



BALANCING BETWEEN ARTISTIC
FREEDOM AND INSTRUMENTALISATION.

ART'S ROLE IN NORDIC CULTURAL
POLICY.

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Balancing between artistic freedom and instrumentalisation. Art's role in Nordic cultural policy.

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Abstract

Cultural policy documents are often considered to simply intended for governmental officials' use. Motivation for this inquiry is based on the idea that cultural policy does not limit itself by being merely a set of documents, but it is first and foremost an ideological field in which different practices emerge.

This thesis is built on explorative cultural policy research and aims to explore and illuminate complex issues around Nordic cultural policy. In 2021, Nordic Council of Ministers, a central platform for cultural co-operation in the Nordic region, has published a new Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024. The programme serves as a main Nordic cultural policy document and draws particular attention to the importance of art and culture in reaching regional goals for sustainable development.

This inquiry is a qualitative case study of Nordic Culture Point, a Nordic cultural institution that aims to translate this policy into real-life practices with the help of funding programmes for art and culture. Thesis investigate institution's strategic role as well as the role of funding programmes in relation to Nordic cultural policy.

In addition, key focus is to investigate how the Nordic policy views the role and condition of art and culture in the context of regional development. To do so, the inquiry builds on the concepts of arm's length principle, artistic freedom, and art's instrumentalisation. Thesis provides in-depth analysis of policy documents, its design and attempts to balance artistic freedom and instrumental views towards the arts. In addition, it draws attention on how the policy and its implementation affect the work of funding advisors and experts at Nordic Culture Point.

The analysis reveals that Nordic cultural policy views art and culture as important recourses for different welfare policy objectives. In addition, it applies a complex instrumental rationale at times suggesting an imbalance between intrumentalisation and artistic freedom. Opinions of advisors and experts also reveal that this imbalance may at times affect funding allocating for art and cultural projects.

Keywords arm's length principle, instrumentalisation, cultural policy, Nordic cultural policy, artistic freedom

Contents

01	Introduction	7
02	Theoretical conceptual framework	11
	Nordic cultural policy model	11
	Artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation	14
	Application of arm's length principle	17
	Policy attachments	19
	Issue with instrumental rationale	21
	Impact measurement	22
	Critical view towards impact measurement	23
	Chapter summary	25
03	Methodology	26
	Data	28
	Ethical consideration	31
04	Analysis structure	33
	Abbreviations	34
	Arm's length principle and organizational distance	35
	Policy views on arm's length principle	35
	Brief history of Nordic Culture Point	36
	Institutional distance of Nordic Culture Point	38
	Strategic role of Nordic Culture Point	42
	Arm's length principle as a rhetorical tool	45
	Arm's length principle and instrumentality	47
	Policy views on art and culture	47
	Sustainable development as policy attachment	49
	Types of instrumentality in Nordic cultural policy	53
	Issue with balance	58
	Policy and real-life funding practices	59
	Culture and Art Programme	60
	Funding process and roles	62
	Programme's strategic criteria	65
	Result evaluation	69
	Arm's length principle and funding process	74

05	Conclusions	75
06	References	80
	List of figures	83
	Appendices	84
	Appendix 1. Invitation letter to participate in a survey	84
	Appendix 2. Questionnaire form for Culture and Art Programme experts	86
	Appendix 3. Application form for Culture and Art Programme	90

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01

Introduction

At a first glance, cultural policies are a set of official documents that are intended to be read and used by the government officials and therefore it is not widely discussed or researched by the general public. After taking a closer look, cultural policies reveal themselves as an ideological field in which different practices emerge. They inevitably affect the ways in which we understand art and culture as well as their function and role in our societies. Cultural policies go beyond the official documents and affect different aspects of development in the art field, starting from economic welfare of field's professionals and going further to what type of art is showcased and is seen as valuable in general.

In 2018 I started working as an assistant at Nordic Culture Point (NKK), a Nordic cultural institution of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Council is a central platform for co-operation in the Nordic countries. Nordic Culture Point supports this co-operation within the area of culture. Among many activities run by NKK, including running a Nordic library in the center of Helsinki, arranging broad scope of cultural events and collaborating with other local cultural bodies, the institution is also responsible of managing the Nordic Council of Ministers' funding programmes for culture and art. While working with these programmes, I could not help but critically reflect upon my own work and the role of the public funding for

art and culture in general. Together with colleagues we were raising questions such as who decides of what types of art projects are being funded, how one can assess the results of implemented projects, who benefits from the funding, what the role of art is and what is seen as valuable art in the context of the official Nordic co-operation. These questions have inspired the subject of this thesis as well as the overall collaboration with Nordic Culture Point while trying to pursue some answers.

Official Nordic regional co-operation began in the early 1950s and from then on it involves active partnership between Nordic countries, that is Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. According to platform's official vision, it aims to make the Nordic region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. Art and culture play a significant role in reaching these ambitious goals. In 2021, Nordic Council of Ministers has published Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024, *Art and culture – driving force for sustainable development in the Nordic region*. The programme serves as a main Nordic cultural policy document. It draws attention to the importance of art and culture in sustainable regional development as well as sets main objectives that are aimed to be accomplished with help of Nordic cultural institutions including aforementioned Nordic Culture Point (NKK). Four funding programmes administrated by the institution also serve as a tool that helps achieve regional success aiming for the sustainable development.

This case study aims to provide a closer look at how art and culture fields are seen in the official Nordic regional co-operation, especially in the context of sustainable development. The main goal is to open up a broader discussion on issues related to artistic freedom and instrumentalisation of art in relation to the Nordic cultural policy. Thesis closely analyses policy structure, its views towards artistic freedom and art's role in society. Since all cultural policies are instrumental by nature, the analysis takes in-depth look at what different layers and types of instrumentality are applied in the current Nordic policy documents. The main focus is on how the arm's length principle is taken into consideration while designing different practices related to the policy implementation. The principle aims to help to prevent political objectives from negatively affecting artistic freedom. The goal of this case

study is to provide in-depth insights into the issue of supporting art through the technical and often instrumental matrices.

Thesis starts with a theoretical and conceptual framework that aims to establish a common ground and context for a later Nordic policy analysis. It aims to contextualize Nordic cultural policy in different cultural policy making traditions. In addition, the framework explores the origins of the common dichotomy that appears while discussing cultural policy, that is a difference between supporting art and culture for its intrinsic values and supporting it for its external values, such as their help to reach other socio-economic objectives. The inquiry does not aim to support one of those views, but rather aims to analyse how they affect the Nordic policy design and what underlying tensions combinations of these two views might cause in the concrete funding practices. Theoretical and conceptual framework introduces concepts such as arm's lengths principle, instrumentalisation, policy attachments, etc. that programmers' to be valuable while analysing cultural policies.

The key concept in the thesis is arm's lengths principle that aims to support artistic freedom in a context of cultural policy implementation and refrains politicians of influencing the artistic outcome. Therefore, analysis aims to uncover different aspects of how arm's length principle is taken into consideration while designing Nordic cultural policy and funding practices. Analysis is divided into three main parts. First part aims to closely analyse policy views on arm's length principle, as well as explore institutional distance of Nordic Culture Point in relation to the Nordic Council of Ministers. Second analysis part focuses on how arm's lengths principle is reflected while formulating the main objectives in the Nordic cultural policy. It closely analyses policy language and different types of instrumentality that the policy is built on. Finally, the last part of the analysis provides an example of concrete funding scheme and how the policy affects its criteria. In addition, it focuses on how political objectives and criteria affect funding-decision making by focusing on opinions and experiences of the main gatekeepers in the funding process at Nordic Culture Point, that is programme advisors and experts.

Thesis focuses on the Nordic regional cultural policy in order to fill the research gap existing in the cultural policy studies that often tend to focus on separate national policies such as Finnish, or Norwegian policies. It builds on explorative policy research, that aims to describe,

explore and illuminate complex issues around the role and condition of culture (Belfiore, 2009). In addition, it aims to open up a broader discussion related to balancing artistic freedom and art's instrumentalisation in the funding activities. Ideally, it will also inspire a further future research interest in the topic.

02

Theoretical conceptual framework

In this chapter I will introduce the main theoretical and conceptual framework of the thesis. It aims to situate Nordic cultural policy in other policy-making traditions. In addition, it uncovers the main concepts such as arm's length principle, instrumentalisation, artistic freedom and policy attachments. The aim is to define a theoretical conceptual field in which the thesis emerges as well as to clarify the language that will be used later in the Analysis chapter. In addition, it briefly touches upon the origins of dichotomy of supporting art for its intrinsic values and supporting art due to its benefits to the society in general.

Nordic cultural policy model

In order to discuss Nordic cultural policy, it is important to situate it in the context of other cultural policy-making traditions. In 1989, Hillman Chartrand and McCaughey offered a typology of State stances which had a large and lasting impact on cultural policy research and still retains its relevance. The typology consists of four main types of State stances – the Facilitator State, the Patron state, the Architect state, and the Engineer State.

Typology of State stances is used as a starting point of reference in this thesis. The typology was offered as an alternative to arm's length principle, or what Hillman Chartrand and McCaughey call a "mode of public support" (1989). Arm's length principle aims to support artistic freedom in a context of cultural policy implementation and refrains politicians to influence the artistic outcome. Even though the State stances are an alternative to the principle, all stances are formulated in relation to the extent in which arm's length principle is incorporated in them. In other words, there is no reason to see arm's length principle as something different from the four State stances, but rather to see it as a starting point and a context in which the State stances appear.

All four State stances differ in a way a state positions itself in relation to artistic autonomy while designing its cultural policy. However, instead of focusing on all State stances I will focus on two, namely the Patron and Architect model while discussing Nordic cultural policy, as it rests and balances between these two (Kulturanalys Nord, 2022; Srakar & Vecco, 2020). The Patron model rests on the idea of a clear arm's length principle which is implemented via independent publicly funded body, such as for instance the British Arts Council, that consists of independent trustees appointed by the government. They can determine the directions and design of funding as well as make decisions on funding allocation. Such model historically is mostly associated with the UK where the model was developed as a response to the use of art and culture as a political and propaganda tool during WWII (Hillman Chartrand & McCaughey, 1989). However, the Patron model is often criticized as a elitists and conservative cultural policy as it usually tends to support well-established art forms and art and cultural professionals.

The so-called Architect model, which is widely applied in the Central European and Nordic countries (Duelund, 2003; Hillman Chartrand & McCaughey, 1989; Mangset, 2010a; Srakar & Vecco, 2020), sees cultural policy as an integral part of a welfare policy and therefore includes additional values alongside artistic freedom and quality. It tends to be revolutionary and "also tends to support art that meets community rather than professional standards of artistic excellence" (Hillman Chartrand & McCaughey, 1989, p. 11). Equal access to culture, in contrast to the Patron model, is seen as an important political goal. In such model, ministries of culture and government officials have a greater influence over the design and

implementation of cultural policy, for example, in relation to grants (Kulturanalys Norden, 2022). Even though the model is related to social and democratic aspirations, it is also criticized to lead to a stagnation of cultural life (Hillman Chartrand & McCaughey, 1989; Mangset, 2010a). Because of cultural policy's close relation to other welfare objectives, it could be argued to also potentially negatively affect the artistic autonomy.

