is simple in that activist, community and protest art was totally involved in the action, in doing, and didn't have the time or money to be documenting, coupled with the fact that most of the people and projects were outside of the system in the first place (a system that validates itself through documentation and precedent). This is a real failure, leaving a legacy that is depreciate in its reference documents and source material for later generations. Systematic research and archiving in this area of work is long overdue.

Notwithstanding the regrettable lack of pedagogic resources available to support activist art, present day activists do have new material to draw on, in addition to Freire, Boal and the other references mentioned. Examples worth mentioning are: 'The Planetary Garden' by Gilles Clément, which lays out a philosophy for the new realities we are facing - globalization and environmental degradation - in a book described as 'where science meets art' in order to 'live without destruction'; 'The Intercultural City' by Phil Wood and Charles Landry analyses not only the theory of why interculturalism is a good thing but also how cities might go about developing through this idea, rather than opposing it; 'From Dictatorship to Democracy' by Gene Sharp has become a handbook for peaceful revolution using communication and design as a tool for change. This latter book has been referenced in most of the major democratic uprisings of the last 20 years.

Besides the problems of developing paradigms for arts and cultural activism, actual interventions continue to surface around the world. In 2011, Los Indignados occupied Plaça Catalunya in central Barcelona. The anti-austerity movement that had swept Spain following the financial crash took over the Catalan capital's centre, along with similar protests in Madrid and many other Spanish cities. But the protest was much more than just chanting and placards. A whole community was built around tents and platforms, where workshops, concerts, children's events, art works, international and migrant interactions

(some on site, some connected through new technology) and performances took place over the weeks of the occupation. What it resembled was an arts festival and the spirit of the 60s could not be ignored in the new generation's fight for their rights and freedoms. I happened to be in Barcelona when the riot police moved into Plaça Catalunya to remove the protesters. Met with peaceful resistance (people simply sat down in the middle of the road) the police proceeded to brutally beat the protesters off the streets. Within minutes viral messages were flying around the city calling for help and within a few hours thousands of people had descended on the square. Some estimations put the numbers at close to 100,000. The police retreated and a celebration took place. People coming to help were asked to bring something to bang: a pot, a pan, a drum, whatever. As the deafening noise continued into the night, signs went up around the park, which said 'If you won't let us dream, we won't let you sleep'. If the arts are about anything it is imaginative dreaming and this imaginative dreaming is, in itself, as Beuys would say, a political act, in the creation of the great artwork that is society.

Value & values

Since the late 1990s, when the discourse on creative industries was presented, first in Australia and the UK and soon in rest of the world, the issue about the economic impact of culture has been discussed from different angles. The discussion in itself is not new. Artists of all times have had a crucial relation to money, and several of the great names in the history of the arts – Shakespeare, Rembrandt - were also prominent entrepreneurs. The discussion about value has nevertheless reached a new magnitude thanks to cultural economists like David Throsby and Giep Hagoort.

The work of Pier Luigi Sacco and Sarah Thelwall has practical, applied importance for both urban areas and regions (Sacco) and small arts and cultural organisations (Thelwall). Sacco provides a background to and a brief outline of the main principles of the new era that he calls Culture 3.0, which is in part characterised by the fact that culture plays an essential role not just for people's well-being or in terms of economic growth but for all aspects of society. Thelwall uses her experience as a consultant working with small cultural organisations in the UK and other countries to argue for the importance of creating a realistic picture of an organisation's financial situation, and how it can be affected. Her article focuses on the difficult balance to be achieved between public subsidy and earned income.

The discussion about value that has flared up in recent decades is not just about the role culture plays in the rest of the economy. It is also about other values that art and culture contribute to society and its citizens. Some of the routes taken in this continuing value discussion, which includes Mark Moore's analysis of public value, are presented here by Mikael Löfgren.

Culture 3.0: culture as a platform for creating economic value

Introduction: change is in front of our eyes, and we must learn to see it properly

Conventional wisdom tends to associate culture not with the creation of economic value but rather with the absorption and use of economic value that has been generated elsewhere, and especially so in terms of public resources. This is certainly true for some fields of cultural production that simply could not exist, or at least fully deploy their potential, without a substantial amount of public transfer. Museums, for instance, are not, and can never be, profit-making companies, and even the best-managed museums that attract significant flows of paying customers from all over the world would not break even should they rely solely on their income. And even when such transfers mainly come from private parties rather than from public sources, as is typically the case in the US, one should bear in mind that behind private patronage there are fiscal breaks that implicitly reflect an allocation of public funds and essentially have the effect of transferring agency (i.e., the choice about what to spend funds on) from public to private.

But culture and creative production are articulated across many different sectors that are extremely diverse in terms of their ability to create economic value. Recently, the perception of culture as a drain on, rather than a source of, economic value has been partially compensated by the steady growth of the cultural and creative industries, and especially by the growing public awareness of their economic weight in terms of value added and jobs that has started to spread across Europe in the past decade. Thanks to the increasing frequency in publication of studies that measure aspects of the economic impact of cultural activity in Europe, and building further on the deep impression made by the ‘Figel Report’, promoted by the European Commissioner responsible for Culture and Education, Jan Figel (which made waves in European media in 2006 as never before), it is today widely acknowledged that the order of magnitude of culture-related economic value added is comparable to, and in many cases greater than, that of many other economic sectors, whose political and media relevance in European policy is, however, still far greater than that of culture. Moreover, such studies clearly illustrate culture’s capacity for job creation (although with a large proportion of atypical jobs) and its equally remarkable anti-cyclical character, i.e. its resilience to economic downturns, a quality that is often in contrast to, if not actually jeopardised by, the systematic budget cuts that affect culture when economic crises are at their worst. The very fact that culture’s structural characteristics as an economic sector are so poorly understood is, then, at the root of the policy failure that insists on leaving culture aside in situations where it might more clearly deploy its beneficial effects upon the economy.

But the picture is rapidly changing in front of our eyes. The recent explosion of the digital economy, and more specifically of open digital platforms as new forms of value creation, with the consequent spectacular performance of the new digitally-driven super-multinationals, is paving the way for new kinds of companies that clearly assign a high strategic value to the production and circulation of cultural and creative content if not a central

role in their business models (starting with all the Big Four: Apple, Google, Facebook, and Amazon). Likewise, the high profile given to cultural and creative industries in the developmental strategies of the most dynamic economies of the Far East (China, India, Japan and South Korea, not to mention Hong Kong and Singapore) is quickly turning the economics of culture into a hot topic for the next generation of industrial policies.

Another strong and dynamic driver is the fact that the technological revolution, in the shape of the digital platforms of creation and dissemination of cultural and creative content, has facilitated access not only to content itself but also, and to an even greater extent, to its decentralized production. This has had the effect of substantially dismantling the cost barriers to high-end production equipment in all kinds of cultural fields (film, photography, music, multimedia, video-gaming, graphic design, etc.), and has caused an equally spectacular improvement in the usability and user-friendliness of such equipment. This is nothing less than a technological revolution, which has led not only to a dramatic expansion of the pool of aspiring cultural and creative professionals, who are now able to make their way through the market by producing and promoting their output directly without having to deal with the complex and sometimes byzantine screening and selection rituals of the traditional cultural industry, but also to the creation of new opportunities for non-professional players to enter the production arena without having to navigate the market as the only real intermediary. Once condescendingly called amateurs and today, with a very significant shift in meaning, prosumers, non-professional producers of cultural and creative content are rapidly organizing themselves into communities of practice whose main goal is peer recognition and the sharing of a common interest in certain types of content. But despite the fact that the content they produce is not intended for sale, cultural and creative production may even in this case, albeit indirectly, contribute to the generation of economic value, mostly through highly innovative channels based upon interaction between culture and other spheres of economic value pro-

duction such as innovation, health, environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and others.

We are thus facing an important moment of change, thanks to which culture will increasingly have a central place in economic value chains, but where at the same time culture is still under-recognised and misperceived by many key decision makers. Moreover, we should not take this scenario to imply that sectors with a limited capacity for production of economic value added or which are strongly dependent on public or private transfers (as applies to a significant proportion of visual arts, theatre and live performance, museums, libraries and archives, and heritage itself) are of little importance in the context of culture as a lever for economic development. On the contrary, such fields are of key importance in that, on the one hand, they constitute extremely rich reservoirs of knowledge and aesthetic-cultural value and, on the other hand, they operate as platforms for innovation, constantly experimenting with new conceptual devices, linguistic codes and structures of meaning. Over time, and in some cases after years or even decades, these will find their way into the production ideas, methods, and techniques of the more market-oriented cultural and creative sectors.

When reasoning about the economic impact of culture it is thus important, if not essential, to avoid surrendering to the temptation of instrumentalist thinking, i.e. tethering evaluation to the most immediate and visible forms of the direct and indirect impact of a given cultural product. The generation of economic value from culture follows a very complex structural logic that is leading the most experienced scholars to think in terms of ‘cultural ecologies’; that is, highly interdependent systems of activities whose interaction is characterized by subtle, nonlinear effects rather than in terms of single, self-referential markets. And this kind of approach becomes particularly necessary in a phase when public spending on culture in the majority of socio-economically advanced countries has seriously contracted as a result of the persisting global economic crisis.

In order to get the most out of the opportunities brought about

by this new scenario, therefore, what is primarily called for is the drawing out of an innovative conceptual framework that enables us to grasp, quickly and intuitively, the specificity of economic value production modes in the cultural context, thus orientating the choices of public decision makers effectively. This short essay provides a concise introduction to this important theme.

Culture 1.0: patronage. What we think we know well, but probably don't

Much of the confusion and misunderstanding that still abounds on the theme of culture's ability to create economic value is due to a failure to properly recognise and distinguish between three essentially different cultural production regimes that are simultaneously at work in various fields in the cultural and creative sector, and which are the result of complex historical and technological processes. We call these Culture 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 respectively, and we will start by briefly presenting Culture 1.0, moving on to the others in subsequent sections.

Patronage, or Culture 1.0, is the most ancient and consolidated cultural production regime (apart from spontaneous grassroots production and its evolutions). In this regime, the figure of the artist/producer gradually acquires and consolidates social recognition and prestige, beginning with the social worlds of the ancient empires, where the artist was little more than a craftsman, and continuing all the way up to the public art commissioning of the modern nation states. It is a typical regime of the pre-industrial economy, in which the technological conditions for the reproducibility of cultural content are not met, and where production itself is then extremely expensive, limited in terms of circulation, and reserved to a privileged élite. The élite was primarily the patron himself, who made use of his resources to provide the cultural artist/producer with what was needed to undertake his creative project and to put it at the disposal of the patron himself (gender specifications here are not incidental; it is well known that, for the major part of

human history, women have been denied the opportunity to play an active, socially-recognised role in creative activity).

In the patronage regime, culture cannot be considered an economic sector since the conditions for the existence of an organised market are absent. In this context, it is appropriate to consider culture as a sector that absorbs economic value created in more economically-active sectors, for instance trade, agriculture, or politics itself. In this regime we see the iconic artist/cultural producer who, because he is exempted from having to market his work thanks to his patron's support, is free to focus only on his art, thereby avoiding any 'contamination' with the economic realm. In later versions of the patronage regime, and especially following the French Revolution, the state itself takes the role of 'public patron', thus evolving toward less and less personalised, and increasingly formalised, role models, through the intermediation of the experts. The latter function as gatekeepers, thus transforming the patron's commitment into a fully-fledged cultural policy that supports sectors with a limited capacity for organisation into markets.

In the Culture 1.0 regime, evaluation of the economic impact of culture is therefore almost a paradox. The viewpoint that sees culture as not able to generate significant flows of economic value thus suffers from a strongly-distorted perspective: it limits itself to consideration of the Culture 1.0 regime only, and with it the necessity of patronage support for culture, which is now entirely obsolete in many sectors of cultural production. And what is paradoxical is that, for those sectors where public support is not an issue, the way to resolve the state of cognitive dissonance in public opinion is not to move away from a viewpoint that culture needs support but rather to have a tendency to believe that market-oriented sectors are not really entirely 'culture' after all. The cultural spheres where the Culture 1.0 regime continues to be very relevant are those that are not able, or for specific reasons do not wish, to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the technical reproducibility of content, i.e., as already mentioned, much of the visual and performing arts and a large part

of our historical and cultural heritage (if we rule out commercial performing arts productions, leading visual artists and galleries, etc.). These are spheres that, despite their limited capacity for generating economic value, are still of vital importance in the overall ecology of cultural production.

Culture 2.0: cultural and creative industries.

The next or the last big thing?

The cultural and creative industries regime was not fully formed until the transition between the 19th and the 20th centuries. At that time, a rapid succession of social innovations – the major process of urbanisation following the industrial revolution, and thus the creation of the first, true mass markets – and technological innovations – the impressive sequence of new technologies that, in the space of just a few years, led to the birth of new forms of expression such as photography, recorded music, radio, cinema, and modern printing techniques, to name some of the most obvious cases. These finally made it possible to liberally reproduce cultural content at relatively modest cost. At the same time, cultural producers now had at their disposal a large and increasingly educated audience that was increasingly willing to access cultural content and finally had the time and financial resources needed to bring well-organized cultural markets into existence. We are thus witness to impressive growth in the volume of cultural content being produced, which reaches out to increasingly large, diversified target markets at ever more affordable prices. Culture thus becomes a proper economic sector, positioning itself within the wider meta-sector of entertainment.

It was cinema, radio, music, and publishing that become the main cultural industry sector, complemented subsequently by television and much later by video games. Similarly, we see the emergence of the creative industries, which differ from the cultural industries mainly in the integration between their creative and functional, extra-curricular components: we thus salute the

birth of design – modern architectural design, fashion design – communication and advertising.

In the cultural and creative industries regime, culture is now able to make a profit, and perhaps even quite a substantial one. But from the geographical point of view, if Europe is indisputably seen as the cradle of patronage, and especially so in its more mature and modern forms, the Culture 2.0 regime flourishes mainly in the United States. Europe mainly interprets the advent of Culture 2.0 through the lens of Culture 1.0 – and in a sense it couldn't be otherwise, given the role that the latter has had in the shaping of European cultural identity itself. One practical consequence is that Europe regards the sudden shift of cultural production towards mass market orientation with great suspicion. This is clearly at odds with the selective quality standards set by the gatekeepers, who have used them as the sole basis of their rationale for public criteria for cultural commissioning. The new orientation particularly questions the contrasting of a highbrow culture, which abides by the highest standards and deserves public resources, with a lowbrow culture, which is not part of the canon and does not merit support from the public purse. It is for this reason that Europe has had to wait for over a century since the explosion of the Culture 2.0 regime for the first coherent studies on the economic impact of cultural and creative industries, and thus to make them a serious theme for policy discussion – and this despite the fact that the economic importance of sectors like television, cinema and music has of course long been well-acknowledged (although as specific economic sectors rather than as parts of the bigger picture, and always in an ancillary position in relation to the attention and importance given to the 'real' sectors of the economy).

Taking advantage of this situation, and virtually without competition, the US quickly become the global leader in the new industrial field, swiftly opening up a competitive gap that Europe will never be able to close. It is this exceptional position of competitive advantage that nurtures the giants of US cultural industry – the Hollywood studios, the big publishing groups of the East

Coast, the big record companies, the radio and TV groups – that in the mature phase of the Culture 2.0 regime will converge towards forms of industrial organisation and production models with an increasing degree of hybridisation and complexity.

But the Culture 2.0 regime is barely a century old and already a new wave of social and technological innovation is setting the conditions for the emergence of a new regime. Despite the fact that, in Europe, cultural and creative industries are still being marketed and perceived as the next big thing, in a sense they are mostly already some way adrift from the forefront of change. And a failure to realise this could be a big mistake from the point of view of strategy and policy design.

Culture 3.0: open digital platforms. A new continent whose maps change daily

The social innovation that has sparked the emergence of the Culture 3.0 regime has been the proliferation of subcultures, which from the '60s onwards have gradually transformed the large cultural mass markets of the high point of Culture 2.0 in the post-WWII era, and whose universal popularity and recognition cut through all strata of society. The mass markets have turned into an ecosystem of cultural niches with increasing levels of specificity and differentiation, appealing to different urban cultures and to specific socio-demographic profiles. The technological innovation that fires up the new regime is the digital revolution, in a double sense. On the one hand, we have the digital technologies that, as we have already noted, enable people to create any kind of cultural content simply and cheaply, reducing production costs and at the same time making it ridiculously easy to achieve semi-professional or even wholly professional standards in production compared to what was possible only a few years previously. On the other hand, the diffusion of social media, and not only the generalist kind (Facebook, Twitter) but the second generation products that focus on a specific content field (such as Insta-

gram for photography or SoundCloud for music), together with the specialised content platforms with their increasingly-pronounced social component (YouTube, Spotify, Netflix etc.), make the creation and dissemination of content a social activity whose payoff is not limited to economic returns but also has a very significant element of social recognition and approval.

The most significant aspect of the new regime is not the further dismantling of barriers on the demand side, which have already been disposed of as Culture 2.0 has fully matured, but is on the supply side: if in advanced Culture 2.0 models there is still a distinction between cultural content producers and (passive) audiences, such a distinction becomes increasingly blurred with the advent of Culture 3.0. In the new regime, everybody naturally moves seamlessly and interchangeably from being a user of content created by others to being a producer of their own content, and vice versa.

In Culture 3.0, it is no longer necessary for the dissemination of cultural content to be mediated by the market; it follows a logic of sharing and social exchange in which payment of a fee is replaced by a spontaneous donation to support production processes that people appreciate and identify with. Specifically, the transition towards the new regime seriously questions the paradigm of intellectual property rights, in that new technologies make it easy for cultural prosumers to radically appropriate, develop and remix all sorts of content created by others, often with interesting results. This state of affairs quickly becomes at odds with the interests of global cultural industry, and in particular with the US and its dominant global position, and causes the US to assume a suspicious and defensive attitude against the new regime, similarly to what has happened in Europe during the advent of Culture 2.0. This is despite the fact that (as with Europe in Culture 2.0) the US was among the key enablers (if not *the* key enabler) of the technological innovation that has made Culture 3.0 possible.

Global leadership in the production of new content was thus gradually able to shift towards those countries that maintain a more open and dialectic attitude towards the protection of intel-

lectual property, and which are at the same time developing a culture and creative industry whose business models are less dependent upon copyright protection – primarily Far Eastern countries such as Japan (the cradle of the new fan culture centred on manga and anime), India, South Korea (a strongly emerging cultural powerhouse in the Culture 3.0 regime) and prospectively, despite the limitations imposed in terms of freedom of expression, China.

Europe, which has largely ‘missed the Culture 3.0 train’, is still in a transitional phase in terms of positioning itself to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the new regime, which are regarded favorably in the Nordic countries but with more diffidence in Central and Southern Europe. It is, however, already quite clear that Culture 3.0 is rapidly redefining the global geography of cultural and creative production, and is causing a significant acceleration in the transformation of cultural and creative business models, not to mention the models of access and participation in cultural sectors that have strong public or private support in terms of the transfer of resources.

The way ahead: more heat, and possibly more light

The structure of the cultural production system is thus currently articulated through the coexistence of three very different regimes, which regulate distinct cultural spheres with a degree of overlap. There are spheres of economic production that could not survive without some form of public or private support; there are others that have solid industrial organisation and generate profits, sometimes large ones; and there are still others whose landscape is currently undergoing dramatic change almost on a monthly basis, where production and circulation are increasingly intermediated through channels other than the market, thus defining innovative sustainability models such as cultural crowdfunding. It is therefore evident that asking generically whether culture produces economic value, and if so how

much, makes little sense. We must first clarify which forms of cultural production we are dealing with, and which regime is the main regulator of their workings. But the point is that, in this complex situation where regimes complement rather than replace each other, it is economic value production itself that is no longer necessarily tightly knit to the market alone.

We do not have space here to explore how this new range of possibilities is opening up new and interesting routes to creative dialogue between culture and other spheres of economic and social activity. In cases such as the relationship between cultural participation (i.e. production *and* dissemination *and* access), well-being and health, there is already a vast array of evidence to support the claim that a somewhat revolutionary approach to ‘cultural welfare’ could be instigated by working systematically on active cultural participation models, particularly in relation to target groups of people with major health and/or well-being issues. The evidence base for culturally-driven social cohesion policies is equally strong, given the ability of culture to break down the barriers to dialogue and mutual understanding erected by vicious spirals of conflict between ethnically diverse communities – an issue that, in the Europe and world of today, is sadly of the utmost relevance. Areas less explored to date are the relationships between cultural participation and environmental sustainability, and innovation itself. But the preliminary evidence is once again very encouraging, and it is safe to predict that these will become hot topics as well and major opportunities for policy design and action.

What can now make a difference is leadership, i.e. the ability to move quickly and effectively to build up experience and consolidate competitive advantage. For Europe in particular, this is a unique opportunity to regain ground in a field in which it has been lagging behind for too long. Whether or not the opportunity will be taken remains to be seen, and it largely depends on whether the decision makers realise the nature of the change and are able to react accordingly and in timely fashion. But it is clear that, should we let the moment pass, we will have to face up to a cultural future on the margins rather than at centre stage.

Sarah Thelwall

Why does the balance between grant and earned income matter?

The non-profit arts and culture sector in Western Europe has enjoyed a long period of fairly high levels of grant funding. For reasons which range from the economic global downturn to the inability for grant funding to continue to fuel the growth in scale of arts organisations this situation has either changed already (e.g. the UK) or is likely to change (e.g. Nordics). Even if individual countries win the political battle to maintain current levels of grant funding for the non-profit arts I would argue that this income stream alone is insufficient to fund the level of growth that would enable the sector to meet its full social, artistic and economic potential.

It is not however just a case of replacing one source of money with another. Grant and earned income sources are not only different in the strings attached to them but also in the way they influence the contextual, operational and relational environment. These influences can be felt both within the organisation and are evident to those outside of it. It matters therefore to understand what these differences are so that as organisations look at how they will fuel both the sustainability and the growth

of their organisation they also consider how the different sources of income may change them. This potential to change the way in which arts organisations operate is particularly important in small and medium sized organisations as these have a smaller staff base with senior staff covering several skill areas (as opposed to larger organisations who have senior staff with single specialisms and a larger overall senior team).

Supply Side

Grant Based:

- Gov't & LA
- Trusts & Foundations
- EU

Demand Side

Tangible Asset Based:

- Tickets
- Collection Loans
- Retailing
- Café & Catering
- Space Hire

Intangible Asset Based:

- Products & Services
- Research
- Partnership & Sponsorship
- Contracts
- Donors & Patrons



What then are the sources of income available to non-profit arts organisations? How are they defined? If we can understand this then we can go on to look at which ones are accessible to small, medium and large organisations and also how they are different in terms of the ways they impact the way an organisation behaves.

Supply side vs. demand side economics

The key thing about supply side income sources is that the availability of these and the ability to grow the overall pot from which they are drawn is not within the control of any single arts organisation. Large collections of organisations can lobby for increased government funding or to change the remit of NGO's but these

are usually long term policy changes which again are outside the control of a single organisation. In this sense the context for these sources is something which is received and relatively fixed.

By and large supply side sources of income are made available as grants. In some countries these are presented as Service Level Agreements (SLA's). This is most common when the funding comes from national or local government.

There are a number of key operational differences between the types of grant funding which are worth considering when looking at the fragility or robustness of an individual arts organisations' income model. The first key question is what percentage of your grant based income includes in its remit the ability to cover core overheads such as rent and core team vs. a specification that the grant can only be used to cover project or programme costs? The difference in the operating model between an organisation that can cover some or all of its core costs via core grant funding from central or local government sources vs. those who are reliant upon a project based funding approach from which only a proportion of overheads can be covered by any one grant is very significant. The former has a certain breathing space organisationally as the core funding provides a bridge across the boiling rapids of the sector's trends and changes in direction. The latter is like having to jump between rocks to cross the river hoping you don't lose your footing and fall in. Naturally the latter feels (and is) more precarious as you are trying to balance out the time spent delivering with the need to be forever chasing the next pot of money (the next stepping stone across the river). If the gap between funding successes is too long then you have to make staff redundant and you lose the very asset you are reliant upon to deliver your work.

There is also a tendency in times of economic hardship for funders to shorten the period of funding to which they are willing to commit and to make cuts to either the total funding amount or the number of organisations they fund (or both!). The UK has seen at least a couple of rounds of this in the Arts Council England National Portfolio funding (2011-2015 and 2015-2108). The greatest losses in the first round were the

non-building based small organisations – less visible than the big theatres and galleries and, for reasons that we'll go on to explain, the organisations least well positioned to leverage income sources such as donations and sponsorship.

In summary if you can achieve three year funding which can cover core costs as well as delivery activities then supply side funding can be a good foundation for an organisation. In Egypt the move to funnel all international NGO funding through the government rather than allow it to go straight to non-profits is also shortening the time horizon upon which arts organisations can work¹ as both funders and recipients can only look a few months into the future before the impact of the political environment makes the economic and political situation near impossible to predict.

If however you cannot shift from project funding to core funding then the ability of this type of grant income to help you establish a solid base is much more unlikely. Even if you achieve core funding the ability to grow this in terms of the amount of the funding is often as much dependent on the position in the long term cycle of arts funding as it is on the quality of your work and need in the sector for your offer.

Leveraging Tangible vs. Intangible assets

By contrast a single arts organisation is much more in control of the factors which influence the success of the income sources which leverage their tangible and intangible assets on the demand side of the income equation!

The most common types of income derived from tangible assets such as buildings, collections and archives include income from tickets, retail activities, catering and hospitality and the

1. At time of writing this has not yet been implemented in the arts and culture arena and attention is focused on political activism and human rights charities. The uncertainty is whether this law will be applied to arts and culture non profits

hiring of space and or the collection. The first challenge is in working out the percentage of space to allocate to these various possibilities and the likely level of income that might reasonably accrue from each. There is not just an opportunity but also an opportunity cost to consider in these decisions about space utilisation. When grant funding levels are declining the trap is that of assuming that the gap can be filled by one or more of these without undertaking proper market research – the trap of making any decision now rather than learning enough about the potential for success so that you can make a good decision.

The Culture Benchmark data indicates that the difference between the percentage of income accruing from a café which is ‘best in class’ could be as much as 25% of turnover but the average is a more modest 10–12% (in the UK). This is of course different again from the contribution from the café i.e. the profit. In addition to these purely operational challenges are the contextual issues to consider. How does the addition of a café or shop change the experience for the visitor? How does it change the types of audiences your organisation attracts and the ways in to the work? The other change that should be considered is that of the balance between the relationships with production based vs. audience based stakeholders. If a visual arts organisation allocates some of its gallery space to a conversion to artists studios what relational changes are likely to ensue? To what extent does the validation offered by the gallery have a connection to any similar validation offered by an artist having a studio in the same building under the umbrella of the same organisation? In this sense the choices of which income streams to pursue have a significant overlap with, and should therefore be considered in conjunction with, the contextual and relational choices the organisation makes and are not simply operational in nature.

Whilst these overlaps are perhaps at their most visible in the choices for the uses of the tangible assets of an organisation they also apply to the ways in which the intangible assets of an organisation are used to deliver earned income. In the diagram above we split the income from intangible assets into five types:

- * **Products and Services** – sold on as close to a commercial basis as possible. Remember these activities are necessarily different from the core arts provision which is the core ‘first order’ activity of the organisation. Here we are talking about the ‘second order’ activities which take the assets and seek to leverage them into new earned income streams². If the first order activity is the delivery of a concert or an exhibition then the second order commercial activities that arise from it are the CD’s or books. The goal is to offer a greater scale of activity from that which is delivered in the first order work. The level of supply side grant funding will be the limiting factor in terms of many concerts/exhibitions can be staged, the tangible assets will be the limiting factor in terms of the volume of audiences who can attend but the earned income from these second order incarnations of the intangible assets are much more scalable in terms of volume that can be supplied. This is not least because the connection between the (relatively) expensive creative input in the core activity and the output has been broken. Once the input has been made (into the book or CD) the output can be scaled up without further creative input (or cost!).

- * **Research** – The prompt from this earned income heading is to ask the question of whether there are ways in which you could leverage your intellectual property and know how into one or more partnerships with universities and other research organisations? What would this offer in terms of a long term (over three years?) income stream which takes the impact you achieve as an organisation through your core (first order) work and adds in the context of research? How would this affect the extent to which your work is seen as innovative and/or excellent? To what extent could this bring you new audiences? Might funding from these sources reinforce your relationships with arts funders?

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2. Thelwall, S. Capitalising Creativity: Developing earned income streams in cultural industries organisations, Proboscis 2007

* **Partnership & Sponsorship** – The implication here is that sponsorship is no longer a one way street from sponsor to arts organisations. It has become more transactional. Sponsors want to know what it is their money is buying both in terms of benefit for them and their customers and in the arts organisation. In this sense it is much more of a partnership than a decade ago. Relationships with these partners need managing on a regular and ongoing basis. This means that there is a substantial staff cost in this area just as there is with private giving from Donors and Patrons. There is also a contextual angle to these decisions in that the reputation of both sponsor and arts organisation rub off on each other. Classic examples of this include the way in which Liberate Tate³ continues to apply pressure to Tate Gallery with a goal of persuading them to drop their sponsorship from British Petroleum (BP). On a more positive note the strong sponsorship relationships pick up on the benefits that sponsors accrue not only in the facilities and opportunities they can provide to staff and clients but in the opportunities to create bridges between the creativity and innovation of the organisations they sponsor and their own commercial innovation and creativity. For these reasons the marketing departments of sponsors are becoming more transparent in the way they make these associations and communicate the similarities they see

* **Contracts** – One way to shift the dynamic of the relationship between the classic public grant funder (such as a local government department) and arts organisation is to start to seek public sector contracts to deliver services and to seek these outside of the standard departments which fund the arts activities. If in addition to standard arts grants an organisation starts to bid for the contracts to deliver work in the areas of health, education, social justice and social care how does this

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3. <http://www.liberatetate.org.uk/about/> and <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/14/tate-modern-climate-activists-bp-protest>

change things? The core skill and resources remain the same but the method of valuing and evaluating the work will be very different? Might the work be seen as higher value? How would the instrumentalisation of artistic activity change the overall context in which the arts organisation works?

- * **Donors & Patrons** – As with Partners & Sponsors this type of earned income stream has become much more bi-directional than a decade ago and private donors are more likely to ask for the details of what their donation is doing and what benefits they accrue as a donor. With large arts organisations developing substantial private fundraising teams who work internationally this has led to a shift to communicating the ‘packages of benefits’ that different levels of donation bring with them. With this shift comes a need to manage these relationships more actively and thus a need to allocate staff time to both developing the relationships in the first place and to maintaining them over the long term. With this in mind the approach to raising income from both private donations and private sponsorship is much more sales based than previously and tends to have clear fiscal targets attached to the various campaigns run by an organisation. This brings arts donations in line with much of the rest of the non-profit sector and its approach to private giving. Alongside the allocation of staff resources is a greater allocation of funds to support fundraising events. In this sense this area of income generation is run much more like a business with an evaluation of how much money/resources need to be spent in order to deliver the level of return required to fund the organisations activities.

This pick and mix list of earned income streams is not however universally or equally available to all arts organisations even if they had the skills and the resources to pump-prime the development of one or more of these areas of activity. The data in the Culture Benchmark indicates that the average level of income which accrues to an arts organisation from each of these income

types is very different depending on the size of the arts organisation you're looking at. There is also a substantial difference in the income models of urban vs. rural based arts organisations. Admittedly the bulk of the data below is from UK based organisations and the structures elsewhere in Europe and indeed further afield are notably different. However for the purposes of providing a start point for discussions it is useful.

2011-12 dataset, UK					
	< £200k	£200- 750k	£750- £2m	£2-10m	> £10m
Sample Details:					
Sample size	23	64	38	32	7
Average turnover	£127k	£449k	£1.1m	£4.8m	£16.4m
Income by type as a % of turnover					
Grant Income:					
Central Gov't funding - core	41.0	37.8	31.5	26.4	50.3
Central Gov't funding - project	36.2	10.7	11.4	7.9	1.5
Trusts & Foundations	14.0	12.4	13.5	4.2	2.0
Local Government Authorities	11.2	9.5	13.9	10.2	5.7
National Lottery Funds	5.0	16.3	5.5	1.6	0.5
Other Gov't grants	3.2	10.0	3.3	6.7	39.4
Other revenue grants	23.5	23.8	10.2	26.0	4.2
Total grant funding	55.1	61.7	51.6	49.7	55.8
Venue based income:					
Ticket Sales	24.9	15.0	16.6	24.7	37.4
Education & Participation	12.2	17.1	11.8	1.1	

Shop & Retail	2.1	15.0	11.7	5.4	0.9
Café	7.8	7.8	12.3	12.6	5.6
Space hire	32.4	7.8	14.6	5.0	1.6
Total Venue based income	29.6	26.9	34.4	34.1	39.4
Non-Venue Based Income:					
Total Donations & Sponsorship	15.8	5.3	7.0	6.3	4.0
Corporate Sponsorship	0.9	5.7	6.1	5.3	0.7
Private Donations	17.9	3.0	5.1	2.9	1.5
Gift Aid	0.6	0.3	2.7	0.8	0
Legacies	1.2	0.2	2.4	2.8	0.5
Other sponsorship & donations	5.1	4.9	5.8	3.8	6.8
Research Councils	0	0	0	0	0
Other research funding	3.2	0	0	0	0
Royalties	0	1.5	4.0	0.6	0
Franchise, Licensing and other IP income	0	0	0.8	1.7	0
Product sales	7.5	8.5	0.8	5.8	1.0
Services & consultancy	23.0	10.6	7.9	14.3	10.7
Ticket Sales (from other venues)	18.4	24.0	36.1	5.4	8.3
Subscriptions & membership	6.8	4.6	4.0	0.8	0.7
Delivery Contracts	43.9	23.8	4.7	7.2	1.2
Commissions	15.7	15.2	9.6	0	0
Investment Interest	1.3	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.5
Total non-Venue based income	30.8	21.1	20.9	13.2	14.5

When we drill down into why there are differences in the ratio of the various income types of course part of it is down to the capacity of the smaller organisations and the extent to which they can access or develop specialist skills in one or more of these earned income types. It is however not just down to the skills base but to the market conditions in which the organisation is operating.

A small building based organisation in a deprived area of a large city working with hard to reach communities and audiences will appeal to fewer sponsors than say a large theatre in the centre of town which can offer a grand hospitality environment – boxes, dinners etc. The data on private donations collected by Arts Council England illustrates this very starkly. Over 67% (some £39m) of all donations income accrued to the NPO portfolio organisations in 2013 was to London based organisations with the rest of England seeing only 33% (some £19m).

It is therefore vital not only to identify the assets you wish to leverage into earned income streams but to evaluate the likelihood of success. One way to do this is to seek out financial data on comparable activities – the Culture Benchmark is one of way of doing this and some work has been done to extend the data set into the Nordics, Australia, Canada and the Middle East. That said the international data sets are currently very small. The key message is that setting a target for a small organisation to be as successful in its café operation as the existing best in class in the whole sector (often but not always a large organisations) does not in itself take account of the circumstances that have given rise the leadership position. Indeed it is as useful to look at the failures in a sector as it is to review the successes.

How do you set up earned income activities that support rather than conflict with the core creative mission of the organisation?

Thus far we have looked at what sources of income are available to non-profit arts organisations, what assets you need in order to

develop them and what percentage of total income they might sensibly be worth. Before you start developing your strategies and tactics for earned income growth however it is worth understanding how these demand-side economics might change your organisation and its priorities. The most common fear on the part of artistic and creative directors is that such income generating activities (as opposed to those driven by the creative core of the organisation) will become the ugly financial wart on the beautiful creative face of the organisation. Whilst of course it is possible (albeit harder than you might think!) to sell your artistic soul to the financial devil it is thoroughly avoidable. In fact I'd go so far as to say that if you do this stuff right your second order activities have the potential to deliver creative benefits as well as fiscal ones.

Back to the question – so how do you set up earned income generating activities which support rather than conflict with your core creative mission and vision?

1. Mission & vision that are fit for purpose

At the risk of pointing out the particularly obvious the first thing is that you need a robust mission and vision which is fit for purpose going forward. If you've been taking it for granted that your programme is delivering then perhaps its time for a review? The wider non-profit sector has been adopting processes which set out a Theory of Change⁴ and establish measures to enable them to see what progress towards this change is being made year on year. This work is starting to be seen in the arts sector particular-

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4. <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/> – “Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or “filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a program or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.”

ly in circumstances where there is a desire to demonstrate the social impact of the work being delivered.

2. A broad brush on the numbers

Roughly speaking what ratio of grant to earned income are you aiming for? Is it 50:50? 70:30? 30:70? Who is driving this – you or the grant funders? How long do you have to reach the target you set and what are the implications of not reaching it? What is your ratio at the moment? What skills in earned income development have you already developed? How familiar are the executive team and the trustees in managing financial risk and particularly the type of financial risk that involves spending money to make money (pump-priming something), making a financial profit or surplus or taking in debt finance to do more than simply smooth out the cashflow on a large project?

These are questions which are looking at what your starting point and your destination are. They are designed to help you work out whether you know where you are going yet and whether you are driving this car or whether you are a passenger? The answers to these questions also start to inform your thinking as to how much you might need to change the way you use your assets and the level of risk you might need to take in order to meet your goals. This in turn might have implications for the make up of your senior team and trustees.

3. Reviewing your assets

The corollary to a review of your position and goals is to review the tangible and intangible assets of the organisation along with your views on whether they are fit for purpose going forward? If for example your website is ludicrously out of date then relying on it for a new set of sales activities is probably unwise and there is likely to be a capital cost in getting it up to date before you em-

bark on new uses of it. The place you want to end up is a sense of which assets are strong and substantial vs. which are weak or not fit for purpose.

One of your assets is your network of professional relationships. Naturally these ebb and flow on an individual basis over a period of years. However if you are going to start utilising your assets somewhat differently it is also useful to know where your existing strong relationships are vs. the places where they would need to be developed in order to leverage assets differently. Map them, chart them, review them and generally jog your memory. You'll surprise yourself as to how well connected across a varied set of topics your senior team and trustees are. If you are looking to test out new ideas in areas in which you don't yet have a full complement of skills this wider network of professionals is invaluable as a sounding board.