Hillman Chartrand and Mc Caughey's argue (1989) that the purpose of such typology is not to strictly divide cultural policies in the context of one or another model. On contrary, State stances help to describe the design of cultural policies in relation to its views towards artistic autonomy. Different State stances can be more or less dominant in a particular cultural policy making tradition. They can sometimes also be combined, as it is argued to be a case for Nordic countries whose policies are generally related to the Architect model but also has clear features of the Patron model (Kulturanalys Norden, 2022; Srakar & Vecco, 2020).

Typology of State stances is not considered as a methodological tool in this thesis but is merely used to describe Nordic policy in relation to the arm's length principle and place it in the context of other policy types.

Some researchers have also developed a discussion in search of the Nordic cultural policy model (see, for example, Duelund, 2003; Mangset, 1992; Mangset et al., 2008; Sokka, ed., 2022), which rests on a post-war idea that a cultural policy is a part of a welfare policy. It has ambitions to balance artistic autonomy and inclusive cultural life that is geographically spread and reaches the entire population. Thus it supports artists and cultural professionals' economic and social security regardless of their background (Kulturanalys Norden, 2022).

Kulturanalys Norden (2022) based on previous Nordic policy research identifies three key ideas around which Nordic cultural policy revolve around:

- Development of high-quality art and culture sector characterized by creativity and artistic freedom
- Goals for an accessible cultural life and everyone's opportunity for participation in it
- Art and culture in different ways should play a role/have a function in society. (p. 19)

[Translation by me]

In addition to these, all Nordic countries have also established some form of arm's body or what Gray (2002) calls "arm's-length quango" when it comes to government's grant allocation. It is usually based on professional experts who assess incoming funding applications. Nordic Culture Point can be seen as an example for such quango of Nordic Council of Ministers. Although the aspect of artistic freedom and quality remains important basis for Nordic cultural policies, appreciation of art and culture due to its added socio-economic values is still its key feature.

Artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation

The previous section suggests that a concept of artistic autonomy lies in the centre of cultural policy discussions. Different attitudes towards it and different attempts to incorporate it in cultural policy can form some underlying tensions. In this section, I will take a closer look at the already mentioned arm's length principle. Before moving there, it is important to discuss two concepts between which arm's lengths principle is situated, that is artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation.

The concept of artistic freedom or artistic autonomy lacks a fixed and clear definition and its perception and understanding varies in different context as well as how different groups of agents use it in the cultural field. However, its philosophical origins are rooted in the Kantian idea whereby art and culture are identified as a social sphere characterized by a complete autonomy or as "purposiveness without a purpose" (Kant, 1790/1987, p. 78). That is art has no other practical purpose outside the purpose of itself.

This idea has formed a basis for 19th century *l'art pour l'art* movement, roughly translated as *art for art's sake*. However, as Belfiore and Bennett (2007) argue, the movement was partially based on distortion of Kant's writings by such cultural intermediaries like Madame de Stael (1766-1817). According to Vestheim (2009), they "diffused the idea of Kant's separation of the aesthetic and the moral, which later in the 19th century led to the rejection of any kind of educational and humanizing functions for the art" (p. 37). To simplify the view, art and culture do not have or cannot be demanded to have additional goals that go beyond intrinsic artistic goals.

In contrast to such views towards the art, there is another historically present tradition. In this view, art is valued because it serves a man. Art & Craft Movement advocated for the art that has a function. In addition, mastering the material, structure and function was seen as a main desirable outcome related to an artistic production. In addition, figures like William Morris and John Ruskin stressed the social vision related to the arts. Criticising industrial revolution and machinery production to be a reason why society loses traditional skills, artists and philosophers stressed that such separation of the intellectual act of design from the manual act of artistic production had negative and damaging effects on society. Therefore, artistic practices were associated with humanizing aspects and the society of free craftspeople.

In such view art is believed to have a concrete function in the society. Similar views are related to the concept of instrumentalisation, which describes a way of thinking whereby art and culture are seen as important contributors for a variety of different socio-economic objectives in a society. Instrumentalisation directly impacts questions related to art and culture's value. Rauterberg (2019) argues, that it is expected that art should serve different types of emancipatory purposes, and if art does not live up to such demands it tends to be considered as less valuable. Based on this, one could argue that instrumental views towards art and culture could pose threats to artistic freedom and the development of the field.

There are several academic attempts to create a theoretical conceptual vocabulary that would allow to discuss instrumentalisation in a greater detail. There is a distinguishment between soft versus hard instrumentalisation (Røyseng, 2016), regular instrumentalisation versus hyperinstrumentalisation (Hadley & Gray, 2017), passive and active

instrumentalisation (Kulturanalys Norden, 2022). Vestheim points out (2008) four types of instrumentality related to public funding, arguments behind them and target group:

Argument	Target group of argument	Type of instrumentality
Support the 'good' art due to arts intrinsic values	Individual as a private person	Aesthetic/educational instrumentality
Support art and culture to create economic development	Individual as an economic being	Economic instrumentality
Support art and culture to create social development and integration	Individual as a social being	Social instrumentality
Support art and culture to contribute to enlightenment and community involvement	Individual as a citizen	Political mobilising instrumentality

Figure 1. Vestheim's typology of instrumentality. Translation by me.

These different types of instrumentality rest on different arguments and values. The aesthetic rests on aesthetic and educational values of art. The economic imply that art can generate economic benefits, for instance, making region more attractive. The social is justified on the basis of positive impacts art has for, for instance, social security, well-being, health benefits, inclusion etc. The political mobilising is related to a view that art and culture can nurture democratic values of the society and affect people's participation in democratic processes. These different aspects of instrumentality are going to be used to analyse Nordic cultural policy programme. However, it is important to make a clear distinction between a concept of instrumentalisation and instrumentality. In the thesis a term instrumentalisation relates to the overall way of thinking or philosophy of using arts as an instrument for a variety of different objectives for societal development. Instrumentality, on the other hand, is seen as a more concrete tool, or direction that instrumentalisation tends incorporates.

The tensions between concepts of artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation have been central since the interest in cultural policy research. However, in the context of this thesis

there is no aim to draw a sharp line between them aiming to advocate for either of these views. As it was earlier discussed in the previous section, the Nordic cultural policy model aims to balance both standpoints with a help of arm's length principle. Therefore the attempts to do lie in the key interest of the thesis.

A strict dichotomy between artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation is not productive while analysing cultural policy as researchers (Gibson, 2008; Vestheim, 2008) argue that all cultural policy by definition is instrumental. It is not important to ask the question *if* art and culture are independent or autonomous in relation to political, ideological and economic powers, but to *what degree* they are autonomous. As Vestheim writes (2009):

However, there is no such thing as a non-instrumental cultural policy. Policy is by definition instrumental by nature. When power holders make a field of social activities and products subject to political action, these activities become «instruments» or means in the sense that all political actions aim at having certain predetermined effects on citizens. The question is what sorts of effects are expected and what sorts of arguments are used. (p. 47)

Arm's length principle aims to balance out artistic autonomy and instrumental views towards art and culture. Both concept of artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation rests on long-lived historical traditions of thinking around art's purpose. Because all cultural policies are instrumental, there are many attempts to introduce different academic vocabulary for discussing it. In this thesis, Vestheim's typology of instrumentality will be applied later while analysing the Nordic cultural policy as it is targeted towards different layers of instrumentality that is incorporated in a cultural policy making.

Application of arm's length principle

Arm's length principle (ALP) remains an important point of departure when aiming to balance artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation in cultural policies. It also aims to prevent cultural policy implementation from negatively affecting artistic freedom and is based on an idea of political abstinence. Arm's length principle is usually taken into consideration while establishing some level of individual artistic autonomy and institutional autonomy.

Art and cultural field professionals are generally seen as group that is most advocate for individual artistic autonomy. The defence of art and culture as autonomous is usually based on argument that is formulated with reference to the principles of freedom of expression and democracy, intrinsic value and creativity which are dependent on free working conditions (Vestheim, 2009). Vestheim (2009) argues, that such way of seeing the arts is close to the idealistic view of the arts as a transcendental sphere above everything else.

Institutional autonomy on the other hand concerns institutional competence to be independent of political and economic interest. Argument for institutional autonomy is based on professional self-determination (Vestheim, 2009). Institutions such as libraries, museums, and arts councils could be seen as the examples of such strive for institutional autonomy from the central government.

In order to respect arm's length principle, governments apply several methods of establishing a sense of individual artistic and institutional autonomy. For instance, by creating an organisational distance between political decision making and grant allocation decision or by establishing the formal control and management of the arts support systems, such as for example arts councils and regional art boards. This allows central governments to avoid accusations of state censorship or political mismanagement of the system. (Gray, 2002).

Another example of an attempt to promote institutional and individual artistic autonomy is a will to separate cultural policy from other policy areas. This relates to the sharing of power. However, such separation almost seems impossible as contemporary cultural policies tend to adapt other than purely artistic goals into their agendas. This is related to a question whether a policy as a phenomenon can even exist without the instrumental aspect. In the context of the Nordic cultural model, cultural policy is seen as an integral part of welfare policy, and therefore a strict application of arm's lengths principle may be hard to identify.

Yet another important aspect of arm's length principle is that politicians should refrain to steering or influencing what phenomena and how artists and cultural workers choose to portray (Kulturanalys Norden, 2021). In other words, politicians should not interfere with the

content of the artistic and cultural production. This could be argued, is promoted by appointing independent expert groups, usually consisting of professionals in the field of art and culture – artists, producers, researchers and others. They make funding allocation decision based on the artistic expertise and artistic quality criteria. This aspect is also related to government's positioning in relation to the criteria of its funding schemes, that is whether government formulates specific criteria or whether it allows the arm's length body to do it.

Examples above show introduces different directions in which governments aim to design the activities and processes in relation to the arm's length principle (ALP). Nevertheless, ALP lacks a strict definition as it is understood differently in different contexts. The principle is not a specific fixed method which is applied while balancing balance views on artistic freedom and instrumentalisation in cultural policies. On contrary, ALP is more of an ideal goal and ambition for cultural policy implementation (Kulturanalys Norden, 2022).

Policy attachments

As it was already suggested in previous sections, all cultural policies are instrumental. Therefore, it is relevant to take a closer look at how instrumentalisation is implemented in practice. Due to instrumental nature of cultural policy, art and culture are entrusted with the task of bringing additional external values beside only nurturing its intrinsic values.

These external values can be economic values, for instance, making region or municipality more attractive to tourists. Other examples of external values are social, such as health benefits, social inclusion, gender equality, urban regeneration, employment and so on. In addition, art and culture can be seen to have an ability of promoting democratic processes and participation. Those are only brief examples not limited to a specific country's cultural policies, but more of a general trend of a contemporary policy making. The shift towards an instrumental policy, which justifies public expenditure in the arts on the grounds of other socio-economic benefits it brings, is a European trend (Vestheim, 1994).

Such incorporation of additional external objectives beside intrinsic values carries a long tradition in the Nordic region since cultural policy area was established in the 1960s and the

1970s. Daelund (2003; 2008) explains that focus of instrumentalisation has changed throughout the second part of 20th century. The arts were firstly seen to help to spread cultural education, then to support democratic participation of the society, moving onto viewing support for arts as economic investment and finally combining economic view with more various areas of society. Henningsen (2015) explains the process as sedimentation, where layers of instrumental goals are added on top of previous layers, which gradually increases the complexity of cultural policy and its objectives.

Such additional objectives can be called “policy attachments” (Gray, 2002). As Gray writes, “policy ‘attachment’ contains the idea that policy development in certain policy areas takes place through the attachment of that area to other policy concerns” (p. 80). According to him, such way of policy making considers the arts for what they can contribute to the pursue of other sectoral policy objectives, for instance welfare objectives. Therefore, it leads to seeing art not as an independent policy sector but as a tool that can be used for other political purposes.

Nevertheless, such incorporation of policy attachments or other external goals in a cultural policy can be used to legitimise a greater public expenditure on the arts, which could in turn provide artists and cultural professionals with greater possibilities. However, in the context of this argument that policy attachments benefit the arts field, Gray reflects (2002):

It could be argued that ‘attachment’ has been at the expense of the core element of the arts themselves and, to paraphrase the biblical message, what does it profit a policy sector to gain political and financial support if the cost is its soul? (p. 88)

As the reviewed literature suggests, instrumentalisation is closely related to policy attachments, that is other external goals that do not directly relate to art and culture. Policy attachments not only help to secure funding for the arts, but also help to justify the public spending on the field. Since Nordic cultural policy model sees art and culture to play a role or have a function in society, Nordic cultural policies tend to adapt a variety of different policy attachments. These attachments will be later extensively analysed in the Analysis chapter.

Issue with instrumental rationale

Despite that policy attachments and instrumentalisation of the arts are generally associated with negative effects on the arts field, there is a deeper issue related with the overall instrumentalisation rationale. Cultural policy researchers (see for example Belfiore & Bennett, 2007; Røyseng, 2009,) argue that instrumentalisation is based on idea, that art produces only positive impacts on the society.

Røyseng (2009, p. 6) talks about "goodness regime" (org. *godhetsregime*) which is related to unquestioned belief of good forces of art and culture and their power to fix all the evil in the society such as laziness, passivity, racism and so on. Belfiore and Bennett (2007) use a term *assumption* when discussing social value of the arts and its performance impacts. They argue that the corollary of such thinking is that arts produce no negative impacts, and if they do, they are not worth mentioning.

In addition, Belfiore and Bennett (2007) offer an extensive historical perspective on both positive and negative traditions associated with arts impact. They conclude that the negative tradition is as robust and historically even more robust than the positive tradition, which is predominant in today's cultural policy and arts funding debates. Based on it, they criticize policy documents for being detached from the complex intellectual traditions leaving them unaware of their own philosophical origins.

Another issue related to such thinking as noted in Bishop (2006) and Krester's (2004) discussion is that it is difficult to be critical of art that helps people and society. Art taking a 'social turn' opposes or excludes the notion that 'bad art' exists. This is also related to questions of value and quality of artistic practice as Badham (2010) comments that "the ability to critique such art practice is also complicated as it is difficult to critique work that appears to be of social merit, even if it does lack innovation" (p. 92).

Contemporary cultural policies are inevitably instrumental, and such nature of policy implies that art and culture have only positive impact in our societies. However, it is important to be aware of a long-lived contrary view where art is seen to affect our societies in negative ways.

The critique of instrumental rationale is mainly situated around the argument that cultural policies are incomplete as they are not informed or do not reflect their philosophical origins.

Impact measurement

Instrumentalisation is built on the idea that arts only have positive impacts. It sees the art and cultural field as a great contributor to governmental socio-economic agenda. Such narrative is often used as an argument helping to secure governmental funding for the field. Cultural policy relies on the rhetoric of alleged transformative powers of the arts in order to justify the public subsidy.

However, these ideological underpinnings of policy making lead to a problem of justification of public spending in the cultural sector. If we see the arts as the important contributor in attaining other attached policy goals, in order to justify the public spending on the arts, administrative institutions need to present evidence of arts impact. In other words, governmental policies have to be informed by the sound evidence.

Belfiore and Bennet (2010) notes such evidence-based policy making has led to many impact studies, which aim to assess the extent to which funded arts have a socio-economic impact and thus contribute to governmental economic and social policy. Methodologies that have been applied been widely criticized by arts professionals, who oppose to excessive instrumentalisation of the arts, as well as academic research, who stress "ideological bias and advocacy purposes lurking in many of them" (Belfiore and Bennet, 2010, p. 122).

Evidence-based policy tend to apply a simplified toolkit approach, a straightforward method of impact evaluation, which resulted from privileging "quantitative approaches borrowed from disciplines of economics auditing"(Belfiore and Bennet 2010, p. 124) or as what Rothbard (1989) refers to as the hermeneutic invasion of economics to other spheres. Belfiore and Bennet (2010) argue that such approach does not take into account the complexity of effects of people's aesthetic experiences and that the attempt to form a broad "generalizations about people's experiences of the arts are never likely to be convincing" (p. 125). As they also notice (2007), "numerous studies have shown, from Pierre Bourdieu to Paul

Willis, the value or impact of a work of art will vary enormously, according to all the factors that make up a person's identity, including age, class, health, wealth and so on" (p.4).

Critical view towards impact measurement

A call for different ways to measure artistic contribution, or different ways to build a case for art and culture funding, is discussed in research (see for example, Badham, 2010; Belfiore and Bennet 2007). Belfiore and Bennet (2009) call for 'explorative' research that would explore the complex questions, to which easy and clear answers might not be able to be found. They add that until we accept the need for such research using genuinely exploratory approach, we are doomed to be reproducing such evidence-based research, which causes several negative threads to the arts field.

Belfiore and Bennet (2010) argue that focus on *positive impacts or measurable outcomes* (Smith, 1998) in evidence-based policy making has led humanities to be rather exempt from this investigation. According to Belfiore and Bennet (2010), the temptation to form research questions on policy- or advocacy-friendly terms established a framework where questions related to *how* the arts help to reach other objectives, rather than actually asking *whether* they help. Can we focus on how to measure something if it is not clear whether art really has any positive social impact. Even if it does, how can we generalize about these experiences related to different art forms and a diverse population.

As McCarthy et al (2005) write, such experiences "lie beyond the traditional quantitative tools of the social sciences, and often beyond the language of common experience" (p. 37). Because of such intangible nature of the aesthetic experience, technocratic mindset is usually deployed while justifying public expenditure on the arts. However, it leads to a threat that McCarthy et al (2005) identify, that even if the arts community advocate for intrinsic benefits they are expected and itself rely on measurable outcomes to have political backing. As Badham (2010) states too, a "challenge of articulating and qualifying the artistic becomes too complex and we [artists] resort to the more easily expressed translation of social policy outcomes" (p. 89).

Belfiore and Bennett (2007) sum up all consequences that evidence-based policy leads into three main directions. First one is that discussion about the impact of the arts is harder to separate from the discussion of their funding. Second – research on both value and impacts has usually been formed around an advocacy agenda, even if this has been disguised as one of dispassionate enquiry. Third – considerably more time and resources are used for searching the proof of impacts rather than actually trying to understand them. In addition, focus on measurable impacts has led to fundamental assumptions about arts role and power introduced in the previous section unchallenged.

On the other hand, advocates of measurable instrumental descriptions argue that evidence-based policy research is less dubious, and that it is an essential component of democratic, fair and transparent government (Chelimsky 2006). One of the main arguments for evidence-based policy is ideology-free procedure which is based on managerialist and technocratic understanding of the state (Wells 2007).

However, Belfiore and Bennet (2010) argues that the possibility of policy making as a politically neutral exercise is flawed in its essence, as the much policy research has shown, the sphere of public administration is hardly value-neutral and ideology-free. In another article, Belfiore (2009) uses a concept of performance paradox, which refers to unintended and undesirable consequences that can result due to application of performance measurement. She argues that while the measures aim to improve transparency and accountability in the public sector, it might have in reality resulted in opaque political messages on arts benefits that are still hard to proof.

Even though intrinsic values are hard to measure and its vague dubious descriptions are not seen as a legitimate justification for public subsidy, Mulligan and Smith (2009) argue that: "Artistic projects can only shift perceptions and attitudes in a meaningful way if they have a 'wow factor' related to an inspirational artistic vision and/or the clever crafting of diverse and well targeted activities" (p. 10). The researchers made an extensive three-year research project in the context community art projects that concluded that the shift in public attitudes is likely to be connected with inspirational artistic vision. This gives the intrinsic values a 'validity' needed to justify the public spending based on conclusion that without intrinsic

values and 'wow factor', external values or goals are harder to reach. And as Badham (2010) writes, "when the instrumental values [...] overstated, the intrinsic values are overlooked, endangering the commitment to artistic integrity" (p. 92). It is this interdependency between the two in important – if one stresses external values too much, it endangers artistic integrity, which in turn does not help the external values to translate into actual reality.

Chapter summary

This chapter has helped to navigate Nordic cultural policy in a context of other policy-making traditions. Nordic cultural policy model stresses the importance of artistic freedom and quality as well as views cultural policy as an integral part of overall welfare policy. Such policy aims to balance artistic freedom and instrumental views towards art and culture. The chapter has introduced the historical and philosophical origins and perspectives of concepts of artistic freedom and instrumentalisation. In addition, it introduced the arm's lengths principle which aims to balance these two concepts. It broadly explored different directions in which arm's length principle is taken into consideration in cultural policy implementation. Finally, the chapter has introduced different academic attempts to analyse instrumental nature of cultural policies and, in addition, has casted a light on critical reflections on instrumental rationale and measurement of arts' impact.

03

Methodology

This chapter describes main methodological directions of this inquiry. It introduces the overall methodological approach of the thesis, data and methods for collecting and analysing it. In addition, it presents ethical considerations related to this study.

This thesis builds on critical explorative cultural policy research, which aims to describe, explore and illuminate complex issues around the role and condition of culture (Belfiore, 2009). This type of policy research also refers to McGuigan's (2004) critical and reflexive cultural policy analysis, which "is permitted to ask awkward questions about the conditions of culture and society in the world at large that go beyond the self-imposed limitations of management consultancy and policy-wonking" (p. 19). The analysis is not built on the advocacy for arts rationale trying to find evidence or proofs that the arts have positive benefits for the society. On contrary, it is built on disinterested research (Stone, 2001), which has a function to pursue knowledge for knowledge's sake. It explores different aspects of cultural policy making, its structure and key pillars it is built on. An important aspect of this research is humility and acceptance "that when exploring complex questions (and cultural and political questions are inescapably complex), the researcher needs to accept that it

might not be possible to find easy answers that can tidily fit into a journal article.”, or in this case, a scope of Master’s thesis.

This thesis views cultural policy as an ideological field in which different practices emerge. In order to present in-depth analysis of the cultural policy and concrete related practices, it was chosen to apply a perspective of qualitative case study. This case study focuses on real-life funding practices for art and culture at Nordic Culture Point, a Nordic cultural institution that administers the Nordic Council of Ministers’ funding programmes. The analysis draws upon the Nordic cultural policy documents and sheds light over its underlying architecture. In order to approach complex issues related to the cultural policy analysis and offer a more in-depth additional perspective, a special attention is also placed on opinions and experiences of the main gatekeepers – funding programmes’ advisors (administrative officers at Nordic Culture Point) and funding programmes’ experts (appointed funding decision-makers).