4. Brainstorm ideas for ways to use your assets to generate earned income

Now that you know what your organisations assets are the question is what else could you do with them? Suspend judgement for a while and just come up with as many ideas as possible. Don't worry about what resources you'd need to do them and whether you have these at the moment or not. If you are in need of inspiration undertake some research trips to organisations you consider either comparable or sector leaders. This doesn't necessarily mean the largest organisations! If you want ideas for how to better utilise your intangible assets go look at how non-building based organisations achieve earned income. If you want to understand what your options are for hiring out space look at a variety from those who offer themselves up as a wedding venue to those who rent out studios etc etc. Such visits also provide the opportunity to meet your peers and discuss with them how they achieve their earned income and what lessons they've learned along the way. Seeking out organisations who've come out from a few tough

years is another way to find those who have probably had to make some tough decisions and come up with some new approaches.

Case Study 1 – Castlefield Gallery

Castlefield Gallery is an artist development gallery and agency based in Manchester. They failed to transition from Arts Council England (ACE) Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) status to that of National Portfolio Organisation, and so needed to undertake rapid and substantial change in 2010 to survive. Simply replacing one form of grant funding with another was a non-starter; the organisation needed to look harder at its tangible and intangible assets if it was to identify routes to earned income generation that would fill the income gap and offer growth.

One of the most noticeable changes in the way the organisation had to plan its activities is that its time horizon became shorter, from annual to quarterly. Unsurprisingly, this felt considerably more precarious, but it was essential without the buffer of a secure long-term income. Two examples of the ways they are achieving growth and diversity are the development of income from the sales of work in exhibitions and trade fairs, and the sale of the time and skills of the Castlefield staff to property owners in the North West. This has resulted in Castlefield in effect being paid to manage a number of additional spaces and turn them into artists' project spaces.

In 2009 Castlefield Gallery accrued 83.8 per cent of its turnover from grants, with ACE RFO funding being worth 77.2 per cent of turnover. By 2013, this has been reduced to 29.6 per cent grant funding and sales are now worth 15.1 per cent, consultancy is worth a further 15.1 per cent and income from the management of spaces owned by third parties is worth 32.6 per cent.

The Castlefield team recognise that the lifespan of some of their income sources is probably only four to five years. This too is a significant shift away from a paradigm where grant funding used to be seen as a stable and permanent element of a business model, to a paradigm where income streams come and go, and time is required to build new income streams every year, rather than once every five years.

Case Study 2 – Craftspace

Craftspace is a Birmingham-based development organisation for the crafts sector. Its goals are to push the boundaries and perceptions of craft while working in diverse social and cultural settings. In 2010, over 90 per cent of the organisation's income was grant based and 54 per cent of the total turnover came from ACE. Craftspace were an RFO and are now a National Portfolio Organisation.

Sponsorship and corporate donations are harder to achieve in an organisation with limited venue-based activity such as this one. This, coupled with their work with communities that are not in a position to contribute to their programme, means the primary focus for fundraising needs to be elsewhere. Craftspace are looking to major trusts, as well as for research opportunities. The aim is to make approximately 10 per cent from the delivery of services and consultancy, and 3–5 per cent from research activities. It is expected that there will be more growth in each of these areas, but that grant funding will continue to be the source of over 50 per cent of the total income of the organisation.

Case Study 3 – Contemporary Image Collective

CIC is based in downtown Cairo and has been operating as a non-profit arts organisation since 2004. CIC was founded by a group of artists and photographers who continue to operate as the board of trustees.

The organisation occupies several floors of a historic residential apartment building and utilizes these to provide gallery, meeting, darkroom and studio spaces. CIC also sublets studio and office space to a mixture of for and non-profit organisations. Their role has been recognized by a number of international NGOs whose funding has supported both some of the core costs and some of the programmatic costs around exhibitions and publishing.

Earned income has always been important to CIC but in a volatile political climate it is necessary for the organisation to shift its business model so that if it could no longer receive income from international NGOs it would be able to sustain its core activities. This is leading CIC to increase the number of courses it offers on a charged for basis and to increase the percentage of space that it sublets.

5. Evaluating risk and return

What capacity and appetite does your organisation have to take risk? What types of risk are you familiar with managing vs. what would be new?

What would be the potential returns from each of the ideas you have generated and what risks would be involved in the initial set up and on an ongoing basis? If you partnered with other organisations to deliver some of these ideas how would this change the risk and return?

Are there ways to pilot or test the market that would indicate whether there is a market demand – it is all very well establishing whether there is a gap in the market but is there a market in the gap? Who could you learn from and are there skills you need to hire in?

6. Select a few to work up in more detail, research and pilot

This is about honing your ideas and focussing your attention. You probably want a mix of low risk (but probably low return) stuff you have the skills and resources for internally and can just get on with combined with some activities which are medium and higher risk but which have the potential to deliver greater returns even if they take longer to achieve. By the way ideas which are low risk and high return are more myth than reality!

For ideas which are higher risk it is worth breaking them into stages or finding ways to pilot them so that you don't have to risk it all at once.

7. Connect the creative to the commercial

Once you have a sense of what earned income activities you would like to expand or start it is vital that the connection is made to the creative core of the organisation. This is not just icing on

the cake or an after thought at the end of a process. It is the glue that connects the commercial with the social, cultural and aesthetic value. If you decided that the best source of earned income was to give up a large part of your venue to offer wedding packages or (perhaps more likely) to host productions from other companies how would this diminish your ability to deliver your core cultural activities? It would probably feel like a huge compromise and too high a price to pay and it would indeed risk becoming a commercial wart on the creative face and it would likely reduce your overall credibility and reputation.

What you are aiming for instead is a set of activities which enhance your ability to achieve your creative vision and mission. Perhaps they bring in a different demographic? Perhaps the means by which the customers for these earned income activities engage with your organisation leads them in to engaging with your creative offer when they would not have done previously. Perhaps it deepens their understanding and they want to become more involved in your other activities?

If customers are coming to one activity how do you encourage them to participate in others? What bridges do you need to build? If you offer ways in to the work for children to what extent does this help parents to engage?

Conclusions

Money doesn't need to be a devil, grant funding comes with strings attached and we are not inhabiting an unchanging creative idyll. Like it or not arts funding is being squeezed and we within the sector are not able to simply prevent it. If this is a choice between taking control vs. having change inflicted upon us my usual response is to say where is the silver lining in this cloud and how do we find a way to work it to our (genuine) advantage without losing our soul in the process.

This sort of change is by no means easy; it requires us to look at long held assumptions and decide whether they are still useful.

Doing this takes us out of our comfort zone and makes the world seem unstable. We risk losing our bearings.

The upside is that we can build business models and ways of working which are sustainable in the current climate and should serve us well even if generous grant funding was to reappear. In doing so we can not only reassert ourselves and improve the ways in which we can measure the impact we have but we can also build new ways of engaging with audiences and explore new ways of working. If we are proactive in this then I suggest we stand a much better chance of winning an argument about what the minimum levels of funding are (by the way different for different sizes and sectors and connected to the level of Deferred Value being created) and the point beyond which the compromise to the work is too fundamental to be sensible.

On the public value of arts and culture

The ability to make a case for the value of what one does is a matter of strategic importance for organisations whose activity does not fit entirely or even partly within the domain of the prevailing market economy model. An organisation whose main aim is not to generate financial gain but which is instead driven by an ambition to create social, cultural and artistic value can easily find itself at a rhetorical disadvantage. This can be harmful, particularly for the relationships of smaller cultural organisations with their users, partners and funders, both private and public. But the consequences of this go beyond the individual organisation and even cultural life; a lively, public conversation about humanistic, cultural and artistic values is an indispensable part of the constant struggle for a society and a world characterised by human rights, democracy and sustainable development.

In order to develop their arguments, cultural organisations need to consider three questions: 1) What are the challenges facing us? 2) What are we good *at*? and 3) What are we good *for*? For smaller, younger organisations in particular, these are urgent questions. In this article, I focus on the third question and on what is needed to provide some sort of reasonable answer.

There is widespread scepticism in arts and culture circles about evaluation in general. People feel that it cannot capture the essence of their activity – a suspicion based on negative experiences.

The predominant evaluation techniques have often been modelled on activity that has completely different aims. I do not feel that this should discourage evaluation per se. Organisations that want to engage in a dialogue with the public, and which perhaps also seek public subsidy, must try to account for why they are, and should be, a public concern.

Three tendencies

In terms of the conditions for artistic and cultural activity, three tendencies are clearly discernible:

Firstly, the age in which we are living is notable for a tremendous expansion and differentiation of cultural expression. In recent decades, cultural boundaries relating to both art and life have become less defined. The ‘arts and culture’ juxtaposition is a problematic manifestation of this tendency that is typical of our times.

Digitisation has played a key role in this process, revolutionising the creation, mediation and appropriation of cultural expression and also relativising roles that were previously distinct, such as artist and audience, and professional and amateur. This has in turn challenged time-honoured beliefs about copyright in a way that has proved a shock to financial and legal systems alike.

The role of culture in our everyday lives, measured in terms of the time people spend creating, mediating and appropriating cultural expression in its widest sense, has increased dramatically in recent decades. It is not something that takes place only in leisure time and in traditional forms. Culture in the sense of activity that creates and interprets symbols has an increasing role in a growing number of employment sectors and occupations. As a result, culture has an increasingly pivotal function in society as a whole, in terms of both financial and social development.¹

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1. Cf researchers such as David Throsby, Giep Hagoort, Sarah Thelwall and Pier Luigi Sacco. The latter even talks about a new era in terms of culture’s

The increasing influence of culture is not clear-cut. Culture plays an important role in the production of identity for both individuals and various sections of the population. Its function can be both emancipatory (inclusive) and sectarian (exclusive). It is a characteristic of our age that the political movements and parties that are amongst the most successful of our times can largely be described as *culturally* political, i.e. their political goals are constructed on the basis of ideas about the meaning of, and connections between, an individual group's distinct identity, territory, values and cultural heritage.

Secondly, up to now the 21st century has brought significant challenges for the cultural sector in Europe. The hope of the late 1990s that the creative and cultural industries would prove to be our economic saviour has largely come to nothing. The financial crisis of 2008–09 and the convulsions that followed led to drastic cuts in public subsidy for arts and culture in several European countries. Neoliberalism questioned public subsidy for culture on ideological grounds for its inability to cover its own costs. The New Public Management (NPM) rationalisation concept delegated responsibility – but not power – in public bodies and organisations, resulting in a decrease in professional skills in several areas that are key to the educational level and cultural vitality of society: teachers at various levels in the education system, researchers in the humanities, and artists and staff in many cultural organisations.

Influxes of refugees and migration prompted by poverty and the post-colonial wars in the Middle East and Africa, together with the financial crisis and increasing unemployment, have stirred up racism and xenophobia, and also provided a fertile environment for both radical nationalism and religiously-motivated extremism. The European project, as expressed by the European Union, is facing challenges that are as yet unquantified. As I write, in January 2016, it is by no means certain that the EU will

key social role, which he calls 'system-wide cultural districts'.

be able to withstand the pressure being brought to bear by increasing class divisions and nationalistic insularity. If we then add the global challenges facing every country in the world due to the ‘climate crisis’, it becomes clear that the discussion about humanistic and cultural values is a matter of urgency not only for the cultural sector but for the international community as a whole.

Thirdly, in the 21st century to date there has been a heightened discussion about the value of arts and culture. Throughout the world, and particularly on either side of the Atlantic, government bodies and universities, civil society and cultural players are engaged in attempts to develop languages and methods that can better describe the values of culture. In 2010, the European Commission appointed a panel of experts that commissioned John Holden and Jordi Baltà to produce a compilation of the relevant literature under the heading ‘*The Public Value of Culture*’.² In 2011 Sweden established the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis to develop methods and analysis to support the government’s decision-making in this area. In 2013, the University of Warwick in the UK launched an international commission of experts who spent a year investigating the ‘*Future of Cultural Value*’. The Warwick Commission organised a range of public seminars on the following three issues: 1) Is it possible to assign a value to culture, and, if so, how? 2) Can the value of culture be measured outside of a monetary context? and 3) What are the limits of the current econometric models in terms of the evaluation of culture?³

Think tanks from both the right (RAND, USA) and the left (Demos, UK) believe the current situation is uncertain and are working to find methods to identify and describe the values that

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2. John Holden & Jordi Baltà, *The Public Value of Culture: a literature review*. European Expert Network on Culture (EENC). EENC Paper. Jan 2012. <http://www.eenc.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/JHolden-JBalt-public-value-literature-review-final.pdf> (accessed 09/01/2016)

3. *Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value*. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/> (accessed 09/01/2016)

are created through cultural and artistic activity.⁴ They all seem to be in agreement that the opposition between instrumental value and intrinsic value, on which the discussion to date has often stalled, is both unfortunate and inappropriate; the value of culture cannot be described in terms of this either/or.

Common challenges faced by small cultural organisations

The challenges faced by small cultural organisations vary depending on size, geographic location, organisational structure, operational focus and ownership. Few organisations would consider themselves to have adequate material or human resources. Underfunding and unhealthy over-exploitation of the workforce are the rule rather than the exception. To aid the task of developing a relevant evaluation model that could enable more effective use of resources and help to create a more sustainable organisation, it might be sensible to acquire a realistic picture of the challenges an individual organisation might face:

Challenges might include⁵:

- * high premises costs
- * small staff team
- * insufficient ongoing training
- * scant resources for marketing
- * increasing bureaucratisation
- * marginalising public discourse

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4. Kevin F. McCarthy, Laura Zaccaras, Elisabeth H. Ondaatje, Arthur Brooks (eds.), *Gifts of the Muse. Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*. RAND Corporation 2004. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf. John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of government policy*. Demos. London 2004. <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/CapturingCulturalValue.pdf> (accessed 09/01/2016). Geoffrey Crossick & Patrycja Kaszynska, Understanding the value of arts & culture. AHRC Cultural Value Project. (2016) <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/>

5. The observations in this section are based on my study of small and medium-sized contemporary art galleries in Sweden: *Inga undantag. Värdeskapandet i små och medelstora samtidskonsthallar*. [No exceptions. Creating values in small and medium-sized contemporary art galleries.] Nätverkstan 2015

For financial reasons, small cultural organisations are often obliged to seek out neighbourhoods or rural settings located off the most attractive thoroughfares. There, they are very often able to play a key role in revitalising the area and making it more attractive – which can in time lead to gentrification and an accompanying rise in prices, which then forces the cultural organisation to look for new premises. The role of cultural organisations in the gentrification of urban spaces is thus both a dynamic and a problematic one. On the one hand, the cultural organisation may help to breathe life into rundown areas, and on the other hand it may contribute to the exploitation of these areas and lead to wealthy groups of people moving in at the expense of those with fewer resources.

But cultural organisations can also play an important role in knitting together a town that is segregated and scaling the walls that divide one neighbourhood from another. The problematic challenge for cultural policy is how to make it possible for cultural organisations that are financially under-resourced but rich in social and creative resources to exist in an urban landscape that is subject to the rules of the market.

The understaffing of small cultural organisations would appear to be an unavoidable dilemma. It is probably related in part to the difficulty of reining in ambitions. The fact that there are constantly new pieces of work to attend to means there are opportunities for development but there is also a danger of overloading and burnout. The staffing issue is also related to what are often blurred boundaries between work and leisure time, and between paid work and voluntary work; people on permanent contracts will often be working alongside people on short-term project contracts, volunteers and trainees.

There is undoubtedly a substantial risk of workforce exploitation in the flexible and sometimes imprecise conditions of employment in the cultural sector. However, small cultural organisations operate using collaborative models and participatory decision-making that can act as exemplars for other labour market sectors.

One direct consequence of underfunding and understaffing is that there is sometimes insufficient investment, in terms of both time and money, in the ongoing training of staff, even though this is a crucial factor in the ability of cultural organisations to hold their own in the often globally-competitive market in which they operate. This lack of training may also contribute to the tendency amongst staff, organisations and the sector to hold themselves apart, which others may interpret as self-sufficiency and elitism.

A lack of resources for marketing has direct consequences for audience numbers and income, but also reinforces the tendency to exclusivity. Inadequate external communications may give the outside world the impression of an organisation that is sufficient unto itself and only a concern of the initiated.⁶

Relationships with potential funders are another challenge for small cultural organisations. The situation varies depending on where the organisation is based. In those countries where public funding due to local authority, regional or government cultural policy still has a crucial role to play – in northern Europe, for example – there is a noticeable development towards attaching more and more conditions to funding that is increasingly project-based and time-constrained. In reality, these conditions, which generally start out with the best intentions – aiming, perhaps, to contribute to political goals such as integration, equality and diversity – amount to indirect, but no less political, control of the cultural organisation. This control is completely at odds with the expressed ideal of there being an ‘arm’s length’ between political power and the arts. Furthermore, and just as importantly, it takes away valuable time and energy from the cultural organisation’s core activity. For example, the ability to write applications has become a strategically-important skill, not least for small cultural organisations, which do not have dedicated staff for this sort of work.

Another inadequate aspect of external communication is relationships with the media and the public debate. But the mar-

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6. Cf Sarah Thelwall’s contribution to this book.

ginalising public discourse that affects many small cultural organisations is not entirely due to their lack of marketing resources. There are deeper causes. One is to be found in the way commercial media operates and how it values news. Complexity, in-depth reporting and nuance often have to make way for coverage that focuses on conflict and the unexpected. News reporting on contemporary art has long been dominated by the ‘scandalised’ approach. Another cause, linked to the way the media works, is in the market economy’s prioritisation of quantitative values, and the electioneering that trivialises the democratic debate. In these situations, it is tempting for politicians to go along with the media witch-hunt rather than to argue for cultural and humanistic values.

What are small cultural organisations good at?

A relevant evaluation of a cultural organisation has two questions to answer: 1) What is the organisation in question good *at*? And: 2) What is the organisation in question good *for*?

The answer to the first question varies, of course, depending on the focus, scope and context of the activity. One factor that comes into play is whether the organisation focuses strictly on a particular art form or has a general cultural and social function. Other significant factors are market conditions and cultural policy. In one study of small contemporary art galleries in Sweden carried out in 2013–14, I noted that the things they were good at were:⁷

1. providing opportunities for young artists and emerging art forms;
2. developing new curatorial and educational practices;
3. acting as nodes for network and collaboration between
 - a. different levels in society – local, regional, national, EU, global;

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7. Se *Inga undantag* [No exceptions].

- b. different spheres of society – the arts world, education and research, civil society, the public debate;
- 4. being general meeting places (public spheres) that inspire artistic and political conversations, strengthening the democratic infrastructure of society.

It should be noted that several of these qualities – innovative experimentation, networking in several dimensions, and acting as a global meeting place and public sphere – are closely allied to the relatively small size of the contemporary art gallery. It was clear in my study how important the well-managed contemporary art gallery is for the artistic ecosystem as well as for a vibrant cultural scene as a whole. At the same time, it was also easy to see how the relatively small size of small contemporary art galleries works against them in that cultural policy is unable to capture and appreciate the real value of their activity.

What are small cultural organisations good for?

A provisional answer to the question of what small cultural organisations are good for from the point of view of society, i.e. the social values they create, might include the following:⁸

- 1. democratic openness (accessibility, participation) – by providing a public arena that is open and accessible for everyone to participate in as an artist, member of the public or debater; the conversation about artistic qualities is part of the lifeblood of our democracy precisely because it is an ongoing public conversation;
- 2. artistic (cultural and social) quality – by providing alterna-

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8. For another way of categorising and discussing cultural values see Robert Hewison & John Holden, *The Cultural Leadership Handbook*, Gower 2011, p 69ff. See also John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of government policy*, Demos, London 2004. <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/CapturingCulturalValue.pdf>

- tive ways of shaping, experiencing and being in the world;
3. social relevance – by being considered important by its users; functioning as a node in various networks, including education and community life, overcoming social and geographic divides;
 4. economic potential – by creating jobs and acting as a growth engine, including, but not solely, in the form of creative industries;
 5. regional branding – by helping to make a town or region an attractive place to live in and visit (destinations for cultural tourism).

However, to be able to bring out and articulate the value creation itemised above we need certain conditions to be in place, and I will be discussing these in the remainder of this short article with the input of four researchers. What is required is the following:

1. *Longer-term perspectives*, which I will be illustrating with the help of Sarah Thelwall's concept of 'deferred value';
2. *Broader perspectives*, which I will be illustrating with the help of Pier Luigi Sacco's concept of 'system-wide cultural districts';
3. *Better focus*, which I will be illustrating with the help of Mark Moore's concept of 'public value';
4. *Relevant language*, which I will be illustrating with the help of Sven-Eric Liedman's concept of 'pseudo-quantities'.

1. Longer-term perspectives: the effects of arts and culture are greater than simply 'here and now'

At any given moment, the artistic and cultural life of a community consists of a vast number of players, organisations, building and perceptions whose origins, age, ideologies and ways of working are all very different. *Cultural heritage* is a far too simplistic, gener-

alised term for this complex system that implies, amongst much else, the co-existence of different temporalities. One of the peculiarities of culture, which it is often scorned for, is its lack of modernity. In actual fact, culture's anachronisms are its most important contribution to society. Culture is both ahead of its time and behind the times.

In 2011, the British strategist and consultant Sarah Thelwall published an acclaimed report by the name of *Size Matters* for the Common Practice network in London.⁹ She used thorough, detailed analysis to demonstrate the decisive role that small visual arts organisations play in the complex ecosystem of the modern art scene. But she was also able to show how disadvantaged small art galleries are in current cultural policy.

For example, small organisations rarely generate any income from their premises because they don't own them, or because their shops or cafés are often run by others. But even more importantly, because they have to live in impecunious circumstances, they can rarely afford to do any marketing, which could bring in more visitors. Short of both time and money, they are also unable to provide their staff with the ongoing training that would be useful or to offer their specialist expertise to potentially interested parties. The lack of resources also prevents small visual arts organisations from disseminating (and raising income from) their often innovative, curatorial practices and the educational methods they develop. This is to the detriment of the whole contemporary art ecosystem and probably also the wider social context.

The concept in *Size Matters* that has attracted most attention is *deferred value*. Here, Thelwall is referring to the dimension of time that is rarely taken into account in existing, short-term cul-

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9. S. Thelwall, *Size Matters. Notes towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations, Common Practice, London 2011.* Thelwall is a consultant and has developed a bench-marking system, Culture Benchmark, that allows arts and cultural organisations to enter their data and benefit from the good practice of other organisations including how they manage their scarce resources in the best possible way. <https://mycake.org/culture-benchmark/>. The term "deferred value" was coined by Thelwall in cooperation with cultural economist Alan Freeman.

tural policy. Giving a number of examples, Thelwall shows how important artistic output and works first curated and presented by small art galleries later achieve recognition and fame on the art scene, perhaps as much as 15–20 years later. But, Thelwall points out, the galleries that made this possible do not benefit from either the monetary or the symbolic value of this success.¹⁰

Ronald Dworkin, the philosopher of law, provided a different perspective on the same thought in a famous and much-debated essay.¹¹ He asks whether a liberal state can support the arts without surrendering its neutrality in issues of taste. After considering various arguments, Dworkin comes to the conclusion that the social value of the arts and culture is that – like the spoken language – they offer a structure for each of us to operate within and use.

“Though we cannot imagine our culture losing any of the basic vocabulary of art entirely – we can scarcely imagine losing the power to distinguish fiction from lie – we can all too easily imagine less dramatic adverse change. For example, we now have the conceptual equipment to find aesthetic value in historical and cultural continuity. We can, and do, find various forms of quotation from the history of our culture exciting; we find value in the idea that contemporary art reworks themes or styles of other ages or is rich in allusion to them, that the past is with us, reworked, in the present. But this complex idea is as much dependent on a shared practice as is the idea of narrative fiction. It can be sustained only so long as that practice continues in a lively form, only so long the past is kept alive among us, in the larger culture that radiates out from the museum and university into concentric circles embracing the experience of a much larger community. The very possibility of finding aesthetic value in continuity depends on our continuing to achieve success and interest in continuity; and this in turn may well require a rich stock of illustrative and comparative collections that can only or best be maintained in museums and

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10. Compare this with the system in sport, where the home club of a successful footballer gets a certain percentage of the proceeds whenever the player is sold on to a new professional club.

11. R. Dworkin, ‘Can a Liberal State Support Art?’ in *A Matter of Principle*, Harvard University Press, 1985.

explored in universities and other academies. If it is right that the community as a whole, and not just those who use these institutions directly, shares and employs the structural possibilities of continuity and reference, something like the public-good argument for state support of such institutions is rehabilitated.”¹²

Just like the spoken language, arts and culture are existing linguistic structures that reach out to new arrivals coming into the world, and they will still be in place when the individual leaves the world. This does not mean that everything about arts and culture is cut and dried. On the contrary, they are in a state of flux and in constant contact with what has been and what is to come. All acts of creation are linked to every other act via the artistic languages.¹³

No-one has expressed that insight, or perhaps rather that intuition, more beautifully than the Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. He writes about the ability of important art to go beyond the limitations of its own epoch. He calls it an ability to enter ‘great time.’ Works that have not themselves absorbed something of past epochs will not live on in later epochs: “*Everything that belongs only to the present dies along with the present.*”¹⁴

Bakhtin illustrates his thinking with the assistance of Shakespeare:

“Semantic phenomena can exist in concealed form, potentially, and be revealed only in semantic cultural contexts of subsequent epochs that are favourable for such disclosure. The semantic treasures Shakespeare embedded in his works were created and collected through the centuries and even the millennia: they lay hidden in the language, and not only in the literary language, but also in those strata of the popular lan-

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12. Dworkin, p. 231.

13. Dworkin’s thinking is akin to the distinction made by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure between *langue* (the language as a system) and *parole* (the concrete act of speaking).

14. M.M. Bakhtin, ‘Response to a Question from the Novy Mir Editorial Staff’; in *Speech Genres and other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 4.

guage that before Shakespeare's time had not entered literature, in the diverse genres and forms of speech communication, in the forms of a mighty national culture (primarily carnival forms), that were shaped through millennia, in theater-spectacle genres (mystery plays, farces and so forth), in plots whose roots go back to prehistoric antiquity, and, finally, in forms of thinking. Shakespeare, like any artist, constructed his works not out of inanimate elements, not out of bricks, but out of forms that were already heavily laden with meaning, filled with it. We may note in passing that even bricks have a certain spatial form and, consequently, in the hands of the builder they express something.”¹⁵

Art arises out of, and references, times and spaces other than those in which it was created. Cultural organisations are the take-off and landing points for intensive traffic between different eras.

2. Broader perspectives: arts and culture operate in a space that is greater than 'here'

It has become popular of late to compare arts and culture with *ecosystems*. The term brings to mind culture's original meaning of 'cultivation'. This is symptomatic of the fact that we perceive these systems and the way they work as more complex than can be represented by the idea of 'infrastructure' that was often previously used (which is after all quite a mechanical concept). An ecosystem (ecological system) consists of all living things and their living environment within a defined area. 'System' refers both to matter and energy content. Closed systems are as uncommon in culture as they are in nature. An ecosystem is therefore open to the world around it and receives and emits both energy and matter.

Another, related, concept is *cluster*, which in economic theory denotes a defined geographical environment within which companies in related sectors produce a specific product, working both in partnership and in competition.

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15. Bakhtin, p. 5.

The Italian cultural economist Pier Luigi Sacco has developed a model for the analysis of regional development – also proposing measures for such development – that he calls *system-wide cultural districts*. Inspired by researchers such as Richard Florida (on attracting resources and talent) and Michael Porter (competition-driven restructuring) and the thoughts of Amartya Sen on capacity-building, Sacco has developed an analytical model that seeks a balance between top-down and bottom-up initiatives and connections between planned and self-organised components.¹⁶

The function of art, Sacco argues, is no longer merely to embellish and legitimise power in order to enjoy the protection of patrons of the arts in return. Neither is culture simply a meaningful leisure activity as in the early days of the welfare state. The main economic importance of culture does not even lie in the creative and cultural industries, which have climbed up the political agenda in recent decades. Sacco maintains that culture's importance for society is much more far-reaching than its role simply as a growing sector of the economy.

The significance of culture today lies in the fact that it is *system-wide*, i.e. it permeates the entire social and economic life of towns and regions. Culture is not just a specific industry and sector in itself; it has a fundamental influence on other industries and systems. Culture constitutes the substance of the platform that enables change and effective, innovation-based communication. Culture is both a catalyst and an engine for local development processes; it both initiates and drives social development.

Sacco's message is an optimistic one. Economic and social decline can be halted. Global competition need not be regarded with fear. Local communities can achieve success if politics, industry and the civil society work together – and if they under-

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 16. Pier Luigi Sacco, Guido Ferilli, Giorgio Tavano Blessi, Massimiliano Nuccio, *Culture as an Engine of Local Development Processes: System-Wide Cultural Districts*. April 2008. http://hitta.arkivihalland.se/public/kontigo/KultSem_2010-11-16_Sacco/KultSem_2010-11-16_02A_Sacco_Papper_Hel_Text.pdf (accessed 01/05/2014)

stand the strategic importance of culture for economic activity and social cohesion. Sacco distinguishes twelve factors that he sees as central to culture’s system-wide capacity. These include the ability to create networks, involve local communities, attract external investment and labour, and develop local talent and entrepreneurs. The first three factors point to the importance of effective, local leadership, good educational institutions and research, and, most importantly, ‘the Quality of Cultural Supply’:

“The existence of a cultural milieu of organizations and institutions that represent and organise the local creativity base while at the same time providing challenging cultural standards, making the local cultural supply palatable to wider though specific global audiences”.¹⁷

The hypothesis that Sacco and his colleagues are examining can be put as follows: Culture creates conditions for innovation; broad and profoundly grass-roots participation in the arts (not just as audiences but also as practitioners) increases the chances of creating a good life – financially, socially and democratically – for the individual as well as for the local community.

Vibrant cultural organisations have a key role to play in this complex, delicate ecosystem. Or they do, if they are allowed to serve their purpose. And if evaluation of them broadens awareness of their ability to create value.

3. Better focus: arts and cultural organisations are here to serve the public

In 1995, Harvard professor Mark Moore published a book that, on the basis of comprehensive empirical data, argued energetically against the thesis that there is no fundamental difference between running a private company and leading a public sector organisation.

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17. Sacco et al, p. 12.

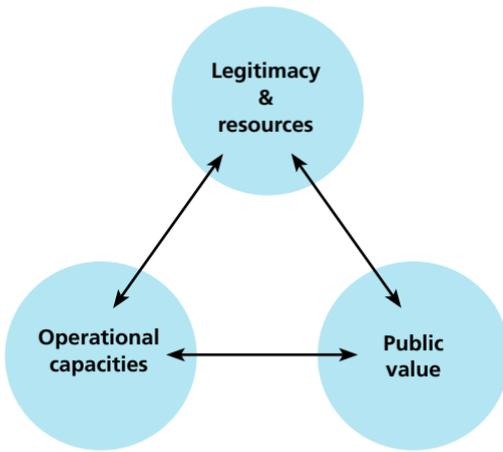
It all started when Moore was sent to Harvard Business School to find out about everything about private enterprise and apply the learning to public administration. In the early 1980s, it was taken as read, not just at Harvard, that the public sector had a lot to learn from industry where management was concerned. He gradually arrived at a number of strategic conclusions that were completely counter to the then dominant rationalisation concept New Public Management.¹⁸ His starting point was a simple observation: while the aim of private enterprise is to create ‘private’, i.e. economic, value, the aim of the public sector is to create ‘public’, i.e. social, value.¹⁹

But what are the actual characteristics of a ‘public value’? To examine this, Moore and his colleagues developed a public sector strategy that they illustrated using a triangle. It focussed attention on three complex issues that managers of organisations serving the public have to consider before or while they take any action: 1) What is the *public value* that their organisation is attempting to create? 2) How can the organisation obtain *legitimacy* and the necessary *resources* to create that value? and 3) What *operational capacity* (including fresh investment and innovation) is required or must be developed by the organisation to achieve the desired result?

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 18. Christopher Hood, *The “New Public Management” in the 1980s: Variations on a theme*. [http://www.drmanage.com/images/1202965572/Hood_NPM\(1995\).pdf](http://www.drmanage.com/images/1202965572/Hood_NPM(1995).pdf)

19. ‘Public value’ is related to ‘public service’, the ‘public sphere’ and the national economic concept of the ‘public good’, which refers to resources that are neither competing nor excluding, such as fresh air and clean water, health and education – and culture! The meaning of the concept is made clear in the following: “*We argued that just as the goal of private managers was to create private (economic) value, the goal of government agencies was to ‘create public (social) value’.*” in: Mark Moore & Sanjeev Khagram, *On creating public value: What business might learn from government about strategic management. Corporate social responsibility initiative working paper No 3*. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University 2004. http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/CSRI/publications/workingpaper_3_moore_khagram.pdf, p. 2. (accessed 14/04/2014)

Moore's strategic triangle



In *Creating Public Value* (1995), which consists of a number of real-life scenarios, Moore tells the story of a librarian faced with a dilemma.²⁰ Every day at 3 pm, the library was invaded by a large number of ‘latchkey kids’, i.e. children with a key around their necks who had finished school for the day but whose parents had not yet finished work. Instead of going home to an empty house, the children chose to visit the library. Their presence was felt. For two or three hours, the library changed from being a quiet oasis of calm to being a playground for children who were not exactly silent and who browsed uninhibitedly for books that the staff then had to replace on the shelves in their own time. At about 5 pm, the children would slowly drift off, and by 6 pm they had all disappeared home again.

The regular invasions made the librarian wonder how she should manage the situation. Should she write to the local newspaper and remind parents of their responsibilities? Or should she ask the authorities for money for the additional staff needed to keep order? Should she ask the parents to pay for childcare services? Or was this a role that could be taken by volunteers looking for work experience? The librarian was in two minds.

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20. Mark H. Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1995.

Finally, she began to think about it from another angle. Perhaps the solution to the problem was to be found within her own organisation? Imagine if, instead of seeing the invading latchkey kids as a nuisance and a problem, she and her colleagues were able to view their presence in the library as a serious opportunity for them to become acquainted with the world of books. The more she thought about the idea, the better it sounded. Imagine if this was the opportunity to make some of the children into life-long readers!

In addition, were the children not just as entitled to use the library as everyone else who used it in various ways? People such as the college students who met there in the evenings to work on their special projects and have a gossip, the pensioners who came to read the papers, and all the DIYers who came to the library to read up on how to complete pet projects that they had started but not been able to complete?

As the librarian started to think about how the library could meet the children's requirements, she started to see her own organisation in a new light. It was no longer just a place to store books and make them available. The library was a place that was open to all and fulfilled a great many different needs. By meeting people halfway and managing the public assets entrusted to her in a way that was financially efficient and fair, the librarian and her colleagues became creators of public value.

4. Relevant language: no pseudo-quantities

The tendency of evaluations inspired by New Public Management to quantify and ultimately to convert all values into hard cash has been closely scrutinised in an essay by the Swedish philosopher Sven-Eric Liedman.²¹ He introduces the concept of 'pseudo-quantity', which he defines as a quantity which is not ac-

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21. Liedman, 'Pseudo-quantities. New Public Management and Human Judgement' in *Confero: Essays on Education, Philosophy and Politics*. Vol 1 2013.

tually a quantity – as compared to a real quantity, such as the population of New York in 2010 or how quickly light travels in a vacuum. The fact that our lives are full of real quantities can fool us into mistakenly believing that everything can be quantified.

In actual fact, Liedman says, that is exactly the mistake that NPM makes and is based on. He quotes the motto of the neoliberal Chicago school, which reminds us that the aim of NPM evaluation is to delegate responsibility, but not power, downwards in an organisation: ‘If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.’ At the same time, Liedman points out, everyone knows from their own experience that not everything can be quantified: friendships, for example, or Beethoven’s late string quartets. NPM has nonetheless managed to establish itself as a means of evaluating extremely complex human activity such as education, healthcare and culture.

How did that happen?

In Liedman’s view, a pseudo-quantity is a quality that is best described in words. He differentiates between simple and composite pseudo-quantities. The former could be the stars or similar symbols that sometimes feature alongside music or film reviews in the press. More composite pseudo-quantities are things such as university rankings and school grades.

NPM has the effect of blurring the difference between activity intended to generate profit and that which aims to satisfy people’s need for, say, care, education or culture. The transparency that is sometimes cited as an argument in favour of NPM often results in increased top-down management – thereby de-professionalising those whose job it is to run the organisation (care staff, teachers, or gallery staff). Liedman’s examples of pseudo-quantities points to the fundamental problem with NPM: *the notional conversion of qualities into quantities is a conversion of language into figures.*

This has a particular bearing on democratic cultural policy. Democracy means government by the people and advocates quantity; the person who gets most votes wins the election. Art is a communicative act whose quality can never be determined by ballot. Looking at it from this point of view, art and demo-

cracy would seem to be in opposition to one another. But the arts can take on board the democratic challenge of reaching out to and being understood by people who are not yet initiated, and democracy can be asked challenging questions about quality, reminding us that democracy can and should be more than just a form of government.

Pseudo-quantification is a threat to both the arts and democracy. What is needed is a resetting of the democratic and artistic debate. Neither democracy nor culture can be reduced to figures. To develop these in more depth, we need nuanced language and informed debate and we need to educate public opinion.

In 2004, RAND, the influential, conservative US think tank, published a report called, tellingly, *The Gifts of the Muse*.²² The background to this was a realisation that the discussion in the US about the value of arts and culture had reached an impasse, firstly because of its one-sided emphasis on instrumental values and, secondly, because it was unable to get past the opposition between instrumental value and intrinsic value.

In a final section, the RAND authors addressed the arts world directly with a number of suggestions as to how it could better argue its cause. Their most important suggestion – in addition to improving research, creating the conditions for positive experiences of art, and ensuring children come into contact with arts and culture at an early age – was to develop a language that is able to articulate the intrinsic value of the arts.²³ The greatest challenge, wrote the authors, lies in getting politicians to start to talk about the intrinsic value of the arts and express their thoughts. This can only happen if we look beyond quantifiable results and take qualitative issues into consideration. Talk about the value of the arts can easily be reconciled with politicians' arm's length approach to artistic decisions. The discussion about

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 22. Kevin F. McCarthy, Laura Zacaras, Elisabeth H. Ondaatje, Arthur Brooks (eds.), *Gifts of the Muse. Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*. RAND Corporation 2004. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf (accessed 03/03/2014)

23. *Gifts of the Muse*, p. 72.

artistic values must not be allowed to disappear from the public debate; that would be to disregard a discussion on quality that may eventually have consequences for democracy.