To sum up, the qualitative case study is informed by a critical explorative policy research and in order to get additional in-depth perspective, opinions and experiences of main gatekeepers are also seen as an important aspect for the Nordic cultural policy analysis. In addition, the thesis applies a principle of triangulation (Denzin, 1970), in a way that it aims to study different types of empirical data and move between theory, policy documents and real-life experiences of the main gatekeepers. This allows to form a bigger and more detailed picture while analysing Nordic cultural policy.

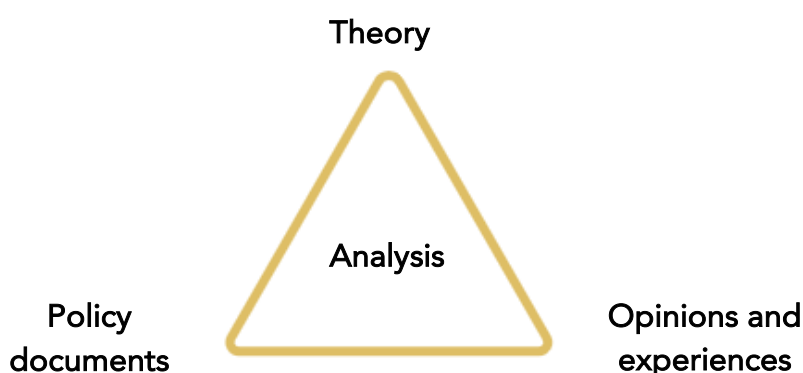


Figure 2. *Application of triangulation in the analysis.*

Data

In order to present a comprehensive analysis different types of data are applied. Analysis data could be divided into two main parts (Figure 3), that is already existing data and self-produced material. Already existing data is the main Nordic cultural policy programme and other additional official documents used in the Nordic funding system for art and culture.

Since the analysis is moving between different documents it is important to provide a clear list of them. There are three main documents that are detailly analysed, and two documents that are directly referred to in the Analysis chapter. The main key document is Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024, that is the overall main public cultural policy document for Nordic co-operation in the art and culture field. This is the main documents that will be referred to as a Nordic cultural policy in the Analysis chapter.

Strategic mandate for Nordic Culture Point is an appendix to the overall Co-operation programme and is not a separate document. However, since the analysis will place a special focus on it, it is distinguished as a separate one. Handbook for Culture and Art Programme is document that describes the overall funding process, criteria, goals etc. for a concrete funding scheme administered by Nordic Culture Point. Nordic Culture Point has provided a permission to refer to the document for thesis purposes. The document is internal and is not accessible for a general public and therefore cannot be added as an appendix. However, it is a key data piece that helps to understand the design of funding process as well as general criteria of funding scheme. Finally, application form for Culture and Art programme is not detailly analysed in this thesis, but it is an important part of departure and referred to several times in the analysis. The form can be found as Appendix 3 since it can be re-designed and changed in the future and the current version may not be accessible anymore.

Already existing material, policy documents

Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024, *Art and culture – driving force for sustainable development in the Nordic region*.

Strategic mandate for Nordic Culture Point

Handbook for Culture and Art programme

Application form for Culture and Art programme

The main Nordic cultural policy document published by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Later referred to as Nordic cultural policy.

Appendix to Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024.

Internal, publicly not available document that functions as a main document for describing Culture and Art programme's goals, targets, evaluation criteria etc. Nordic Culture Point has granted a permission to refer to this document.

Official application form used by applicants while applying for funding.

Self-produced material

Questionnaire for experts

Spring 2020

Interview with an expert

Spring 2020

Group discussion with advisors for funding programmes at Nordic Culture Point

Summer 2021

Figure 3. Collection of data.

Self-produced materials consist of three main parts – questionnaire for experts, a semi-structured interview with an expert and a group discussion with advisors working with funding programmes at Nordic Culture Point. The initial idea was to also include questionnaire for funding receivers or applicants in order to form a broad picture of how Nordic cultural policy affects all related agents. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the art and culture field as well as the overall size of the thesis it was decided to leave applicants' perspectives out. In addition, due to pandemic related restrictions all data gathering activities were moved online. The pandemic has also affected data gathering

period as it has extended for almost over a year. It is also important to note, that a new Co-operation programme on culture policy was published meanwhile in 2021 while some gathered data was focusing on a previous co-operation programme for years 2014-2020. This, however, is not seen as a major issue, because those two programmes are related to each other as the new programme could be seen as an extension of the former one.

Self-produced material combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaire for the Culture and Art Programme experts were consisting of quantitative questions as well as qualitative questions, where experts could have expressed their opinions freely.

Questionnaire was sent out to 8 programme experts, 5 of them responding. The invitation letter to participate in questionnaire as well as the questionnaire form are attached in the Appendices. Experts were asked questions related to the Nordic cultural policy, their funding decision-making, their views on quality of art, sustainability and other. Questionnaire was anonymous – experts were asked to respond in English so they could not be traced back by the language they used. However, it was asked if they could be contacted if some questions related to their answers would come up. In this case, they were asked to write their e-mail address stressing that this might reveal their identities, but their anonymity will not be compromised in the final thesis paper.

Questionnaire responses were used as a material for next data-gathering stage. Snowballing technique was applied while preparing semi-structured interview questions for one of the experts. That is, questionnaire has revealed some interesting directions and issues that became key interest in the following expert interview. Semi-structured interview allowed to modify questions where it was felt important. One-hour interview was done online and focused on artistic freedom, personal experiences while working as an expert at Nordic Culture Point, issues related to quality of art and art's instrumentalisation. The interview was recorded with participant's consent.

Finally, a last step of data gathering was a group discussion with programme advisors that took place on-line in summer 2021. Before the meeting, advisors were asked to anonymously fill in an online form related to four topics: key values of Nordic cultural co-operation, project's quality and success assessment, Co-operation programme on culture

policy 2021-2024, social sustainability in art and culture field. They were asked to fill in the form using keywords, ideas, and any associations that come to their mind while thinking of these four topics. Later meeting was built on discussing these ideas in the group. My own position in the group session was one of facilitator – I aimed to crystalize the main topics and ideas that came up as well as to moderate the discussion and move towards next themes. The group session was recorded with a consent of the advisors. Even though final opinions in the analysis cannot be traced back to a concrete individual, advisors were informed that they could be traced back as the group. The main topics discussed in the group discussion were trust, instrumentalisation of art, policy objectives, value and quality of a project as well as how their work is affected by the policy documents.

It is important to notice that the key concern while collecting data was related to the formulation of questions that were asked. "In matters of cultural policy too, how questions are framed will largely shape the answers reached" (Belfiore, 2009, p. 354). The goal was to ask questions that would allow to capture genuine opinions of the participants. Since experts and advisors' work and responsibilities closely relate to the Nordic cultural policy, they might have felt that they should provide 'suitable', 'appropriate' or 'correct' answers in relation the policy. However, it could be assumed that both advisors and experts have shared their genuine opinions, that at times included some critical views towards the overall funding process and policy application. Subjective opinions of participants could be seen as "an appropriate response to the nature of the arts and the complexity of its social outcomes" (Matarasso, 1997, p. 4). Moreover, as Matarasso (1997) writes, objectivity is an "inappropriate aspiration" (p. 4) in evaluation of policy.

Ethical considerations

My position in the inquiry has constantly moved between being a colleague, an insider at the Nordic Culture Point, and a researcher on-duty, an outsider that aims to establish a sense of distance in order to pursue a more objective knowledge. Being the insider created conditions that allowed me to pursue a knowledge that might have not been assessable to another researcher. I was well aware of funding practices at the Nordic Culture Point, organizational structure as well as had the access to internal documents and other important

material. In addition, I did not have to build trust with study participants in a same way an outsider would had needed to. A sense of trust has allowed to create a safe space for sharing opinions and experiences.

Being an outsider, on the other hand, allowed me to build a sense of distance between me and the material I worked with. It provided me a possibility to ask sometimes uncomfortable and uneasy questions. Throughout the inquiry, I had to constantly reflect my own beliefs related to a purpose and function of arts and culture in the society. Analysis of the cultural policy is inevitably affected by beliefs and understandings of the researcher. I worked to be conscious about them while formulating the questions and analyzing the data.

My hope was to create a safe, judgement free space for the participants of inquiry. This was done through asking consent, providing anonymity. In addition, the aim was to build a space where different opinions can emerge and can be heard. Representation of participants' opinions was an important as "researchers are accountable for their research paradigms, their authority, and their moral responsibility relative to representation and interpretation" (Madison, 2005, p. 14).

04

Analysis structure

As it was already mentioned in a Methodology chapter, the analysis in the thesis is built on triangulation, that is moving between theory and different types of empirical data – already existing and self-produced material. The analysis is divided into main three parts that focus on different aspects of arm's length principle (ALP). Arm's length principle intends to create favorable conditions for artistic freedom by advocating for organizational distance between the central government and funding allocation, and power sharing based on the idea that cultural policy should be separated from other policy areas. In addition, it aims to refrain politicians from steering or influencing which phenomena and how artists choose to portray (Kulturanalys Norden, 2022).

The first analysis part focuses on institutional distance of Nordic Culture Point. It explores how ALP principle is taken into account while establishing institutional autonomy. The second part focuses on the power sharing aspect. It analyses additional policy attachments in the Nordic cultural policy, namely the biggest attachment that is the sustainable development. In addition, this analysis part takes an in-depth look at different types of instrumentality applied in the policy with the help of Vestheim's types of instrumentality. The

final and third analysis part explores a concrete funding scheme administrated by Nordic Culture Point. It aims to cast light over how political objectives influence funding programme criteria as well as the language funding applicants tend to adapt in order to secure the funding for their projects.

Abbreviations

ALP – Arm's length principle

CAP – Culture and Art Programme

NCM – Nordic Council of Ministers

NKK – Nordic Culture Point

Arm's length principle in practice

This part of analysis will take a closer look into how arm's length principle (ALP) is understood in the Nordic cultural policy and how it is taken into consideration on institutional organisational level within the Nordic cultural co-operation. I will firstly introduce how ALP is seen in the current Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024, titled *Art and culture – driving force for sustainable development in the Nordic region*. This is the main cultural policy document published by the Nordic Council of Ministers – the official inter-governmental body for co-operation in the Nordic region. This document will be referred to as Nordic cultural policy throughout the whole Analysis chapter.

Secondly, I will present a brief history of thesis case study Nordic Culture Point – a cultural institution funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Later on, I will focus the attention on how ALP is taken into account on institutional organisational level while establishing the institutional autonomy of Nordic Culture Point (NKK). Finally, I will analyse a *Strategic mandate for Nordic Culture Point* – a document that sets strategic objectives for the institution. Focus of the first analysis part aims to get a better understanding on how ALP is understood within the official Nordic cultural co-operation on organisational level.