In June 2003, the British think tank Demos organised a conference on the theme of ‘Valuing Culture’. The following year, John Holden, the then Head of Culture at Demos, published a controversial pamphlet called *Capturing Cultural Value*, which expressly acknowledged its debt to Moore’s theory on public value. The key message of the pamphlet was: “*The value of culture cannot be expressed only with statistics. Audience numbers give us a poor picture of how culture enriches us.*”²⁴

The central argument in Holden’s pamphlet was a plea for a completely new understanding of the public funding of culture. “*We need a language*”, Holden wrote, “*capable of reflecting, recognising and capturing the whole range of values expressed through culture.*”²⁵ Instead of telling us what they do, cultural organisations are obliged to account for how they support integration, crime prevention and learning. The instrumental language currently adopted forces culture into the role of the supplicant. Note, Holden points out, that both cultural institutions and defence are financed through taxation, but it is only the former that is described as being dependent on grants. In view of the value created by the cultural sector, he continues, *investment* would be the more correct term to use.

In his pamphlet, Holden gives a summary of all the values he believes culture creates. The list is a long one, and it borrows from several different disciplines. The field of anthropology is the source of the recognition and expression of non-economic values, as well as language that allows for discussion of historic, social, symbolic, aesthetic and spiritual values. The environmental discourse provides ideas about sustainability, intergenerational equity, the need for diversity, the precautionary principle and conditions for creativity. The public value discussion convinces Holden that every or-

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24. John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of government policy*. Demos. London 2004. <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/CapturingCulturalValue.pdf> (accessed 04/03/2014)

25. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

ganisation must determine for itself what its purpose is rather than being handed down a purpose by others.

Holden believes it is essential to abandon the top-down, target-driven management of the NPM model and instead come to a common understanding between funders and the funded in the sphere of arts and culture that “*favours the creation of value (recognised by the public) rather than the delivery of benefit (recognised by administrators)*”.²⁶ If we understand how crucial legitimacy, trust, equality and justice are for public value, we will realise that *how* an organisation works is just as important as *what* it strives to achieve. A well-functioning organisation that serves the public recognises the value of professional judgement and discernment.

Summary

The dictates of neoliberalism and New Public Management that have the market act as the measure of all human activity have come to the end of the road. Mark Moore’s solidly-evidenced theory about public value constitutes an important corrective. The public value approach not only defends but demands publicly-funded activity. Rather than being predetermined, definitions of public value emerge from an open dialogue with the users of the organisation in question. Any organisation claiming to create public value should be clear about the goals it wants to achieve, how it can create legitimacy and trust for what it does and, not least, the fact that the way it runs its activities is just as important as the goals it is aiming at.

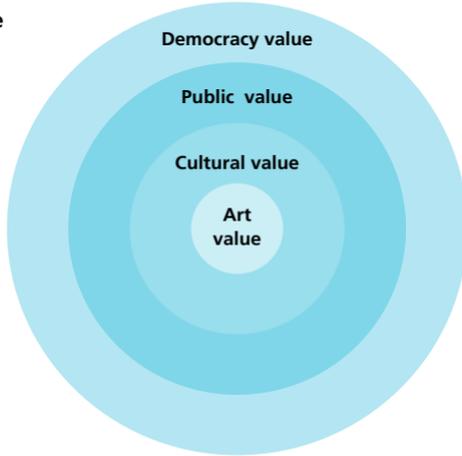
Cultural organisations can draw arguments and inspiration from Moore’s model, but if they do so they must complement them with a line of reasoning that is more specifically geared to cultural activity. Cultural values can be viewed from a public value perspective, but they also go beyond that. Similarly, artistic values may arise from cultural and social activity, but they cannot be reduced

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26. Ibid., p 47.

to their original context or diminished on the basis of imposed objectives and functions.

The cultural economist David Throsby has developed a widely distributed – and unfortunately often misunderstood – illustration of the economic potential of the arts.²⁷ Pier Luigi Sacco and Sarah Thelwall have shown the importance of viewing artistic value creation both in a wider social context (*system-wide cultural districts*) and in a longer time frame (*deferred value*). Using Mark Moore’s research around public value, it is possible to outline something similar to Throsby’s cultural economic ‘dart-board’ that represents the social value created by the arts:

**Art’s creation
of societal value**



From a social perspective, publicly-supported arts and culture organisations form part of attempts to create the conditions for good lives and a good society. Mark Moore’s research has demonstrated the importance of evaluating organisations that have the public good at their hearts using methods that are able to represent their social value in all its complexity, rather than reducing citizens to satisfied or dissatisfied customers.²⁸

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27. The misunderstanding usually arises from seeing the illustration as representing the generic values of the arts. Cf David Throsby, *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge 2001.

28. In one interview, Moore related an illuminating anecdote from his own

Both Sacco's and Moore's research underlines the importance of the interaction between (artistic, cultural and social) quality and (democratic) participation. From a social perspective, the value creation of the arts happens somewhere between the poles of artistic work and democratic participation.

Proper evaluation of small cultural organisations requires an understanding of the interaction that takes place between the organisation and the surrounding community. In addition, as Sarah Thelwall has reminded us, the evaluator must bear in mind that the most important effects of the work of organisations such as arts and cultural organisations are seldom felt immediately after the end of the financial year; they may not become apparent until much later.

So value creation in small cultural organisations is complex. But we should not be dejected by this and conclude that the issue should be removed from the cultural policy agenda. Neither should we imagine that a mere customer satisfaction survey will allow us to home in on our value creation to the necessary extent. Instead, we should arm ourselves with the now extensive empirical research available in this area and engage in the critical debate aiming to capture the values in our lives that cannot be measured in money and figures alone.²⁹

career. As a young researcher, he was given the task of evaluating a publicly-funded drugs detoxification programme. If, as in the customer satisfaction surveys popular in the private sector, he had been content merely to ask the users if they liked the programme or not, his conclusions would have been seriously misleading; the evaluation would have failed to say anything about the social consequences that the programme aimed to overcome: Had the users stopped taking drugs and stopped committing crimes to fund their addiction? Had they got themselves a job and started supporting their family? In order to bring out the public value that was the purpose of the programme, he needed to adopt a broader and more structural perspective that did not regard the users as simply x number of satisfied or dissatisfied customers. Source: <http://www.management-issues.com/interviews/4606/mark-h-moore-on-public-value/>

29. Nätverkstan in Gothenburg is currently undertaking developmental work on the evaluation concepts outlined above. Anyone interested can contact us direct: karin.dalborg@natverkstan.net or mikael.lofgren@natverkstan.net.

Work & the arts

The sphere of arts and culture is an area in which traditional roles are questioned. Authoritarian leaders and hierarchical organisational structures are unthinkable for generations who have grown up in a culture characterised by digitisation's relativisation of the boundaries between originators and audiences and between copying and creating. Small cultural organisations in particular seem to prioritise a model based on shared leadership, and on the whole this is not for formally democratic reasons but because it produces better artistic outcomes.

In this section we have brought together three articles about cultural leadership from different parts of Europe. Joke Schrauwen, Annick Schramme and Jesse Segers have been researching how shared leadership works in practice in the arts and cultural sector. Using empirical material from continental Europe – Belgium and France – they test the hypothesis that shared leadership is better placed to meet the increasing challenges of a rapidly-changing world. Lars Lindkvist's article provides advice on how leadership can best be practised in cultural organisations through an analysis of various leadership models and study of a specific county theatre in south-east Sweden. Sue Kay examines a number of common preconceptions about cultural leadership by looking at how leadership is practised in the day-to-day work of three small theatre organisations in south-west England. Her article underlines the significance of size. If our understanding of cultural leadership is based on large organisations as the norm, the circumstances and ways of working of small organisations (with fewer than five employees) – the overwhelming majority of all cultural organisations in the broadest sense – are rendered invisible.

The section concludes with Julia Romanowska, a musician and researcher at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, who reports on the leadership training she has conceived that she

calls “Shibboleth”. In contrast to the business-related initiatives that like to philosophise about entrepreneurship as art, Romanowska uses art – fragments of music, literature and visual art – to improve the leadership of managers in different sectors. The article provides unexpected perspectives on the issue of the values of arts and culture.

**Joke Schrauwen,
Annick Schramme,
Jesse Segers**

Do managers run cultural institutions? The practice of shared leadership in the arts sector

When we think of cultural leadership, we often picture famous, groundbreaking pioneers in a particular discipline, for example, Harald Szeemann, the curator, Franco Dragone, the founder of Cirque du Soleil, or Herbert von Karajan, the flamboyant conductor – people who inspired, who managed to stamp their mark on the arts worldwide and who one way or the other had the entrepreneurial spirit and the political insight to achieve their artistic goals. But in a changing, ‘VUCA’ world where goals and trends are volatile (V), money is uncertain (U), stakeholder management is complex (C) and strategic issues are ambiguous (A), can this model of the sole leader – or, to use the more negative expressions of our respondents, ‘le roi soleil’, or the ‘imperator unicus’ – still be maintained? Management theory in a contingency paradigm advocates the opposite. The assumption is that in extremely changeable contexts with increasing num-

bers of challenges, leadership should be shared. (Pearce 2004, Pearce & Manz 2005).

Departing from this assumption, this study takes a deeper look into the practice of sharing leadership in the cultural sector. Shared leadership comes in many different forms: one typical form is a division of roles, with the classic artistic/operational manager dyad. This dual leadership structure, set up to manage dual organisational rationalities, has been well studied in the arts (e.g. Bhansing et al 2012; Cray et al 2007; Kolsteeg 2014; Reid et al 2009). In this study, we want to go further than the classic artistic/operational manager dyad. We examine if and how leadership is shared with middle management and also with most other employees. Shared leadership is seen here as an organisational structure and culture in which the entrepreneurship and innovative talents of all employees are stimulated by giving them autonomy in a context of accountability, learning opportunities and teamwork. This can be implemented at several levels, e.g. co-leadership (cf. the classic artistic-operational manager dyad), serial or rotating leadership, spontaneous leadership, self-steering teams, and collective leadership without hierarchy and with maximal self-steering. (Denis et al. 2001, Marichal 2015, Pearce et al 2014).

We operationalised our basic assumption by posing three main questions: What are the challenges that cultural leaders feel that they and their organisations are faced with? Is their world as 'VUCA' as the literature assumes and, if so, how do the external challenges affect the organisation in terms of structures, the leadership or management model, the role of the board or the government and HR issues? And finally, what are the interpersonal factors that make a management model or a model of shared leadership work?

Methodology

In order to answer the above research questions, we put our research project into operation firstly by limiting our population to museums and performing arts institutions. We only looked at

organisations that were beyond the pioneering phase and were of a certain size (20 to 500+ employees), and most were building-based so as to obtain a certain degree of comparability. This gave us a sample of 24 cases, mostly from Belgium, but there were also five Dutch cases and one French. For all cases, we conducted several semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the management team or the Chair of the board. We triangulated information from the interviews with document analysis (organisation charts, annual accounts, strategic plans, website information and, where relevant, newspaper articles). We coded this qualitative material using several predefined topics (based on our research questions and literature), and later classified the cases into parameters with specific scales using crisp set or fuzzy set logic. During this process, we filtered out potential researcher bias by reflecting on the topic with several members of the research team: between three and six team members were involved depending on the parameter. We presented this analysis (and thus the parameters and scales) to the directors of the organisations in the sample by means of a focus group that looked at general tendencies and individual benchmark reports with a more detailed explanation of each individual classification. Slight alterations were made to the classification results as a result of feedback from the organisations. This first analysis enabled us to continue on to undertake more thorough analysis using the Qualitative Case Analysis (QCA) method. QCA enables us to validate (qualitative) research data in a quantitative manner and can bring configurations or patterns in shared leadership to the fore (Fiss et al 2013). Nonetheless, some trends were detected in this first phase of the research project.

Initial results

Outside in

In this results section, we will first take a more in-depth look at the various constructs and how we defined them and will then point out some trends.

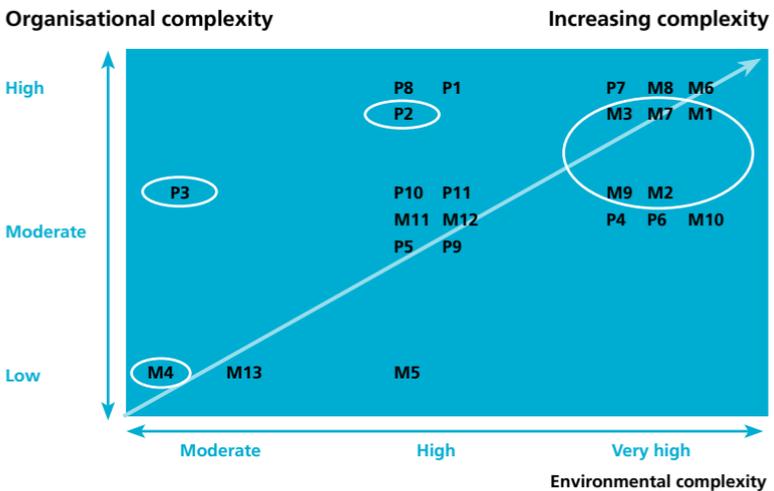
We first asked our respondents how they experienced their environment. Oddly, all the respondents mentioned similar challenges: market issues, societal embedding, financial issues and government policy on culture. But the intensity of these perceptions varied depending on whether organisations were seen as operating in low complexity environments or in moderately or highly complex environments. For three organisations operating in a ‘moderately complex environment’, market issues, for example, were related to competing at a global level; they did not affect local ticket sales and so there was no overall effect on their business. Ten organisations were categorised as operating in a ‘highly complex environment’. In these cases, both the level of competition and financial issues affected long-term strategies. Eleven cases were categorised as operating in a ‘very highly complex environment’. For these, market issues, societal embedding, financial issues and government policy fundamentally altered their model and their opinion of what a museum or theatre should be in the 21st century. None of the organisations identified themselves as working in a ‘low complexity environment’.

The second issue was the complexity of the organisation itself. Here, our parameters for classification purposes were size (staff, budget), conflicting activities, complexity of governance and tenure of the management team. As a result of this, we identified three organisations as low complexity: they were smaller organisations with a closely-defined programme of activity and a simple governance structure (e.g. only one board, a clear relationship with the responsible authority and a management team that had been in post for some time). Eleven organisations were identified as moderately complex; in these cases, one or two parameters scored high (e.g. conflicting activities, perhaps because the venue had its own arts or cultural programme, offered hospitality services and a bar and had a complex accountability system with several boards and commissioning bodies or more than one responsible authority). Nine organisations were defined as highly complex organisations as they scored high on three or four parameters.

The third issue was the organisations’ robustness. This was a sub-theme that arose out of the coding process. Many organ-

isations were struggling with internal threats, e.g. fundamental organisational changes, uncertainties around infrastructure due to long-term refurbishment or closure of the building, severe budget cuts, staffing reductions, and also an enormous workload and an unhealthy leader dependency. If only one item was mentioned, we classified organisations as robust (eight cases); if two were noted, they were classified as moderately robust (seven cases), but if more than three were mentioned, we rated the organisation as having a low level of robustness (eight cases).

The fourth sub-theme was the influence of the government on the organisation. Since all the organisations studied received subsidies, governments always had some sort of role to play. But this role varied. In some cases, governments simply approved the strategic plan submitted by the organisation (13 cases). In 11 cases, the government had a real impact on the organisation through their representatives on the board, and in some cases these representatives interfered in the organisation’s operational management. Here, we define the impact of the government as ‘steering’. In our initial (non-statistical) analysis, counter-intuitively, this parameter did not seem to affect the configuration of the other parameters.



Graph 1: Distribution of the cases according to organisational and environmental complexity. M stands for museum; P for performing arts organisation. The white circles indicate the less robust organisations.

When the first three parameters were presented in a graph, we noticed that there was a considerable disparity between traditional organisations (in the bottom left corner) that did not feel any urgency to change and the highly complex organisations in the top right corner. We might say, of this last group, that they were managing at the edge of chaos. This result indicates that for organisations within the same sector, and even within the same region, the challenges perceived were very diverse. Secondly, the white circles indicate the less robust organisations, and it is notable that traditional organisations can suffer from a lack of robustness too.

Are museums and performing arts organisations ready to share leadership?

Organisational structure is key to shared leadership. For an organisation to share leadership, it must have a suitable organisational structure. To analyse this aspect, we used the Mintzberg classification (1980). The first category, the simple structure, did not feature in our sample, but some respondents remembered the time when their organisation belonged in this category. Four organisations were organised as a classic machine bureaucracy. These were very old institutions such as opera houses, orchestras, and museums with a century-long history. Most organisations were divisional structures (12 cases). These have multiple business units and product lines and an important role is that of the middle manager who heads a division. Six cases were structured as professional bureaucracies, with much freedom given to the professional – collection managers, curators, marketers, educational team etc. Only two of the organisations classified as having divisional structures and professional bureaucracies had not put in place transversal teamwork at employee level across the divisions. Finally, just two organisations were structured as adhocracies. Both had suffered from severe budget cuts in recent years and had had to let go essential members of their team. This

result is noteworthy: in his organisational theory of the firm, Mintzberg links organisational structure to the ability of organisations to adapt to a complex and dynamic environment, and points out that, in a 'VUCA' world (a highly complex and highly dynamic environment), the adhocracy is the organisational structure that can best respond to this environment. However, this was not the most popular structure for museums or performing arts institutions in our sample.

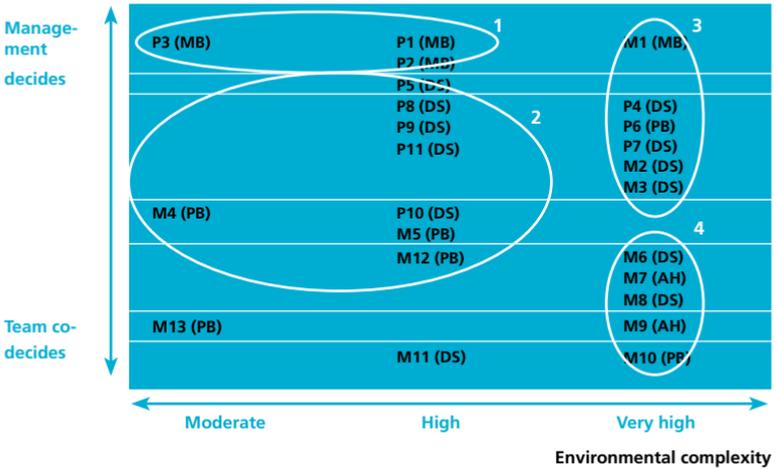
The next topic we investigated was shared leadership. Here, two dimensions were explored. The first of these was the level at which leadership is shared in the company. The questions we asked were: Do different layers in the company have the freedom and autonomy to take the initiative; and, do they have budget responsibilities. In five cases, leadership was shared only at the top: the general/artistic/operational manager team. Not surprisingly, four of these organisations were machine bureaucracies and one was divisionally structured. In 11 cases, leadership was also shared with middle management: marketing managers, technical managers, financial managers or the head of the artistic/programming team were all included in a broad management team. These organisations were all structured as professional bureaucracies or divisional structures. In these organisations, the role of the classic artistic-operational dyad was not as clearly marked: both functions existed, but in most cases one was subordinated to the other and he or she was on a similar level to the other middle managers. The last category included eight cases in which leadership was shared with almost everyone. But not quite with everyone; we noticed that in teams where several employees were performing the same operational and rather routine tasks (e.g. the cleaning team, ticket sales), leadership was less shared.

A second dimension of shared leadership lies in the method used to develop strategic plans. Most organisations in our sample had to produce an elaborate 4 or 5-year strategic policy plan in order to get government funding. In the vast majority of organisations, 15 cases, this still seemed to be the responsibility

of top management, even in organisations that shared (operational) leadership with most other people. A frequent comment from respondents/directors was that an organisation cannot be a democracy and that when there was disagreement or confusion, someone – the manager – needed to take the lead. Nonetheless, in these cases too, the strategic plan was widely communicated with the staff and the board for approval and feedback on the more operational elements. Secondly, there was a group of organisations where somebody else from the team (e.g. a curator, quality controller, etc.) or an external party wielded the pen. This person requested input and feedback from management, staff and stakeholders. This method was used in six cases. The last two organisations in our sample arranged a number of workshops with staff, employee surveys, etc. so that all employees could contribute to the plan. Finally, we assumed that there was a group where the plan was drawn up by the board, but this was not evident in our sample.

Another variable in the shared leadership topic is how incremental day-to-day decisions are made. Most organisations (19) had basic procedures or standard ways of dealing with operational issues and arranged cycles of meetings. This seems an obvious point, but structural processes and meetings were not mentioned in the interviews with machine bureaucratic organisations. So sharing leadership seems to imply a basis of cycles of meetings and standardised processes. In 15 cases, many issues were solved due to proximity of staff, in that colleagues were able to consult with one another instantly; just being in the same office and having an open-door-policy was enough to solve most problems. External advice was also mentioned in eight cases. In five organisations we noticed political tactics in day-to-day decision-making. When resources are scarce, and goals are blurry, one route is to influence the person with the money (Ferris & Kacmar 1992). The final incremental decision-making method was the presence of a shadow cabinet, which was identified in five cases. Here the manager was advised by a circle of intimates, irrespective of their position within (or even outside) the organisation.

Decisions higher in hierarchy



Graph 2: Is leadership more often shared in organisations in a very highly complex environment?

Abbreviations used: MB = machine bureaucracy, DS = divisional structure, PB = professional bureaucracy, AH = adhocracy

The above graph illustrates our basic question: Do cultural organisations that perceive that they operate in a highly complex environment share leadership more? Perceived environmental complexity is plotted on the x-axis. On the y-axis, the shared leadership and strategic decision-making method items are combined. Organisations in the top left corner (in the circle marked ‘1’) are very traditional organisations that do not feel external pressure to change. These are all machine bureaucracies. The second group contains organisations that are – in our assessment – in a relatively safe position. Group 3 in the top right corner contains organisations that were implementing fundamental changes at the point of data collection; they had recently undergone an organisational restructure, put in place procedures to involve middle management more in strategy decisions, or had let go essential members of staff due to budget cuts. The organisations in group 4 at the bottom right corner are probably the most future-proof.

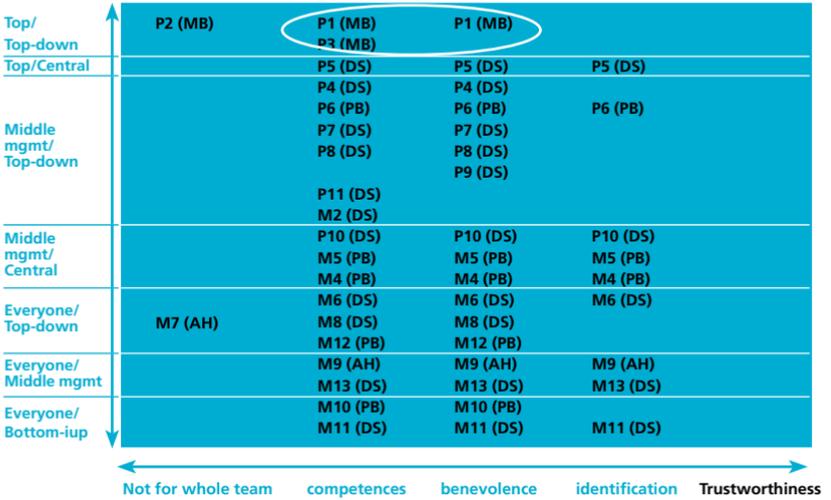
Interpersonal factors

We defined two main sub-themes amongst the interpersonal factors: conflict, and trust in the management team. There is a significant bias at play here in that this analysis was mainly based on the respondents' own perceptions; for example, the conflict topic was coded based on answers to very open questions and it was not always possible to use triangulation by interviewing other persons.

A first aspect is the level of conflict identified within the management team. We detected three categories here. In the first (12 cases), there was a low level of conflict. This did not necessarily mean that meetings or collaboration were always harmonious or that there were no disagreements. By way of illustration, five respondents in this category spoke of previous serious conflicts in the management team that had led to one of the parties leaving or being let go. In 11 cases, the respondents mentioned conflicts between the tasks of colleagues in the management team. This is very common in organisations with contrasting activities (e.g. scientific research, blockbuster exhibitions or catering services in museums). A final type of conflict in the management team, seen in two cases, was relationship conflict. This situation is mostly the result of long-standing conflicts between tasks, and often leads to one of the employees involved leaving. (Yang & Mossholder 2004).

To code trust within the management team, we used the factors of trustworthiness set out by Mayer et al (1995). They identify three levels of trustworthiness: trust in each other's competence (basic level, seen in 19 cases); trust in colleagues' benevolence towards the organisation ('he/she doesn't mean any harm', noted in 17 cases); and trust in their identification with the organisation ('he is Mr. Museum or she is Mrs. Opera', seen in 9 cases). In two organisations, trust was very low or was not something that could be measured for the whole team. Not surprisingly, these were the same as the organisations with a relationship conflict. In two cases, the interviews did not deliver clear enough answers to classify the data.

Decisions higher in the hierarchy



Graph 3: trustworthiness in relation to shared leadership
 Abbreviations used: MB = machine bureaucracy, DS = divisional structure, PB = professional bureaucracy, AH = adhocracy

When we relate the level of trustworthiness (x-axis) to types of shared leadership (y-axis), we see that in most organisations with more shared leadership, trust levels were more often present to the level of the middle management. Nonetheless, sharing leadership is no guarantee of a conflict-free environment. Case M7 had a significant problem with trust and dealing with conflict, although leadership was shared. The main reason for that is that the organisation had undergone a difficult transition in the previous five years, with a halving of staff, radical changes in programming, closure of the old museum, and new infrastructure and at the time of the interviews no positive outcomes had yet been reported, although new transitional plans had been drawn up.

Preliminary conclusions

Some relevant trends are already apparent from the initial analysis above. The first question about the increasing complexity of

the environment and the robustness of organisations led to some surprising findings. From an outside-in perspective, we find it striking that there is a very considerable disparity between very traditional organisations and those at the edge of chaos within the same sector and in the same region. Secondly, we noticed that there are less robust organisations amongst both the traditional organisations and the organisations at the edge of chaos. Thirdly, we detected that the close involvement of government is no predictor of the complexity of the environment or the complexity and robustness of organisations.

On the second question of whether leadership is shared in arts organisations, it is important to bear in mind that shared leadership is facilitated by an organisation's structure. We noticed that several cultural leaders kept a close grip on power and that, in half our sample, leadership was shared at the middle management level. But even in organisations where (operational) leadership was shared with almost all staff members, sharing leadership did not necessarily mean that long-term strategic decision-making was also shared, or that every decision was made democratically. There still needed to be a clear vision, and that was often set by management. Finally, shared leadership came with cycles of meetings and basic procedures or standard ways of dealing with operational issues.

Thirdly, in terms of interpersonal factors, perceived trustworthiness is an important factor in shared leadership (Pearce et al., 2014), but is not always in evidence. Conflicts between tasks are quite common in organisations with contrasting activities, but relationship conflicts and a lack of trust in members of the management team do not bode well for the future.

Finally, did our main assumption for the cultural sector also hold? Does a perceived 'VUCA' world require more shared leadership? This assumption was partially confirmed by our initial trends analysis. Several cultural organisations did feel the need to share leadership amongst employees due to external drivers and challenges. However, for some organisations these external drivers were absent and they still conducted their business as

usual, including in terms of organisation. But it is important to note that the cultural organisations in our sample are not static; many of them are undergoing fundamental transitions and processes of structural change.

It is clear that further research is needed. Our first task is to finish the QCA analysis in order to get statistical validation of our assumptions and we can look further for successful configurations on the chosen factors. We also hope to undertake longitudinal follow-up research to look at how the organisations in this study adapt their organisational structure to the environment in the coming years. As we have mentioned, many organisations are evolving entities. We would like to investigate whether and, if so, how these cases find new ways to ensure their future success. Finally, we would be keen to replicate the study in other cultural settings, working with smaller cultural organisations, artist-driven organisations or perhaps more cases from other countries.

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Lars Lindkvist

Leading cultural organisations: from leadership to followership

”There are many pitfalls in the arts and cultural sector. It is extremely difficult to keep to a budget – extensive experience is a help, but none of us are mind-readers and can tell what the overall composition of colleagues, project partners, artists and the public will be when it’s all happening on first night in five months’ time. So always employ a good administrator, in recognition of the fact that, while hassle and tight budgets can be a turn-off, some people are really galvanised by them. We are in show business and are expected to bring in the crowds, find partners to work with, seek sponsorship, arrange media coverage, administer pastoral care, accept living in a state of chaos – also known as dynamic uncertainty – and constantly reassess our financial situation.” (Director of Culture and Museum Director Uwe Bodewadt in ‘Konsten at lede kunstnere etc.’ 2009, p 15)

In this chapter I will be presenting six lessons about leadership in cultural organisations. I focus particularly on the challenges you face as a leader and what can be learned from research in the area. One important point to make is that the formula for appropriate leadership varies over time. I will be examining various successive leadership models, ending with the current

research position (Lindkvist, Bakka & Fivelsdal, 2014).¹ Another point I highlight is the importance of viewing leadership of cultural organisations as a relational leadership model operating in a sphere that must take account of tensions between various stakeholders. The concrete examples mainly used to illustrate my observations come from studies undertaken over several years of Byteatern Kalmar Länsteater, Kalmar county theatre (Duhlin & Lindkvist 2009, Ohlsson & Älverdal 2015).

Lesson 1: Base your approach on your unique experiences of leadership and skills, as the formula for appropriate leadership is in constant flux

Leaders will be able to infer from earlier research into leadership that it is in practice difficult to identify general leadership qualities that are more appropriate than others. Studies of leaders in various areas of public life showed that they were different types of people. So research into leadership moved on from taking an interest in personality traits and capability to looking at the interaction between leaders and followers and the development of relational leadership in both formal and informal groups.

One thing to note is that the formula for appropriate leadership has gone through different phases. Several leadership researchers have been interested in how different leadership models have evolved over time (Bryman 1996; Grint 1997; and Stranegård & Jönsson 2014). Bryman identifies four phases, each with a different focus: 1. The trait approach, with a focus on qualities as being something that people either do or do not have (1920's–1940's); 2. The style approach, in which behaviour and leadership styles (relationship-oriented or task-oriented) were

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1. The article is mainly based on Chapter 8, Ledarskap, in *Organisationsteori. Struktur, Kultur, Processer*, Lindkvist, L., Bakka, J.F. & Fivelsdal, E. (2014) and Chapter 9, Administrative Artists and Artistic Administrators: The Case of Theatre, by Duhlin, O. & Lindkvist, L. in N. Koivonen & Rehn, A (eds) (2009) *Creativity and the Contemporary Economy*.

considered important (1940's–1960's); 3. The contingency approach, where appropriate leadership depends on the context or the situation (1960's–1980's); 4. The new leadership, where the vision took centre stage and there was an emphasis on charismatic and transformative leadership (1970's onwards). Grint (1997, 2005) makes the same distinctions and agrees with the titles of the first three phases, but calls the fourth phase the constitutive approach, where leadership is seen as a linguistic construct, i.e. it is shaped in language, in a social context of surrounding commentators. Leadership then becomes the actions and conduct that other people are convinced is what leadership is.

Sveningsson, Alvesson & Kärreman (2014) term this fourth stage post-heroic, with the emphasis more on everyday activities than heroic deeds. Leadership is exercised by listening, chatting and paying attention to followers, bringing them to the fore and acknowledging them. At the same time, there is a danger of too much emphasis on the presence of managers and of colleagues linking their self-esteem to their manager's ability to listen (*ibid*, p. 51).

The focus in the research on leaders and leadership has increasingly come in for criticism on the basis of what Meindl et al. (1985) called a romanticisation of leadership. The criticism is based on the mythologising and mystification of the significance ascribed to leadership. Instead, there has been an increasing emphasis on the role of followers.

”It may be that the romance and the mystery surrounding leadership concepts are critical for sustaining follower-ship and that they contribute significantly to the responsiveness of individuals to the needs and goals of the collective organization” (Meindl et al., 1985, p. 100).

An important aspect of process-oriented leadership of this sort is that leadership comes to be seen as an interlocking relationship between leaders and followers (Meindl 1993; Shamir et al. 2007). This was also underlined by Hewison & Holden (2011) who, in their study of cultural and artistic leadership, assert that:

”Leadership is only held by the consent of the group. Thus leadership is the responsibility of followers, and will depend on their consent or dissent. Both consent and dissent can be exercised responsibly, or irresponsibly” (Hewison & Holden 2011, p. 36).

As a leader in a cultural organisation, this means engendering trust and confidence in your followers on the basis of your unique experiences and skills. It means being aware of your skills and your strengths and also conscious of things you are less good at. I agree with Warren Bennis who breaks with the idea of the leader as an unapproachable hero and argues that leadership is something fundamentally human, humane and approachable and that mistakes are opportunities to learn. People who learn look forward to a chance to learn from new mistakes. The greatest problem in leadership is achieving premature success, as that means there are no opportunities to learn from setbacks and problems, say Bennis and Nanus (1985).

Lesson 2: It is not either leadership or management, it's both

International research into leadership makes a distinction between ‘management’ and ‘leadership’. In ‘management’, the focus is on control and it involves a strong element of specialised knowledge and professional expertise, while ‘leadership’ puts the focus on the ability to formulate compelling objectives and visions and thereby inspire people to work and cooperate. An outstanding manager manages with the help of rules and systems, while a great leader is outstanding at managing human resources – and perhaps not so good at rules and systems. There is a conflict here between two different types of skills. Bringing them together in practice – either in one person or as a constructive partnership between several people – is a significant challenge for many arts and cultural organisations. There may be competition between ‘leader’ types and ‘accountant’ types where the organisation’s financial

situation is the decisive factor. At the same time, the fact is that a managerial position is a formal appointment while leadership is something that has to be earned. You must secure legitimacy for your leadership from your followers. One way of doing this is through success, and successes at an early stage create a reservoir of trust that you can draw upon when you encounter setbacks – for they will come sooner or later.

Bennis & Nanus (1985, p. 30) identify the following differences between leadership and management:

“There is a profound difference between management and leadership, and both are important. ‘To manage’ means ‘to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct.’ ‘Leading’ is ‘influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion.’ The difference is crucial. Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.”

I see leadership and management as compatible in a situation where you as head of a cultural organisation, or your leadership colleague, need to take both roles – everything depends on the situation.

In her doctoral thesis on art and businesses, Emma Stenström looks at the similarities between art and leadership. Drawing a parallel with Greece, she takes as her starting point the myth of the chaotic, creative artist, but emphasises that in reality the artist also has a structured existence and is financially-oriented, as is necessary for survival. Stenström points out that in classical antiquity, two gods were seen as the main protectors of the arts, i.e. Apollo and Dionysus (Stenström 2000/2009). Apollo stood for reason, form and discipline and Dionysus for feelings, passion and intuition. Dionysus inspired creativity, represented intoxication, ecstasy and madness, and caused artists to lose themselves in something higher.

Older leadership literature is often characterised by an Apollonian disposition, whereas today’s literature is marked more by a Dionysian temperament. It is about the creative leader, a passionate leadership where the leader governs on the basis of

feelings and intuition ; the leader who inspires her troops with her charisma, inspiration and visions; the leader who can turn ingrained opinion on its head and help his colleagues find new ways of looking at the world. What is needed is leaders who, like artists, can create new visions and break with conventions. However, there can be a problem in that they may appear to be too abstract, disorganised and not very interested in administrative matters. So it is both the Dionysus-inspired leader and the Apollonian manager that are needed.

It can be difficult to find both of these in one person, but the difficulty can be alleviated through shared leadership (see Lesson 6). As leadership researcher Meredith Belbin puts it: “Nobody is perfect but a team can be” (Belbin 1993/10).

Lesson 3: Specialised, sector-based leadership skills are preferable to general skills

Successful leadership in one sector cannot always simply be transferred to another sector. Just because success is achieved in one context does not mean that it can act as a blueprint for another. This is because there are success factors associated with specific situations and circumstances that are not transferable. Many of an individual’s professional networks have no value in another context. Experience and skills may be of a purely ‘local’ nature and cannot be transposed into another sector. As a new leader, you will need to build up trust, and the acceptance of your followers, from scratch, and this can take some time. As a consequence, many organisations place a great emphasis on internal recruitment for many leadership positions and on appointing managers who have experience from other similar organisations in the cultural and creative industries; for example, a theatre manager may be replaced by the former manager of a film company or a former museum director.

At the same time, in my experience there are similarities in leadership between the cultural industries and other organisa-

tions if they are characterised by strong professional groupings, doctors and professors in the health sector. In both cases, the job involves leading highly-specialised creative colleagues, or prima donnas. In a study of the Danish national theatre *Det Kongelige Teater*, Helle Hedegaard Hein (2012) describes prima donnas as “temperamental, demanding, overly self-conscious colleagues who are averse to being controlled and who have a not inconsiderable dose of megalomania” (ibid, p. 184). Management cannot have control over their colleagues’ missions in life or existential motivating factors, but it is possible to facilitate or suppress them by putting in place external frameworks and requirements. According to Hein, then, a leader’s task is to create an organisational culture that is characterised by autonomy and to facilitate professional ideals and vocations, the desire to make a difference.

In his study of 12 Scandinavian cultural leaders, including Sune Nordgren, Suzanne Osten, Lars Nittve, Marie-Louise Ekman, David Neuman and Staffan Valdemar Holm, Anders Risling writes (2009, p. 2004) that one of the most fundamental differences between cultural leaders and leaders in ordinary businesses is the close relationships cultural leaders are obliged to have with their middle management: the artistic leaders (directors and curators). Every artistic leader is unique and must be managed in a way that combines care with demands. In Risling’s opinion, the most important task of the cultural leaders is to lead the artistic leaders. This means adhering to the organisation’s aims while supporting individual artistic leaders in their personal artistic development.

At the same time, while I highlight the importance of having specific sectoral skills acquired through experience of leadership in artistic and cultural areas, in latter years a growing interest has emerged in the community for a combination of leadership and aesthetics/art. Guillet de Monthoux, Gustafsson and Sjöstrand (2007) write about a new type of aesthetic leadership at the intersection between traditional management and leadership. By placing the focus on passion, playfulness, improvisation, intuitive judgement and sensualism beyond the rigid dichotomy, they see

a new type of leadership opening up, an aesthetic ‘third way’ that brings quality, meaning and value to projects and companies.