Policy views on arm's length principle

This section will introduce how Nordic cultural policy understands arm's lengths principle (ALP) and what role it plays. This is an important point of departure for the further analysis as the following sections will take a closer look on how the ALP is taken into consideration on organisational and strategic level in relation to Nordic Culture Point and its activities.

Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024 mentions arm's length principle (ALM) several times. First, it is understood as a "common value for the culture policy co-operation" (p. 4). Later on, its importance is stressed again as it is described as a "key feature of the entire Nordic Council of Ministers' co-operation on culture policy" (p. 14). Policy also commits to respect the principle that "supports the artistic freedom, freedom of

expression, and media freedom throughout the Nordic region and in international contexts” (p. 13).

The policy offers a description of the ALP that is formulated with a reference to artistic autonomy and freedom of expression. The principle is understood as an instrument that helps to defend the arts field from improper political influence. However, the policy does not elaborate on specific aspects of ALP, but rather sees it as a fundamental and general principle of the Nordic cultural policy implementation. This could also relate to the overall issue of lack of a concrete and clear definition of arm’s length principle in general as it can mean different things in different contexts. Because the policy sees the principle as a general cultural policy principle, one may argue that the policy uses it as a rhetorical tool in order to strengthen policy’s legitimacy (Mangset, 2009).

Since the policy lacks clear definitions and descriptions of ALP, it is important to further analyse how the principle goes beyond serving mere rhetorical purposes and how it is actually mirrored in the institutional practices of Nordic cultural co-operation. In later sections, I will closely examine how arm’s length principle is taken into account while establishing the institutional autonomy between the Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordic Culture Point, a Nordic cultural institution, who among other activities also administrates Council’s funding schemes for art and culture. Nevertheless, before heading there, it is important to place Nordic Culture Point in a historical context.

Brief history of Nordic Culture Point

Nordic Culture Point (NKK) is an institution funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) whose aim is to support Nordic co-operation in the area of art and culture. In order to understand the background and the context for NKK’s current activities and institution's importance, a brief history institution’s development will be presented.

NKK’s history can be tracked down to activities that took place in Suomenlinna, an island fortress outside Helsinki, starting around 40 years ago. As Möller notices (2020) in her extensive report on history of Nordic cultural co-operation in Suomenlinna, it is rather

difficult to find any organized material or documentation on the institutions that could be seen as the ancestors for NKK. However, it is clear that the Nordic Council of Ministers established the first Nordic institution on the island, Nordisk konstcentrum /The Nordic Arts Center (NKC) in 1978. Institution focused on contemporary art - exhibited it and collaborated with museums as well as established an extensive network of art residencies.

In 1996, a new institution the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA) replaced NKC due to financial saving targets of the Nordic Council of Ministers. NIFCA continued its ancestor's activities of working with residencies and even expanded residency programme beyond art practitioners, allowing researchers and curators to use this opportunity. At the end of 20th century, several possibilities for broader trans-national collaboration emerged due to global political changes, namely the independence of the Baltic countries and some of the Nordic countries' membership in the EU.

In 2005, The Nordic Council of Ministers once again scrutinized its operations in cultural sector and decided to reallocate its financial expenditure on administration, rent and travel to funding activities. In 2007, two new funding programmes were launched – the Nordic Mobility Programme aiming to residencies, networks and individuals, and the Art and Culture Programme, offering possibilities for partners from at least three Nordic countries to run projects. The funding of these programmes came from savings generated after closing other institutions, committees and working groups (Möller, 2020).

New funding activities and re-organization have led to NIFCA turning into Kulturkontakt Nord, which in 2012 merged with the Nordic Institute in Finland to form an institution that from 2017 is known as Nordic Culture Point (NKK). Since the former two institutions had different focus areas before the merge, it affected new institution's scope of activities. Therefore, a current NKK's activities are based on three main areas – allocating the Nordic Council of Ministers' funding for art and culture, running Nordic library and organising a broad scope of events.

Many institutional reorganisations that took place throughout the years show the importance and relevance of a continuous co-operation in the culture field in the Nordic

countries. In addition, it shows that both NKK and its institutional ancestors have always had an important strategic role for the Nordic Council of Ministers in supporting Nordic collaboration in the field of art and culture both on local and region level.

Institutional distance of Nordic Culture Point

Nordic Culture Point (NKK) has a relatively long institutional history that shows NKK and its former institutions have always been an important key player in promoting and supporting Nordic cultural exchanges. Institution's development also shows that it has always been linked to the Nordic Council of Ministers. NKK could be seen as a governmental arm's length body of the Council. Since the Nordic cultural policy views arm's length principle (ALP) as a general principle, in this analysis section, I aim to track down how the principle is taken into consideration in the actual organisational practices.

As already explained in the Theoretical and conceptual framework chapter, ALP could be viewed as an instrument for defending artistic autonomy (Mangset, 2009). It is often established by a sense of institutional autonomy from the central government. This autonomy is usually supported by organisational distance between the political decision-making and, for instance, the grant allocation decision making, in order to avoid improper political intervention. NKK is a separate institution outside the government that is delegated of responsibility to allocate public funding for arts and culture (among other activities). However, it is hard to draw a clear demarcation line that would mark the extent to which arm's length principle is taken into consideration in NKK's case.

NKK is institutionally separated from the central political decision-making and has its own Board consisting of five members, who have a two-year mandate and reside in different Nordic countries or regions. A wide geographical spread of board members supports ALP in a way that no particular country or region would have a stronger influence over the institution. The Board acts as an advisory body, that supports institution's director, acts like ambassadors for Nordic cultural co-operation and has networks that benefit the institution.

However, it could be argued that there are more complex dependencies between NKK and the Nordic Council of Ministers. First of all, a major part of NKK funding is provided by the Council, which funds NKK's operational costs, as well as costs of the events and other activities. In return, NKK is expected to present an annual report, which, among the other things, includes institutions financial expenditure. Such tight financial dependency creates a short institutional distance.

In order to make an organisational distance longer with the respect to arm's length principle, independent expert groups make grant allocation decisions of Nordic Council of Ministers funding programmes for art and culture. Expert groups, which have a mandate of three years, have a particular importance of guarding the arm's length principle, as the grant allocation decision is based on their independent evaluation and judgement. Information on criteria for experts and their appointment scheme in the following paragraphs will be based on an internal document of Handbook for Culture and Art Programme. This programme was chosen as a main funding scheme example in the thesis, but the same criteria apply to other funding schemes administrated by the NKK. The Handbook sets expectations on the experts stating that their group has to ensure that arm's length principle is followed throughout the assessment of incoming grant applications and final decisions.

There are four main organizational aspects related to the experts, which aim to strengthen the ALP. First important aspect is that the expert group has to consist of artist, cultural professionals and other representatives for the field of art and culture. The main criteria of becoming an expert are a general knowledge of arts and culture; a broad and recognized expertise in their own artistic discipline(s); a working experience in at least two professional roles (e.g., artist/producer) and a wide-ranging networks and international experience. This is supposed to ensure the artistic freedom and freedom of expression, as grant decision makers are themselves the arts field professionals.

Second aspect relates to the appointment of the experts, which goes as following – each Nordic country and region's local national art and culture authorities nominate three experts. Based on these nominations The Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat composes

a final proposal that is approved by the Committee of Senior Officials for Nordic Cultural Cooperation/EK-K. A final decision is based on nominee's professional competence, artistic discipline, geographical spread, gender as well as cultural diversity. In total eight experts are chosen for Art and Culture Programme.

Even though local art and culture authorities nominate the experts, the final appointment decision is made by the Committee associated with the Nordic Council of Ministers, and not, for instance, NKK's own Board members. Such process might suggest a sense of limited autonomy of NKK as the institution has no power in the appointment of experts that later make the final funding decisions for the programmes administrated by NKK. Even though there is no empirical evidence, it could be also assumed that such practice may leave some open space in which it is quite unclear how different biases or political preferences on the ministerial level might affect.

Third important aspect related to ALP is experts' independency from the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). A nominee is not considered independent if they have worked or have worked in the NCM Secretariat in the last five years or have represented any board or steering group under the NCM in the last three years. In addition, a nominee cannot have acted as an expert in any working group or expert group under NCM in the two last years or have worked as a civil servant in a ministry. This aspect aims to leave no room for any accusations on political involvement of NCM in the final funding decision-making.

However, there is no documented criteria that an expert cannot be a member of, for instance, artist unions, or is not employed by other cultural organizations or other employer who may have interest in the cultural life. Experts' professional dependency on other groups may lead to potentially biased funding decision making, which could threaten to negatively affect the ALP. In addition to this, names of the experts and their professional area within arts field are public and can be found on NKK official webpage. On one hand, it may be considered to provide a sense of transparency, on the other, it may cause a risk that experts might be approached by other interest groups that could affect their decisions.

Finally, the third aspect that supports arm's length principle is an expectation set to the experts to ensure of independency and transparency by experts themselves. This expectation is built on trust and aims to eliminate any biased decision-making influenced by experts' professional network. Experts need to pay close attention to any conflicts of interests as well as represent society's interest over personal ones. If an expert is in any way related or has personal interests in a project that has applied for a funding, they cannot participate in the application's assessment. As there is no way to control that experts are following this expectation, one may argue, that in this case social trust plays an important role – there is a general sense of trust that the experts will act transparently.

To sum up, the Nordic Council of Ministers respects arm's length principle by setting an institutional distance between itself and NKK. In addition, the independent expert groups who have a broad professionalism in the art and culture field are entrusted to make transparent grant allocation decisions. These decisions are based on a fair assessment done by art professionals who are expected to take into account artistic criteria, quality and the needs of the field as well.

However, as examples above suggest, each of these strategies to establish arm's length between the Nordic Council of Ministers and NKK could potentially also have negative impact on arm's length principle as it may leave some room for political influence. If the Council funds NKK, appoints its Board members and experts and in addition requires NKK to be accountable to the government on how the funds were used, one may argue that NKK is actually quite depended on the Nordic Council of Ministers. However, these are primarily indications, as there is no concrete empirical evidence.

This section has uncovered a set of concrete attempts to create a sense of institutional autonomy with respect of arm's length principle in the Nordic funding system. In addition to seeing ALP as merely rhetorical tool, the principle partly functions as an organisational principle that is applied in some parts of NKK's organizational structure and funding allocation. In the next section, I will take a closer look at ALP in relation to NKK institutional identity. I am going to move further from formal organizational aspects and further explore political ideological influence that may take place.

Strategic role of Nordic Culture Point

The previous section uncovered the main organisational aspects related to NKK that aim to support arm's lengths principle. In this section, I am going to analyse NKK's strategic role that aims to help to achieve some of political objectives of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). It is not only NKK's main funding that comes from the NCM. In 2021 NCM has published a new Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024, titled *Art and culture – driving force for sustainable development in the Nordic region*. This policy document includes main strategic guidelines for Nordic cultural co-operation as well as mandates for NCM's five cultural institutions (later referred as Nordic cultural institutions), which one of them is Nordic Culture Point.