Leadership researcher Henry Mintzberg sees similarities between leadership/strategic development and arts and crafts. He compares his years of studying and working with business leaders at INSEAD business school with his wife’s work as a ceramicist. When his wife is working, her mind is on the clay on the potter’s wheel – on the task at hand. But she also knows, consciously or unconsciously, that she is sitting somewhere between her previous experiences and new opportunities. The piece being created builds on what she has learned in the past. But sometimes there is an advancement and she changes direction. Talented leaders work in a similar way when they use their intuition to develop their strategies in the midst of “the calculated chaos” (Mintzberg 1989).

Mintzberg demonstrates that arts and crafts are a good metaphor for leadership. In both cases there is engagement and insight, experience, a deep feeling for and understanding of the activity, and detailed knowledge. They both involve a long-term, organic process of balancing and combining planning with intuition. I stress that leadership is seen as a combination of different skills (see also Lesson 5, on how leadership is about achieving balance when negotiating tensions between different stakeholders).

Lesson 4: Appropriate leadership is context-specific and can be developed

As I mentioned in the introduction, early researchers into leadership were mainly interested in leaders’ personal qualities. One explanation as to why the search for certain specific qualities is seen as important is because in practice boards and employers often need to take a view on whether a particular individual is capable of certain tasks. Mistakes can be costly when appointing or dismissing.

While it has proved difficult to identify any specific qualities that are better than others, a debate has emerged from the

field of behaviour research about appropriate relationships between leaders and colleagues at different levels. There has been advocacy of collective leadership ideals ('democratic leadership'), seen as alternatives to 'laissez-faire leadership' and the traditional ('authoritarian') approaches of, say, demonic directors, conductors and theatre managers (Sveiby 1992). However, it has proved impossible to demonstrate that one specific leadership model is superior to all others in all circumstances.

Because leadership tasks and leadership behaviour have varied a great deal between different areas of operation, at different levels and under different external conditions, theories have evolved about situational leadership. The concepts of 'good' or 'bad' and appropriate or inappropriate leadership cannot be generalised but must be linked to concrete tasks and situations. These theories are supported by a large number of empirical studies (Yukl 2012). Interest in a leader's personality has not disappeared from the picture, but the issue for research now is the selection of leaders in different situations – having the 'right leader in the right place'.

In many cases, the search is for leaders who can bring flexibility to their leadership – an ability to work easily in partnership and to be able to switch rapidly when meeting new people and encountering new problems. These are accomplishments that can be learned, and the new buzzwords are skills and skills development. The idea that leadership is about a creative process that can be learned constitutes a significant break with traditional views on leadership and power relationships. Leadership is seen as something that is in principle democratic, open to anyone with certain qualifications. Leadership can be described in terms of skills that can be learned in school and/or developed through practice, which has significance for your development as a leader.

The basis of more recent discussions in the area of leadership is an optimistic attitude to opportunities for personal development. The message that will help you to grow and develop as a leader comes from research in the fields of philosophy and

psychology: “We are not sentenced to lifetime imprisonment in rigid patterns of behaviour; there are always opportunities for us to take ourselves in new directions. This is an important requirement for future leadership training, in terms of both short courses and more systematic leadership training.” (Lindkvist, Bakka & Fivelsdal 2014, p. 198)

Lesson 5: Assume different leadership roles when negotiating tensions between different stakeholders

Practice-oriented studies of leadership have often been based on role theory and theories about social networks. Henry Mintzberg drew a lot of attention with his doctoral thesis *The Nature of Managerial Work* (1973). In it, he showed (as did Sune Carlsson’s classic 1951 study of ten Swedish business leaders) that many traditional views of leadership functions were inadequate. The business leaders he studied were not at all the rational planners and problem-solvers described in economic theory. Their work tended to feature disjointed, short-term activities with lots of interruptions and a preference for the hands-on aspects of the work prompted by unforeseen events.

In an attempt to create a theoretical framework for what leaders do, Mintzberg divides leaders’ activities into ten different roles (Mintzberg 1973/80, ch. 4). He claims that the roles are common to all managers, irrespective of management level. The ten roles are categorised into three main groups: 1 *Interpersonal roles*: figurehead, leader, liaison – about human relationships, 2 *Informational roles*: monitor, disseminator, spokesperson – about handling and distributing information and knowledge, and 3 *Decisional roles*: entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator – involving the manager in many different kinds of decisions.

We based our study of leadership in theatres (Duhlin & Lindkvist 2009) on Mintzberg’s role theory. One reason for doing so was because he shows that the work of a leader is dependent on contextual factors that affect the daily running of an organ-

isation. But we felt he had too few roles and chose to supplement them with two additional ones – Empathiser and Dialogue Partner – which helped us towards a better understanding of the position of a theatre manager and of leadership in cultural organisations. We categorised Empathiser as an Interpersonal role because it is about empathetically putting oneself in the shoes of a colleague and into their situation, say, leading up to a first night. We saw Dialogue Partner as a Decisional role in which decisions are made together with colleagues. We also linked the role of Dialogue Partner to the theatre director’s internal and external Informational roles.

Public subsidies for theatres have been seen as self-evident for some time, which has meant that theatre managers have not needed to focus on relationships with politicians, funders and other external stakeholders. Internal relationships with colleagues have been prioritised over external groups, with the results that the outward-looking Information roles have been downplayed. As public support for theatres and other cultural organisations has been cut, the externally-oriented Information roles have become more and more important. This is because of the need to create a secure working environment in an uncertain financial climate.

As part of our study of Byteatern Kalmar Länsteater, we interviewed Byteatern’s then (2006) Theatre Manager Jan Dzedins and former Theatre Manager Bertil Hertzberg. Both stressed that one important function of leadership is to harness external assistance and put in place secure structures to create an organisation that facilitates internal creative processes. The administrative structure is seen as a means to successful artistic output. In Jan Dzedins’ own words:

“In the end it’s all about the creative process. Because that’s what you are after. It’s what we are constantly working for, so that it’s as good as it can possibly get. Everything around it has to be safe and secure, so that what goes on in the rehearsal studio can be messy, risky and exploratory.” (Duhlin & Lindkvist 2009, p. 185)

In summary, our study of theatre managers shows that they have to put much effort into both internal and external relations if they are to achieve internal and external legitimacy. The various leadership roles, including the need to mediate through dialogue between strong in-house professionals and powerful external funders, require different modes of discourse that make use of different language and symbols. This is a difficult balance to achieve and requires knowledge of both fields and mastery of both fields' vocabulary (Duhlin & Lindkvist 2009). The process can be made easier if the leadership role is divided between two people who can share the job of dealing with the tensions between different stakeholders (see Lesson 6 about shared leadership).

In his study of 12 Scandinavian cultural leaders, Anders Risling writes (2009) in similar vein about the tensions that cultural leaders have to work with. He highlights the importance of structure and a clear division of responsibilities so that control can be achieved not by means of bureaucratic rules but through the ability to take action. A cultural leader must take four domains into consideration: 1. owners; 2. artists; 3. artistic leaders (directors, curators etc.); 4. the public:

“Let the artists create their art. Allow the artistic leaders to coordinate each group of employees and the relationships between different groups. Work together with the board to establish a framework for the organisation's business and structure and determine how to measure effectiveness and how to reward individual effort. Consider your public and have the courage to enable them to take part in inspirational experiences. Cultural leaders must achieve a balance between the four domains” (Risling 2009, p. 202).

For Risling, the way to do this is to use dialogue to balance out the divisions, especially those between owners and the interests of the artistic leaders. Owners operate on long timescales, often with an eye to the community, while artistic leaders must offer up immediate experiences in the interface between artists and the public. The best option for a cultural leader is to enter into a dialogue and act as a buffer between the two parties (ibid, p.

204). For other examples of creating legitimacy when organising cultural projects, see Lindkvist & Hjorth (2015).

Lesson 6: Shared, joint leadership can make things easier

In Lesson 3, I emphasised how the leadership of cultural organisations is not about either leadership or management but about both. It can be difficult to combine the artistic visionary and the structuralist economist in one person, and so it is not uncommon for undertakings to be shared. This means a shared leadership role, with one manager who can be responsible for artistic activity and another who takes responsibility for administration and finance. As Derrick Chong (2010, p. 163) points out, this division between various goals and tasks can make it easier for management to take divergent interests into consideration:

”an encroachment of newer values associated with non-aesthetic performance measures – including the instrumentalism of the arts and culture – makes arts and cultural organizations even more complex to manage and lead. Experimentation with different executive management structures – not least of all questions surrounding what constitutes legitimate authority – is one manifestation which is likely to continue.”

At Byteatern Kalmar Länsteater, the leadership role is shared between Theatre Managers Mia Carlsson and Daniel Rylander. Mia is a producer and has substantial experience of finance and planning, which she sees as her main responsibilities in the organisation. Daniel is a director, which means that he mainly directs and has overall responsibility for the theatre’s repertoire and artistic direction. They have chosen to call their leadership joint rather than shared, as they believe they have a joint responsibility for operations. Ohlsson & Älvedahl (2015) interviewed them about their leadership and writes:

“They do everything together because all aspects of the work are interdependent. ‘The art doesn’t exist without finance and the finance

doesn't exist without the art' says Carlsson. It is about widening the scope of their leadership by having different skills. There are practical advantages in dividing up the responsibilities so that Byteatern's activities are not scattered about internally or externally. For example, all artistic matters are part of Rylander's role, including communication with actors and directors. Carlsson's responsibility is communication with administrative, marketing and finance staff. Even with this division of responsibilities, the two are in constant discussion. It is important that they are in agreement about what they are doing. The leadership duo say that this type of leadership requires constant checking in about all issues whether large or small.

One drawback of their leadership method, according to Carlsson and Rylander, is that the buy-in process can be taken for granted and be easily neglected. The Byteatern leadership duo feel that they have made errors in terms of getting buy-in from their employees. The duo discuss decisions and changes at work with each other and think that they are fully endorsed by the others when in actual fact they have only been discussed between the two of them. It is important to be aware of this weakness since both Rylander and Carlsson are results-oriented rather than process-oriented. It may be the case that, as restless spirits, they are anxious to get things done, so that their focus on results can sometimes take over.

An advantage is that workplaces like theatres can be quite turbulent, both emotionally but also financially and organisationally. Byteatern is expected to be a professional organisation that fulfils its role as a public service while at the same time creating art. Turbulence comes, they feel, from the range of factors that come into play when creating art, such as taste, technical ability and views. By far the main advantage as far as Carlsson and Rylander are concerned is that they do not have to govern and make decisions by themselves; they feel that working together makes them smarter. Their decisions are substantiated to a greater degree because they can test out their ideas and get buy-in from the other person. They have better ideas and thoughts, and they are more polished." (ibid, pp. 55-61)

My experiences of shared/joint leadership in cultural organisations suggest that it can lead to the assumption of different leadership roles, making it easier to deal with the tensions that leaders have to work with.

This brings to an end my lessons on leadership in cultural organisations. To summarise, as a leader you should think about

the following: 1. Base your approach on your unique experiences of leadership and skills, as the formula for appropriate leadership is in constant flux; 2. It is not either leadership or management, it's both; 3. Specialised, sector-based leadership skills are preferable to general skills; 4. Appropriate leadership is context-specific and can be developed; 5. Assume different leadership roles when negotiating tensions between different stakeholders; 6. Shared, joint leadership can make things easier.

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Sue Kay

More than meets the eye: leadership and the 'daily doings' of cultural managers in micro-scale theatre organisations

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Introduction

This essay seeks to interrupt a few taken-for-granted assumptions about cultural leadership. It will do so through the voices and actions of some 'unusual suspects' – three managers in three micro-scale theatre organisations in South West England – and thereby hopes to shift the cultural leadership 'frame' in ways that might prove surprising and beneficial for practitioners and scholars alike. So, why focus on cultural managers in tiny organisations?

From large to small and objects to subjects

Prevailing talk *about* cultural leadership tends to focus on those who occupy (or who aspire to) prominent positions in mid-large

scale organisations (Caust, 2013; Hewison & Holden, 2011; Hewison, Holden & Jones, 2010). However, in the UK at least, 85% of the UK's 59,561 creative and cultural businesses (and 88% of the 10,123 organisations working in the performing arts) employ fewer than five people (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2012): the vast majority, therefore, operate at micro-scale. This bias can reinforce an impression that 'small' is simply a miniature version of or breeding ground for an inevitable 'progression' towards 'large' which, in turn, can result in the setting of inappropriate norms and expectations for what effective management and leadership might mean (Summerton & Kay, 1999). Small, can all too often be equated with inefficient, inferior or (pejoratively) 'amateur' (Storey, 1994). It is a curious feature of our sector that we have no trouble associating tiny cultural organisations with work that frequently operates politically and/or artistically at the cutting edge (Arts Council England, 2011), but when it comes to executive leadership in particular, those same organisations are just as frequently found wanting:

In many cases, there is no shortage of individuals with drive and creative talent [across the creative and cultural industries]. There is however, a lack of understanding surrounding the need for strong management and leadership skills, particularly in small organisations (www.ccskills.org.uk – accessed 16 June 2009).

This essay seeks to challenge that assertion.

In addition, talk *by* cultural managers is not so easy to come by. Little has been written by them and their role is sparingly acknowledged in programmes, catalogues and other publications (Summerton & Hutchins, 2005). They rarely record their own experiences or publically analyse their working practices, which one manager (Jodi Myers) suggests leads to a kind of "corporate amnesia" (Hutchins, Kay & Perinpanayagam, 2007, p. 40).

There is ... a dearth of research detail on how they actually conduct their work. Their sense of practice, of how values can be enacted, is locked into experiential insights that are shared within the profes-

sion and through collective discussion rather than written forms of communication (Beirne & Knight, 2004, p. 37).

Even when asked about their day to day activities, cultural managers have a tendency to sidestep a definitive reply, as evidenced by earlier enquiries:

In the research discussion days, there were very few direct responses [from the cultural managers] to the question ‘what do you actually do?’ . . . people concentrated on aspects they found most interesting and their relationship to the artistic product, rather than their work itself (Hutchins et al, 2007, p. 14).

Reponses to interview questions about established ways of doing things were frequently hesitant, as if a rationale was being found or incubated during the discussions (Beirne & Knight, 2002a, p. 83).

This reluctance is accounted for in a number of ways. Tyndall (2007, p. 2) observes that cultural managers and producers actually prefer to stay out of the limelight, expressing “bemused surprise” when attention is focused on them.

Summerton, Kay and Hutchins (2006) suggest that what cultural managers do is often practised unconsciously, and is characterised by intense activity and multiple deadlines which leave them little time for reflection. Moreover, as Dods and Andrews (2010) observe, it has become a habit for cultural managers to seek legitimacy from outside their organisation or sector and to fail to value or even recognise the skills and knowledge they have (often informally) accumulated inside. This can leave individuals apologetic and self-deprecating about what they do and unable to recognise “managerial value that can be drawn from their own traditions” (Beirne & Knight, 2002a, p. 75).

Finally, Hutchins et al. note that the invisibility of producer and manager roles (in theatre and dance) can have an impact on how well their work is understood and respected by others in their own organisations (2007, p. 18). Operating out of the spotlight might seem preferable to them as a *modus operandi*, but

this lack of visibility can lead others to ignore, belittle or misunderstand their work, particularly where issues of leadership are concerned.

This essay seeks to coax cultural managers (operating at micro-scale) out of the shadows to add their contribution to our understanding of leadership and how it is enacted in the sector. And here – as a cultural manager myself – I need to come clean about the ‘take’ on leadership that suffuses my own enquiry.

Cultural leadership

Leadership, many believe, “holds the answer not only to the success of individuals and organisations, but also to sectors, regions and nations” (Bolden, 2007, p. 4). In our globalised, fast changing world, the quest for leadership has been likened to a search for the Holy Grail (Pye, 2005, p. 31). And yet, what it is and how we might define it remain a bit of a mystery. Some maintain that “like beauty, you will know leadership when you see it” (Western, 2008), while others (Stogdill, 1974, p. 259) have concluded that there are “almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”.

No less diverse is the notion of *cultural* leadership – variously described as “outstanding individuals and organizations pursuing the goal of making art” (Caust, 2013, p. xvii); “the act of leading the cultural sector [which]...like culture itself comes from many different people and can be practised in many different ways” (http://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/media/uploads/files/Cultural_Leadership_2.pdf); and “moving from ‘just’ administration to becoming cultural entrepreneurs, turning good ideas into good business” (Hewison & Holden, 2011).

Nevertheless, while it can be argued that writing about cultural leadership has become much more sophisticated and nuanced since the term entered the UK lexicon in the early 2000s, the discussion rarely strays outside the established conversational “tripod” of “leaders, followers and common goals” (Bennis, 2007, p.

3). Nor does it readily move beyond positivist or “systems-control” territory (Watson, 2002) i.e. if cultural leaders can only learn to apply particular mind-sets, competencies and techniques, then in cause-and-effect fashion, success will result. Experience – as we know – tends to be more complex and messy than that.

Accordingly, I take leadership to mean a *process* (rather than a ‘thing’ or a fixed set of tools, techniques, roles or characteristics) which is *social and dynamic* (rather than the property of one individual), which is ‘done’ as people *interact* and *make sense* of what is happening and then take further *action* to move forward (Pye, 2005; Weick, 1995, 2009).

An empirical study

My ‘subjects’ are three cultural managers working in three micro-scale theatre organisations, dedicated in different ways to the development of contemporary performance. I shadowed each manager (for 40 hours each over three months) as they went about their day-to-day work. So, while I was observing them as individuals, I was looking at what they did as a social and dynamic process of interacting, making sense and taking action (with others); in other words, I was paying particular attention to how they constructed and participated in leadership.

Through analysis of case study notes, interview transcripts and other written material, I arrived at five ‘propositions’ to try and make sense of what they do.

These are each set out below.

The propositions

- 1 *Cultural managers in micro-scale theatre companies make particular kinds of theatre-based work happen with/for particular constituencies, and seek to ensure a sustainable future for their company and/or art form.*

This is an overarching proposition distilled from what the managers articulated as the purpose of their work within their organisations. This is their function as they see it: making things of value happen in good company (after Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 2004) *and* pulling “things together and along in a general direction to bring about long-term organisational [and here, art form] survival” (Watson, 1986, as cited in Watson, 2001, p. 33). As Lawrence and Phillips write:

Managing in the cultural industries is ... about creating and maintaining an *organization* that can produce and sell *meaning* (2002, p. 431, italics added).

These managers were very clear about this dual aspect, even if it was not properly or fully reflected in their job descriptions or others’ assessment of their role. Nevertheless, this is what they feel they do, in close relationship with others, with a very high level of commitment, motivation – even vocation:

It’s all about changing things ... making things better
Making things happen is the most creative part of my job
What I’m interested in is making artists better ...

This function they carried out through a number of actions and “*inter*-actions” (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010, p. 3), some of which can be identified as follows:

II They place ‘the work’, ‘company values’ and ‘the ensemble’ at the centre of their participation in leading

— The work

All expressed a strong belief in what they described as the ‘power’ of theatre (to provoke, challenge, entertain and bring out the best in people) and in the quality, excitement and innovative nature of ‘the work’ produced and promoted by their companies. This they described as the motivator and reward for their efforts:

it was what kept them going and provided the counterweight to stress, crises, overwork, and the boredom of routine.

As one of the managers said:

The work is totally important. I think if there wasn't creative work of quality coming out, it would just be a ridiculous thing to do ... I love watching young people come into the organisation and just watching them grow and seeing where they get to... and providing these opportunities and scaffolding for people to make their own work I find very moving.

with the others adding:

I tend to think about the artists making the best thing they can make. So in this job it's the artists. We need them ... I just well up when I see people really putting themselves out there doing something amazing, or even trying to do something amazing. I need the stories ... I just really need live performance.

I don't know, there's just something that feels different about [this company], that is kind of genuine and authentic ... and OK, some parts of it may be a bit rough round the edges, but its heart's in the right place and seeing loads of people have a really good night ... is what makes me want to keep on doing it.

Seeing, facilitating and bringing 'good' theatre – with others – to the public domain, was articulated as both a personal and a societal 'need'; something that gave these managers a buzz and deep sense of personal and professional satisfaction. They were also clear that their company's reputation rested largely on the ongoing quality and excitement of the artistic work; work that would not 'exist' until it was experienced by a particular constituency, a process they played a key role in brokering. This commitment was given added urgency and edge though an external operating environment which they constructed as complex, risky and uncertain.

These managers were (and still are) all involved in running tiny subsidised theatre organisations with unstable support mechanisms and multiple external stakeholders with whom good rela-

tionships must be built and sustained: public funders, trusts and foundations, sponsors, donors, partners, audiences/users/participants, print, online and broadcast media. Their companies produce or enable work that is aesthetic, interpretive and experimental; consumer demand/reception is uncertain; products and producing processes have rapid turnaround; and success is unpredictable (Voss, Cable & Giraud Voss, 2000, p. 331).

While it is debatable whether these factors are exclusive to the arts, the fact is these managers *believe* that their organisations' creative work is important, different and under fairly constant threat, and that it is a major part of their job to make sure that that work is enabled on an ongoing basis.

— *Values*

All three managers expressed a very strong adherence to the espoused values of their companies; values which are inextricably bound up with the creative work. These are broadly compatible with the value dimensions identified by Voss et al. (2000, p. 335) in their study of the relationships between non-profit professional theatres and *external* constituents in the US:

Prosocial: expanding... access to and appreciation for art;

Artistic: intrinsic drive for artistic creativity, innovation and independence;

Financial: ensuring the current and longer term financial stability and security of the company;

Market: commitment to customer [/user/participant] satisfaction;

Achievement: striving for publicly recognised excellence [positive reputation]

In addition, the three managers cited the importance of values underpinning the working relationships *inside* their organisations. Again, there was a high degree of consensus in the words they used to describe these: collaborative, familial, creative, trusting, open and – very importantly – fun.

They felt it was vital that all these values were shared and en-

acted within and across their organisations, and the reasons they gave were again strongly echoed by Voss et al. (2000, p. 344):

... it is possible that values are particularly prominent in non-profit cultural industries. Individuals accept significantly less pay...than they would for similar jobs in the for-profit sector due to the intrinsic rewards of value-fulfilment ... perhaps resulting in an industry where values are intensely salient and thus more directly applicable to organizational decision making

These managers saw themselves as having a particular responsibility for upholding and inducting others into company values, and ensuring that choices and decisions of all kinds would be sufficiently congruent with them.

As one of the managers said:

I ... think in this role you do create the ethos, you create the ... yeah, I don't know how to describe it. I think the kind of feel of the organisation ... something to do with the culture ... You do model it, don't you? How you talk and how you encourage [people] ...

— *Ensemble*

All three were equally dedicated to collective engagement and ensemble working (Beirne & Knight, 2002b, pp. 7–8), both inside and outside the rehearsal studio/creative space.

According to Radosavljevic (2013), ensemble is synonymous with the collective and/or collaborative ethos of a creative team, with ensemble-*working* becoming a default methodology for theatre-making more broadly, as it is discernible even among practitioners who do not work under the banner of an ensemble (pp. 11–12)

As Mermikides and Smart write, quoting from Theatre O's website:

The successful make-up of the group is often the hardest and most painful thing to achieve. If done well, however, then half the battle is already won. The absolute commitment of everyone is essen-

tial ... Quite simply, Theatre O is only as good and as exciting as the sum of the people who are involved in the creation of the company's work (2010, p. 143).

Similarly, Complicite state that "what is essential is collaboration...between individuals to establish an ensemble with a common physical and imaginative language" (2001, p. 10).

Thus, sharing of vision, commitment, values and language is seen as a *prerequisite* for making successful and innovative theatre work and essential for keeping the ensemble going, the better to *keep on* making successful and innovative work (albeit with the periodic injection of new people to avoid staleness, and lazy or reductive groupthink).

There are signs of change in recent reconsiderations of ensemble as encompassing the *whole* company (rather than being restricted to the 'creative team'), with dual leadership between the artistic director and executive director rebranded as "ensemble leadership" (Hewison, Holden & Jones, 2010). Certainly the idea of ensemble as a "value, as well as a description of a particular way of organising people: a way of being as much as a way of doing" (2010, p.18) is something that these managers subscribed to. As one of them put it:

The informality and closeness of people, that's got to be a win... I just think you are way more effective if you are cohesive when you need to be ... it just needs to work as a team...We definitely have different roles, like a family does. People come to the fore at different times ...

It is important to stress at this point that the elements just described (a commitment to ensemble, values, the work) are not only intertwined, they were clearly *replicated across all three companies*. The managers felt it was a central and continuous part of their job, passionately and unequivocally to uphold, protect and sustain them.

It is the persistent, ongoing safeguarding of a "sufficiency of sharedness" (Weick, 1995, p. 42) – such that action can take place and work can be made – that is most important, and which, for the cultural managers in this study, was a principal concern.

Consequently, one of the most stressful things they experienced was when anyone stepped so far out of the ensemble that it became threatened in some way e.g. an artistic director or company director who didn't communicate about changes or logistics. They got particularly frustrated when talking it through didn't help and they felt pressure to resort to a show-down or disciplinary measures, which ran the risk of undermining the very values of collaborative working, trust, openness and fun they were trying to protect.

Why would you want to have a massive blow-up if it meant you didn't have any degree of friendship left? ... it was easier to keep him happy ... and if I'd stamped my feet and stuff ... we wouldn't have been able to pick up the phone [after he'd taken up a post elsewhere] to ask for his help on things and now we can.

As Phelim McDermott, artistic director of Improbable Theatre puts it:

That's a challenge if one person goes 'I'm not playing'. This is the difficulty in the ensemble. Because ensemble is a thing which exists only because people believe in it. And if one person says 'It's not going to work', then they'll be right. Because it will drop to the level at which the limitation of the belief is (Radosavljevic, 2013, p. 206).

Care must be taken at this point, however, to ensure that this orientation towards 'safeguarding' is not taken as an endorsement of the stereotypical view of cultural managers as the suits in eternal opposition to the creatives; those whose default position is to say 'no' when confronted with anything that threatens the financial bottom line or their desire to control.

To reiterate, these managers saw themselves as ensuring a *sufficiency* of sharedness around the values, collaborative ethos, even 'scaffolding' of their organisations, the *better* to support and enable the making of theatre work, on an ongoing and future-orientated basis, in the spaces in between.

There are nevertheless the lurking issues of mandate, author-

ity and influence here, which in any discussion of leadership cannot be avoided.

Within these managers' companies, "being the leadership" (Pye, 2005, p. 32) was structurally shared. One was executive producer within a collective of producers; another was executive director of a building-based theatre organisation working closely with the artistic director whom she nominally line-managed; the third described herself as supporting the artistic director, while their working relationship was a very equal one.

"Doing the leadership" – once again "the process by which movement [*to something*] is shaped" (Pye, 2005, pp. 32, 35) – was also largely shared. In the two organisations with a dual leadership structure, the artistic director focused mainly on the theatre-making aspects of the work, while the cultural manager concentrated on delivery and/or the current and future well-being of the company *as a whole*. In the third, all these aspects of the work were shared, with executive producer assuming an enhanced 'organising' role.

It was noticeable that none of the managers felt the need or desire to stand on top of a hill and yell 'Charge!' Instead they appeared "convinced that sharing secures better decisions and even greater effort from those with whom one shares influence" (Pye, 2005, p. 46). They saw themselves as operating from the *middle* of a web (Helgesen, 1990) rather than the *top* of a hierarchy, and in the behaviour I observed (outside of crisis situations) they enacted the notion that leading is "a matter of bringing people together, who in an evolving dialectical fashion construct and reconstruct patterns of response such that mutual expectations are fulfilled" (Pye, 2005, p. 42) – which is further alluded to in propositions III, IV and V.

As one manager summarised:

The way I approach my job is . . . collaborative. I think it's definitely a team effort so I think I do draw out of people what they think and what they want to do, so it's a sort of chairwoman's role . . . I quite like fact that I allow myself to let other people have better ideas than

me. I think it's stupid not to use the best people if you've got them.

III *They constantly and seamlessly shift register – (individual/collective; inside/outside; means/ends; tight/loose);*

All three managers were in a continuous state of action and readiness for more action, invariably in communication with others. In the process they seemed to do a lot of register-shifting and shuttling from one topic or mode to another, almost as if they were moving along or between different “interdependent polarities” (Johnson, 1992, 1998), in a future-orientated and continuous fashion e.g. individual/collective; inside/outside; means/ends; tight/loose.

So, one moment they might be holding the ‘big picture’ and the next focusing on pragmatic detail; operating invisibly inside the organisation and then very visibly ‘performing the organisation’ at a press conference; critiquing a piece of work they had recently seen and then complimenting someone on their new haircut; expressing passion for theatre in one meeting and then discussing a possible budget deficit the next. And despite the attendant stresses and overwork they seemed to enjoy this continuous – and occasionally frenetic – activity.

This shuttling was, in effect, the means by which they were able to spot opportunities (e.g. for funding or partnerships), gaps or threats; make links; check people were alright; energise when things were flagging; keep the momentum going; and to match actions to necessary project or production stages and ongoing organisational survival. This was not a distraction from their work or indeed their participation in leadership: it was absolutely essential to both.

One manager summed it up:

My job is to say, ‘Yes, it will be alright,’ and ‘How can we look at this?’ and ‘What more help do we need? ... I am the one who does the questioning, the checking ... whether it's of a number of routes, is this the right route? Are we sure we have checked? Are we sure we

have covered the territory? Is there another way of doing this ...?

IV They use communication, storytelling and personalisation as a proxy for formal structures, rules and guidelines, to build and sustain good relationships (internally and externally)

The constitutive use of language is implicit in the first three propositions. Each of the managers was an inveterate communicator, managing a company that is explicitly in the business of creating, communicating (and disrupting) meaning, often, though not always, in story form.

As Boje writes "... in organizations, storytelling is the preferred sensemaking currency of human relationships among internal and external stakeholders" (1991, p.106).

All three co-created, gathered and told stories *inside* the organisation; "centring" stories which said "Here we are. This is what we do. This is what we strive for" (Boyce, 1995, p. 111). They also translated and shared stories *outside* – in the form of project proposals, funding applications, plans, budgets and accounts, reports, media and social events. Moreover, they fed external stories – policy developments, partnership and promotional opportunities, spending reviews, funding opportunities and cuts – *back in*, all the while trying to ensure a plausible fit with company work and values – so back to a sufficiency of sharedness again.

The location for a lot of this storytelling was meetings (called and invariably chaired by the managers). These served not only to keep the social wheels oiled, but were also the principal means by which the organisation was talked into existence and sustained, providing essential live opportunities for discussing opportunities and challenges, and making up more stories.

It often feels like I never sit down at my desk, that I'm always in meetings ... there's never a full day with no meetings, very rarely.

I do do lots of meetings ... [that's] how I tend to work up collabo-

rations and partnerships which then become projects which then get passed along the line

I think a lot of it is just communication. It's responding to people's ideas or events, or leads.

The cultural manager's role as expert communicator was particularly apparent in the most significant structuring device deployed by each company – the creative project or production.

To make [the project] happen, [she] supports its creative development, working within the internal world ... to ... support the process that will bring it to fruition. Externally, [she] must also position the idea, build and hold together the framework of relationships and of meaning that will attract the necessary support and finance, and engage those for whom it is intended (Tyndall, 2007, p. 2).

Moving iteratively between these internal and external worlds evidently requires shifts in power – in particular between the cultural manager and the artistic director –and these were continually negotiated within the company, depending on the stage in the production or project process. In addition, since projects or productions often involve a mix of participants (performers, designers, choreographers etc.) who are new to and previously known by the company, each project group can be subtly or significantly different for each one. So, within each of these permanent organisations, there are successive or concurrent “temporary systems” (Goodman & Goodman, 1976), with more and new people to integrate into the ways of the ensemble. In such a dynamic context, coordination, trust and a sufficiency of sharedness need to be *continually* recreated through interaction (talk), which (outside the rehearsal space) is largely the responsibility of the cultural manager.

As alluded to earlier, when these managers encountered difficulties with others, their communication skills were tested to the limit, and not always with wholly satisfactory outcomes. Despite this, however, they seemed loath to rely instead on formalised

systems and structures, not because they (the managers) were inefficient or chaotic, but because, they *preferred* to address issues face-to-face in a personalised and context/situation-specific and values-congruent fashion (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). The learning from these instances was rarely translated into standardised procedures; rather, it seemed to be absorbed into ‘the way we do things round here’ through reflection-in-action, in the company of others. There was a tacit recognition that some issues (particularly those that involve people) are never permanently ‘resolved’; instead they are episodically massaged back from the brink... until the next time.

Thus, contrary to stereotype – these cultural managers seemed to appreciate that formal rules and structures could not fit all eventualities; whatever seems fixed is only contingent; what works with one group or production will not necessarily work with the next; and the best ‘solutions’ are often personalised, accidental or ad hoc.

As David Jubb (Director of Battersea Arts Centre in London) warns:

Beware of rationalists. Including yourself. Logical, sensible, well-considered trains of thought are fantastically seductive, especially because they are often right: do the sensible thing, take the path of righteousness, you know it makes sense. At key moments this is exactly the opposite of what you should do. The most important bit is looking after people and being generous with your time. I am at my best when I am helping someone else work something out. I am at my worst when I’m in danger of taking someone for granted (Tyn-dall, 2007, pp. 32–33).

Working with and through talk, then, was a central part of these managers’ ‘daily doings’ and their participation in leadership, and here too, ‘small’ was of vital significance.

... the order in organizational life comes just as much from the subtle, the small, the relational, the oral, the particular, and the momentary as it does from the conspicuous, the large, the substantive,

the written, the general, and the sustained ... [S]mallness does not equate with insignificance. Small structures and short moments can have large consequences (Weick, 2009, p. 132).

V They take a collaborative and devising-inflected approach to direction making, paying attention to cognitive, embodied and aesthetic dimensions

In all three companies, productions and projects (ultimately the responsibility of the artistic director) were iteratively and collaboratively constructed from a notion, idea or text that was worked into something new. In other words, they relied heavily on devised processes and strategies of theatre-making (Graham & Hoggett, 2009; Heddon & Milling, 2006; Mermikides & Smart, 2010). Likewise – and this was probably the most surprising and unexpected finding – strategy-making or formulating major reports, proposals or funding bids (ultimately the responsibility of the cultural manager) echoed some of the same processes and strategies in ways very similar – for example – to Glass’s (2003) five stage model of ‘creative cycling’, as follows:

1. *Preparation* (creating a safe, productive and informal environment)
2. *Creative origination* (generating, exploring and developing ideas; questioning and opening up scope)
3. *Creative organisation* (focusing, structuring, drawing ideas together, developing overall ‘meaning’)
4. *Manifestation/presentation* (performing, with continued evolution and development)
5. *Reflection/renewal* (critical reflection, giving and receiving feedback, setting new goals for the future)

So, planning, for example, always started with *something*: a notion, a kernel of an idea, even a solid intention, together with the expectation that material would emerge from and during a collaborative process, and an it-goes-without-saying acceptance that it was perfectly alright to *not know* at the start how things were going to play out. In addition, the stages above (as in the

making of creative work) were not always clearly differentiated, with lots of overlapping and looping backwards and forwards.

One manager summarised it like this:

My approach is always to go, right, this is what we need to work out and I don't know the end point ... I don't have the answers and I do kind of use people a lot, but I think you get their buy-in then forever

Furthermore, in planning meetings and conversations, for example, there was explicit encouragement of creative, sensory and nonsensical thinking, alongside editing, shaping and structuring: making the familiar strange and following where that leads was just as likely to co-exist with making the strange familiar. These managers seemed not only to *tolerate* ambiguity, uncertainty and equivocality (having too many options), but also actively to *enjoy* them. And the resultant accounts (plans, strategies, proposals and reports) were judged by the contributors (and specifically the manager) to be 'good' on aesthetic as well as effectiveness grounds, depending on the extent to which they produced felt meaning, connectedness with others and enjoyment for its own sake ... so following a kind of aesthetic notion of 'what works' (Nelson, 2006).

In these ways it was as if both the processes and products of devising *inside* the studio and the devising-*inflected* approach of these managers to direction-making *outside*, grew out of and fed back *into* whole company notions of the work, values and ensemble.

To be clear, I am *not* suggesting that these managers were operating *as artists* or that what they were producing with others *was art* ... more that in a leading sense they were influenced by operating alongside artists in an organisation which was small enough for them to remain close to the art being produced. As each of the managers said:

I would never want to operate on a large scale. I think people assume that if you are small scale, you really want to get big, and I would hate it, because what you get [in a small organisation] is quite

a lot of control. And that's exciting ... if someone rings up and says they want to bring a piece of work ... I can go, actually, yes, let's do it. And that's very unusual. Anything more than small scale and you wouldn't get to do that, would you? There would be such a lot of bureaucracy and there would be lots of timetabling issues. You just wouldn't see that proximity to the problem

... small organisations, just being able to handle uncertainty and not being related to [hierarchical] power and all that stuff ... it's got to be where the innovation happens

... because we are a tiny organisation amongst very big organisations with much more funding and much more profile, I feel as if I have my foot in the door and that my job is to get as many people into the room [creative space] as possible

Bringing it all together

The five propositions above, weave a picture or story of what cultural managers (in micro scale theatre organisations) do when they participate in leadership.

In summary, these managers – with others – make particular kinds of theatre-based activity happen, whilst working towards a sustainable future for their organisation and/or art form (the 'what'). In this, they are fuelled by a commitment to the 'power' of theatre, associated value dimensions (e.g. pro-social, artistic, achievement) and ensemble-working (the 'why'). These commitments 'play out' and are reflected back in to their being and doing of leadership.

The 'how' of what they do is encapsulated in a number of identifiable doings. They engage in continuous action and movement to spot and act on opportunities, gaps and threats and to keep the momentum going. They are inveterate story-tellers and sharers, both within the organisation and with multiple external stakeholders outside it.

Through constant interaction, they reinforce the 'what' and 'why' of their company, seeking contingent solutions to difficul-

ty and challenge in personalised and contextualised ways: good relationships are of paramount importance. They take a collaborative and iterative approach to the future direction of the company using strategies and processes which strikingly echo those used in devised theatre-making. They appraise the results of direction-making in terms of aesthetics (felt meaning, connectedness, enjoyment), as well as efficiency and effectiveness.

Thus, while these managers' job descriptions (however out of date) outlined their functions and responsibilities (planning, people management, production/touring, promotion, finance and fundraising), the propositions above suggest activities (Watson, 2001) and links between activities, which are far more reflective, textured and nuanced than these functions alone could convey. Moreover the propositions shape-shift from 'why' to 'what' to 'how' and back again, thus giving a glimpse of the *integrated* ways in which these managers move between different registers and types of activity, participating in leadership with a future orientation firmly in mind.

So what?

This essay offers a 'reframing' to the prevailing cultural leadership narrative – the latter being characterised by the comparative invisibility of the small scale in empirical research and a tendency to set out what cultural managers *should* do (often in very abstract terms) without necessarily examining what they *already* do, particularly within what are very variable arts contexts and organisational settings.

Here, cultural leadership has been constructed as the *processes* that make up organising and managing in theatre-based work and the constantly changing *relationships* that such work entails (Watson, 2002). At the same time, the essay highlights the *purposive quality* of the endeavour, which, as set out in the first and second propositions, has a crucial bearing on the managers' being and doing of leadership.

It should be stressed that this story – in part or as a whole – might well resonate with cultural managers in a range of other settings, and in medium and large scale organisations too. And that’s fine. The important thing is the *provenance* of the portrait (cultural managers working at micro-scale), the associated *challenge* it offers to the idea that the trajectory of expertise and good practice can only pass from large to small, and the *potential* it offers for an asset-based (rather than deficiency-driven) approach to cultural leadership development (i.e. not about looking for problems to solve, but about opportunities to build on).

So, the next time you find yourself enacting any or all of the five propositions outlined here, just remember: cultural leadership doesn’t have to be big, exceptional or heroic. As a social and dynamic process of interacting, making sense and taking action (with others), we can see it rather (after Pye, 2005) as a sophisticated and embedded part of our daily doing and our everyday working life.

Note This essay draws on and extends the content of an earlier piece:

Kay, S (2015). From palace to tent: how cultural managers participate in leadership in micro-scale theatre organisations. In Schramme, A. and Uitgeverji Lannoo (Eds.), *De Cultuurmanager: Regels can de kunst voor leiderschap in de culturele en creatieve sector* (pp. 40–59). Leuven, Belgium: Nannoo Campus. By kind permission of Annick Schramme.

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Julia Romanowska

Aesthetics: aesthetics, emotions and ethics in leadership

“It’s not something you can really describe to anyone else. Normally when you go on a course, you can say that you’ve learned this and you’ve learned that. I don’t think I’ve yet grasped the full impact of having done that course, as it’s on a different level. It becomes ingrained, somehow, as part of your basic values. It’s anchored in you.”

This quotation is from a manager who had just finished a one-year leadership training programme. The manager had responded to an advertisement a year earlier about a research study of leadership at Karolinska Institutet. “Are you in a leadership role? We are interested in investigating the extent to which your behaviour changes. All participants will have to provide blood samples.”¹ About a hundred managers applied, not put off by the warning that they “may feel uncomfortable at times”. They were informed that they would be randomly divided into two groups, but were not told what the different programmes would involve. Fifty people who met the criteria were accepted onto the scheme:

.....

1. The project is described in my thesis: Romanowska 2014.

they included police officers, reservists, clergymen, head teachers, nurses, psychologists, doctors, prison directors, warehouse managers, public sector managers, IT company directors and creative practitioners.

The participants in one group were given information about the aims and content of the course in the normal way at the start, and at the first meeting they introduced themselves to one another. This was followed by 12 three-hour sessions alternating between lectures, discussions, opportunities to exchange experiences and group process exercises. The programme was based on the Swedish Defence University educational model and was led by professional leadership trainers from the Swedish armed forces.

The only information given to the other group was the date and the place they were to go to. When they arrived they were taken into a room that was painted black:

“no whiteboard, not even a window. But an unknown male voice said: ‘I live here and now, this minute, this day, to the full. Life is difficult, it is true, a struggle from minute to minute’ ‘For the world is, and will continue to be, inhospitable.’ ‘But I am attracted by the struggle’, a woman answered. They were immediately interrupted by some furious music. Then the reading continued, a duet that was at times defiant, at times despairing: ‘there’s a worry inside me’ . . . – a chord – ‘a bizarre, satanic worry’ – and then a few seconds of Alfred Schnittke’s violin concerto ‘Largo’. That continued for over an hour. The texts were fragments from the diaries of Etty Hillesum, a Dutch Jewish woman who refused to hide away from the Nazis, volunteered as an aid worker in a concentration camp and was murdered in Auschwitz. The story of her suffering was interspersed with snippets from Rilke and instructions for killing people in mobile gas chambers by SS officer and group leader Walter Rauff. And in between, music – pleasant music, tragic music or dance music. Zarah Leander’s ‘Wunderbar’ at a marching pace, Beethoven violins, the work songs of Buchenwald guards, sometimes just a muffled chord. ‘What on earth is going on?’ I wondered. And then, one of the managers noted down, ‘Do I need to understand what’s going on?’

It was the same every time. Seventy minutes of words broken up by music. After that, each participant was given an exercise book.

‘What are we supposed to write?’ ‘What you like and whatever you can write down in five minutes.’ There would then be a conversation, with the minimum of moderation, and at the next gathering the managers would be given a record of their responses. ‘Is good a counterbalance to evil?’ ‘We did a lot of harm in the name of good.’ ‘Imagine if there are psychopaths in this group too.’ That was the entire process. Thirteen Mondays over 10 months. The word ‘leadership’ wasn’t mentioned. It wasn’t a leadership course. It was *Shibboleth*, a collage of prose, lyric poetry and documents, put together by the musician Julia Romanowska. But it was in her capacity as researcher at Karolinska Institutet assisted by the Swedish Defence University that she stressed the managers out with Kafka, Mayakovsky, Klezmer and Maria Callas by turns.”

“The sudden changes were like daggers to the soul” says one Director of Social Services who was part of the experimental *Shibboleth* group. The other group mentioned earlier acted as a reference group and underwent a classical leadership programme based on Swedish Defence University training methods.

My intentions with the *Shibboleth* concept

The *Shibboleth* format initially took shape in my literary salon (scensalong Romanowska in Stockholm) where I have also had the privilege of witnessing the experiences of the audiences and the effect the performances had on them. From that experience grew the idea of creating an artistic leadership concept as an alternative – a contrast – to conventional training. The idea was also prompted by my diverse professional background in various disciplines such as music, education, organisational development and leadership. Research funds from the Swedish Research Council and a grant from Sparbankernas forskningsstiftelse (Sparbanken Research Foundation) gave me a unique opportunity to put the idea into practice and test the concept on a scientific basis.

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2. DN Kultur 6/2/2011, Maciej Zaremba

My experiences as a leadership trainer have led me to the opinion that traditional programmes find it difficult to counteract the darker sides of leadership. Along with power comes a reduced capacity for empathy, compassion and helpfulness³ and increased tendencies towards narcissism, hubris, stereotypical thinking, prejudice and group bias.⁴ Moreover, leaders face significant challenges inherent in the social dynamics of our times that can reinforce these antisocial tendencies. To avoid discomfort, people tend to shun reality and surrender to the illusion that they can achieve control through simple means.⁵ There is a clear connection between a leader's inability to tolerate stress and failed leadership.⁶ Stress also has a negative effect on our moral judgement and on how motivated we are to take other people's interests into consideration.⁷

In light of the problematic nature of power, it is vitally important that leadership programmes set out to guard against destructive forms of leadership and their devastating consequences. There seems to be a basic psychological phenomenon in which bad is stronger than good; negative experiences have deeper and more far-reaching effects on people's lives than positive ones.⁸

However, leadership development is characterised by social engineering methods; people are taught a range of theories, methods and strategies for managing others. The training is based on the assumption that social skills can somehow be learned by rote. In addition, in line with the current self-esteem movement in education, the focus is on the positive qualities of the participants, as if reinforcement of what is positive implies a

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3. Anderson, Keltner & John, 2003; Galinsky, Magee, Inesi & Gruenfeld, 2006; Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003; Russell & Fiske, 2010; Fiske & Dépret, 1996.
4. Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov & Duarte, 2003.
5. Heatherton & Baumeister 1991
6. Bass 1990
7. Jex, Adams, Bachrach & Sorenson 2003
8. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001.

reduction in what is negative. One can also sense an underlying fear of hurting participants' feelings or a sort of value relativism according to which most things are considered equally valuable: "It's just different ways of doing things."

An emphasis on instrumental knowledge, 'administratively-formulated' values and positive thinking can lead to an underestimation of life's complexities and an overestimation of one's own leadership abilities. Man's multifaceted uniqueness and human qualities such as empathy and moral judgement tend to disappear in the face of standard formulae and can result in employees somehow being dehumanised. Such tendencies promote the emergence of 'laissez-faire leadership' (abdication of leadership responsibilities). Laissez-faire leadership has been shown to be one of the very worst and most widespread⁹ of all destructive leadership styles, having a number of negative consequences for employees (conflict, bullying and stress-related ill-health).¹⁰

We need a new educational vision. If we are to expose our own illusions, evasion, indifference and cowardice, we need something that has a powerful impact that can initiate changes in leaders at a deeper level. Being trained in standardised skills or fed with simplified truths does not prepare us to encounter a reality that is cognitively, ethically and emotionally demanding.

In stark contrast to traditional forms of training, Shibboleth aimed to act as a guide to the complexities of life that would increase the psychological and moral readiness of leaders to relate to the unpredictability, ambiguity and contradictory nature of the modern world. The unique ability of the arts to portray our multifaceted reality and not to close its eyes to things that are

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9. Goodnight 2004

10. Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen & Einarsen, 2010; Hoel, & Salin, 2003; Hyde, Jappinen, Theorell & Oxenstierna, 2006; Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland & Hetland, 2007.

unpleasant or to the reality of evil can help managers to see that the world is inhabited by living beings of flesh and blood and not just by institutions, strategies, targets and results. It can help them understand the profound gravity of moral choices. The arts provide experiences that cannot be accessed by means of cognitive, rational methods. They enable unexpected aspects of our existence to emerge without being ‘analysed to bits’ by theoretical systems.¹¹ The arts represent an opposition to every reductive view of humans.¹²

The Shibboleth educational model

The Hebrew word ‘shibboleth’ exists in many languages. In addition to its literal meaning – ear of corn, or torrent – symbolising growth and dynamism, it has taken on the meaning of cipher, touchstone or crossing a boundary; the latter can be interpreted as achieving maturity through arduous work.

Shibboleth comprises a combination of demanding content and avant-garde artistic technique. Harrowing human experiences are depicted in a fragmentary way in a variety of linguistic forms. The concept is exacting in terms of receptiveness, powers of imagination and emotional and ethical processing. A Shibboleth session starts with participants spending a few minutes writing whatever they like in a diary. After that they experience a one-hour performance which is followed by another writing session lasting a few minutes. There is then a period of group reflection, and the session concludes with another minute or so of writing. A Shibboleth performance can be seen as a sort of literary and musical collage woven together associatively: a fragmented and rapidly-shifting flow of form and content. Two performers, a man and a woman, alone on a stripped-down stage, take turns to read animatedly and rhythmically, switching quick-

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11. Ricoeur 1991

12. Nussbaum 1995

ly from one to the other without warning. Short and often contrasting phrases from poetry, prose, documentary texts and philosophical reflections come together with music in an intense flood of polyphony, the streams interacting or disengaging, constantly alternating between artistic genres. The often contradictory combinations of text with music, and text with text, and the way they alternate, stimulate various senses that are forced to come face to face with one another. The result is a concentrated, dreamlike structure: it is fragmented, with multiple voices and unexpected interruptions to the narrative, various pitches and leaps, and shifts between conflicting scenes and emotions.

The various pieces of text in the performances are based on quotations from a variety of sources, which are then pasted together into a new work with a new meaning. Amongst the writers represented are Fernando Pessoa, Georges Perec, Elfriede Jelinek, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ety Hillesum, Franz Kafka, Edmond Jabès, Emil Cioran and Vladimir Mayakovsky. The performances may include up to 35 different pieces of music, mostly art music ranging from baroque to avant-garde but also world music such as Romani, Klezmer or Fado.

The texts deal with the big, universal questions and depict man-made disasters, destructivity and evil as well as man's greatness, selflessness and dignity. Unique, deeply moving life stories, often with a tragic ending, are used to reflect a broad spectrum of human experience and human suffering: genocide (the Holocaust, the gulag, Rwanda), abuse of power, violation, dissociative identity disorder, sexual abuse, loneliness, collusion, etc. But they also portray their opposites: love, compassion, moral courage, faith in god, meaningfulness, etc.

As an example, one performance brings together texts that are derived mainly from the Old Testament and from modern works by Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek. The Song of Songs, the canonical love poems attributed to King Solomon from the 10th century BC (known as 'shir ha-shirim' in the Bible), is a homage to love and the tender desire that unites lovers – a flame that overcomes death and wishes the lover all that is

good on the earth. Sensuous love is also the theme of Jelinek's novel *Lust* from 1989. But here, there is a raw absence of contact. The lovers are unable to come close to each other; they are mute and deaf; they consume one another in a violent pornographic relationship. Death triumphs over love. These two love songs, completely different in terms of both their content and their form of linguistic expression, are woven together and cut into each other; the various fragments of text attract and repel each other. Combined into one text, we might say that they unite as an intensifying or excluding force. Or perhaps a third text emerges, another song that is reflection of what is happening to the audience.

Striking difference between the effects of the two different programmes

Both programmes, the experimental one and the conventional one, had an effect on the managers and the colleagues they manage – a positive one in the case of *Shibboleth*, while the opposite effect was noted in many respects for the control group.¹³ The differences can be most clearly seen in the long-term monitoring, nine months after the training had finished, which suggests that it has long-lasting effects.

Nine months after the end of the training, the colleagues of the *Shibboleth* managers reported fewer symptoms of ill-health; they were in a better frame of mind, had more energy and were sleeping better. Their self-esteem had improved, and their tendency to avoid dealing with stressful situations had reduced considerably. In addition, significantly higher levels of DHEA-S were observed in their blood than were found in the colleagues of the control group managers. DHEA-S is an anabolic hormone

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13. Romanowska, Larsson, Eriksson, Wikstrom, Westerlund & Theorell 2011, Romanowska, Larsson & Theorell 2013, Romanowska, Larsson & Theorell 2014.

that has the effect of building up cellular tissue and bringing new cells into life. DHEA-S also protects us against infections, against the damaging effects of stress and against premature ageing.

In the conventional group, colleagues reported increased symptoms: more exhaustion, depressive tendencies and poorer sleep. Conflict was dealt with in a more introverted manner, which according to earlier research co-varies with several serious health conditions.¹⁴ At the same time, colleagues reported a decline in responsibility on the part of their managers. Laissez-faire leadership by the managers increased and they were less able to handle stress. This was in contrast to the managers' positive self-evaluation following the training, which led to substantial overestimation of their abilities – a dangerous tendency that is consistent with a lack of efficiency as a leader.

In the Shibboleth programme, the effect was the opposite. At the same time as colleagues were experiencing a reduction in stress-related symptoms, they were reporting that their managers had assumed more responsibility. Laissez-faire leadership had declined, the managers felt increasingly able to take a stand on important issues and make essential decisions, and they were also more able to handle stress. What is interesting is that, in contrast to what their colleagues had reported, the managers themselves felt that their laissez-faire leadership had increased. An initial overestimation of their abilities became an underestimation. A tendency amongst leaders to underestimate points to greater effectiveness and ethical capacity.¹⁵

The results of personality testing also showed a significant increase in pro-social motivation and responsibility ('agreeableness'¹⁶) and greater powers of psychological resilience (KASAM¹⁷) in the Shibboleth managers. Agreeableness is characterised by

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14. Leineweber, Westerlund, Theorell, Kivimäki, Westerholm, & Alfredsson, 2011; Härenstam, Theorell, & Kaijser, 2000; Theorell, Alfredsson, Westerholm, & Falck, 2000.

15. Krishnan, 2003

16. Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997

17. Antonovsky, 1996

altruism, empathy, straightforwardness, tender-mindedness, trust and compliance, and contrasts with antisocial tendencies such as hostility, aggressiveness, cynicism, callousness, manipulativeness, indifference and prejudice against others. An increase in agreeableness means a stronger feeling of affinity with others and a clear wish to contribute to something greater than oneself. No such outcomes were found in the reference group.

KASAM means an ability to be deeply rooted in reality, understand one's place in the world, experience meaningfulness, and be ready to handle pressure and uncertainty. KASAM has positive links with optimism and self-esteem and negative links with 'victim mentality', hostility, hopelessness, anxiety, burn-out, depression and others.¹⁸ Reduced levels of KASAM were observed in the managers in the reference group.

What did the participants themselves say?

The managers in the conventional group were generally pleased with the programme; they felt it had been beneficial and informative, that they felt stronger as a result, and that they had become better leaders. Theories, models and tools were seen as very important and they saw these as constituting "a platform from which to work". At the same time, they affirmed their instincts and the belief that they could "rely on their gut feelings and have a theory to support them". They found their own experiences reflected in that of others, and felt that this strengthened them as individuals.

A different story emerges when we look at the personal experiences of the Shibboleth participants.

A confrontation with Shibboleth can be compared to shock treatment: "What has this got to do with leadership???" Nausea." The participants were placed in a situation that was beyond their sphere of experience and where there were no known points

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18. Eriksson & Lindström, 2006

of reference. They were left without access to any explanatory model or ground rules. The experience was hard to grasp and to comprehend; it was harrowing and challenging. “You couldn’t defend yourself ... it took your breath away, you were shaken up.” When repressive mechanisms are interrupted, the deeper layers of the self are affected in a way that is uncontrollable, an experience described as “mental rape”. The experience was not only a cognitive one, it was also aesthetically, emotionally and ethically challenging. Emotions “invade your body”. “Pains in the stomach from the feelings of unease. Can feel how my jaws clench and stiffen.” The participants protested: “DON’T WANT THIS! Never again!”. Why should they “be subjected to things you never normally encounter, be shaken up by things you side-step or aren’t obliged to consider? This has tested our own boundaries”.

Meanwhile, participants experienced a sense of wonder that fired the imagination, followed by a feeling of liberation and an intense sense of presence. “This is the coolest thing I have ever been involved in.” “It was just amazing! I felt a freedom.”

The participants adopted an *aesthetic* approach – an immersive aesthetic, emotional and ethical receptiveness. “You can’t control everything, you just have to let it come to you.”

They embarked upon “fantastic journeys through the eyes and thoughts of other people”. During these journeys, they encountered all possible types of experiences – some painful, some frightening, some beautiful. They took in the multifaceted reality of the various characters and were moved by their suffering. Participants experienced feelings of solidarity, affinity and compassion and wanted to alleviate other people’s suffering.

They encountered “feelings they had never before experienced” and developed a new perspective on their existence. The great universal questions, man-made disasters such as the Holocaust and other instances of genocide forced the participants to take a position on what justice is. Participants looked at where they were themselves as human beings, discovered their “dark corners” and re-evaluated previous standpoints. They entered

into a challenging mental process but at the same time discovered a joy in life.

The participants testified in the strongest terms to how their lives had changed after completing the training: “The course has affected my whole life.” A strong feeling of being part of a wider context developed alongside a powerful awareness that value judgements “pervade everything we do” and that man’s humanity and freedom are linked to ethical responsibility. The new understanding of “what it means to be a human being” was to be realised through action – an intervention in the world here and now: “We are responsible for taking action ourselves. That stuck with me. Not being the silent majority – that was something we worked on. Not waiting too long, caring.”

The participants reported that they felt a responsibility for mankind that they had never felt before: “My responsibility as a human being is greater than the responsibility I have as a civil servant. If my job turns into an oppressive role I need to have the strength to step away.” They felt that *Shibboleth* had given them “loads of courage” and meant that they were able to resist group pressure: “Being able to say no, not going along with it . . . daring to cross boundaries, daring to face up to fear [. . .] I am braver in my day-to-day life and am strict about that.” “I don’t intend to sit with my hands in my pockets and let injustice pass by unnoticed.” “Moral courage!! Intervening verbally and physically when other people are subjected to harassment, bullying or physical violence!” Being able to go beyond one’s limits and openly defend one’s values brought a genuine sense of self-recognition.

The aesthetic approach appeared to be a model that people could relate to in their lives. “You have to be prepared for the unknown, the unexpected . . . you have to allow yourself to be carried along. Control is an illusion.” “Daring to be a human being, daring to see, and feel”, and daring to listen out “for everything that’s inside me, both evil and good, heaven and hell”.

Ethical sensitivity in the form of an internal dialogue had now become deeply integrated into the participants’ powers of

judgement; it had settled “in my backbone, skeleton, molecules [...] you have spoken to my innermost being”. Participants expressed reverence for the sanctity of life: “if you save a life, your life is meaningful” and a deep feeling of hope that man can preserve “the courage to live” and retain his dignity and a strong belief in humanity “despite everything that is incomprehensible”. “This enormous love and gratitude for life is something I have never experienced before. Not on that level.”

The participants took the many experiences that had been “etched” in their memory as their “companion” out into the world. These emotion-bearing impressions that “often pop up in one’s consciousness” continued to influence and generate emotions and provided moral guidance that was the inspiration for new, undreamt-of ways of being. Something “was set in motion that will continue”, something that “is rumbling in the background”, as if it were impossible to bring it to a close.

In summary, the participants felt that *Shibboleth* was a transformative power in their lives, a power that led to a radical reappraisal of their self-image and of their view of the world and leadership. One can observe a fundamental shift in the participants from exercising power via ‘strategies’ to taking responsibility on the basis of an internal, ethical conviction.

Although after the course the managers felt that their lives seemed more complex, more exposed and more challenging, they felt more courageous and more capable of intervening in the world. The change suggests a mental development towards a more complex and integrated ‘self’ in which awareness of the world’s and one’s own inadequacies coexists with an awareness of one’s own empowerment.

The *Shibboleth* programme opened up the world as something to question. No ready answers or ‘correct’ moral values or other instrumental solutions were supplied. No attempts were made to confirm the participants in their views; on the contrary, their illusions were crushed. Their self was placed in a wider existential context that invited humility in the face of the complexity and magnificence of our existence. The managers had to turn

their gaze away from themselves and their own interests towards universality – moving from ‘I’ to ‘we’ – and see the world through the eyes of other people. This sense of ‘we’ is crucial for social impact and constitutes the core of effective leadership.¹⁹

One of the most obvious effects of Shibboleth was perhaps that the participants broadened out their view of themselves in relation to others, which is important in terms of altruism.²⁰ This could explain why the Shibboleth managers themselves underestimated the extent to which they took responsibility; it was something that happened after the programme had finished which was in contrast to their colleagues’ observations about improved levels of responsibility. It reflects a feeling that one can always do more. For philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, a moral person does not think that he or she has ever done enough: “Never console yourself by saying that you have done everything you could, because it is not true”.²¹ A feeling of ambivalence is unavoidable for moral consciousness.²²

Aesthetics – a key concept

Analysis of the participants’ experiences offers a deeper understanding of the process that characterises beneficial leadership development in general terms. Using the previously-introduced concept of aesthetics (an interplay between the aesthetic, the emotional and the ethical), we can differentiate between four stages in this process of transformation.

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19. Haslam, Reicher & Platow, 2012.

20. Monroe, 1996; Monroe, 2011.

21. Lévinas, 1985.

22. Bauman, 1995.

An aesthetic shock/collision: Inspiration from breaking with the familiar

Encountering Shibboleth is like a shock that disrupts the familiar, and is both a negative and a positive experience. Emotionally, Shibboleth was perceived to have an uncontrollable effect on the deeper levels of the self and to generate unwelcome and fearful feelings. Ethically, working to counteract the mechanisms of denial, the participants experienced Shibboleth as forcing them to relate to the suffering of others. Aesthetically, the artistic form awakened a strong sense of awe at something unique, beautiful and magical. In this dialectic, destabilising tension, in the oscillation at the threshold between alienation and coercion on the one hand and the feeling of freedom and enchantment on the other, there is a drastic break with habitual, instrumental, self-absorbed attitudes. This break may provide an incentive to go beyond the given.

The shock/break is credited by theorists with strong transformative powers.²³ In order to mature mentally, we need a radical break with our ingrained attitudes. When we lose control of our intentions, strange, repressed and twisted emotions within us can be transformed and integrated into something new and meaningful. These epiphanic moments free us from our limitations and open us up to ethics and creativity; they make us question our conscience and reorient our thinking, providing new ways of being. Moments such as this cannot be recreated in daily life and can be a source of power and happiness.

An aesthetic appropriation process: Affirming life through that which is difficult

For the participants, “losing their footing” enabled them to enter into an arduous and challenging mental process that was up-

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23. Lévinas, 1985; Husserl, 2012; Adorno, 1997; Adorno, 2005

setting, enigmatic and filled with anxiety. At the same time, they felt safe – “this cannot harm me”. Paradoxically, the invented aesthetic space and artistic format provided a sort of empathetic distance that enabled participants to assimilate elements that were difficult and unpleasant as well as their own suffering and that of others, and to maintain their critical gaze without losing themselves in the pain. This allowed them to undergo a demanding process of self-re-evaluation. Meanwhile, the participants discovered the freedom of their imagination, a joy in life and powers of recovery.

Many theorists claim that achieving psychological development requires a very testing mental effort to accommodate our destructive sides and develop trust in our restorative vitality, and that feelings such as anxiety and guilt are a prerequisite for moral maturity.²⁴ They prompt compassion and responsibility and can transform destructiveness into creativity. Optimism alone cannot capture the fundamental nature of life. Paying attention to negative experiences and failures, to suffering and death, is absolutely fundamental for our understanding of our existence, and constitutes the tragic source of practical wisdom in life, which in turn leads to the discovery of freedom and new opportunities.

An aesthetic transformation: Self-recognition through moral responsibility

Three decisive turning points can be identified in the arduous appropriation process:

- * recognition of the ‘otherness’, individuality and vulnerability of other people
- * recognition of the complexity and darker sides of our existence, and man’s destructiveness

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24. Klein, 2002; Lévinas, 2003; Ricoeur, 1960.

- * our identification of ourselves as morally accountable subjects, which includes self-respect.

Here too there is support for this in philosophy.²⁵ Our ability to act in an authentic fashion comes when we acknowledge the reality of suffering and the limitations of our lives. The “capable human being” must always go via the long route of hard-earned external experiences if he is to identify himself as a morally responsible subject. We can never achieve this identity and self-recognition solely through introspection; we must gain it indirectly through our encounters with the other, with people different from us. It is only when man divests himself of his ego and instead takes responsibility for the other that he can fully appreciate himself, which is a reversal of the well-known saying: “You must love yourself before you can love others.”

Liminality and the memory: Transformation through artistic technique

The Shibboleth ‘laboratory’ provided learning through experiences that are not available in the empirical world. Artistic experiences were felt to be real although they did not affect people in their real lives. The participants were placed in a state resembling ‘liminality’ which is characterised by an elusive instability when on the threshold of something else; this allowed them to try out new ways of being and enabled a change in the self.²⁶ In this type of cross-boundary space, aesthetic, emotional and ethical dimensions are integrated. When you really reach into the depths of the brain, the heart and the body all at the same time, reality ceases to exist and the extent of human suffering ceases to be an abstraction.

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 25. Ricoeur, 1960; Nabert, 1962; Ricoeur, 2004; Lévinas, 1969; Lévinas, 1987

26. Turner, 1995; Iser, 1974; Fischer-Lichte, 2008.

Such experiences leave a trace that may suddenly pop up in one's memory much later in another context, and a connection to earlier experiences may become a fresh source of understanding. According to Adorno's concept of 'art as memory'²⁷, such flashes of memory can be transformative, generating new understandings. The ethical importance of 'memory traces' for connecting us to the others, or to the past, has also been discussed by Lévinas and Ricoeur²⁸.

For Viktor Shklovsky, the role of art is to liberate our powers of perception – powers that are often in automatic mode in day-to-day life – by the use of intentionally complicated artistic forms, so that life does not pass us by unawares.²⁹ Shibboleth's experimental techniques and combination of text and music were seen as essential to this development. They provoked creative, synthesising powers of imagination and were of crucial emotional significance for the participants' ethical response. Mental defences were broken down – participants were forced to abandon positions of indifference – but the performance also had a sheltering effect that helped the participants retain a reflective attitude.

Concluding words

In general, the programme was felt to be intellectually, aesthetically, emotionally and ethically demanding, and it met with some opposition. Some of the differences between the conventional training and Shibboleth are considerable, and in an educational context this can be seen as challenging:

1. *Learn by indirect routes.* The routes to leadership are indirect. They do not involve learning the theory of leadership or prac-

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27. Adorno, 1997
28. Lévinas, 2003a, Ricoeur, 2008
29. Shklovsky, 1971

tising interpersonal skills. What is required is enhancement of the human qualities that increase a person's ability to exercise leadership. Instead of informing, instructing, defining, moralising and delivering ready-made solutions and truths, responsibility is passed back to participants who are forced to find their own approach and use their own powers of judgement.

2. *Make understanding more difficult*, instead of making it easy by using simplistic ideas. Having to relinquish a habitual, logical way of thinking stimulates our creative imagination; this activates a non-linear, associative type of thinking/knowing and helps us to see connections we have previously been unaware of. Our imagination has an important cognitive function. It makes it possible for us to empathise and it governs our decisions, our ethical choices and our visioning.
3. *Counteract repression and the ethics of security*; “deepen the wound” by shining a light on the darker sides of our lives instead of shielding ourselves from strong or unpleasant emotions. That enables us to open ourselves up emotionally to other people's vulnerability and insecurity and also to our own hidden pain. It enhances our psychological resilience. An artistic experience is a fantasy experience that takes place in an imaginary/artistic space and not in reality, which makes it possible to retain a distance and take in only what we can mentally cope with.
4. *Counteract self-centredness*; instead of recognising the manager egos of the participants and affirming their frames of reference and what is ‘relevant’ to them, the focus moves away from them to the other and to the alien world. By being placed in a wider human context, people are obliged to transcend their ego and adopt a universalist way of thinking – one that relates to everyone. This enables a radical reappraisal of our self-image, our view of others and of our own leadership.

The Shibboleth concept may not be appropriate for everyone. One participant was highly uncomfortable and left the pro-

gramme after a few sessions. Two other participants were doubtful until the very end but nevertheless continued to take part. On two occasions, two people left the room during a performance but came back for the discussion. However, we should not forget that Shibboleth is a leadership concept aimed at people who have voluntarily assumed leadership responsibilities, and that this requires them to manage a reality that is often demanding, turbulent and painful.

This study demonstrates that leadership development can make a difference, but that the choice of method can determine whether the effects are good or bad. The participants put responsibility, courage and human dignity at the heart of leadership. In contrast to the conventional programme, Shibboleth countered repressive mechanisms and tendencies towards self-deception and indifference, tendencies that appear to be part of the power dynamic. This leadership training without instrumental purpose or learning objectives, and whose content was not about leadership, gave each individual manager an opportunity to accept the experience in their own unique way and to use it to develop exactly what they needed for their leadership. The managers' aesthetic experiences were transformed into a living reality that also changed their colleagues.

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Challenge & possibilities

Cultural leadership does not operate in a vacuum. It is always practised at specific times, in specific places, with specific colleagues and in relation to specific users. Education and training that wishes to prepare participants for the reality they will encounter would do well to be based on real conditions as far as possible and should constantly be putting theory into practice. The 'Challenges and Opportunities' section brings together articles depicting specific environmental challenges that at the same time present challenges for an organisation's operational and relational dimensions: the ability to deal with conflict (Anna Johansen Fridén) and stress (Kerstin Jeding), the latest developments in the digital domain (Rasmus Fleischer), the concept of intersectionality that is the focus of the increasingly heated debate on identity politics, feminism and post-colonialism (Paulina de los Reyes), and intercultural cooperation (Chris Torch).

Anna Johansen Fridén is Head of Education at Nätverkstan Kultur, and an experienced trainer in group facilitation, mediation and conflict management. In her article she focuses on how to develop new approaches to conflict in daily life. While conflict is regarded as inevitable in friendship and love relationships, people at work are more likely to want to avoid it and to feel frustrated by it. By contrast, Fridén Johansen argues that conflict is essential for the creation of mutual trust and that there is much to be learned from it.

Kerstin Jeding, an Oxford-educated psychologist now active in Stockholm, passes on lessons from her research and practice about how to establish a healthy workplace and combat harmful stress. She notes amongst other things the importance of getting colleagues involved in the overall vision of the organisation – but also of ensuring that their involvement is established in a way that is sustainable in the long term. This means finding the right level of requirements and

expectations, of goals that are not only inspiring but also realistic and sustainable.

With his starting point in the development of the American company Google to date in this century, Rasmus Fleischer raises questions about the consequences of the internet being transformed from a common into increasingly closed-off, commercialised territory. What is the difference between *having* a database and *being* a database? What are the long-term consequences of public service organisations, such as libraries, outsourcing their archives and catalogues to private companies? What digital knowledge, competences and skills should a cultural organisation itself have at its disposal?

In Paulina de los Reyes's contribution, intersectionality is a concept that cultural organisations can and should use to explore and challenge inequalities and subordination based on gender, class, sexuality or ethnicity. These are not permanently fixed categories that create finished identities; they are social positions that are given meaning through people's actions in specific social and historical contexts. In this way, intersectionality is both the knowledge of these processes, the competence to identify them, and the skills to do something about them – both within an organisation and as part of its outreach activities.

Intercultural activist Chris Torch shares several formative experiences and encounters from his own lifelong work. No person is just one person; we all have several identities that we activate in different contexts. Torch sees intercultural cooperation as often the missing link in the European project. He has therefore drafted nine demanding tasks for those who wish to accept the challenge.

The book is interleaved with two essays that place the focus on art. Sandy Fitzgerald takes his own life as cultural leader

and activist as the basis of a reflection on the relationship between art and political activism in recent decades. Swedish writer and opinion-maker Lena Andersson, whose novel *Egenmäktigt förfarande – en roman om kärlek* (2013) ('Wilful Disregard: A Novel About Love') has been translated into most European languages, concludes the book with a meditation on the limits of art and freedom of speech with reference to the terrorist attack against the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015.

Leading through conflict

When working with other people, conflict is seemingly unavoidable; it is difficult to imagine a successful alliance that is never subject to challenge. Working with others is like being in a relationship, which is in itself a vulnerable position to be in. With friendship and love relationships, the dependence is often accepted, and the conflict that goes with it is to some extent expected, but at work people are more likely to want to avoid such situations. This is why people in situations of intractable conflict at their workplace quite often feel frustrated. We don't understand why the conflict can't just be shrugged off, and bystanders may well think that those involved are being a bit dramatic.

In my work with organisations, I often find people want the process of working in a team to be without friction or at least controllable so that any conflict is limited in duration and feels meaningful. But in practice it's not always like that. Many people have had experience of conflict that gets out of control and ends in deadlock. If you're in charge, this can be a particularly challenging situation.

This article focuses on how to develop new approaches to conflict in daily life. I first present a number of theoretical and methodological perspectives and go on to explain how I have brought them to bear in a specific set of circumstances. In so doing, I hope to encourage a form of leadership that works *with*

conflict rather than against it, a leadership that has the courage to explore ways of actively making use of the diverse opinions and viewpoints that always emerge when people work together.

Independence and community

The experience of working in a team can be both full of hope and intimidating at the same time. We all have a considerable need to be part of a community and to belong. Working with others can provide a feeling of security and can also be stimulating. At the same time, it is no less important for us to be autonomous and to be able to voice our independence. A community that requires uniformity is never sustainable; it leads to friction and will always encounter resistance in the long term. However, collective processes are partnerships that require a degree of adaptation. It is hard to achieve a balance in which there is a stable feeling of community but where differences are taken into account, a balance that in a way is always under threat. There is always an underlying fear that someone will feel left out, that there will be conflict leading to separation or that someone's thoughts or opinion will not be accommodated, and that fear influences our choices and the positions we take. What will happen if I express my opinion? Will the group accept me even if I don't think the same as them? Will someone else be left out in the cold if I go along with the majority view on this issue?

Having to adapt too much takes effort and can mean that we lose sight of our own resources, with consequences both for ourselves personally and for the quality of the joint work. Thus the behaviours that keep the group together can often lead to stagnation. But without adaptation and a process of listening to each another and building on each other's ideas and opinions there can be no collective work, and individual needs take up space at the expense of other people's and the outcomes of the work.

Research has shown that there are strong links between conflict and sickness absence at work, not least because we often

have to live with conflict that is never resolved. An ability to make team relationships work seems to be essential for managing the challenges of working life and being able to develop both as a person and in professional life.¹ So conflict and conflict management are relevant to leadership. More important than knowledge of methods or theory are curiosity and motivation to learn and to find one's own way of dealing with conflict. In many ways, fear of conflict is more restricting than conflict itself. Conflict in the group process can be seen as a continuous wave-like motion, and the extent to which we can make use of it is crucial for the group's ability to develop and be creative.

Being in conflict and exploring resistance

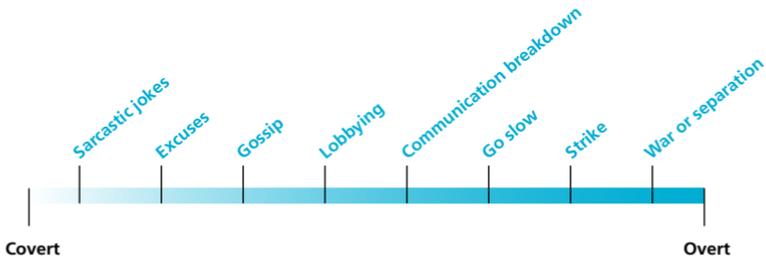
I have worked with many teams that have been hugely fearful of articulating dissent clearly. Many have been afraid that the group would not be capable of dealing with conflict, to such an extent that many years of productive work have been sacrificed. I think one reason for this is that many of us have no positive experience of conflict resolution.