Term of the strategic mandate for NKK is four years and it mirrors the term of co-operation programme. The strategic mandate serves as a cultural policy document that is realised through arm's length bodies and their institutional operational objectives, targets and performance. Nordic cultural institutions' role in relation to the cultural policy is summed up in a previous co-operation programme (2013-2020):

The institutions will be encouraged to set up operational targets that will demonstrate the tangible effects of the overall objectives of the strategy on the institution's activities. (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2014, p. 2)

In other words, institutions are encouraged to formulate their objectives and targets that in relation to the cultural policy. In addition, success in reaching these objectives help to measure the overall impact of the cultural policy. Furthermore, institutions have to demonstrate tangible effects or to measure the impact of their activities. NKK does such measurement through institution's annual report, which, for example, provides statistics on financial figures, number of grant applications, geographical spread of the projects, art areas that are mainly affected by the funding, gender participation within funded projects and so on. The quantitative impact measurement is expected to provide tangible and clear evidence of arts and culture's benefits that help to reach other external policy goals.

Therefore, Nordic cultural policy is an evidence-based cultural policy, which avail itself of measurable outcomes for justification of public subsidy for the arts.

A very similar view of NKK's strategic role is also seen in the new co-operation programme 2021-2024, which includes a strategic mandate for NKK. As the mandate states (2021), NKK "plays a strategic role in efforts to achieve the objectives of the co-operation programme on culture policy and the action plan for 2021 to 2024 linked to the Nordic Council of Ministers' vision" (p. 23). As a result, the document sets particular overarching objectives that should be reflected in NKK's vision, goals as well as daily operations. In addition, the mandate also sets a particular understanding of art and culture's role.

The strategic mandate views NKK as a platform that shall serve as a "long-term and ongoing interface between people and countries" (p. 23). This is directly reflected in NKK institutional mission to increase awareness of Nordic culture in Finland as well as to focus on ensuring equal terms of participation in socio-cultural life. The mandate views art and cultural activities as means for people to "become familiar with, get closer to, and understand other countries and their populations and communities" (p. 23).

NKK is expected to promote an "understanding and knowledge of the role of art and culture as a prerequisite for sustainable development" (p. 23). Such understanding of art should not only be implemented within NKK's objectives and activities, but also should be promoted to the general public. This is supposed to be implemented by initiating and communicating good examples and inspiring green cultural production, distribution, and consumption (2021). NKK adapts these strategic guidelines while organizing, for instance, debates, various events, exhibitions, but in the scope of this thesis, most importantly through the funding schemes.

Sustainable development is a general top goal for the whole cultural policy programme as it is also directly linked with overall objectives of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Therefore, it acts like a main horizontal perspective for all parts of Nordic collaboration, including in the field of art and culture. Sustainable development is not clearly defined in the mandate, but it can be assumed that the concept is built on the three-pillar model that includes

economic, environmental and social perspectives of sustainability. This is mainly because the document includes terms such as green production, distribution, consumption, competitiveness, diversity, accessibility. The mandate pays a particular importance on social aspect of sustainability. Even though a term of social sustainability is not directly used, there are several smaller objectives for NKK that address social dimension and issues that could be linked with the concept.

For instance, NKK's activities must encourage "exchanges between art and culture practitioners that should expand artistic horizons and assist in renewal, skills development, and the creation of networks, which in turn contribute to a competitive culture sector" (p. 23). Activities should reflect a diversity of artistic and cultural expressions as well as be accessible to both practitioners and the general public regardless of "age, gender, language, cultural and ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation, religion, place of residence, or socio-economic circumstances" (p.23). This supports the overall Nordic cultural policy model, which aims for art to be accessible by the majority in the society.

Children and youth are also seen a priority target group in order to help to strengthen their voices, initiatives and creativity. This leads to NKK aiming to support children and youth activities and their participation – organising events and projects for schools and day-care centres, funding youth initiatives. In addition, the mandate states that core principles of NKK activities, such as freedom of expression, artistic freedom, equality, and gender equality, help to promote trust and sense of belonging in the Nordic Region (2021). In other words, art and culture is seen as a tool that contributes to the development of a competitive culture sector and promotes long-lived Nordic societal values, such as equality, inclusion, freedom of speech and trust.

All these smaller objectives for NKK are examples of how social sustainability is understood in the mandate. It is related to network building, skills development, social inclusion and youth participation. As a Nordic cultural institution NKK should formulate objectives in relation to the mandate and initiate activities that would help nurture these aspects of social sustainability.

The strategic mandate for NKK reveals deeper tensions related to arm's length principle. In the previous analysis section, it was argued that the principle can be seen as the organisational principle used to establish some sense of institutional autonomy. However, there were several indications that would let to presume that institutional autonomy of NKK is rather short. In this analysis section, strategic guidelines for NKK were explored to see how arm's length is taken into consideration in relation to institution's identity.

Even though NKK is autonomous in which artists, cultural professionals and other institutions they choose to collaborate with, some underlying strategic objectives must be reflected in institution's activities and overall goals. Moreover, NKK has to provide tangible effects of their activities in relation to the general cultural policy goals. As Mangset (2009) argues: "The introduction of specific performance objectives and evaluations into cultural policy and administration of course also contributes to the limits between the arm's length between politics and the arts." (p. 285). To conclude NKK has a short autonomy as the arm's length body of the Nordic Council of Ministers in terms of its institutional identity and vision.

Arm's length principle as a rhetorical tool

The first analysis chapter has shed a light on ways arm's length principle (ALP) is taken into consideration in the Nordic cultural co-operation. The Nordic cultural policy does not offer a clear definition of the principle, but rather views it as a general and fundamental principle of cultural policy that relates to the absence of political intervention in, for instance, art and culture funding decision-making. Due to this reason, I explored how ALP is taken into consideration as an organisational principle that aims to create a sense of autonomy between the Nordic Culture Point (NKK) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). However, as previous sections concluded organisational methods to establish institutional autonomy between the central government (NCM) and the arm's length body (NKK) might at times leave some room for negatively affecting arm's length principle.

In addition, NKK institutional identity is closely related to overall the Nordic cultural policy objectives. NKK has always had an important strategic role in helping the policy to reach its goals and continues to do so. This is implemented mostly through NKK's institutional

mission, objectives and daily activities. Moreover, NKK has to provide tangible results of success that would help to evaluate the success of the overall cultural policy. It was argued to leave the institution with a limited sense of autonomy.

To sum up, even though there are many successful attempts to establish institutional autonomy for the NKK, the arm's length between NKK and NCM remains short. One may argue the policy primarily uses arm's length as a rhetorical tool to justify its legitimacy, even though analysis shows it does not always necessarily reflect the same political reality.

Arm's length principle and instrumentality

Arm's length principle aims to prevent cultural policy implementation from negatively affecting artistic freedom and is based on idea of political abstinence in, for instance, funding decision making. In the first analysis part the aim was to closely examine to what extent the principle is taken into consideration while designing official Nordic cultural institutional practices both on organisational and ideological level. Since arm's lengths principle calls for organisational distance between the government and funding allocating bodies, I analysed and explored the attempts of creating a sense of institutional autonomy between the Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordic Culture Point.

Arm's lengths principle is also closely related to the idea of power sharing, that is that cultural policies have to be separated from cultural policies. Nordic cultural model sees the policy as an integral part of welfare policy and includes additional objectives alongside the artistic freedom and quality. In addition, it tends to be revolutionary and change oriented. Therefore, it incorporates additional welfare objectives or policy attachments. As a result, arm's length principle aims to balance artistic freedom and instrumental nature of cultural policies.

In the second analysis part I will analyse main additional policy objectives or so-called 'policy attachments' (Gray, 2002). I will continue a close reading of the current Nordic cultural policy document - Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024, titled *Art and culture – driving force for sustainable development in the Nordic region*. Firstly, I will analyse the main policy attachment, that is sustainable development. Secondly, I will apply Vestheim's typology of instrumentality (2008) in order to uncover how sustainable development is aimed to be implemented through different levels of instrumentality.

Policy views on art and culture

Every cultural policy is instrumental and therefore a question whether art and culture are autonomous in relation to political ideologies and economic powers does not provide a multi-layered and in-depth answers. In this section I aim to take a deeper look to what degree they are autonomous in relation to Nordic cultural policy. In order to uncover this, I

will closely analyse Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024 (later referred as the Nordic cultural policy) from a perspective of policy attachments, that are additional objectives, usually socio-economical, that cultural policies tend to include alongside artistic freedom and free expression.

To start the analysis, it is important to describe the structure of the Nordic cultural policy. The policy programme is a 25-page public document. It “describes and establishes the orientation of the culture sector’s most important policy priorities for the programme period, 2021-2024” (2021, p. 3). Policy includes a foreword, introduction, broad descriptions of the main strategic priorities and the appendix, that describes organisational structure and collaboration partners for Nordic cultural co-operation, overall objectives and directions of Nordic co-operation, programme evaluation guidelines and strategic mandates for Nordic cultural institutions (the mandate for Nordic Culture Point was already analysed in the previous analysis part).

Nordic cultural policy is titled *Art and culture – driving force for sustainable development in the Nordic region*. The title itself sets an ideological tone and gives a clear definition of how art and culture should be understood. It is foremost seen as an instrument or a tool that helps towards sustainable development of the Nordic region. As Denmark’s former Minister for Culture Joy Mogensen states in the foreword:

The cultural co-operation serves as a central driver for the green transition in societal development, through dialogues and concrete solutions, and in ensuring good living opportunities for present and future generations. Art, culture, and media create arenas for people, play an important role in setting agendas, and help us to tackle global challenges such as the climate crisis. (p. 3)

In this small but meaning-dense paragraph the minister describes a persistent nature of the Nordic policy programme – it aims for change and is revolutionary. The focus is on green transition and concrete solutions. The policy does not only focus on present issues but aims to tackle them in order to ensure good life for future generations. Art and culture are seen as a tool, that will help to reach these aspirations. In addition, Co-operation programme states, “culture is an all-embracing and supporting force that creates trust in our

societies...” (p. 6.) So, culture is also closely related to the aspect of social trust, the whole binding glue that keeps the Nordic societies intact (Andreasson, 2017).

Green transition, societal development, global challenges, climate crisis all relate to a sustainable development that is a key main policy attachment in the Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024. This policy attachment directly relates to the whole Nordic Council of Ministers’ vision that aims to make the Nordic region “the most sustainable and integrated region in 2030” (p. 7). In order to achieve goals related to such vision, sustainable development has to systematically influence all activities within the Nordic Council of Ministers, including co-operation in the cultural field. As it is stated in the programme, programme “shows how culture, art and media can contribute to ensuring strategic priorities of the vision” (p. 4). To conclude, the programme views art and culture as a tool or a resource that could help to achieve overall objectives of the Council. In the next section, I will closely examine how the main objective, that is sustainable development is understood in the policy. It is important because it directly affects the views of art and culture’s role as well.

Sustainable development as policy attachment

Programme’s strategic priorities and language is directly related to the main vision of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The main target of the vision is to make the Nordics the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. As a result, the concept of sustainability is also a key concept in the Nordic cultural policy. It functions as a main policy attachment, that is it plays a significant role alongside the artistic freedom. In this section, I aim to closely analyse how this policy attachment is understood in the Nordic cultural policy and how it is aimed to be implemented with the help of art and culture.

To begin with, it is important to try to define what sustainable development stands for. The term was already coined in 1987 by Brundtland Commission and had a clear ecological focus. The concept was built on the idea that meeting the needs of the present should not compromise the good living conditions for the future generations. However, since then, the term has been broadly used and stretched out from its original meaning or in other words it was affected by a semantic inflation. The term is now being used in various context, usually

without a clear definition, and has arguably become a floating signifier, an element of discursive ritual, a mobilising metaphor, a leading grand narrative of our time (Isar, 2017; Shore & Wright, 1997).

However, what is currently referred to as the sustainable development is usually based on a three- pillar structure, that is on economic, the environmental and social sustainability. Although there are attempts to propose a fourth pillar of cultural sustainability (Hawkes, 2001; Throsby 2015), the most common understanding of the concept still rests on three pillar system, in which culture is mostly included under the umbrella pillar of social sustainability. As researchers notice (Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer, 2017; Isar, 2017), sustainable development as a concept is mainly connected with the United Nations, who shaped its definition. In addition, it has led to orchestration of different political actors, institutions, local governments, NGOs and other networks, that adapt and popularize the meanings defined by the UN (Isar, 2017; Throsby 2017).

UN's Sustainable Development Goals also affect the Nordic Council of Ministers and therefore the Nordic cultural policy. The programme directly states that it aims to support the Goals. However, as Isar notices (2017), "when people make 'sustainable development' an issue of cultural policy nowadays they could be referring to very different things – the notion has become positively polysemic in the multiplicity of its understandings" (p. 149). In addition, Kangas, Duxbury & De Beukelaer (2017) discuss, that there is a danger of term becoming a meaningless cliché unless it is there is an attempt to add a precision to the debate. In the context of the thesis, it is important to analyse in detail how the Nordic cultural policy defines the sustainability, and how it sees its own and art and cultures role in the sustainable development debate.

Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024 does not provide a concrete definition for sustainable development. However, it defines the three main strategic priorities that are based on the Vision 2030 of the Nordic Council of Ministers:

- A green Nordic region: A green cultural life ensures good living opportunities for present and future generations.

- A competitive Nordic region: Vibrant art and cultural life in and outside our region contributes to green growth.
- A socially sustainable Nordic region: An inclusive Nordic cultural life promotes democracy, diversity, and quality of life. (p. 6)

These three priorities are directly related to the three pillars of sustainability and are supported with concrete language examples that could be linked to them. In order to analyse in-detail how the policy describes various aspects of sustainability, these language examples can be grouped as a Figure 4 shows below.

Strategic priority	Type of sustainability	Language examples
A green Nordic region	Environmental sustainability	green culture creation, production and distribution; climate crisis; Earth's resources, vibrant rural areas, conscious formation, green approach in planning, green initiatives in art and culture, and media policy; green preservation
A competitive Nordic region	Economic sustainability	green growth; international attention; investments, marketing, distribution and visibility; innovation; global arena; brand the Nordic region; collective competitiveness

<p>A socially sustainable Nordic region</p>	<p>Social sustainability</p>	<p>inclusive art and cultural life; quality of life; gender equality; artistic freedom; freedom of expression; media freedom; diverse voices; democracy; participation and inclusion; structural changes, conditions of cultural workers; career opportunities; power structures; various recognition and selection mechanisms; children and young people.</p>
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Figure 4. Policy language examples related to the three pillars of sustainable development and strategic priorities.

Even though the programme does not provide a clear definition of sustainable development, the language analysis above shows the attempt to break down and associate concrete, detailed and multifaceted examples offered by the policy that relate to the concept of sustainability. It shows that instead of relying on limited and simplified descriptions, the policy aims to expand the concept of sustainable development and place it in the context of art and culture field. Different aspects of art and cultural enterprises are seen as resources for specific pillar of sustainable development. In this way Nordic cultural policy aims to embody at the first sight very different but at the same time co-existing and overlapping aspects of cultural industries in relation to sustainable development (Kangas et al, 2017).

On the other hand, such expansion of the concept in the policy could contribute to even more abstract notions, that are hard to define, and that can simply turn into floating signifiers that absorbs rather than emits meanings. In return, this may cause danger to serve as a mere rhetorical tool that does not convey any particular meaning but instead is used in order to justify public spending on arts and culture. Moreover, if there is no particular meaning or objective defined by the policy, how we could describe the role of art and

culture in becoming a driving force for sustainable development? In other words, if we do not know what we aim for, how can we define how we will get there?

In this analysis section, a closer look was taken at sustainable development, that is a main policy attachment in Nordic cultural policy. It serves as an umbrella term that aims to gather various different, co-existing and multi-layered additional smaller policy attachment's, such as green production, gender equality, participation, regional branding etc. Smaller attachments can be thematically grouped in relation to three pillars of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social. In addition, the Nordic policy applies the logic of the expediency of culture (Yúdice, 2003), that sees cultural values, forms and expressions as recourses to be invested in, contested, and used for varied socio-political and economic ends. In the following section, I will explore how different types of instrumentality is being used by the policy while aiming to use art and culture as tools for its main policy attachment – the sustainable development.

Types of instrumentality in Nordic cultural policy

In this section, I will closely examine instrumentalisation of the Nordic cultural policy applying Vestheim's typology of instrumentality. Sustainable development that is a main Nordic cultural policy attachment is aimed to be implemented with a use of different layers of instrumentality. These types of instrumentality closely relate to the integrated views on art and culture' value and function that cultural policy tends to promote.

Instrumentalisation concept rests on the idea whereby art and culture are seen as an important contributor for a variety of different socio-economic benefits in the society. From the previous analysis section, it was clear that the Nordic cultural policy, due to its architect and revolutionary nature, adopts a clear instrumental thinking. It sees art and culture as resources for branding the region, promoting democratic values, supporting gender equality and so on. It also suggests that such extensive application of other welfare policy objectives into cultural policy might have a negative impact on arm's length principle.

The reasons for funding art deploying instrumental rationale inevitably affect how value of art and culture is perceived – what is seen as a valuable, good art? In order to see what

aspects of art and culture are valued in the Nordic policy, it is important to explore what types of instrumentalisation are being implemented as they all rest on different motivations for funding of art and culture.

Vestheim's typology of instrumentality (2008) includes three types of instrumentality – aesthetic/educational, economic, social and political mobilising. All these types target different groups based on how it sees an individual, either as a private person or for instance a citizen. In addition, every type of instrumentality rests on a different ideological argument related to particular views on art and culture's value. For instance, the arts are worth to be supported because it helps to create economic development. A Figure 1 below illustrates Vestheim's typology.

Argument	Target group of argument	Type of instrumentality
Support the 'good' art due to arts intrinsic values	Individual as a private person	Aesthetic/educational instrumentality
Support art and culture to create economic development	Individual as an economic being	Economic instrumentality
Support art and culture to create social development and integration	Individual as a social being	Social instrumentality
Support art and culture to contribute to enlightenment and community involvement	Individual as a citizen	Political mobilising instrumentality

Figure 1. Vestheim's (2008) typology of instrumentality. Translation by me.

Nordic cultural policy arguably applies different types of instrumentality while aiming for its main goal that is – sustainable development of the region.

Aesthetic/educational instrumentality. Nordic cultural policy programme does not specify any particular argument that could be linked with aesthetic/educational instrumentality.

However, the policy brings up freedom of expression several times. It states: "Media, art, and culture will be free. They will be allowed to function, be created, and spread freely" (p. 4). It is clear that the policy values the freedom of expression and freedom of media, but it does not further elaborate how art and culture should be supported for its intrinsic values. In addition, artistic freedom, freedom of expression and media freedom is valued in relation to their role in 'democratic and thereby sustainable Nordic societies' (p.5). This argument, according to Vestheim's typology, is more related to political mobilising instrumentality than the aesthetic/educational one.

Economic instrumentality. This type of instrumentality keeps reoccurring throughout the Nordic cultural policy. For instance, the policy stresses the importance of bringing the cultural heritage to life with help of art and culture. In return, it "helps to brand the Nordic region as a sustainable, competitive, and attractive cultural region" (p. 4). In addition, the policy states that cultural enterprises can help with "vibrant rural areas" (p. 8) and contributes to green growth. A clear economic value of arts field is described by the following – "The creative industries in the Nordic region help to secure investments in, marketing, distribution, and visibility of renowned Nordic enterprises" (p. 10). These examples suggest that economic rationale behind Nordic cultural policy plays a significant role arguably in order to justify the public spending on the arts field.

Social instrumentality. Example of the social instrumentality in the policy could be its particular focus on gender-equality and children and youth participation. As programme states, "gender-equal cultural life can show the way for gender equality also in other societal areas" (p. 4). In other words, art is funded because it shows an example in other areas of society. In addition, the cultural programme stresses importance of inclusion, democracy, diversity and quality of life that the arts can contribute to. It is important to note, that the policy also reflects the conditions of the arts fields itself and states that gender equality, inclusion and diversity in cultural life challenges – "the conditions for cultural workers, career opportunities, cultural economy, power structures, and various recognition and selection mechanisms" (p. 13). To conclude, social instrumentality takes a lot of space in the Nordic cultural policy. Many ideas behind this type of instrumentality in the policy can also be connected with concept of social sustainability. Because cultural aspects are usually placed

under the umbrella term of social sustainability, it is safe to assume that cultural policy as such would place a particular focus on social objectives and matters.

Political mobilising instrumentality. Nordic cultural policy puts a strong stress on democratic values, participation, trust, inclusion and diverse voices. As it states: "Culture and media initiatives also contribute to sustainable and democratic Nordic societies" (p. 4). According to the policy, free art, culture and media lay a foundation for a democratic society. In addition, it helps to nurture the sense of belonging. A special focus is paid on initiatives for and by children and young people as it strengthens their participation, promote feeling of cohesion, and especially helps to form democratic value-based future citizen societies in the Nordic region.

Environmental instrumentality. Although Vestheim's typology does not include such type of instrumentality, it may be added in the context of the Nordic cultural policy. I would argue that such type of instrumentality would identify its target as a physical environment. Such target omits human-centred view that Vestheim's typology tend to imply. Physical environment is closely connected with good living conditions of both humans and other-than-humans. Argument for supporting the arts in this type of instrumentality is based on art and culture's ability to rethink and apply methods for creation of appropriate living environments. Nordic cultural policy includes several such examples that could be linked to environmental instrumentality. For instance, the policy states: "Art and culture can create and mediate experiences that give new insights and quality of life, without wasting the Earth's resources" (p. 8). In addition, it also brings up conscious formation through architecture, design and a green approach of urban planning that would help to contribute to more humane living environments. Art and culture, especially, cultural heritage, is seen to offer methods that could help to rethink and develop the current living environments. Because such rationale is present in the policy, I would offer an addition to the Vestheim's typology as follows:

Argument	Target group of argument	Type of instrumentality
Support art and culture to create good living conditions	Physical environment	Environmental instrumentality

Figure 5. *Environmental instrumentality - addition to Vestheim's typology.*

As the analysis implies, the Nordic cultural policy tends to apply different types of instrumentality in order to reach its main goal and main policy attachment of sustainable development. Even though Vestheim's typology is human-centric, it still provides a sufficient framework to analyse a complex cultural policy document and uncovers concrete instrumental strategies it aims to apply. However, in the context of the Nordic cultural policy, additional type of environmental instrumentality could be identified. It suggests that policy explores new horizons for instrumental rationale. These different types of instrumentality by its nature and arguments also relate to three pillars of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Different types of instrumentality effect how art and culture is perceived in the Nordic cultural policy. Art and culture are seen as tools that help to promote aesthetic/educational, economic, social, political mobilising and environmental values. Different aspects of the arts field, its methods and ways of thinking are seen as resources. It is important to notice, that social instrumentality is the most elaborated in the policy, and the least elaborated remains aesthetic/educational instrumentality that relates to arts intrinsic values. It is not clear however why the policy does not expand more on art's intrinsic values, but it could be argued that this is because the policy may not see them as important or the policy may not attempt to generalize about individual personal aesthetic experiences. On the other hand, it suggests a visible disbalance between instrumental and intrinsic rationale included in the policy. That is a particular reason why art's length principle might be more important than ever. To conclude, it could be argued that art and culture is value is understood in relation to their ability to function as resources for development of the Nordic societies.