Arnold Mindell, an American therapist and facilitator, has been developing theories and practice in the field of human relationships and conflict since the 1970s. One important premise of Mindell's work is that in every group there are thoughts, opinions, feelings and attitudes that are central to the group and at one with the group's identity. It's all those things that are said over and over again that feel reassuring and create a sense of community. But – at the margins, or just beneath the surface – there are also those things that are not as accepted or familiar, thoughts that are excluded and somehow challenge the identity of the group and the prevailing norm. Both voices are always present in groups, both in individuals and in the group as a whole. It never takes long before

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1. Karolinska Institutet Public Health Academy, 2011:16, *Links between conflict at work and depression*, Karolinska Institutet.

the uniformity starts to feel uncomfortable and something that runs counter to it, or that highlights a point of view that the group finds less comfortable, starts to bubble up from under the surface. Mindell says that these moments are valuable. He calls them ‘hot spots’ and it is only if we can learn to stop and explore them that we will be able to incorporate the knowledge held at the margins. We can often feel ‘hot spots’ physically in our bodies or we may see signs of restlessness in the group or in one individual, a sort of discord. So by pausing and attempting to include the diverse voices, we can provide space for conflict at an early stage, making it constructive instead of allowing it to grow within an individual or in smaller groups and become destructive in the longer term.²

Myrna Lewis is a psychologist and facilitator from South Africa with lengthy experience of working with conflict in the work environment. Lewis has created a model based on Mindell’s work that shows why it is important for teams to find constructive ways of ‘arguing’. In her experience, resistance that is not addressed is a ticking time bomb that paralyses the work until the conflict has reached such a level that it leads to open warfare or separation.³



Lewis’s model describes a line in which resistance that is not taken into account takes different forms over time. One of the first signs of resistance that is not explicit is *joking* and *sarcasm*; jokes that are not meant just to entertain but that contain unspoken criticism.

2. Arnold Mindell, 2003, *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums; How to Transform Organisations into Communities*, Hampton Roads Publishing Co.

3. Myrna Lewis 2003, *Inside the NO. Five Steps to Decisions That Last.*

The next step on the line is *excuses*. Rather than clearly opposing a decision or an opinion, a person may give various reasons why something has not been done. Resistance which has been below the surface for a while is often also expressed as *gossip*; things are said to some people in the group but are not mentioned when everyone is present. The resistance gradually becomes more obvious and increasingly affects the work. *Communication breaks down*, colleagues *deliberately hold up the work* or even *fail to attend* important meetings. In the end, the conflict is *open warfare* or, there's a *separation*: someone resigns, goes on sick leave or is forced to leave.

Simplistic identities as a way of coping with anxiety

Just as we have noted previously about groups, there are elements in all of us that are integrated into our self-image and identity and other elements that we are unaware of or exclude. One way of managing the vulnerability of not being fully able to control or understand oneself or others is to create *simplistic identities*, for example by projecting our own unconscious or undesirable qualities onto others. This happens almost automatically and does not always seem negative; it can create a sense of community and security: "You're like that, and I'm like this, so we know where we are with each other." But over time, roles that are too fixed can feel restrictive, and when other people's ideas about us feel simplistic and immovable we may get more and more frustrated. Suddenly, the organisation no longer consists of complex and highly-resourceful colleagues but of individuals who are caricatures of themselves and their profession.

In my experience, one section of a cultural organisation will often create a simplistic identity for another section, for example the administration department and those closer to the core artistic activity. Sometimes artistic leaders protest because structure and predictability kill creativity, while others in the organisation find that impulsiveness and flexibility make it impossible to work sustainably. In situations such as these, the conflict often

becomes simplified and is felt to be about people who are impossible or groups that do not understand the purpose of the overall work. The conflict tends to generate stagnated identities, roles and perceptions of enemies that increasingly lock in individuals and occupational groups, with a negative effect on the quality of the joint work. All needs and perspectives that argue in favour of orderliness and bureaucracy are then projected onto the administration staff, who are simplistically labelled ‘structure freaks’, while everyone’s narcissistic and crazy sides are seen as an eccentricity of the artistic staff.

The Norwegian organisational psychologist Paul Moxnes says that being in a group is a vulnerable and distressing position to be in, mainly because groups are characterised by a lack of control. Moxnes calls this *drive anxiety*. At work, we create structures and approaches to avoid our drive anxiety and in order to make both our own and other people’s behaviour predictable. A situation in which we never know what to expect of ourselves or of others is something we cannot easily tolerate. We therefore create roles, identities and structures so that we feel secure and can put our energy into our work.

However, there can be a danger of the structure becoming too rigid, and some individuals, and those in particular positions, instead experience what Moxnes calls *system anxiety*. System anxiety is a feeling of being locked in, restricted and controlled, an adverse reaction to an excess of predictability. While those people in an organisation who have least voice, least information and overview and who are most dependent on other people’s decisions are often affected by drive anxiety, systems anxiety is more common amongst those higher up in the hierarchy. It is therefore not unusual for the structure many people see as their lifeline to be challenged or joked about by those with more power in the organisation.⁴

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4. Paul Moxnes, 2015, *Positiv ångest hos individen, gruppen, organisationen : ett organisationspsykologiskt perspektiv* (‘Positive anxiety in the individual, the group and the organisation: an organisational psychology perspective’), Natur Kultur Akademisk.

Thus if we accept Moxnes's ideas, differences in position and power are significant in this context. It is my experience that if leaders, and ideally others too, are aware of this, they can establish a dialogue and a better balance that will enable, say, artistic freedom and structure to co-exist. But it is also important to find ways of allowing individuals and the positions they are in to have complexity and to discourage over-rigid divisions between different groups in the organisation – to be open to joint exploration of the many different perspectives and viewpoints that we all have within us, and to allow ourselves to surprise and be surprised.

Resistance and locked-in identities in a cultural organisation

A cultural organisation I worked with needed help to re-energise their internal work that had stagnated. The director, along with others in the team, testified that for several years there had been a state of inertia and an atmosphere that did not encourage creativity. Insecurity featured large in the group and many people were unwilling to express their opinion. Joint meetings were often quiet, but in the smaller groups people voiced strong opinions and were critical of other colleagues, the director and how the work was being organised.

Many people in the organisation recognised themselves in Lewis's 'resistance line', with each of the different steps being relevant at one time or another. Several people had left the organisation in open frustration or had quietly gone on sick leave. My task was to give the leadership the confidence to get a grip on the dissent in a structured way. The director and I were in agreement that the conflict was not about any factual issue; it was rather that there was a dynamic that needed to be challenged. After a lengthy piece of work involving several meetings that aimed to help the group to talk about the things that needed to be talked about and at the same time get some practice in conducting these sorts of

conversations, the group and the director started to find new approaches to conflict.

One outcome of the initial meetings was some additional training in conflict theory and in simple ways for a team to run meetings and make decisions that were inclusive of dissenting views and allowed them to be expressed. The group practised actively seeking out resistance rather than moving quickly towards consensus and harmony. The methods took the focus away from the individual and instead helped the group to look at resistance and diversity of opinion as a natural part of working in a team, and to realise that if there was a lot of uniformity in respect of an issue it should be seen more as a warning signal. Moving towards a decision without exploring different perspectives may seem efficient at the time, but because groups and individuals are complex a better strategy can often be to pause and make things more complicated so as to achieve a strong buy-in that will stand the test of time.

We then held a special joint meeting to look at the identity of the team and see what was excluded. It became clear during the conversation that many people felt the norms were restrictive and that they did not recognise themselves in their often rigid viewpoints. Some people felt that they had tried to break with prevailing ways of working, but that when this had clearly not been appreciated by the others they had given up. Together, we attempted to unpick the caricatures that had been created around various roles in the organisation. Everybody had an opportunity to get a feel for the different identities by identifying qualities in themselves. Which part of me wants or needs to be a structure freak? When can I be crazy and creative? It became obvious in the accounts people gave how restrictive the roles had become. For many people it felt good to be able to attend to those aspects of themselves that hadn't been involved. Of particular importance was the moment when those in leadership positions acknowledged that it was their position and power that enabled them to give expression to certain sides of their character. They now realised that it was unfair of them to be frustrated at what

they perceived to be other people's inability to be flexible during the process. For those people working in an administrative role, this acknowledgement made a considerable difference. What they had experienced as an injustice had made them more inclined to cling tight to their structure. With this new-found understanding came the potential for a better connection. This was a moment of breakthrough in the process, and although conflict is always around the corner, we made sure that we celebrated the sense of community that was then apparent.

The meeting ended with the group agreeing how in the future they would take note of *hot spots* and try to be supportive in situations where there was an opportunity to grasp perspectives and knowledge that were below the surface. One suggestion was to get a greater understanding of and insight into each other's work through study visits and joint meetings, and also for colleagues to make each other aware of when they are simplifying or gossiping.

In my feedback session with the organisation, it became clear that things hadn't all gone like clockwork. The problems have not simply disappeared, and they don't always feel that they have time to be meticulous in ensuring buy-in from people with their diverse perspectives and opinions. But one thing that the director identified as a major difference was that the vast majority of people are more open to working with conflict and are better at undertaking more complex analysis of their feelings and opinions. This means that there is much less tendency to place everything at the door of other individuals or other occupational groups. There is less tolerance of gossip, and more people actively draw the line at less constructive ways of expressing dissent. More people participate in the meetings and help to ensure that thoughts that are not articulated clearly at the start are expressed before a decision is made. The boundaries between different occupational categories are less rigid.

Afterwards, we pulled together the following conclusions to guide the organisation's future approach to conflict management:

- * Management needs to be prepared to tackle resistance at an early stage. This could be by responding to sarcasm and not getting involved in gossip.
- * It is important for everyone to help by taking note of *hot spots* and doing what they can to make sure that the group has the courage to explore them, thus bringing dissent to light at an earlier stage.
- * Each individual has responsibility for raising any dissent with their manager or with the whole group in a constructive way.
- * It is important to take a step back and try to analyse conflict situations in a more complex way, for example by asking oneself questions such as: Am I projecting? Does this situation look different to us because we are in different positions in the organisation? Is the conflict mainly being created by the circumstances in which we currently work?

New ways of understanding and relating to conflict

Having trust in a team is something that many people feel is an important factor in being able to work well and enjoyably together. But what we often forget is that trust is not something we can simply agree will exist, neither can the director create it. Trust is not a prerequisite for successful collective work, it emerges from it. To judge by the relationships and experiences we bring with us, I think it is often the case that the way to achieve trust is to experience it being broken. *Trust is created when we go through conflict and find a joint way forward.*

It's important for leaders to remind themselves of this. Our role is not to create security and harmony; it is to allow the group and the individuals in it to be part of a process in which the experiences they go through lead them to feel confident that the group can accommodate the range of opinions, thoughts, feelings and knowledge in every individual and in the group as a whole.

The most important role a leader can play in that process is probably to be open to conflict and to try to see opposition and resistance as the expression of something important that needs to be understood, rather than something that interrupts the work and allows chaos to ensue. If the person leading the work is comfortable with the fact that conflict is natural and manageable, there will be less anxiety in the process. That in itself will lead to individuals and groups keeping sight of their own resources and being more able to relate both to themselves and to other people.

Kerstin Jeding

Stress, health and productivity

All leaders want healthy and motivated co-workers. To avoid having burnt out, over-stressed or indifferent employees seem to be one of today's greatest challenges for Western world organisations.

Public debate mentions stress often. People are stressed by rigid rules at work, or by high workloads, or by not knowing well enough what's expected of them. We're stressed about low wages, uncertain employment contracts, bad management, conflicts, low levels of control over our work, poor social support. This list could be made much longer, and scientific references to each of those correlations could be added easily. But what is stress, really? In common language today, it seems to be everything and anything that challenges us.

Stress has been systematically researched since the 1940's when it was first defined simply as the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change. Definitions have since included that the person getting stressed actually has to perceive that demand on herself as taxing or exceeding her resources. Furthermore, all of those non-specific responses do not have to be bodily, but include mental and not the least behavioural responses as well.

Thus, anything that someone subjectively perceives as taxing or exceeding what they can handle can be stressful. The research

can only show us what those factors commonly are - commonly, but not in all of us all the time.

There seems to be an assumption that larger organisations deal better with stress prevention or psychosocial work environment interventions than smaller. There is no reason for this, other than that a larger organisation might be able to employ specialists that can focus exclusively on these issues and thereby gain useful experiences and implement systems and routines. It is the strength, and challenge, of any small organisation that a smaller number of people take on a large number of roles without being specialists in most of them. The strength lies, among other things, in the flexibility it allows. Treat “stress management” or “sustainable health” as you would any other project: initiate, plan, do, check, act (repeat/close). It is my firm belief, as a specialist in this area, that the main obstacle to better stress prevention in work places is not trying to do anything, rather than doing something not well enough. To me it seems that too many leaders decide that they do not know enough about how to do it, and choose to do nothing or hesitate for so long when choosing the “right thing” that it in practise equals doing nothing. Remember, treat it as any other project, and you’ll get far.

Insecure employment, threat of unemployment and temporary employment are factors known to relate to decreased levels of worker health. Shift-work, including all work outside of regular office hours, is also related to decreased health in studies of the general population. Economic stress is a well-known correlate of poorer health. Works that make demands on our mental abilities: concentration, memory, decision-making, empathy are known to be able to increase our stress levels by making it harder to let go of thoughts of work outside of working hours, thus disturbing recuperation. Work that can be closely monitored or evaluated by others is often perceived as more stressful. Do you recognise any of those challenges in the culture sector? In your current project? Initiate your Increase-health-at-work-project right now!

When working to promote health and decrease stress in a

workplace, some knowledge of the most salient factors identified by research will guide every leader to increase health on a general level. When implementing guidelines laid out by research that works for the majority, we still need something that guides us in helping the individuals that might perceive stress so differently from others. Believe it or not, while we are thoroughly different in our reactions, it is possible to use a simple model to guide us in this. Let's start by briefly reviewing science's best advice for a healthy workplace, and then move on to a model for supporting any group or individual stuck in unhealthy patterns.

Science's best advice for a healthy and productive work place

Research has come a long way and has lots of advice to guide leaders. While there are several overlapping models giving roughly the same message, the Demand-Control-Support model of professors Karasek and Theorell sums it up beautifully: we can all be healthy and motivated by rather high workloads, as long as we have control/influence/discretion over how and when our work tasks are done; and we are doing it in a supportive, friendly-enough environment. If we have low control over our job such as when we have to do it in a way someone else has come up with, and we have to do it according to a schedule we can't influence we will be stressed, perform more poorly, eat more medications, have a higher incidence of depression and be more likely to quit our job.

Let's look at each of those three factors that make up the model separately:

Social support makes everything better, and lack of it makes everything worse. Social support often means anything from that people are generally friendly and greet each other, have coffee together, and ask about each other's well-being. Every person in the work place or project can contribute to improv-

ing the social climate by setting their own example, and for a leader to be very conscious of being a good role model in this is a small step that can have huge impact.

Social support is more than courtesies though. It is also about openness to each other's differences as well as ideas, and about acceptance of everyone having a bad day and performing below their average every once in a while. How you as a leader deal with one co-worker after a temporarily bad performance sets the stage for all other co-workers too: here they'll hang me out to dry, scape-goat me when I'm having a bad day or here I will be supported and given a new chance when I make a mistake.

Control (or discretion) at work means we can cope better with increased workloads. Control can be both over the larger picture at work: In this project I'd like to do part B first, and then part A, or the smaller picture: When sorting these letters alphabetically, I can choose the way I do it, or when I take a break while doing it. The opposite of high control over one's job is to be told what to do, how to do it and when to do it, without having any influence over it while being supervised or observed that I do it according to protocol. Job control can be greatly increased just by the way the leader manages work.

Work demands or work load is how much is asked of us. If we are asked to assemble 10 units per hour, the work load would increase if we were asked to do 11 per hour instead. Most of us can't measure our work demands by counting output factors that easily. Instead, a leader will have to try to look out for other indicators of work load, such as total working hours, or fatigue, performance, motivation or health indicators. In a field where working hours commonly are irregular, and people get admired for managing long hours, this will be a challenge. But consider the seemingly easy example of knowing the workload is adequate at a particular level of output factor such as 10 or 11 units per hour. How would we know that out-

put is a reasonable workload? By looking at total working hours, but also fatigue, motivation, performance and health indicators.

In every kind of work we need to look at those factors to be able to determine what is a reasonable workload.

Thus, if you as a leader are perceiving indicators of tired, unmotivated or sloppy performance by co-workers, consider if the work load, which may be perfect for you, may be too high for those you lead. Always check that it isn't too low - too little challenge at work is detrimental for motivation as well.

Remember that even if there are lots of things that need doing, giving people a too high workload is very ineffective, and your organisation will get more done if work load is about right. Furthermore, ask yourself if you could increase the job control in one or several ways to help people cope with a high work load: ask your employees for their advice on how or when to do something. If nothing else, work on increasing social support: buy something to munch on together over a cup of tea or coffee this afternoon; ask someone you usually don't what they did on their day off; say something encouraging to someone who is having a bad day.

Working on these work place factors is where any researcher would put her money – scientific studies have shown time after time that these kinds of factors matter more than any individual intervention we could invest in.

How to motivate and promote health in individuals

What it's all about – our valued direction

For organisations of any kind - hospitals, factories or theatres - to be successful, many researchers and management gurus point to the importance of clear goals and visions. That is the answer to “why are we doing this?” but also to “how would we be proud of

doing this?”. It’s old wisdom that if you want workers to build a ship, the most effective way is neither the threat of the whip nor the promise of rich rewards, but to make these people dream of sailing on the sea. All people have enormous resources to achieve goals given the right motivation, and the right motivation for one person isn’t the same as for the next. By helping to uncover genuine motivation for work groups or individuals, any organisation can improve productivity in a way that reduces stress and promotes health at the same time. Sounds too good to be true? Check out the research (see references at the end).

What is your organisation’s or project’s *raison d’être*? What are you committed to? To tell stories, to provoke, to contribute to society, to provide distraction from a hard life, to stimulate? For a liquid organisation or a one-off project team, the temporary nature of the organisation can in itself be a challenge. Colleagues don’t know each other, there are no traditions or common experiences to draw from. To have a group discussion about the project’s common *why*’s and *how*’s when starting up a new project will help to quickly establish common goals and direction – let’s call it your valued direction. Gather your co-workers and think about this together, keeping openness and acceptance of each others differences in mind. Brain-storm, collect ideas, sort ideas and pen down three to five words (or sentences) that describes what your organisation is about. If it helps you, think about what you wish you would read about yourself if you would be able to read about your organisation in some wikipedia text 200 years from now. “The Jupiter Project is remembered for its commitment to portraying people that have turned their lives around which inspired many individuals to change their own situation”. The Jupiter Project could have had the words “inspire the ill-advantaged” on their white-board in their session, and would be proud to be remembered that way.

Take a moment to notice how valued direction relate to goals. The valued direction is just that - a direction in the same way as west or east that you can travel towards for the rest of your life without ever reaching it. Valued direction is what allows you to

know which goals to choose. Goals are concrete milestones you pass along your way that might guide you to move in your valued direction. Goals can be achieved and ticked off. You can set up several goals if you would like to go eastwards: First I fly to Paris, then I take the train to Berlin, next I drive to Warsaw. Note that not everything you do along the way will be moving exactly eastwards. There will be times perhaps when you drive west or south to be able to catch that roughly eastbound train, but they are all part of a series of actions that take you steadily in your valued direction.

Have you ever worked hard to achieve a goal that left you feeling surprisingly empty and lacking in pride or sense of achievement? I bet that was a goal that was not towards your personal valued direction. Goals that are milestones towards your valued direction will be goals worth achieving, and achieving them is likely to make you feel proud and vital. Goals that are not in your valued direction leave you feeling nothing in particular or worse.

If you as a leader take time to have discussions with your co-workers/contractors/partners about your current valued direction you will be able to summarise on a tiny piece of paper what you want your organisation or project to be about. Knowing your valued direction is how you will be able to know how well something works: something that works is something that helps you/the organisation move in this valued direction.

Sustainability

Framing something as a valued direction can be misused to manipulate people. To do something in the name of something bigger and worthier has made people such as you and me do terrible things:

Give electric shocks beyond the point of safety to others “in the name of science” (in Milgrams infamous scientific experiments)

Participate in Holocaust “for the Third Reich”

Killing civilians in terrorist attacks “for the Islamic State”

These are extreme examples, but they point to the extreme power that is possible to unleash when relating to a common higher purpose, i.e. clarifying valued directions. Do it responsibly.

Perhaps you know of less extreme examples yourself. Examples where you yourself, or others, have worked beyond what is healthy for a common higher goal. It happens easily in volunteer or idea-driven organisations where the idea itself (e.g. helping others) takes the place of a full valued direction. When using valued directions in training or therapy, the direction is never complete if not the full spectrum of it is considered: love, work, play and health/sustainability (that is relationships, working life, leisure/life outside of work and health). As you probably could see in your own example, it is possible to stress severely or even burn-out even when moving towards a slice of valued direction, as long as it is a slice and not the full spectrum.

In order not to misuse the power of working towards a common good, consider how you will be able to pursue your valued direction in a sustainable way - a way that sustains health, energy and work performance until the project's end or the undetermined future. What could the organisation stand for in this? What could the leadership embody? Openness, challenge, support? Find the words that would describe this part of the valued direction for the organisation. Next, list behaviours you can do to move towards these values: keep working hours better, not send each other text messages outside of hours, encourage each other to take breaks. If pauses and breaks are seen in their context, as ways of sustaining high performance over an extended period and being able to keep moving in valued direction, it is easier for both you as a leader, and for those you lead to be motivated to balance your energies better.

We can misuse the powers of valued directions on ourselves, too. I work at a stress rehabilitation clinic. Our patients have

overtaxed their energy resources for years. While part of the problem often is what is called rule-governed behaviour (polar opposite of the flexible guidance given by striving in a valued direction), another part has to do with lack of sustainability. Some of the things the patients have been striving for has been genuinely a part of their valued direction, such as caring for others or pursuing a specific career. Note that I say “part of” their valued direction, for the valued direction is not complete without considering sustainability: for an individual this often means taking care of one’s own health. It is painfully clear to my patients that they are not able to ease the load off their co-workers or family or pursue their career at all while in rehab, and I am quite sure they all wish they had seen it like that earlier when they still could adjust their behaviour and avoid a health collapse. Because to be able to keep caring for others (or keep going in any valued direction) we do need to balance our effort enough to make it sustainable over time. Here’s the short version of how, that will help you take care of yourself, and lead your co-workers in a sustainable way.

We accumulate tiredness or fatigue from being active, and then reinstitute energy through rest or recuperation. Experts keep repeating that activity is good for us, and that stress is not unhealthy if matched with adequate recuperation. Passive resting, such as lying still on the couch, is not always, or even very often, the best way of rebuilding energy. Instead, let us look for active ways of sustaining energy.

First, let’s consider different types of tiredness or fatigue that we can accumulate. Easy to distinguish are physical fatigue that we accumulate from physical activities and mental fatigue that we acquire gradually from mental activities. Other kinds of fatigue include sleepiness from prolonged wakefulness or too little sleep and a more hard-to-define emotional fatigue that comes from dealing with strong emotions. Note that all these kinds of fatigue have in common that they are accumulated by a certain kind of activity, and that they can be restored by other activities.

If we have been active physically, we need to rest our body, but it is possible to engage in mental activities, in the same way as we can do physical activities when mentally fatigued. Thus, one of the best ways of balancing our energies is to consciously alternate between activities that use different modalities in us. For instance, my work is quite mental and not very physical at all. For me, a good break is not usually sitting still or thinking and problem-solving. Instead, I go to the staff pentry and unload the dishwasher, or walk the corridors, or anything else that might be more physical and is not a taxing mental activity. Lunch time walks gives me a good break, and walking and working out before or after my working hours balances my efforts.

In addition to changing modalities, taking breaks is a great strategy for sustainability. Great advice is to plan your days breaks first, and then fill in the rest with activities, rather than the opposite. Combine slightly longer pauses (such as a meal break) with micro-pauses that can be 30 seconds or a few minutes long. Micro-pauses can include doing an easy stretch, or doing a very brief mindfulness exercise or looking out the window for a minute or so. This is what might help you to not increase your stress levels during the day. Finding it hard to take even small breaks is for many of us a signal that we really, really need them. Use your good problem-solving skills to help yourself and your co-workers to actually take breaks. One easy way is for you yourself to model the behaviour you wish your co-workers to adopt: be a role-model by taking a break yourself.

Some people recognise adhering to a pattern of activity that often comes in bursts and is concentrated to half-a-day or longer of intense activity followed by a period of recuperation that often is longer than the active period. We call this burn and crash. If you recognise yourself in this pattern, you will know how good it often feels while still in the burn-mode, but also how tough the crash can be each time. If you are looking for sustainability of your efforts over a longer period than half-a-day, experiment with reducing your efforts and choosing to increase pauses and rest on a burn-day while at the same time slightly increasing

your activity on a crash-day. The goal is to even-out the activity level and finding a pace that you can keep every day over a longer period of time. Most people will miss some of the rush of working in crazy bursts, but be surprised at the benefits of a more even activity pattern. If this applies to you, I encourage you to experiment with what it can do for you. If it applies to members of your team, encourage them to explore it in different ways and be mindful of not accidentally reinforcing intense bouts of work but instead encouraging the balanced examples - this is often very hard to do. When something is hard, remember your motivation for doing so: what is the valued direction you are trying to move towards? Don't do it because I, the board, your partner or doctors says so. Do it because it matters to you.

Workability

To summarise this far, the advice is to move towards you and your organisation's valued direction in a sustainable way. Many times, it is that easy. And other times, it really isn't. As a psychologist, I quickly sort problems into those that are in the Outer World and those that are in our Inner World, inside our skin in form of thoughts and feelings. Not having enough money is an Outer World problem. In the Outer World, use your problem-solving skills. Anything from "How can I get more funds?" to "How can I tell this story given this budget?" can be problem-solved.

We can problem-solve to get more things, or get rid of things that are problems in the Outer World, so naturally we try to use this successful strategy in the Inner World too. We try to problem-solve away fears, negative thoughts or insecurities. You have probably tried too. The problem is, it doesn't work, not in the long run. If it did work, our alcoholics, anorectics and agoraphobics would be anxiety-free now. Instead, we know that painful thoughts and emotions are abundant in those diagnoses. This is one of many clues to why increased problem-solving and

control over thoughts and emotions is not going to help any one of us. Instead, we need a different way of dealing with thoughts and emotions we perceive get in our way of doing the things we want.

We can be trapped by the way we use language, or by ideas we have about the Inner World. The best example regarding being trapped by language can be summarised by examples of replacing but's with and's. Check out to see if this changes meaning

I love my husband, but he snores so much.

I love my husband, and he snores so much.

It does, doesn't it? In the but-example, it does seem that I love him a bit less for snoring. In the and-example, I can love him while he is snoring away, right? Now, we often put the but-condition on on actions we plan to do too:

I would love to receive school-class visits, but they're so much work.

I would like to have that conversation, but I'm afraid.

The "but" makes it less likely that we will do what we say we'd like to in the first part of the sentence. That little word can impact what we do or refrain from doing irrespective of whether doing it would mean moving towards our valued direction.

Try to change the but's to and's:

I would love to receive school-class visits, and they're so much work.

I would like to have that conversation, and I'm afraid.

This is better guidance for you. If you want to receive school-class visits you can. And it will be hard work, though worthwhile if it is a move towards your valued direction. If you would like to have that conversation you can do it and be afraid at the same time. Remember that valued direction is where you want to put

your efforts – it is the things that are worthy of your blood, toil, tears and sweat.

Sometimes we get caught up in the idea that we first have to feel better about something, and then we can do it. When my self-esteem has improved, I will apply for art school. When I feel less sad, I will spend more time with my friends. It is a very widespread idea, though it doesn't work very well. Because putting off life, waiting, will not help you improve self-esteem or mood, while filing that application or meeting those friends actually may.

Note that the content of your thought can have surprisingly little impact on you, while the way you handle your thoughts has a lot. This literally means that you need not spend time or energy fruitlessly trying to change the way people feel or think to be able to support them in being healthy co-workers. By helping people move in valued direction, while letting their minds chatter away, is a way of improving motivation while at the same time improving health.

The bullet-proof test that you can apply to any thought, emotion or even bodily sensation that comes to mind when you are about to engage in an activity is that of workability. Ask yourself not if the thought is true or false, or fair or unfair, or even positive or negative, as this perhaps surprisingly does not matter. Ask only if listening to it will help you move towards your valued direction. If the answer is yes, do indeed listen. If the answer is no, go ahead and do what you want to do, even if the thought still broadcasts its fears and warnings over your inner radio. If you doubt that you can do things that are contrary to your thoughts about it, we can test this in an experiment right now. Start thinking “I cannot lift my arm, I cannot lift my arm” and keep thinking it, while you raise your arm. It's doable. Take some time to reflect over if this applies to feelings as well in your experience. Have you ever done something and felt nervous, afraid, happy or any other emotion at the same time? We need not be slaves under our thoughts and feelings, we can choose what we do guided by our own valued direction in life.

Now, how is this good advice to a leader? It is so because the way you react to your co-workers will matter. If you yourself can disentangle from your Inner World content, your way of responding to other's will help you find a workable way towards your common valued directions. You will not have to wait until all the stars align and none of your crew have any worries, insecurities or stress, but you can guide them towards the valued direction while life goes on.

Advice to leaders who want to increase health and decrease stress in summary:

- * work to provide interesting but reasonable levels of work demands, giving your team high control over their work and high social support
- * be guided by what is workable in that it helps you move towards your/your organisations valued direction in a sustainable way

Any step towards either or both of the points above will most likely increase or maintain the health of your team, while at the same time increasing productivity and motivation. This is what a leader can do to decrease stress.

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Rasmus Fleischer

Brave new interface, or, Never put all your eggs in the same cloud!

I.

Besides being one of the world's largest corporations, Google is also a cultural heritage institution. The latter aspect might seem merely accidental, given the fact that the bulk of Google's business is in the advertising industry. Nevertheless, cultural heritage has been central to the corporate image. Just consider Google's official mission statement, dating from 1999:

“Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.”

From the perspective of existing cultural institutions, working non-commercially to preserve cultural heritage, this statement could be read either as a threat or as an opportunity. Furthermore, the pledge to make information “universally accessible” was predetermined to create a panic over copyright in certain quarters.

These tensions began to surface in 2004 when Google announced its plans to scan every book in the world. A special de-

vice was developed, capable of digitising a thousand pages an hour. Partnerships were established with some of the largest US libraries, and Google officials became prominent guests at librarian conferences.

Google Books was soon sued by various rights-holders, resulting in a number of high-profile cases in various jurisdictions. But copyright issues aside, the massive digitisation effort did much to boost goodwill for Google. The idea of making every book universally accessible – or at least searchable – was greeted with open arms by the world’s librarians. They were not just naive. Some even concluded that Google’s real motivation was to use the world’s literary heritage to fine-tune its software for automatic translation; the fact that the public could be given access to digitised books was just a beneficial spillover effect. And indeed, in the ideal world national libraries would be granted the legal permissions and financial resources to digitise all books themselves. But it’s the financial outcomes that count in this world, isn’t it?

For the remainder of the decade, Google’s expansion in all directions – forwards, sideways, backwards – seemed unstoppable. As more libraries entered into partnerships with Google Books, the collection of digitised books seemed to grow exponentially.

But then something happened around 2010. Google Books is now in stagnation: the work on digitisation has slowed considerably, much of the scanning already done is of poor quality, public access is restricted and Google seems to have aborted its previous efforts to maintain a cosy relationship with the world’s professional librarians. In addition, Google’s project to scan 200 years’ worth of the world’s newspapers was abandoned in 2011, just a few years after its launch.

This development has been well charted in blog posts by librarian Jessamyn West and technologist Andy Baio. The moral of the story is captured by the latter in a headline: “Never trust a corporation to do a library’s job”.

The demise of Google Books may be due to some degree to copyright indictments. But most of all, I would argue, it is part of

a strategic decision that has never been explicitly declared but is nevertheless becoming clear: Google is turning its back on the past.

This change of strategy has also transformed Google's core service, Google Search. In 2010 the algorithms for sorting search results were changed, in order to boost "freshness". The search engine, and indeed Google as a company, was originally built upon a ground-breaking algorithm known as PageRank. It was essentially a formula for quantifying the relevance of a web page according to the number of incoming links from other web pages, with links from more relevant pages being assigned a higher value. As more people began to link to a particular web page over time it would rise in the rankings, and in this sense PageRank really did reward archival efforts. Of course, other aspects such as geographical proximity were also influencing the ordering of search results. From 2005 onwards, Google began to experiment with personalisation, based on a more rigorous monitoring of the individual user's preferences, and by the turn of the decade it was declared that all search results would now be personalised. According to critics, this placed each individual within a "filter bubble", unable to relate to a common point of reference or index of truth (if it had not been for Wikipedia taking precisely this role).

At about the same time, in 2010, Google made some fundamental changes in its algorithms, promising "50 percent fresher results". In other words, the top search results no longer tended to be those that many others had valued over time but newly-published information. This resulted in altered incentives for all kinds of digital publishing. Much of the past slid into the shadows as the spotlight was firmly focused on the present.

The rationale behind this relates to wider trends in the market in which Google operates. During the 2010's, the ongoing redesign of services like Facebook and Twitter has also tended to direct users' attention to the most recently published information, at the expense of context. Of course, these two companies never promised to be cultural heritage institutions. But Google did.

The demise of Google Books should serve as a reminder that grandiose claims by commercial companies about culturally-important projects should never be trusted. Even if there are good intentions, they might not survive a global financial crisis, and in this case they did not.

In the 2010's we see a new Google emerging. It has refocused its digitisation work on other kinds of information: medical (Google Genomics), scientific (Google Scholar), and spatial (Google Maps, Google Street View). Rather than putting resources into organising existing information just in case someone wants to find it, the priority now is to predict what users might be interested in right now (Google Now) and even future events. This turn away from cultural heritage may be understood as a consequence of Google's strategic ambition to become less dependent on the advertising industry. Andy Baio concludes:

“Google in 2015 is focused on the present and future. Its social and mobile efforts, experiments with robotics and artificial intelligence, self-driving vehicles and fiberoptics. As it turns out, organizing the world's information isn't always profitable.”

It all adds up to a trend whose wider consequences will have to be addressed by all kinds of cultural institutions, in some way or another, whether they are actively interacting with Google or similar corporations or not.

This is a lesson that assumes particular importance in relation to Google's current work with museums on digitising artworks. I will return to this in the last part of this article. But before that, I want to sketch a broader picture of the latest transformation of the internet in terms of both infrastructure and interface.

II.

As permanent connectivity via mobile devices has become the norm, power has effectively become centralised and monop-

lised. Both computing power and social power have been transferred from the multitude of ‘peers’ to the ‘cloud’ – that is, to operators of data centres of industrial scale. This development in contemporary media history is seldom seen as the industrialisation process that it really is. Rather, it is ascribed mystic status like some kind of apotheosis. To use a hydrological metaphor: *The Net* is evaporating, everything will be in *the Cloud*.

In the last decade, the trajectory of digital media became associated with the ‘web 2.0’ buzzword. It was charged with romantic associations: sharing, democracy and radical openness. Not so with ‘the cloud’. Emphasis has shifted towards mobility and convenience.

We no longer tend to imagine the internet as a vast ocean on which to surf, but rather as a series of tubes for accessing a number of distinct *services*, each one represented by an app on our mobile devices. All the predominant services – with the notable exception of Wikipedia – are controlled by corporations, heavily dominated by a few US giants: Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple. Of course, independent media operators can still run their own blogs, their own podcasts, even their own servers. But in order to be able to reach out to anybody, these media initiatives must be marketed within the predominant, commercial platforms. There is no longer a spot outside the supermarket where you can stand handing out your flyers.

In retrospect, *web 2.0* was a heart-warming vision in which digital media would bring about social and cultural transformation – without hurting business. This vision died with the global economic recession, as the advertising market collapsed. Financial stimuli from central banks soon let loose a new wave of venture capital hungry to invest in high-risk markets, producing a new bubble of technology companies that could be valued at billions of dollars and were more likely to expand than to make profit. And yet, these companies no longer have any grand ideas about digital revolution bringing about social or cultural change. The cloud is a rather cold place.

Looking more closely at this cloud, we see a stratification of

digital media into two broad categories: *social media* and *streaming media*. These labels have taken on specific meanings.

On the one hand, ‘social’ tends to stand for the kinds of services – ultimately dependent on advertising revenue – that are based on the interaction between registered users. Any user can circulate messages to others, and in return everybody is fed with a personalized ‘news feed’. There are no longer any groups to join. Instead, each user may ‘follow’ other users, usually chosen from a list of recommendations. The more users you follow, the fuller your feed.

‘Streaming’, on the other hand, tends to mean an experience intended to be less chaotic and more convenient. The user of streaming media is not left at the mercy of a constantly updating feed, but simply enters something into a search box and then receives the result. Or clicks on an editorial recommendation. The aim of streaming media is to deliver professional content that has the status of intellectual property. The emerging consensus is that the business model for streaming media is not to sell advertising, but to sell subscriptions.

Of course, there are innumerable ways of using digital media other than these two standardised models. But in the current version of the attention economy, the rules are in fact set by this pairing of social and streaming media. Anybody who uses digital media in order to maximize an audience – be it a commercial company, an activist group or a cultural institution – will be confronted with this choice. In other words, competition for attention seems to reinforce this divide between the social and streaming media models. The failure of a media company to position itself correctly on either one of the two sides tends to be punished by market forces, or in court.

To take one example: SoundCloud is an immensely popular platform for sharing music between independent artists and music connoisseurs, yet its future seems uncertain as the company continues to be sustained by venture capital with no viable business model in sight. At the same time, copyright holders are forcing SoundCloud to restrict the sharing of DJ mixes, alienating its

core users. This is the result when a service attempts to be both social media and streaming media in one.

In a sense, the same thing is happening to newspapers. On the one hand, most newspapers fear becoming irrelevant, losing advertising revenue, if their articles are not widely shared on social media such as Facebook. On the other hand, the same newspapers want to sell digital subscriptions, meaning that they must restrict access to that content, making it less ‘spreadable’. In the age of print, these two business models were able to complement each other, to the benefit of journalists. But instead newspapers are now torn apart, stuck between the social and the streaming models.

III.

The transfer of power from peers to the cloud does not mean that everyday use of digital media will shift from active participation back to passive consumption. Rather, the line between activity and passivity is now blurred. Participation is encouraged by social media, but mostly in forms that are easily quantified. So instead of writing a long blog post every other day, we are invited to write a short tweet every fifteen minutes. That generates data that is so much easier to analyse for the purposes of targeted advertising. The general tendency is to reduce interaction to a binary response – like, dislike, follow, share, retweet, heart or swipe.

A new universal interface has crystallised. Little by little it is replacing the classic forms of web design that was based on a duality of hypertext and hierarchy. It is also marginalising the peculiarities of web 2.0 such as tagging and wikis. (Of course, Wikipedia continues, but that is just one organisation. When was the last time you heard of someone starting a new wiki about a particular topic?)

The universal interface for digital media provides us with two points of entry to the abundance of information: the feed and

the search. These correspond to two modes of engagement. The feed represents the passivity of social media, while streaming media allows activity within a certain framework, i.e. the search box.

To search for entertainment, art, literature or news reporting, we must first know what we are looking for and be able to formulate this preference as a string of text. If we are not sure, we are drawn back to the newsfeed to get fed with new impulses. Everyday life on the internet is lived vacillating between the empty search box and the overfull feed.

At a deeper level, there is a tendency for the feed and the search to converge. On the one hand, the listing of search results is becoming more like a newsfeed, as Google and others change their algorithms to give priority to the most recently published material. At the same time, Facebook and Twitter have been moving away from their original model of chronological presentation towards filtered newsfeeds in which chronology is just one sorting parameter alongside personalized ‘relevance’. That allows for the introduction of other parameters, i.e. advertising. As anybody maintaining an information page on Facebook will have noted, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a message out to followers without paying for ‘promoted posts’.

IV.

Let us now return to Google and its role as a cultural heritage institution. Around the same time that it seemed to lose interest in libraries, it began to develop links with museums. Now it was no longer all the world’s books that were to be digitised but the most important art works in world history. In late 2011, a press release announced the founding of the Google Cultural Institute:

“Together with our museum partners around the world we have created what we hope will be a fascinating resource for art-lovers,

students and casual museum goers alike – inspiring them to one day visit the real thing.”

The same kind of 360° camera on wheels that was used to document the outside of urban buildings (Google Street View) was now used to record the inside of museums. The first list of partners included Alte Nationalgalerie (Berlin), the National Gallery (London), MoMA (New York) and the Palace of Versailles. Notably, no museums outside of Western Europe and Northern America were involved at the time of the launch. Although the collection has since grown more diversified, it still has a strong Eurocentric bias.

This bias is also reflected in the resolution of the images. Only a select few have gigapixel quality, making it possible for the user to zoom into “details of the brushwork and patina beyond that possible with the naked eye”. Gigapixel resolution indicates that an artwork has been canonized by Google, as noted by the Swedish-Mexican artist Geraldine Juárez in a fascinating essay about the “techno-colonial” impulse behind the Google Cultural Institute. She not only questions whether this promotion of high culture is just a way to better the image of a giant corporation but also tries to understand what happens with culture when it is disconnected from its material context and swallowed up by a digital database that is organised in accordance with commercial logic.

“When representations of artistic expression are turned into mere content, these images become mere assets that can feed any application”, writes Juárez. For example, it is now possible to display “a beautiful artwork” each time you open a new tab in your web browser. (“Breathe a little culture into your day” is the catchphrase used to market this browser plugin.) And those who have connected Google’s services to their TV using the Chromecast device can now get an endless flow of images right into their living room – the collections of the world’s museums digitised by Google. (Similar services are now offered by a number of start-up companies, including Artkick that has branded itself as “the Spotify for art”.)

As visual art is turned into entertainment flows of this kind, archives will be faced with the need to weed out content that at first sight might seem less pleasurable. ‘Art’ in this context tends to mean two-dimensional representations of historical ‘masterpieces’. At this stage, Google has chosen to avoid copyright disputes by mostly digitising works by artists who have been dead for more than 70 years. There seems to be a gulf between the fixation on the present and future that characterizes Google’s overall strategy and the digitised artefacts from the past that define the Google Cultural Institution. The latter collection is divided into three sections: *Art Project*, *Historic Moments* and *World Wonders*.

The user can use the search box if she is already certain of what she is looking for. Alternatively she can choose to ‘explore’ the collection and be directed to ‘featured content’. While exploration may sound like a daring activity, in practice it is a rather passive way of navigating without interacting. Geraldine Juárez notes that in the Google Cultural Institute, “the right-click option is disabled, so I cannot save the images to my hard-disk”. Instead, the user is invited to create ‘galleries’: selections of images that can only be viewed within Google’s own interface.

At this point, we might note the interesting contrast with the somewhat similar Europeana project, launched in 2008 and financed by the European Commission. Users who find something on Europeana are explicitly invited to “download it, print it, use it, save it, share it, play with it, love it!” In other words, Europeana are still using the characteristic language of web 2.0 which was so dominant at the time of its launch – celebrating an ideal that is strikingly absent from the commercial services of today.

On the other hand, it is not entirely clear how anybody would find anything on Europeana. Everything is still centred around a search box. A search for ‘Mozart’ returns about 15,000 hits, mostly pictures and sounds. For most purposes, this amounts to little more than noise. In Europeana strategy documents, there is some talk about improving navigation with “visualisation tech-

niques and more cross-linking between different content types”. But it seems that these good intentions have never borne fruit.

So what is Europeana? It is a database. Just as the Google Cultural Institute is, in essence, a database. That differentiates them from the traditional kinds of cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, archives and museums. Or magazines, book shops or radio stations. In simple terms, it is the difference between *being* a database and *having* a database.

The problem is not that a cultural institution may mistake itself for a database, although that may happen. Much trickier is the question of what it means to have, to control or to operate a database.

The technical solution for a digital database can always be outsourced. For example, many university libraries are no longer running their own catalogues. Instead they buy them as a service from a cloud computing company like Ex Libris, which calls itself “a global provider of library automation technology”. But that means that every time someone searches in the library catalogue, the search term together with identification data is sent overseas to the company’s server, to be stored in a growing database of search terms entered by academics across the world. So the use of the database creates another database that Ex Libris can use as a resource for data mining, detecting patterns in what academics have been searching for and selling the knowledge back.

Meanwhile, these kinds of services construct their own algorithms for ranking relevance among search results. Most library catalogues now claim to present the ‘most relevant’ results at the top – but very few librarians can tell you about the rationale for this ranking. It might not even be clear whether or not the search engine involves any degree of localisation or personalisation. But this cannot be seen as a strictly technological matter, nor is it just about creating a convenient service for a consumer that can be outsourced to ‘the cloud’. Rather, it concerns the very essence of what a library can be. I think this example is indicative of what can happen when cultural institutions try to follow current

trends in the digital media industry uncritically. In any case, we cannot know how long these trends will last. They might disappear silently just like *web 2.0*. Whatever the future, one lesson to be learned from the examples discussed here is never to put all your eggs in the same cloud.

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Practising intersectionality: challenging power

Introduction

Intersectionality has emerged as an intellectual and political challenge for researchers, practitioners and activists involved with social and cultural inequalities and, more specifically, with the relations of power, exploitation and subordination established as a result of categorisation on the basis of gender, class, sexuality and race. However, the open nature of the concept has also generated different interpretations, multiple uses and intensive debates. Questions of political usefulness, empirical limitations and ontological premises have been at the core of feminist discussions on intersectionality.¹ There has also been critical examination of the historical context in which the concept has appeared and of the implications of a metaphor that suggests a crossroads rather than mutually-constructed relations of power. But even though the concept is interpreted and used in different

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1. See for instance the special issues of *Signs – Intersectionality: Theorizing Power, Empowering Theory*, Vol 38/4 2013 and of the *European Journal of Women Studies – Intersectionality*, Vol 13/3 2006. In Sweden, the *Gender Studies Review (Tidskrift for genusvetenskap)* has also dedicated a special edition to exploration of intersectionality in a Swedish context (2005/2).

ways, most analysis shares a common understanding of power as complex, unstable and sustained by practices and discourses on various social levels. Notwithstanding other differences, we can see this common point of departure as an invitation to think about the many different types of power and how they operate in different contexts.

This article presents a short introduction to the debate on intersectionality and explores some basic assumptions that help to make this perspective a useful instrument with which to interrogate power inequalities and conditions of oppression apparent in cultural activity. The main focus is on the construction of formal and informal hierarchies in society and in cultural production and, specifically, on the contradictions, tensions and challenges emerging from normalised representations of difference that bind people to fixed identities and unequal positions.

The origins, the contexts and the story

In the 1970s, John Lennon achieved great popularity among feminists and other radicals for his singing of "Woman is the Nigger of the World". While advocating for women's liberation, the song identified gender inequality with the experience of slavery and racial oppression in the USA. Lennon used race as a metaphor to describe the deplorable fate of women but remained silent about racial injustices. The song implicitly defines womanhood within the boundaries of whiteness and uses a derogatory word to reinforce the abject position of a group beyond gender hierarchies. While Lennon's (male) solidarity has been extensively acknowledged, there have still been remarkably few critical comments pointing to the uncontested whiteness of the text. The song is not only an illustration of the invisibility of racism in feminist discourses and cultural production, it can also be read as an example of the hegemonic nature of Western ideologies that makes a position within whiteness a universal starting point for political action and social transformation.

Afro-American women have conducted a persistent and never-ending fight for equal rights and political visibility. Sojourner Truth's speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron in 1851 is a historical milestone. Asking the question "Ain't I a woman?", she denounced not only the inhumanity of slavery but also the racialised boundaries of womanhood. The invisibility of racism in feminist discourses and the lack of interest in class inequalities and relations of subordination and exploitation between women were important reasons behind Black feminist organisation in the 1970s. On the other hand, the existence of widespread sexism and patriarchal practices within the anti-racist movement was also a motivating factor in the search for other forms of political organisation, often under the umbrella of separatism. Political and scholarly efforts to identify the particular challenges faced by Afro-American women were presented in the classical work *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982) edited by Barbara Smith, Gloria Hull and Patricia Bell Scott. An engaging exposé of black feminist scholarship, the book has become a source of inspiration for later political and intellectual interventions. By focusing on racism against minority women, it probes the interlocking nature of different relations of power based on gender, class and sexuality.

Although Black feminist thinking has a long tradition of theorising both the invisibility of racism in gender narratives and the absence of a gender perspective in anti-racism strategies, most accounts of the trajectory of intersectional thinking start with the theoretical contributions of Kimberlé Crenshaw who published *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex* in the late 1980s. The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw as part of her development of a theory that explains the specific conditions of oppression affecting women who experience both racist subordination and class exploitation, and, at the same time, gender injustice. Crenshaw's focus on the situation of Afro-American women and other minority women in USA challenges common understandings of gender formulated by a feminist movement positioned in whiteness, heteronormativity and

class privilege. At the same time, the idea of racism as a totalising system of privileges based on ideas of white supremacy is also questioned when gender, class and sexuality are incorporated into research analysis and political activism. An intersectional perspective problematises experiences of racism as homogeneous and gender neutral. Instead, intersectionality examines the multiple ways in which racism is constructed, reproduced and contested along lines of class, sexuality and gender.

Postcolonial approximations to nation, place and time

Postcolonial feminist reactions to essentialist depictions of Third World Women make relevant a closer examination of feminist perceptions of a universal sisterhood and reveal discursive connections between current racist representations and the pervasiveness of a colonial past. The criticism presented by Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) in her article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and Colonial Discourses" addresses not only the (often) racialised generalisations characterizing feminist accounts of Third World Women but also the role played by representations of a colonised female subject in the production of a Western feminist identity. Against this background, filmmaker and writer Trinh Min-ha asks questions about the particular conditions surrounding the inclusion of non-Western participants in academic activities and other feminist events:

"Have you read the grievances some of our sisters express of being among the few women chosen for a 'Special Third World Women's Issue', or of being the only Third World woman at readings, workshops and meetings? It is as if everywhere we go, we become Someone's private zoo." (Min-ha 1987, p7)

Min-ha tells a story of subordinated inclusion, or rather, reflects a history of conditional humanity where the (temporal) inclusion of the 'other' in feminist activities also reifies colonial hier-

archies and representations. The relevance of these hierarchies is not, however, expressed only in discursive practices or limited to social interactions within academia. The colonial mapping of the world is also manifested in current labour market hierarchies in the rich world. Postcolonial research illuminates the intersections that make colonial representations a useful instrument in the construction of multiple working regimes characterized by differentiated access to welfare security, protective regulations and collective bargaining. The existence of a growing precariousness in working conditions is thus naturalised by perceptions of a ‘diverse’ labour force.² Sweden is not an exception. Even though Sweden’s participation in the colonial project is often silenced or played down, it is also true that colonial representations of white supremacy, Swedish exceptionalism and ethnic homogeneity have played a central role in the construction of a national identity and also in the normalisation of genderised and racialised hierarchies in the labour market and in society.

The imaginaries of the Swedish nation have been powerfully activated in encounters with immigrants and also in relation to ethnic minorities. Postcolonial feminist Anne McClintock reminds us that nations “are historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed” (2004:89). It is not only nations that are gendered. Gender has also been crucial in defining boundaries that construct strange ‘others’. Swedish gender research has repeatedly pointed to enduring limitations in gender politics regarding salaries, working conditions, the organisation of care, distribution of paid and unpaid work etc. But, despite these shortcomings, the notion of Sweden as a gender equality paradise is one that is constantly enlisted in internation-

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2. See among others Mezzadra, Sandro & Neilson, Brett (2013): *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Duke University Press, USA; Thörnquist, Annette & Engstrand, Åsa-Karin, eds. (2011): *Precarious Employment in Perspective. Old and New Challenges to Working Conditions in Sweden*, Peter Lang, Brussels; de los Reyes, Paulina (2001): *Diversity and Differentiation. Discourse, Difference and Construction of Norms in Swedish Research and Public Debate*, Saltsa/NIWL, Stockholm.

al comparisons and postulated as a national value threatened by the presence of immigrants or by the implementation of multiculturalism. In this way, gender equality is conceptualised on a discursive level not as an unfinished political project but rather as a distinctive national characteristic. Gender equality is thus constructed as a national (essential?) attribute closely connected to the notion of an exceptional Swedishness.

Postcolonial feminist research in Sweden identifies the articulation of gender equality alongside nationalism as a central node from which to understand the construction of immigrants, and particularly of immigrant women, as essentially deviant from Swedish norms and consequently as a given target group for gender disciplining, particularly in the labour market. The creation of low paid, unqualified jobs in a gender and ethnically-segregated labour market has historically been accompanied by the characterisation of migrant women as less competent and qualified than other women and also in less need of welfare reforms such as child-care provision or part-time working. A clear example of this is when employment opportunities within the tax-subsidised domestic service sector are presented as an integration strategy for migrant women. Additionally, the class and ethnical dimensions of this strategy become evident when it is argued that a market for care work can help to achieve gender equality goals, since it allows (wealthy) women to solve work life imbalances by buying care work and other reproductive work.

When qualifications and suitability (or lack thereof) are defined in collective terms, being identified with a group has a crucial impact not only on entry to the labour market but also on the conditions of employment. Decision-making is based on internalised perceptions and accordance with existing norms. It is this implicit agreement about the characteristics and suitability of different groups that gives legitimacy to their position within the labour market and in society. Against this background, it is scarcely casual that the introduction of an intersectional perspective in Sweden was based on a critical analysis that resists the invisibility of racism and class perspectives in feminist accounts

and uncovers some problematic erasing of the country's (post) colonial inheritance.

The idea of the nation as a seat of exclusion and inclusion has been at the core of intersectional analysis of power and the conditions of belonging. Moving in social spaces characterized by diasporas, transcontinental migration and the emergence of new rounds of inclusion, subordination and exploitation of a fragmented labour force in a context of expanding global capitalism, postcolonial feminists use intersectionality to interrogate not only national borders but also power relations embedded in conceptualisations of different times and different spaces. One central idea is that the 'post' of postcolonial must be understood as the continuity of a colonial paradigm of violence, exploitation and subordination in a framework of formal decolonisation and geopolitical restructuring of the relations between the "West and the rest", as formulated by Stuart Hall (1992). The postcolonial world is thus conceptualised not as a period following colonialism in former colonies but rather as the persistence of colonial relations of power in a global context.

Postcolonial thinking challenges the idea of a universal pattern of evolution that assumes that all countries go through similar stages of development and invites us to critically examine the power relations involved in perceptions that see current inequality as an issue of a lack of modernity. Framing global inequality as a problem about different people inhabiting different spaces and having different capabilities has been critical to the reinforcement of Western hegemony. As sociologist Ramon Grosfogel asserts, the production of (Western) knowledge has had a central role in the construction of colonised subjects as being unable to achieve the values of modernity:

"We went from the sixteenth century characterization of 'people without writing' to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of 'people without history' to the twentieth century characterization of 'people without development' and more recently, to the early twenty-first century of 'people without democracy'" (Grosfogel 2007, p 214)

Grosfogel's criticism refers to a narrative that constantly underlines the inferiority of colonial subjects, pointing to their intrinsic inability to behave in accordance with the changing markers of modernity. Modernity becomes an unattainable goal and history acts as a "waiting room" for people who have not yet qualified as modern (Chakrabarty 2000). To the extent that temporality is used to conceal inequalities between different social spaces, the relations of power involved in this conceptualisation of history remain unquestioned. Furthermore, as historian Dipesh Chakrabarty points out, thinking about history as a singular process also influences what kind of visions are possible in the present: "[A]t the core of this exercise is a concern about how we might think about the past and the future in a non-totalizing manner" (Chakrabarty 2000:249).

Focusing on the intersections between time and place, post-colonial analysis sheds light not only on particular geographical or historical settings inhabited by (un)equal subjects but also on the conditions that make the production of inequality possible. An intersectional perspective problematises the nation state's internal contradictions and exclusion mechanisms based on historically-constructed national borders. In this view, the national space is understood as an instrument that conceals gender and class inequalities in the name of common ethnic origin and cultural inheritance. Thus, following the theoretical influence of postcolonial thinking, intersectional studies indicate that the complexity of power cannot be analysed without taking into consideration both the historical inheritance of colonialism and its pervasiveness in current patterns of global capital accumulation.

Which intersections matter?

Even though intersectionality is considered to be a major theoretical component of feminist analysis, there is no consensus about how the concept should be interpreted and used. Some in-

terpretations focus on the interaction of different structures of power while others are interested in scrutinising processes of identity formation on the basis of social categorisations in terms of gender, class, sexuality, race or ethnicity. The question of which structures of power should be at the core of intersectional analysis is also under debate. Why class and race and not age and sexuality? Of course, much of this debate relates to different perceptions of power but much also relates to an understanding of different forms of oppression as being experientially separated and analytically distinguishable from each other. This creates not only theoretical bias regarding the a priori defined identity categories or power structures to be included in intersectional analysis but also expectations that subordinated subjects are able to provide consistent and convincing accounts of the specific nature of the oppression they are experiencing.

In contrast to approaches that are based on different identities or subject positions, intersectionality focuses on how being categorised as ‘different’ is linked to relations of power and privilege and manifests itself in unequal living conditions. The construction of ‘different people’ and ‘different identities’ is thus linked to a system of privileges that renders inequality invisible or unproblematic. By revealing how different relations of oppression are articulated at different levels, an intersectional perspective can highlight the problem of how structural, institutional and individual intersections increase vulnerability and create conditions of oppression that remain unquestioned and unchallenged.

A central question in this context is how new models of capital accumulation articulate the enduring production of different people and the fragmentation of labour along lines of gender, race, nation, sexuality, (dis)ability and age. Focusing on the logic of capital allows for a historically-constructed understanding of social categorisation and opens the way to a criticism of essentialist perceptions of identity. A crucial point is thus how the operations of capital are involved in the reformulation of social stratification models and in the creation of unequal subject positions both globally and within nation states.

This approach points to the centrality of borders and especially how they are based on relations of domination and exploitation. As postcolonial feminist Gloria Anzaldúa wrote, a border is “una herida abierta” and a site of “hatred, anger and exploitation”³ that separates people from each other. Boundaries are constructed not only for the purposes of delimiting national states but also to provide the means for formal and informal regulation processes determining conditions of belonging and access to citizen rights. In postcolonial thinking, differentiating between people is linked to the expansion of commodity production and the emergence of differentiated labour regimes that enable multiple forms of exploitation. By interrogating the logic of capital accumulation, intersectionality goes beyond neoliberal perceptions of diversity that celebrate differences between people but remain silent on inequality. Intersectional perspectives shed light on the mechanisms that make a difference to inequality markers and explore the contexts in which the existence of difference is natural, unquestioned and desirable. Against this background, the issues of interpretative precedence, the colonisation of the experiences of the other and the silencing of critical voices are central to an understanding of the operations of power through the constant divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Cultural boundaries and the production of otherness

The contribution of Edward Said to our understanding of the importance of cultural production in the construction of a different and subordinated ‘other’ in a context of colonial and imperial dominance is brought to the fore in current intersectional analysis that focuses on stigmatising representations of ‘Muslim women’ and demonising images of ‘Muslim men’. In the aftermath of 9/11 and USA’s proclaimed war against terrorism, the figure of the

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 3. Anzaldúa, Gloria (1987): *Borderlands/La frontera*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books. p 19

Muslim has become the expression of an absolute otherness. While some accounts concentrated on 'crimes of honour' affecting women in Muslim communities living in accordance with traditional patriarchal values, other narratives focus on young Muslim men as perpetrators of those crimes or as potential terrorists. Racialised and genderised perceptions of violence thus help to reinforce a deviant position and the threats represented by different cultures, different religions and different people.

The operations of power require the constant production of different people that reinforce the social order embodied in the idea of the nation and that are vulnerable to new models of exploitation. At the same time as Muslims are depicted as representing an absolute incompatibility with 'our' values, there are other 'others' who are (ab)used so as to confirm the superiority of these values. The significance of the arts as a platform for racist and sexist representations was highlighted in international and national debates that followed performance artist Makode Linde's installation at an event during the Swedish Artists' National Organization's celebration of World Art Day. The installation consisted of a cake representing the body of a black woman and the artist himself took the place of the woman's head wearing a black face mask. According to Linde, the installation, called *Afromantics*, was intended to draw attention to the practice of female genital mutilation in Africa and was meant as a provocation to the racist stereotypes of a white audience.⁴ The then Minister of Culture Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth became part of the installation when she cut off the genital area from the cake while Linde loudly simulated pain. When in the debate that followed Adelsohn Liljeroth was criticised for racism and an apology was demanded, she defended herself adducing artistic freedom and the right to be provocative.

The symbolic mutilation of a black female body was thus transformed by Adelsohn Liljeroth into an act of freedom and a right to provoke in the name of art. Neither the Minister nor the

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4. Dagens Nyheter newspaper 21/05/201221 <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/konst-form/makode-linde-nu-far-tartan-ett-sammanhang/>

traditional media engaged in any discussion about the subject of this freedom. Speaking from a position in which art is invested with (our) universal values, she did not take responsibility for helping to make racism and sexism a spectacle and a joke for a white audience. However, while the racist dimension of the performance was widely criticised by anti-racist organisations, considerably less attention was paid to the sexist aspects of the exhibition. It appears that the objectification of female bodies is less offensive when permeated by a racist gaze. As poet and artist Shailja Patel commented, this appropriation is also premised by the exclusion of subaltern voices:

What makes this cake episode so deeply offensive is the appropriation, by both Linde and his audience, of African women's bodies and experiences, while completely excluding real African women from the discourse. It is a pornography of violence⁵

Patel points to significant issues that not only underline the importance of an intersectional understanding of sexualised and radicalised exploitation of human bodies but also question the exclusion of subaltern voices from established discourses of what is desirable, accepted and normal. From this perspective, the exclusionary practices that prevent subaltern stories from being told appear as essential technologies of power.

The violence of racist representations does not, however, always manifest itself in as blatant a way as in the cake episode. It may also take more subtle or covert routes, such as illustrations of stereotypical, racialised figures in children's and young people's literature or in stories that reinforce ideas of white and male superiority. Nevertheless, to the extent that access to this type of literature is not questioned, it also reflects a normalisation of racist stereotypes. The outraged reactions following the decision to remove the comic book *Tintin in Congo* from one section of the public library in Stockholm can illustrate the difficulties of dealing with cultural products that legitimise colonial domination

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5. Pambazuka News, <http://www.pambazuka.net/en/category.php/features/81491>

and express institutionalised forms of racism. While many people welcomed a critical stance against racist stereotypes in literature, others saw the withdrawal as illegitimate censorship and control. The polarised positions in the debate that followed reflect not only an audience that considers the consumption of racist cultural goods as normal behaviour and an undeniable right but also voices that make visible and reject the presence of racist representations in customary cultural production.

Thus, the power of representation operates not only through the production of images of what is normal, desirable and accepted but also by reinforcing ideas of deviance, subordination and otherness. However, the power of representation is never complete or unquestioned. Exclusionary practices in cultural production have been at the core of debates demanding a democratisation of cultural work and increased representation of groups subject to discrimination. Additionally, many cultural workers actively challenge established views of what it means to be human from perspectives that make social and global inequality visible. But even though critical voices arguing for different ways to experience the world and society can be perceived within a framework that celebrates diversity and dialogical understanding, they are very often understood as domesticated speakers expressing views that are less dangerous, less challenging and less political.

Discursive technologies to neutralise the critical potential of cultural production are often connected to processes of otherisation that make oppression, inequality and exploitation exceptional circumstances associated with the experiences of specific groups or deviant identities. This is exemplified by how the writer Jonas Hassen Khemiri was received in Sweden. Khemiri's debut novel 'One Eye Red' (2003) was almost unanimously acclaimed by professional reviewers, who saw the writer's creative language as the expression of an emergent migrant literature. The author's use of what is known as 'Rinkebysvenska', that is, a dialect mostly spoken by people of migrant background and officially considered 'broken' or 'incorrect' Swedish, made many readers see him as a representative of young people living in segregated suburbs.

In this context, Khemiri's authenticity became crucial, an authenticity that apparently rested more on representations of the author's identity than on his qualities as a writer.⁶ The expectations of an 'authentic other' thus not only contribute to the exotisation of the cultural production of people represented as different but also help to make fictionalised realities of the particular expression of different identities and different lives.

Even though Khemiri's work as a writer and a playwright covers an ample repertoire of burning social problems such as inequality, injustice and institutional racism, he is often expected to talk about issues relating to migration and integration. In an open letter to the former minister of Justice Beatrice Ask, Khemiri invites her to "share skin, spine and nervous system" in order to experience what it means to be constantly exposed to police racial profiling practices:

"I wish you had been with me in the police van. But I sat there alone. And I met all the eyes walking by and tried to show them that I wasn't guilty, that I had just been standing in a place and looking a particular way. But it's hard to argue one's innocence from the back seat of a police van. And it's impossible to be a part of society when everyone continually assumes that you are not."⁷

The letter has been read, shared and celebrated innumerable times. Dear Beatrice Ask is a text that painfully highlights the existence of internal borders. However, the letter is also being read as an intervention in the 'integration debate', thus silencing the widespread institutional racism, persecution of irregular migrants and racial profiling practices of the police. As Dear Beatrice Ask circulates around the world, the powerful message of

6. See for instance the debate between Ali Fegan (Arena 5/2004) and Mikael Löfgren (Arena 2/2005). I apologise for simplifying a discussion that was, of course, both more complex and deeper than I am able to summarize here. My point, however, is that ascribing a particular identity to the author also helps to make his/her work a particular expression of a minority.

7. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/21/opinion/sunday/swedens-closet-racists.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1

the letter is reinterpreted as a specific problem mainly concerning those waiting to be integrated into Swedish society.

Postcolonial feminist Gayatri Spivak reminds us that everything read or heard can be inscribed into the production of the 'Other',⁸ a process that erases the experiences of subaltern and oppressed people and makes their struggles to become a subject unintelligible for an audience permeated by dominant discourses. When a dramatic version of Athena Farrokhzad's poem *Vitsvit* (*White Blight*) was reviewed in the cultural section of one of Sweden's biggest newspapers, it was presented as "The grief of being a half".⁹ The reviewer elaborates on the loss of a language that can convey memories of origin and belonging, while emphasising that the collection illustrates a gendered vulnerability. Farrokhzad's rich exploration of the experiences of hatred, loss, desire and unrest is thus interpreted as a situation of incompleteness that particularises the trajectory of the author and reinforces the politics of location that sees displacement and diasporas as the domain of the other. In an interview, Farrokhzad says how she aims to deal with readings that particularise by using writing strategies – words, codes and metaphors – to mirror complex subject positions that resist being reduced to fixed identities. She also talks in the interview of the difficulties of this.¹⁰ And let us turn again to Spivak, who underlines the (im)possibility of speaking in the intersection of gender and race:

"If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow."¹¹

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8. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1988) *Can the Subaltern Speak?* in: Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, London, Macmillan.

9. <http://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/teater/article21521812.ab>

10. <https://www.feministisktperspektiv.se/2015/11/13/beyond-the-new-black-fokus-pa-att-forandra/>

11. Spivak (1988), p 28.

The impossibility of speaking without being translated, reinterpreted or appropriated must be inscribed in a postcolonial tradition that denies the other a position of knowledge. The construction of otherness is thus not only premised by the existence of imagined boundaries. It also requires a distancing from experiences to remind us that the other may also be seen, as philosopher Achille Mbembe suggests, as “another me”¹².

Summing up

Intersectionality has been interpreted in different ways and used in different manners. In this article, I have argued for a perspective that takes the exertion of power as its starting point and that challenges the view of power as determined, monolithic and based on single relations of dominance; according to this perspective, a person’s position in the social order is neither predestined nor structurally fixed. This order is continually (re)created through processes of dominance and resistance in which representations of different identities and affiliations reinforce social boundaries that regulate access and entitlement to material and symbolic resources in society. In this context, the power of representation and the divisions between those who can talk and those who are talked about have been examined in the field of cultural production. As I have argued in this article, the operations of power are constantly producing difference and normalising inequality. The construction of different and unequal identities is made possible not only through dominant narratives and cultural representations but also by the particularisation of subaltern experiences.

Gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality are not fixed categories that create fixed identities; rather, they can be understood as social positions that acquire meaning through people’s actions in

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 12. Mbembe, A (2013) Africa and the future: An interview with Achille Mbembe, <http://africasacountry.com/africa-and-the-future-an-interview-with-achille-mbembe/>.

specific social contexts and historical situations. In this article, I have linked the production of difference to the logic of capital and the fragmentation of labour conditions in a postcolonial context and also to the symbolic power of culture to represent humanity and to (re) produce boundaries. Intersectionality interrogates norm-creating processes and exploitation mechanisms, shifting the focus to the separation logic that relates the exercise of power to perceptions of essentially different identities. This is an important dividing line in relation to traditional theoretical and political perspectives, where the interest in identity construction and different subject positions all too often ignores the mechanisms and circumstances that give rise to these identities and link difference to inequality.

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Re-create the circle: the challenges of intercultural action

Calls for developed cultural leadership have been heard numerous times. It has become obvious for many that the missing ingredient in the European Project is culture.

The original impulse to a European union of nations was a natural reaction to centuries of war, colonialism and the unique cruelty of the first half of the 20th century. Creating inter-dependent economic and **political** systems was envisioned as a guarantee for ending aggression, conflict, even poverty. As the short-sightedness of this “rational” construction has become exposed, the cultural factor grows more significant. The recent turbulence of people on the move, mass migration from wars and poverty in North Africa and the Middle East, underlines the necessity of culture - cultivating empathy, provoking dialogue, mutual transformation of values and social units. If the key challenge – and it seems to be - is competent negotiation, what response would be more appropriate than a cultural one?

There is an exploding need for *cultural* leadership: producers, policymakers, innovators, team builders. It is **human-structure** we lack, even when **infra-structure** is in place. Building the capacity to invent/create/manage cultural encounters and shared space is an essential step in re-inventing the European Project. Educa-

tional platforms must be generated, internships and other mobility programs must be designed, residencies prepared. All to strengthen the intercultural competence of European citizens and institutions.

However – before we learn to make budgets, book hotel rooms, organize conferences, reform institutions or design new buildings, we should ask ourselves: Why? Before we can speak about “cultural leadership” and “capacity-building”, we should explore what the essential function of cultural investment really is.

We are not facing temporary social traumas. We are in transition. This requires flexibility, a capacity to adapt and re-invent, faced with as yet unimaginable challenges. It is about learning. How do we learn? Because we have to learn very very fast.

Democracy was used for the first time by the Greeks, paradoxically in the same decade that the word “theatre” was first used. Culture and Democracy have basically gone through the same painful process the last 2500 years. Amphitheatres built by the Greek civilization were not *performance* places but *gathering* places, for exchange and discourse. The public stayed for a week or two, drinking wine, camped in the surrounding fields. Medea or Oedipus Rex were not *performed*, but declaimed, stories told to be taken back to the camps and sublimated. That’s how a public could deal with such heavy narratives about a mother who kills her child or a king sticking out his eyes because he made love with his mother. Such experiences can be coped with only if you are prepared to actually make them a sounding board for yourself and your community. Over 2500 years, Culture has gone through a number of transformations, the most devastating during the last 200 years: culture has been caged in, formed into a controlled tool for defining and maintaining national identity. The construction of a national identity through cultural institutions is a tragic historical parenthesis. I don’t mean the beauty of an opera or dance performance. The problem is the caging of culture into closed and exclusive spaces, for the wealthy and educated.

The ideas of *democracy* (shared values) and *culture* (shared

space) are intimately connected. Where are we today? Are we honest and humble enough to see the threats?

I once had a friend, his name was Mandiaye N'Diaye. Mandiaye called himself an Afro-European. He was born in Senegal, in a small village a bit from Dakar. When he was 18 years old he went to his sheik and said: "I want to become a doctor, I will go to Paris and study. I know French, I have family there. I want your blessing." And the sheik said "Mandiaye, yes travel. But to Italy." Mandiaye: "Italy? I don't speak Italian, I don't know anything about that country, how can I study?" The sheik: "I don't know. But you should go to Italy." Mandiaye found himself on the east coast of Italy, selling souvenirs, and he wondered what he was doing there.

At the same time, the director of the city theatre in Ravenna, Marco Martinelli, walked in Ravenna, his beloved hometown. He saw black faces and he also wondered. He went to the beach, equipped with a true artist's curiosity. He presented himself to the first black man he met and he said to Mandiaye: "Excuse me, I hope I don't insult you, but may I ask you a question - why are you here?" Mandiaye looked at Marco, considered his sheik's proposal, and responded: "In order to meet you." Marco and Mandiaye became friends, they worked for years together in Ravenna and throughout Europe, until Mandiaye moved back to Senegal, where he prematurely died.

Mandiaye told me this story:

"In my village when we gather for a cultural activity, for story-telling, we gather in a circle. Everyone: children, old people, dogs. The artist steps into the center of the circle, and begins to perform, dance, sing or tell a story. The people watching, the audience, become the 'set design' of the performance. I see into the faces of my neighbors on the other side of the circle, watching together, sharing space. I see their reactions, I respond to them. The artist is not the point, the point is the circle."

Over the course of history this relationship was transformed in Western culture into two half circles: stage and audience. All

light on the artist, darkness on the audience. Mandiaye made it his task, as a cultural worker in Europe, to re-create the circle. This has given me a basis for my work the last 15 years. Continuously trying to re-create the circle. We don't need to change all the architecture, some cultural buildings are used in unconventional and interesting ways. But we need to re-design their function.

My colleague and friend Dragan Klaic, unfortunately another who passed away too early, once wrote: "Cultures do not dialogue with each other. They compete, clash, fight, interact and mutually influence each other." This is a definition of interculturalism, which implies both an international outlook and an intercultural insight. Or, shortened, inter//local.

Conflict is essentially a cultural question. One doesn't go to war, one doesn't rape a woman, one doesn't kill a neighbor with a knife for purely political or economic reasons. It is also a cultural impulse. One puts a knife into the back of someone one knows, feeling threatened or afraid. Emotional impulses, based in misunderstanding, domination and submission. Cultural and educational investment is the only appropriate and sustainable response to violent conflict and its roots.

Conflict bubbles throughout Europe, and especially at the edges: Northern Ireland; the Balkans; the Basque country; the Black Sea region; the borderlands between Ukraine and Poland, Ukraine and Russia; the Caucasus. These are also places with amazing stories. We call them the "corners", the outer reaches.

Our project **CORNERS – turning Europe inside** out began in 2010 as an ongoing collaboration between 11 European arts/culture organizations, with long term support from the EU. We began with Xpeditions, organized travels with 30–35 artists and researchers, two weeks each in different "corners of Europe". We visited different marketplaces, bus and train stations, neighborhoods and we intervened. We had no finished performances, only creative interventions by the artists, as tools to meet local citizens and start a dialogue.

An example: the Bulgarian stage director Nedyalko Delchev took five photographs from a second hand shop in Sofia, Bulgaria, put them in his pocket, chose a Georgian family name (we were traveling in Georgia at the time) and entered the marketplace. He approached different vendors, showing them the photographs. “My grandparents left Georgia many years ago and emigrated to Bulgaria”, he said. “Do you know anybody who looks like this? Can you help me find these people?” Within 30 minutes the entire marketplace was buzzing trying to find Nedyalko’s relatives. They had different ideas, they compared impressions, they studied noses and eyes in the photographs. The results were inconclusive, no agreement was reached about who Nedyalko’s “lost family” might be.

However – when we climbed into the bus the next day to leave the town and we were about an hour away, Nedyalko gets a telephone call from the hotel: “There are two cars and a truck outside filled with people who have come to get you, to take you to your family village.” Fourteen people came along with the truck, and they expected Nedyalko to stay for three or four days, because that’s the only way that they could celebrate their returned relative.

Where does art grow? Stories heard on one street corner get retold on another. This creates shared space, imagined space, new space. But can we turn our cultural centers, our museums, even public spaces in our neighborhoods, our theatres and our concert halls, into shared spaces? Can we design a free flow of movement, from/to such places, originally bastions of national identity, and turn them into places that we share and that we need to create a human identity? Participation is an important aspect. We have advanced beyond funding special experts and iconic buildings, programs created for us to consume. Co-creation is practicing democracy. It is an essential part of our cultural activity, whether reading a book or joining a dance.

The great director Peter Brook, when he formed his first intercultural company in 1974, defined the intention, together

with artists that shared no language and no cultural references. They took themselves to Africa, Iran and other “corners”, confronted new and untold narratives. The intention, he wrote, was to create culture “in the meaning that yoghurt is culture”: a cultivated bacteria that transforms the milky substance of our society into something healthy, rich and tasteful. This transformation by a microcosm, a cultural virus, placed in the right temperature and under the right conditions, is exactly what is needed.

Democratic participation and audience, “citizen” and “visitor”, are one and the same. We can shift our audiences, we can co-create with them, we can engage them. Shifting audiences means going outside the comfort zone of cultural consumers, changing the audience, mixing it up, creating intercultural encounters. Sometimes we lose our old audience when we’re on our way to stimulate a re-newed constellation. To find that balance is one of the greatest requirements for any cultural leader today. *Co-creation* implies a shared process, sharing the light with participants rather than spectators. By *engaging with audiences*, we empower them, we give them trust, we show humility. We make them shareholders, even co-curators.

When I underline the link between culture and democracy, I don’t mean that every artistic production is a democratic process. Leadership, brilliant directors, brilliant composers, brilliance in general, is essential. But how do we balance **ethics** and **excellence**? Excellence is the quality of the art, integrity and ethics form the context. When I use the word “culture” in this discourse, I mean *that which is not nature*. Culture is what human beings *do* with each other, for each other, sometimes against each other. Culture is not an answer to anything, because it is the central reason for why we are on this earth, to invent.

What do you need? What kind of art? It is empowerment just to ask the question. And that re-invention has to be done by artists and cultural leaders alike, especially if we want to increase the public will to finance the Arts. We have to change our ethics. Every cultural institution and organization needs to form a pol-

icy: for whom are we working? Who gives us our mission? The answer is both simple and complex: our task is delegated by the citizens who pay taxes, build the buildings, give us space and share their experiences.

My grandfather was born in 1892 in Calabria, in southern Italy. He emigrated in 1912 to the United States, where he met and married my grandmother, who was 14 years old at the time. Within seven years she had six children. My father, Carl, and his twin brother Lenin (obviously names connected to my grandfathers fleeing the rising fascism in Italy) lived in a family that spoke only Italian, or actually Calabrese, little to do with Italian. People living in the neighborhood also spoke Italian, it was said, but they spoke Napolitano. Calabrese and Napolitani could not easily speak with each other. Their common language in Cleveland was English, although they continued speaking their own languages in their own circles. When my father and his brother attended their first day of school at the age of six, the school teacher said to them: “We are now in an American school, and in America, we speak English.” The two boys went back to their parents, and informed them that from that day on, they would speak only English, which they did.

My grandfather was a coal miner. When he saw other coal miners dying of black lung, he moved to Ohio, where I was born. He became a gardener, a nurseryman. He had a greenhouse on a piece of land. My father insisted that he may not speak Italian with me. Once when we visited, my grandfather took me by the hand and led me into the greenhouse. He took two small branches, twisted them together at the end, and wrapped them in wet newspaper and then buried them in a bed of sand. He did this over and over, I watched him, and he spoke non stop Italian.

Four months later, we visited again, and he walked me into the greenhouse. He pulled out one of these packages and tore away the rotten newspaper. He showed me the roots that were growing. He would now plant them and wait. He did not know what flower, colour, or smell would arrive. He was grafting something that was “to become”.

My grandfather never returned to Calabria. He imported plants from Calabria, and grafted them with local Ohio plants. He was 25 when he left, he died at age 69 in the United States. My father never had little interest in going to Italy, he ate Italian food but that was about it. He is buried in Ohio, never learning his parents' language.

I was 21 years old when I moved to Italy and Europe. I still remember the smell in the greenhouse and the wet fingers of my grandfather. I guess he was trying to deal with a personal conflict: can I be two people at the same time? Can I have two identities?

What kind of intercultural actions and programs meet the challenge of multiple identities? Each of us has an ethnic background, maybe a national citizenship, but we also have personal identities, as parents, as believers, as men or women, we have professional identities, we have cultural identities, we share hobbies and interests. These different identities are in continuous negotiation, and none of them alone are sufficient to define a human being. We are at the same time Calabrese, American and European, we are both father and lover, we are both bankers and dog owners. We weave our way through this complicated map, and we relate to one another from various positions, none of them fixed.

My cultural identity is American, I hear one chord from Springsteen's guitar and I start to cry. The songs my mother sang, the candy I ate, the TV jingles I heard. I have an ethnic identity, possibly Italian. I understood this first when I went to Italy, people looked like me, they shook their hands like me. They got angry, although they weren't really angry, they sounded angry, and I recognized myself. I have a national identity – Swedish. I pay taxes, I have children that went to school, I want to trust Sweden. I'm possibly more Swedish than the Swedes themselves because I had to *learn* Sweden.

I'm a father, I'm a brother, I'm a professional. How can we create a society, a cultural context, in which flexibility and transformation are possible and fluid? Our world is changing con-

stantly, and we need to exercise our capacity for change. Confrontation and negotiation with other realities is excellent preparation for meeting with an unknown future.

During one of my earliest journeys in Southeast Europe, I found myself on a train traveling between Turkey and Bulgaria. There was extreme tension in the air. Bulgaria's communist regime was actively deporting so-called "Turk Bulgarians", with the intention to eliminate the problem of a national minority and at the same time to stave the growing political resistance within the country.

As we came closer to the border, the train filled with people trying to return to Bulgaria. They had huge bags filled with goods to be sold in Bulgaria. They sat wherever they could and I found my cabin filled with people, each with a bag of cigarettes or whiskey between the legs, under the seats, as bribes for the border guards.

I observed this spectacle for hours because the train was stopped a number of times throughout the night, on both the Turkish and Bulgarian sides of the border. And each time the ritual was repeated. Someone was called from the cabin into the corridor. Plastic bags or sexual services were delivered. Some people disappeared while others returned, slightly calmer, to their seats.

I was called out of the train. The conversation was short. I was traveling with an American passport at the time and I was treated courteously and with some curiosity. Why would I be there now? Good question. I was sent back to the first class wagon, which was if possible more packed with travelers and bags.

The rest of the trip, in Sofia, was overwhelming. The people of Bulgaria took to the streets and the regime fell during my visit, with no help from me. That's another story.

But the impression of that long night in the borderlands of Turkey and Bulgaria remained with me as a lesson in mobility. The absurd reality of the national state was bundled into these trains, a business of in and out was created. It would be difficult to change.

The European Project is an excellent opportunity for re-thinking mobility of people and experience – IF it is envisioned as primarily a **cultural project**. As long as the EU remains as an exchange of goods and an administrative body, as long as European security means moving the border guards a bit farther out, the issues of mobility and migration will not be met.

The problem comes when a **political** will – to expand and stabilize relations with so called Neighboring Countries - is not reflected in the **cultural** field. In fact, if goals for expansion and collaboration are to be met, they must be treated as **cultural challenges**. Artists and their organisers need to take part in a larger strategy. Mobility between their home countries and the EU member states must be encouraged and subsidized. It is a European democratic question.

But it also means a change of attitude from the artists. Why do we want to travel? What is our motivation to open ourselves to other impulses, to other conditions? Do we really want to meet or do we want to simply pass by?

Serious cultural exchange takes time. To bridge language barriers, methods of work and personal wills takes effort and travel and time. Artists and cultural operators must increase their intercultural competence to be prepared for this mobility. They can work in many ways. Europe can house many varied expressions. But the essential European cultural work to be done today is across national borders and into the neighboring states.

9 Challenges:

Re-inventing cultural institutions and placing Culture at the center of the European Project

1. Places:

Cultural centers, public spaces, digital arenas, schools and workplaces. These places must be developed, we must have gathering places in each community, we cannot keep leasing our public

place to Starbucks. Public space is where religions are practiced, marriages are formed, ideas are developed. Shared space is essential for dialogue. But public authorities, with dwindling cultural budgets, carry a heavy load: opera houses, concert halls, national museums, all products of the national identity project driven throughout Europe. They cost a great deal of money and they are isolated from most of the citizens who pay for them.

Throughout Europe there are examples of newly created or re-invented cultural centers, often in culturally re-cycled buildings, post-industrial, post harbour, post military. I have seen how re-inventing the idea of “free space” leads to citizen engagement and new places of encounter.

2. Competence:

Our European cities continue to cultivate diversity, all statistics remind us: a critical mass of immigrants and their offspring, in schools, at workplaces, in neighborhoods, has been reached in most European urban centers. It is a political, economic, social, and above all cultural question of utmost importance. Intercultural competence is developed in schools, through traveling and through cooperation.

3. Networks:

We need local and community associations, we need librarians, teachers and others working with people. We need transnational networks. We need to share with other European organizations, societies and governments, multiple levels of engagement, inter-dependent and in close collaboration.

4. Resources:

Without a doubt, we need subsidies and investments, a solid foundation on which cultural continuity can rest. But distributing 5.000–10.000 euros for short term projects is not sustainable. With the creation of **Resource Centers**, with access to technical equipment for free, to trucks for touring, to translation equipment and competent people, another kind of cultural collaboration and support could be made more effective and accessible.

5. Program:

What is our repertory? What exhibitions, gatherings and concerts are we actually offering? Are they relevant? And to whom?

6. Audience:

If we are not developing relationships with our audience, if we are not empowering them, if we are not talking to them, if we are not involving them in programming decisions, then we are failing in our purpose. We are no longer “re-creating the circle”. Diverse people need to enter the same room sometimes. The Arts could play a central role: citizenship and participation are stimulated by common values that are *developed*, not enforced or taught. The EU has audience relations as one of its major threads in the Creative Europe program. It should be a priority for small independents and large cultural institutions as well.

7. Education:

Arts education in schools has been drastically cut and ignored. Access to music, painting, poetry, is reduced, because we are told us that economy is the basis of our life and employability is the basis of economy. Sharpen the learning curve.

8. Empowerment:

We cannot have cultural institutions any longer where white middle-aged men run them and sit on the boards, while we intend to reach out to a culturally diverse audience, from a mixture of social experiences. The traditional audience is actually women over the age of 50, but the composition of the leadership tells another story. If we want to change our institutions, the first thing to do is to change the board structures. It will take time before we can develop the skills and competence among our newer citizens to manage cultural institutions. But by empowering them on the boards, in audience councils and other innovative structures, we can start a process of transformation.

9. Cross-sectoral:

Innovative cross-sectoral collaborations, between the cultural sector and e.g. social issues, employment, science, business, health, youth, environment etc could be encouraged. Such links can contribute to removing the “stigma” of cultural diversity - that it is about “them” and not “us”.

Many years ago, during the Indian struggle for independence, Mahatma Gandhi was called to England to negotiate. It was the first time he had been in London for many years. He landed at the airport, with hundreds of journalists, and one of them places a microphone in front of Mr. Gandhi’s face and asks: “Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western Civilization?”

Gandhi blinks his eyes, reflects for a moment and responds: “I think it would be a very good idea.”

I believe that we have all of the tools necessary for us to deal with the challenges of globalization and the ongoing transformation of our populations. The cultural factor will prove the primary ingredient.

Viewpoint

Lena Andersson

On artistic freedom and its limitations: what is the right course of action?

January 2015 saw the tragedy at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris, when two jihadists got into the editorial office and executed everyone in their path. This was in response to the magazine's habitual use of words and images to poke fun at God and the prophet of Islam and the rigid world view of those with literal beliefs.

There were subsequently huge demonstrations against violence and for freedom of expression in a strong show of support for those who were murdered. Voices emerged saying that the images in Charlie Hebdo were unnecessary, coarse, insulting and should never have been published. There were fewer voices than had previously been heard on similar occasions, but they were there – and they claimed that the images were racist because they caricatured and satirised what was sacred to another, weaker group in society. They suggested that it was understandable that some people who were constantly subjected to this type of 'racism' under the cloak of 'the sacred freedom of speech' had been driven to such depths of vulnerability and desperation that they would respond in the crudest of ways.

Such thinking recurs every time there is a similar catastrophe and seems to have considerable support, particularly amongst those who view the world as consisting of fixed groups of inferiors and superiors, and where liberal freedoms are exploited to further degrade, deride and suppress those who are already downtrodden.

In the public debate, those whose fervent wish it is that insulting images and hostile views are never created or expressed usually say that the images or texts are so badly executed that they have no artistic value at all and so are unnecessary. It is therefore no social sacrifice to agree that we should refrain from art that is insulting. It is merely a question of decency.

It is not clear whether those who argue in this way would accept what was immoral if it were better art, or whether they are of the opinion that the works are not good because they are derisive, malicious and unethical. The latter position is illogical, so I assume they think that art is important and art is free, but that it really must be art, and good art, otherwise we should refrain.

Another viewpoint is that, irrespective of how good a piece of art is or how valid and apt an opinion is, it should not be created or expressed, partly because it is insulting and partly because words and images are normative and thus create the suppression they claim to represent, depict and comment on. You cannot avoid the issue by saying that it is only language and images, or just quotations from or references to other people's statements and images, because it is language and images that create the world as we know it and shape how our brains conceive it. So people's assertions are never innocent.

In my view there are, generally speaking, four distinct approaches to the ethical issue of artistic freedom versus self-censorship. They sit on a continuum that extends from a dogmatic insistence on rights to a dogmatic insistence on consequences, with various versions and combinations of them in between.

1. **An entirely rights-based, subjective standpoint** that does not consider consequences and says that human rights include

protection from abuse not only to one's own body but also to one's mind and its emotions. No-one except the subject may take a view on the validity of the injured feelings. Because only the subject can decide when they are aggrieved, their experience is regarded as the truth and constitutes a boundary for other people's actions.

Central to this standpoint is the subject's right not to be exposed to other people's freedoms.

2. **A pragmatic, utilitarian and impact-oriented viewpoint** with a substantial, subjective, rights-based element. Its advocates say that offensive art and ill-intentioned words are both unnecessary and hateful, and of absolutely no value. It is the subject's absolute, indisputable feelings that determine what is offensive and therefore unnecessary. What is pragmatic about this viewpoint is the ability to nonetheless hold the view that freedom of expression is important and that the person exercising it should have certain freedoms even though they are abusing them. If we only persist with what is offensive during periods of convulsion, the effects of the provocation will one day be diluted and no longer needed. Ill-intentioned artists will no longer be tempted to tease and bully.

Central to this standpoint are tolerance, understanding and compromising on principles.

3. **A rights-based, objective, rational standpoint** with some minor, not to be disregarded, elements of utilitarianism and consideration of impact. This approach claims that we may all create any art we like as no-one has the right to prevent an individual from doing so as long as that person's freedom does not curtail the equally important freedoms of other people. The definition of freedom is determined by objective criteria which appeal to reason. Moreover, as it is not possible to determine what is necessary, unnecessary, important or

unimportant art, and because no-one's freedom is curtailed by art or words, there are also utilitarian reasons to use all the freedoms we have to promote tolerance and diversity, since society tends to be richer and more interesting when it reflects different perspectives, even if it means that we must all tolerate things we loathe.

This standpoint is based on material/physical self-ownership and rational presumption of the freedom of the individual rather than emotional perceptions of the subject's need for protection.

4. A wholly utilitarian, objective, impact-oriented standpoint that believes that, in light of the evident and predictable consequences of, say, art that is critical of religion or images and assertions that a person might consider bullying or inflammatory, we should all refrain from creating any such art or expressing any such opinions – not because people's feelings are hurt, but because the consequence is an increase in suffering, not least through the foreseeable risk of calamitous acts of revenge, and thus a reduction in well-being. When it is possible to foresee the consequences – that innocent people will be sacrificed so that a few people can exercise their freedoms and rights – we have a moral responsibility to refrain. No individual can use their individual freedoms as an excuse to avoid responsibility for the predictable actions of others.

Central to this standpoint is the right of society collectively not to have to pay for the consequences of the freedom of the individual.

Most people arrive at their view by combining various aspects of these formulaic rationalisations, depending on what the opposite party says and other psychological factors. My own sympathies lie mainly with approach 3.

The four basic standpoints can be further divided into two subgroups. One of these is rooted in romantic self-image; it is built on emotions and aims to defend ego vulnerability. The po-

litical scientist Gina Gustavsson has aptly called this romantic liberalism; it can also be called subjectivism, tending towards relativism, but with no trace of the latter's value nihilism: on the contrary, the subjectivist has strong ethical values to defend. The ego is considered to enjoy an inalienable right not to be hurt or be subjected to stress. Neither must the subject ever be prevented from following their ego's inner voice; this is their truth and thus the only valid truth. This viewpoint can thus be used both as a motive to publish and create offensive art and to urge that no offensive art should be created. The reason in both cases is that one should not be forced to act against oneself, one's ego, what one is at the deepest level. A person who encounters offensive art must do violence to her ego when seeing it, and a person having to decide whether or not to publish risky caricatures cannot live with himself if he does not carry out this important, journalistic act.

It is the core of the individual that must be preserved and protected at all costs. It is a very strongly anti-utilitarian notion.

This romantic, essentialistic and emotionally-based subgroup constitutes the source of standpoints 1 and 2 in the framework above. We will now set that aside in order to look at the other subgroup, which is unromantic, matter-of-fact and based on objectivity. This is where categories 3 and 4 belong. The point at which these two meet is the subject of the remainder of this article.

A short while after the Charlie Hebdo attack, I wrote a column in the Dagens Nyheter daily newspaper (21/02/2015). It is reproduced below in its entirety:

“After every violent attack on artistic expression, there are exhortations that we should act together to restrict our real freedom to express ourselves. Not the formal freedom, the freedom we have in reality. We must refrain from expression that may cause divisions and hurt someone who is powerless. It is still taboo to want to restrict the law on freedom of expression. We might ask ourselves why, since the effect being sought is the same.

Perhaps we feel uneasy about once again putting people in prison for blasphemy and offending public decency? Not only do the traces of our actions frighten us, they also embarrass us. Moral outrage always seems hugely ridiculous in the light of history.

But it would be more honest to recommend legal restrictions. Violation of the law results in clear, defined punishments. Calling for strict, general criteria that dictate reverence for religious feeling may be less sincere and the penalty – suspicion, shame or ostracism – less precise.

Charlie Hebdo's satirical output was thought by some people to be far too tasteless and unsophisticated to have anything of substance to say. It was unnecessary. Many people are now also airing the opinion that Lars Vilks' art is uncalled for. It is unnecessary too. It is too poorly executed, trite and banal.

Aside from the fact that the freedom debate is indifferent as to whether the art is good or bad, important or unimportant, and that such things cannot easily be determined, and possibly not at all, I would argue that Vilks' numerous art projects, including the roundabout dog, are particularly interesting in terms of both their intention and their execution. As an artist, he does the things that formal speeches and writings usually say art should aspire to do – he investigates ingrained opinion and fossilized thinking, breaks taboos, finds the sensitivities in our society, and opposes power and current thinking.

But of course nobody is seriously alleging that the problem with Vilks or the satirical cartoonists, or with Theo van Gogh, Ayaan Hirsi Ali or Salman Rushdie, is that their works are not good enough. Even if we were in the presence of what we thought was the world's best work of art, that would also be considered unnecessary if the artist had had the audacity to address the issue of the status of Muhammed or Jesus's divinity, or to paint a nose or a breast in the wrong way.

Recommending restraint for fear of violence is wholly understandable. But when democrats consider restraint to be morally warranted out of concern for religious sentiment, they are clearly saying that it is reasonable for oversensitivity and violence to determine the true limits of freedom of expression.

Following through the logic of the argument, I can think of a lot of unnecessary and provocative phenomena. Religion, for example. If restraint is to be our watchword, then naturally those with a belief in God must also do the calculations in terms of respect and impact before they attend their next sermon, or in fact before

they join a congregation, since they are the source of many shocking claims about morality and the nature of reality.

If everyone refrains from doing something that someone particularly dislikes, things will get pretty quiet – but it will be fair. A more appealing version of fairness is the one that real freedom of expression offers and formal freedom of expression defends.

What is certain is that we do not know the long-term implications of our actions and expressed opinions. The consequences of art that is critical of religion may very well be better than the consequences of restraint; unquestioned worship of texts and founders of religions probably has highly damaging consequences.

The lack of proportionality in the repeated acts against artists is indeed startling. One draws a picture, the other shoots a person dead. In this equation, blaming the cartoonist is almost inconceivable, and can only be understood in a situation where the Islamist is seen as not of sound mind, as a brute that one is obliged to have dealings with but who lacks human faculties.

Another point of view commonly put forward is the ‘kålsupar’ theory’. According to this, when two sacred beings of equal merit are ranged against one another no-one can claim that one is more important than the other. For one side, Muhammed is sacred; for the other, freedom of expression – both forms of dogma.

This is a false analogy, since the two phenomena are completely different in nature.

The concept of freedom of expression is a linguistic receptacle, a collective term for something which is anything but collected and uniform. The founder of Islam is something qualitatively different. He is an essential entity and can in no shape or form be equated with the phenomenon of freedom of expression, whose only essence is to enable the occurrence of that which is uncontrollable. Within the context of freedom of expression, Muhammed can be deemed sacred, but in the context of Muhammed’s sanctity there is no freedom of expression. Within freedom of expression, one can advocate for its abolition; within the cult of Muhammed there is no option to advocate for the abolition of the cult. This is quite all right as long as it is possible to opt out of the cult but it demonstrates the essential difference between the two phenomena. Thus freedom of expression is not sacred; the term is quite inapt. It does, however, guarantee that what is sacred can be made unsacred. In addition to that, it is the best way we know of accommodating people’s various perceptions of what is unnecessary and what is necessary.”

The same day it was published, I received an email from Torbjörn Tännsjö, a professor of practical philosophy with utilitarian convictions. Tännsjö is consistent in a way few others are able to be in his rejection of the freedom of the individual for fear it will lead to worse consequences overall. Few people are able to maintain such intellectual discipline in the face of increasing opposition, and so it is interesting to look closely at his approach.

Consequences would seem to be the natural starting point for everyday ethical thinking, even if this is seldom as fully developed as in Torbjörn Tännsjö's case. It is not possible to think about morality without thinking of it in the form of collective consequences, but few people are prepared to go so far as pure utilitarianism, and the question is whether it is possible to think of morality merely in the form of consequences irrespective of the cost of the consequences for the individuals. I don't believe it is, and I share Robert Nozick's position based on Kant's statement that individuals should never be the means to an end, and that the rationality-based freedom of the individual therefore determines the limits of ethical thinking about consequences when the two approaches look to be colliding.

Tännsjö says instead that the moral status of an action is determined by the sum of its consequences, not by intentions, rights or notions that every one of us is responsible only for our own actions. We also have responsibility for other people's actions if their effects can be foreseen. Fully-fledged utilitarianism means that omission is the same as intentional activity. Drawing a picture or writing a book that one suspects might lead to innocent people losing their lives is a failure to refrain which is the same as killing someone yourself. One is morally guilty of the crime even though someone else held the weapon. Clearly, Salman Rushdie should therefore have realised that his book 'The Satanic Verses' might be used for political purposes and by insulted fundamentalists, and not written it.

My email correspondence with Tännsjö is set out below, edited and in some places in referenced form.

Tännsjö wrote to me:

“Hello. I read your column in Dagens Nyheter today and agree with most of what you say, but my main concern is the things you do not discuss. You write ‘Recommending restraint for fear of violence is wholly understandable. But when democrats consider restraint to be morally warranted out of concern for religious sentiment, they are clearly saying that it is reasonable for oversensitivity and violence to determine the true limits of freedom of expression.’

Obviously, one should not hold back one’s thoughts out of consideration for religious sentiment. But what if these turn into acts of terrorism? The important question must be how far one must take into consideration the misuse of what one has said, which may have fatal consequences, or fuel unfortunate political tensions, or similar. I am particularly interested in your thoughts around this. If I say something which makes one person kill another, do I then have moral responsibility for that person’s actions? I think that I do have responsibility (and if I am the one that is murdered, I believe I have moral responsibility for my murder). I am guessing that you think that if a person murders someone, that person must bear the responsibility for it, in which case your hands are clean. Is that how you think? It’s not how I think.”

The fact that Tännsjö writes: “Obviously, one should not hold back one’s thoughts out of consideration for religious sentiment” makes it clear that the reasons he holds his view are not out of concern for the person that has been wronged but concern for overall well-being in the world. So a type 4, rationality-based, collective and hedonistic utilitarianism.

I replied as follows, edited for the sake of clarity and argument:

It is of course sensible to be as clear as possible when one expresses oneself in an attempt to hinder misuse, but this cannot

determine the moral issue. People who misuse other people's expressed opinions have the option of not misusing them, of thinking for themselves, having their own opinion and not exploiting other people's or allowing themselves to be guided by other people's assertions for the purposes of their own (violent) actions. And when all is said and done, potential perpetrators of violence are fully able to control themselves and their feelings of outrage. If a person who has been insulted by an opinion or a piece of artwork wants to respond, they should do so in kind with an equally insulting opinion or piece of artwork. It is difficult to see how public expression and violence could be viewed as being on the same moral level, or how physical violence could also be seen as an expression having the same moral status as art. Why? Because these two phenomena in themselves have completely different effects on people and must therefore be judged differently. Opinions do not silence anyone; they do not bring anything to an end or prevent anyone from exercising their freedom. Violence and killing, however, constitute the greatest of impediments for those affected. They constitute the great finality. Nothing happens after that, but when an artwork is completed life goes on as normal for everyone.

If we are responsible for other people's misuse of our work, it means that the state of the world and its freedoms are determined by the person who is most insulted and most inclined to violence. That person, then, holds all the power. In this sort of moral order, artists live under a constant latent threat and are in practice without freedom, while perpetrators of violence take the whole of mankind hostage so that they can live exactly as they want to. The insulted perpetrator of violence uses blackmail to insure himself against criticism of his ideas and if anyone objects to being a hostage the wronged person commits violence to silence him, whereupon the hostage, in your eyes, is just as morally responsible as the terrorist. The whole world genuflects before the terrorist – and this is in addition deemed morally correct?

After an event has occurred, to note that x led to y and that if

x had known, x ought to and should have acted differently may be interesting in terms of understanding what causal chains look like, but is it interesting in terms of accountability? No, I do not see the point in calling that moral.

I agree that an arms manufacturer can figure out that his product will be used to shoot people dead. But it is still quite possible that it might only be used for shooting sports or for legitimate self-defence. The person who puts the weapon into service himself determines how he will use it; he has full control of the decision. No-one forces him to shoot anyone dead.

It is also entirely possible to refrain from killing someone even though that person has made a drawing you do not like. That is to assume, however, that the person is able to choose, that they have agency and can refrain from potential actions. In reply to this, Tännsjö refers to a well-known moral dilemma in moral philosophy which he feels is relevant in this context and which he writes on at length in his book *Fatta! En upplysningskrift* (Get it! Informational writings) (Thales, 2014). It consists of two different situations. In the first situation, A discards a cigarette at the edge of a forest. After it has lain there glowing for a while, it flares up and the flames are spread by a slight breeze to a patch of woodland, which catches light.

In the second situation, A also discards a cigarette at the edge of a forest. But just before the cigarette goes out, B comes past and intentionally pours petrol onto the cigarette which is only just smouldering. It flares up and the flames are spread by a slight breeze to a patch of woodland, which catches light.

The usual approach, writes Tännsjö in his book, is to view A as responsible for the forest fire only in the first situation, as he is the direct cause of it and can easily foresee what will happen. In the second situation, on the other hand, the usual approach is to say that B is to blame for the incident. Instead, Tännsjö says, in the second case both A and B bear full responsibility for the forest fire; this is because people are fully responsible for all the consequences of their actions and should foresee that someone may come along and pour petrol on their cigarette. A's responsi-

bility is not greater than B's, but neither is it less; they both bear full responsibility for the fire.

“Both the person who discards the cigarette that someone else pours petrol onto and the person pouring the petrol are responsible for the fire”, says Tännsjö in his email. “They are responsible only because the fact that the fire arose determines the moral status of their respective actions. You are right that this may be of no relevance if one discards a cigarette completely unaware that someone is going to pour petrol over it. But these days we know that certain types of expressed opinion can contribute to an area of political tension, in which various western regimes are waging war (using terror methods) against Islamic movements, who are also waging war using terror methods against the same regimes.”

I replied:

I do not think that the situation with the cigarette and the fire is exactly the same as a situation in which a drawing leads to the murder of the artist. The examples seem asymmetric to me, for two reasons. The point that there is probably no value in being able to drop litter but that there is value in being able to express one's opinion is one we can probably leave aside, since just occasionally one person's rubbish is another person's art, and rights are rights irrespective of value – but there is a much better reason: An individual does not have the right to discard cigarettes on anyone else's property, or their own if it constitutes a threat to other people's property, so our freedom does not include dropping litter. Expressing oneself, on the other hand, never in itself destroys anything physical like a fire does – but committing violence requires an active choice on the part of an individual. And the expression of an opinion does not curtail anyone else's equal freedom to express their opinion.

The other reason is ontological and is linked to the first: The terrorist is not a natural disaster that lacks choice. A fire cannot be influenced by argument or by its own rationality, since it does not

have rationality, but a terrorist can always come to a realisation that murder is not a reasonable response to a drawing or a novel. In a world where because of his violent reactions no art that he dislikes is ever created, it is less likely that he will come to a realisation.

However, I understand that there is a symmetry in the examples if we consider the terrorist to be just as biochemically and physically predetermined to accomplish his act as the fire is.

But if you are right that certain insulted and wronged people are predetermined to commit crime when their indignation has reached too great a pitch, some artists must also be predetermined to create the mocking or critical images that are the cause of this indignation. So what is the point of weighing and discussion ethical alternatives if no-one is actually able to choose or change how they are?

Tännsjö did not comment on my objections, but claimed that I had misunderstood him. He explained afresh that his point is that we are morally responsible for any fire that we enable someone else to start. "If it is true that the other person would not have started the fire if I hadn't thrown away the cigarette, I should have refrained", he writes. "And", he goes on to say, "this is very important when we assess the risks inherent in our own behaviour and how it may be used by other people as justification for violent acts".

To this I replied:

"I don't think there is any misunderstanding. The consequence of your approach, which ought to be of particular interest to a utilitarian, is that all human beings are to take no action in the face of the two natural disasters of fires and potentially-offended people with weapons. There will be fire disasters if people light fires outdoors, and people will die if we ridicule gods, prophets and historical documents, so we shouldn't light fires or engage in religious criticism whether jokingly or, like Salman Rushdie, in a more challenging form."

Tännsjö and I didn't get any further on this occasion. I agree with him that, for strategic reasons, and with the benefit of rational deliberation, we might sometimes be wise to refrain from making or publishing art or expressing opinions that might be insulting to someone, otherwise we are dogmatic romantics as in 1 above, but this is a personal choice and not a moral imperative. A person who does not refrain but persists with provocative art is not responsible for the ensuing violence, for the reasons I have set out above. The basic standpoint for a good, open and free society should not be self-censorship but a rational, equitable freedom based on common sense and the gentle friction of mutual exchange that arises wherever people are able to come together in freedom. Artistic quality cannot determine the right to express oneself freely, and neither can the knowledge that some people are more inclined to turn to violence than others, as this would mean that we had surrendered to violence.

Contributors

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Karin Dalborg is CEO of Nätverkstan Kultur, based in Gothenburg, Sweden, and the initiator and project manager of The Fika Project. Formerly head of the Education Department at Nätverkstan, Dalborg has a background as lecturer and organiser at Kulturverkstan, a vocational training programme for international project managers in the cultural sector. She also co-designed and managed Globalverkstan, a training programme for civil society activists from across the world. Dalborg has extensive experience as a civil society activist herself, including as co-organiser of the Festival of the Free Word in Gothenburg in 2001 and 2002.

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Sandy Fitzgerald has over forty years experience as an artist, activist and manager in the cultural sector. He was Executive Director of City Arts Centre, Dublin (1973 to 2001) and was a board member for a range of cultural organisations, including: Royal Hospital National Cultural Centre (1985–1990), later to

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Kerstin Jeding is a mother, a wife, a psychologist and a researcher. As a licensed psychologist she specialises in stress and sleep problems at The Stress Clinic, Stockholm, Sweden (Stressmottagnin-gen). Her work spans from stress prevention to stress rehabilitation, and she is engaged in treatment of exhaustion syndrome. She has earned a Ph.D in psychosocial work environment and health, at University of Oxford, England. She is the author of several books in psychology, published in Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian and German.

Anna Johansen Fridén is head of Education at Nätverkstan Kultur in Gothenburg, Sweden. Her academic background is sociology and conflict management. She is an experienced trainer in group facilitation, mediation and conflict management. Anna has a long experience of working with many different organisations both in the cultural sector and other contexts, in Sweden as well as in other parts of the world.

Sue Kay has over thirty years' experience in cultural management, within performing arts organisations, development agencies and higher education. She now operates as a freelance educator, facilitator, trainer and writer. With a strong interest in cultural leadership and in teaching and learning in the cultural management field, Kay has an MA in Arts Management and a PhD in Leadership Studies (with a particular focus on cultural management in micro-scale theatre organisations). Formerly a board member of the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC), she teaches abroad (principally in Central and Eastern Europe and Nordic-Baltic countries) on a regular basis.

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Mikael Löfgren is a writer and human rights activist, cultural critic and lecturer. He has previously worked as editor at the cultural magazine Ord & Bild and at Swedish Television. Mikael has also worked as university lecturer in Cultural Studies and as dramaturge at Unga Klara theatre, Stockholm. He is currently teaching at Kulturverkstan, a vocational training programme for international cultural managers. He is also working as a freelance critic and cultural journalist in the daily Dagens Nyheter. Mikael has published books on various topics: postmodernism, football, Ship to Gaza, the labour market, the global justice movement, digitisation and copyright. His most recent publication is *No exceptions. The creation of value in small and mid-sized galleries of contemporary art*. He has five children and two grandchildren and lives on an island outside Gothenburg.

Julia Romanowska is PhD in Medicine and a percussionist with an MA in Music and Education. She has performed with all the major symphony orchestras and theatres in Stockholm. Romanowska has also trained in IT and has worked as a programmer, developer, analyst and management consultant. As a leadership trainer with certification from the Swedish Defence University, Romanowska has designed courses in leadership that include artistic elements.

For many years she has run a cultural salon inspired by the salons littéraires of the past, where she has developed a special art form for the stage – a collage of words and music. This was the origin of the artistic leadership concept Schibboleth, which has been evaluated in a cross-disciplinary study at Karolinska Institutet in conjunction with the Swedish Defence University.

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Joke Schrauwen (MA) joined academia after having worked several years in the private art world. She is affiliated as researcher with University of Antwerp and Antwerp Management School since 2010. After several years of policy research on amongst others cultural governance, public-private partnerships in museums, the impact of creative industries and fashion, inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market, she is now preparing a PhD on the leadership in the cultural sector.

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Sarah Thelwall is a London based strategist who works internationally to restructure the business models of non-profit arts organisations. This consultancy based approach combines a qualitative analysis of the creative core of the organisation and the motivations of the staff with a quantitative analysis of the income streams, cost structures, and the economic, political and social environment in which the organisation is operating. In addition to working with individual organisations Sarah advises at a government policy level internationally and writes periodically about the changing structures of the sector and the challenges and opportunities they bring.

Chris Torch is founder and Senior Associate at *Intercult*, a production and resource unit focused on culture, ideas and the arts. Created in 1996, it is a publically-financed institution, based in Stockholm, managing both a designated *Europe Direct* office and *Access Europa*, a platform for cultural organizations in Sweden focusing on international collaboration.

Torch is presently Program Director for *Rijeka 2020*. Rijeka was named European Capital of Culture for 2020 on 25 march 2016.

Apart from large-scale project design, Torch contributes to intercultural policies. He serves currently on the Board of *Culture Action Europe*. During 2012–2013, he was designated expert to the EU Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group on Cultural Diversity, including 22 EU Member States.

The Fika Project: Empowering Cultural Change Makers

What is it?

Fika is a social institution in Sweden. There has been evidence of the word *fika* for over a hundred years. It is a transposition of “kaffi” (a variation of the Swedish word for coffee). *To fika* means to take a break from work to have a coffee with colleagues. You may well have buns and cake along with your coffee. And a chat – a *fika* break is a great opportunity to discuss anything and everything.

In similar fashion, **The Fika Cultural Leadership Programme** offers you a chance to replenish your reserves, both physical and mental, and helps you to develop your work in a significant way. These are challenging times and **The Fika Programme** is about building leadership capacity to face these challenges.

How did it come about?

The Fika Project was developed in five steps:

1. An examination of the leadership CPD (Continuing Professional Development) needs of the cultural sector, focussing on Europe: summary on the project website: thefikaproject.org;
 2. A survey of existing cultural leadership training in different parts of the world: summary on thefikaproject.org;
 3. *Narratives by Cultural Change Makers*: international case studies of the professional lives of ten cultural leaders published in book form and made available on thefikaproject.org;
 4. *Perspectives on Cultural Leadership*: an anthology of research and essays published in book form and made available on thefikaproject.org;
- ... and will finally result in:
5. *The Fika Cultural Leadership Programme*: an intensive residential and distance learning programme that invites cultural change makers across the world (particularly – though not exclusively – those operating at small scale) to take a break

from their day-to-day responsibilities. Not just to drink coffee and eat cake, but also to meet colleagues and mentors, share experiences, learn from others, take the opportunity to reflect, access new networks and make new collaborations (information – and application form to follow – on thefikaproject.org)

Who did it?

We are the partners behind **The Fika Project**, which is supported by the EU Erasmus+ education and training programme and Region Västra Götaland in Sweden:

Karin Dalborg (Project Manager), Anna Johansen Fridén and Mikael Löfgren, Nätverkstan Kultur: independent cultural organisation based in Gothenburg, Sweden, providing education, financial and technical services, project management and consulting to the cultural sector: www.natverkstan.net.

Birgitta Persson, Trans Europe Halles: European-based network of cultural centres initiated by citizens and artists: www.teh.net.

Sue Kay and Annick Schramme, ENCATC: European network for cultural management and cultural policy education: www.encatc.org.

Sandy Fitzgerald and Paul Bogen, Olivearte Cultural Agency: providing wide-ranging supports to the European arts and cultural sector: www.olivearte.com

THE  PROJECT

Perspectives on Cultural Leadership is part of *The Fika Project* (thefikaproject.org) which aim is to develop a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) concept for international cultural leadership capable of meeting the demands of our complex and changing times.

Perspectives on Cultural Leadership is an anthology of research and essays. Rather than aiming to be all-encompassing, the book seeks to open up discussion by offering thought-provoking perspectives on some of the waters that cultural leaders these days are obliged to navigate.

Accompanying this book is the newly-published *Narratives by Cultural Change Makers*, which consists of interviews with ten prominent cultural leaders from different parts of the world. Active in different countries, in different types of organisations and with different art forms and types of culture, they tell us about life and work, education and training, professional experiences, success and setbacks, dilemmas and solutions.

Together, these two books will hopefully serve as inspiring examples and interesting perspectives for the readers to test against their own experience.



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