Issue of balance

The second analysis part analyzed the main Nordic cultural policy document – Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024. The policy pays a significant focus on sustainable development that could be identified as its main and unifying policy attachment, that is its main objective besides arts intrinsic values.

Analysis has uncovered different layers of instrumentality incorporated in the Nordic cultural policy. Instrumental nature of the policy entrusts the arts and culture with the task of supporting sustainable development in the region through various different smaller political attachments related to the three pillars of sustainability. For instance, gender equality, inclusion of children and young people, branding the region, green growth and so on.

This is done on one hand because of a long tradition of the Nordic cultural policy model which views art and culture as an active agent which has a particular function in the society. On the other hand, arguments for arts benefits help to create a transformative narrative about powers of the arts that in turn helps to secure and justifies public subsidy of the arts and the cultural sector (Belfiore, 2009). Instrumental rationale is greatly present in the Nordic cultural policy and analysis suggested that there may be a disbalance in the policy when it comes to supporting art for its external values and supporting art for its intrinsic values. Therefore, arm's length principle keeps playing a crucial role in guarding artistic autonomy from being negatively affected by the political intervention.

Policy and real-life funding practices

The previous analysis part illustrated how Nordic cultural policy relates to the Nordic cultural policy model, which sees art and culture to have a particular transformative function in a society. It aims to balance artistic freedom and defend it by the use of arm's length principle, but at the same time it is greatly instrumental. As the analysis has suggested, the Nordic policy applies different types of instrumentality while aiming for its main policy attachment that is sustainable development. Instrumental logic inevitably affects the way art and culture's function is perceived and promoted as well as how concrete funding programmes are designed.

Since the policy is a layer or a horizontal ideological field in which different practices emerge, the main focus in the third analysis part will be on how the policy effects concrete funding practices, that is how policy effects strategic criteria of funding programmes, as well as what potential tensions, opinions and experiences it is associated with. This analysis part is closely related to the third important aspect of arm's lengths principle, that is politicians should refrain from steering or influencing what phenomena and how artists and cultural workers choose to portray (Myndigheten för kulturanalys, 2021). In other words, politicians should not interfere with the content of the artistic and cultural production. This aspect is also closely related to government's self-position in relation to formulation of concrete criteria of its funding programmes.

In order to shed a light on this aspect of arm's length principle, in this analysis part I am going to focus on a concrete Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) funding scheme for art and culture administrated by the Nordic Culture Point. In order to compose a broader background context, I will firstly introduce Culture and Art programme focusing on its background, goals, targets groups and general criteria based on information from the official Nordic Culture Point website and internal handbook used by the programme advisors. Later, I will present a funding process in the Nordic Culture Point and introduce the roles of programme advisors and experts. This broader contextualization will serve as a way to deeper understand the underlying tensions related with Nordic public funding for art and culture.

An important part of this analysis part is its close focus on strategic criteria of Culture and Art programme, its effects on the work of experts and advisors as well as the applicants. The main question is in what ways the manner of integrating different horizontal perspectives in grant allocation could potentially have an adverse effect on artistic freedom? I will focus on the design of application and report forms, and the overall tools of impact measurement. I will mainly analyse the opinions and thoughts expressed by the advisors the group discussion, as well as expert's opinions expressed in questionnaire answers and an interview.

Culture and Art Programme

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) has a variety of funding programmes for different areas of the society – from natural sciences to culture and art. Ministers' funding programmes for art and culture are administrated by the Nordic Culture Point (NKK). Throughout the history of the funding programmes (2008-2022), NKK and its institutional ancestors have granted over 60 million EUR to different art and culture projects. The main source of finances for the funding programmes is the Nordic Council of Ministers, and therefore programmes' goals, target groups and funded themes are in direct relation to NCM's political agendas and decisions.

At the moment NKK is administrating four of the NCM's funding programmes for cultural co-operation and in doing so "contributes to the continued renewal of Nordic and Nordic-Baltic co-operation on culture" (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 23). Each programme has a specific target group identified by the NCM. These target groups include professional art and culture practitioners, both individuals, networks and residencies, as well as initiatives related to children and young people's participation. The common shared feature of all these programmes is their support for projects that have a strong Nordic dimension and are culturally innovative. Each year around 5 million EUR is being budgeted for these funding schemes.

In this thesis Culture and Art Programme was chosen as a main example of funding programmes administrated by the NKK. The decision was made not due to an assumption that this is the most significant programme of the rest, but because it has a very concrete

Nordic geographical framework and is not as geographically extended compared to other funding schemes that for instance includes the Baltic region. Also, the programme mostly focuses on adult artistic and cultural activities in comparison to several other funding programmes, which specifically targets children and youth. In addition, funding process for Culture and Art programme, application assessment and reporting processes are very similar to the rest of the programmes administrated by Nordic Culture Point.

Goals. The Culture and Art Programme (CAP) supports Nordic cooperation within art and culture. Applicants are welcome to apply for project with artistic and/or cultural quality which promotes a "multifaceted and sustainable Nordic region" (Nordic Culture Point, n.d., para. 1). Programme supports projects within all areas of art and culture in all project phases: preparation work, presentation and dissemination.

Target groups: Applicants for grants can scope from individuals and groups to organisations, institutions and companies. However, one cannot apply for running costs of institutions. Projects has to include partners from three countries, which at least two are Nordic, that is, either Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, the Åland Islands, the Faroe Islands and/or Greenland. It is, however, not necessary for the applicants to live or work in the Nordic region, nor to have Nordic nationality, as long as a requirement for the Nordic dimension of the project is met. Important criterium is that applicants do not need to be professionals, but anyone who is active in the field of art and culture can apply for support for project running costs. That could be linked to overall Nordic cultural policy objective that culture and art should be equality accessible to everyone, not to limited audiences.

Finance: The biggest amount one could apply for is up to 100 000 EUR, which would require at least 50% of co-financing from either project itself or other funding bodies. CAP can cover 50-100% of total project's costs, depending on the amount applied. Financing granted by the CAP is rather high. Applicants are expected to provide a preliminary budget plan as well as a final budget after they implemented their ideas. However, NKK does not ask for detailed proofs, such as receipts (only in rare cases with the help of spot check, which is sent to random applicants).

Funded activities: CAP supports a broad range of activities, including:

- creation or dissemination of works, projects and initiatives that require a creative process
- creation of meeting places between artists/cultural bodies and the public
- development and dissemination of knowledge and/or work methods
- organising discussions and debates, as well as seminars and workshops.

However, there are also strict criteria for which activities cannot be funded. Those mostly include tours with already existing material, running costs of institutions, ongoing costs for annual activities (e.g., festivals), film, TV, computer game productions or book publishing, commercial activities that aim to generate financial profit, sports events, solo records or performances (activities without active participation of other partners), etc. It suggests that programme criteria are closely formulated to the overall Nordic cultural policy objectives of broad audience reach, funding of innovative initiatives that stimulate public debate and participation, networks and so on.

Funding process and roles

Every year two application rounds for Culture and Art Programme (CAP) take place. Assessment of incoming applications for CAP is done in same way as for the other programmes and is done in two main stages. Firstly, programme advisor reviews incoming applications, making sure all the main criteria of the programme are being met. After reviewing and accepting incoming applications, they are assessed by an independent expert group, which consist of professionals from art and culture field. Final decision is taken by the group during an expert meeting. The total time taken to process applications is 8 weeks.

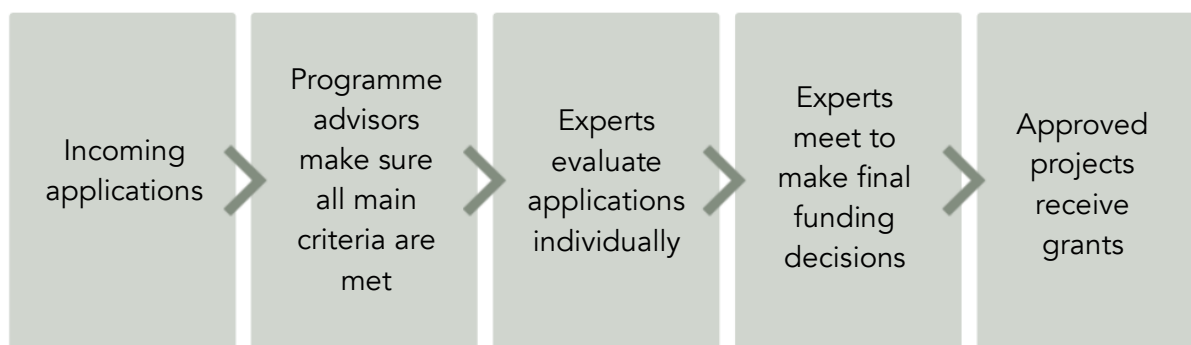


Figure 6. Application assessment process at Nordic Culture Point.

In order to better understand the funding process applied in the Nordic Culture Point's activities, a closer look should be taken at the roles of programme advisors and experts. Understanding their main roles also serve as a base for the later analysis sections where their opinions and experiences in relation to funding activities will be explored.

Role of programme advisors. Advisors of the funding programmes in NKK, including the advisor of Culture and Art Programme, primarily function as administration officers implementing the guidelines, goals and principles received from The Nordic Council of Ministers. Therefore, their main objective is to ensure smooth daily operational administrative routines, a proper application handling and coordination. Also, they design programmes administration practices, work with communication as well as follow-up the funding results. These results have to be detailly reported and included into NKK's annual report.

Advisors are also expected to ensure user-friendly programme's administrative approach as well as to develop a high-profile programme that contributes to the development of a dynamic and attractive cultural life in the Nordic region. In order to do this, they develop funding application and report forms together with the officials from the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as work with programme communication, including advertisement, press releases, info events.

A very important aspect of advisors' work is a close collaboration with the expert group of the programme. According to goals and principles set by NCM, advisors have to ensure

that the expert group is kept well informed about the goals of the NCM's current cultural programme. This means that at the beginning of experts' mandates, programme advisors have to introduce main strategic goals, assessment process as well as to set expectations for the experts. The meeting sets a set of rules and expectations which experts are supposed to meet, and in addition it provides a particular way of reading or interpreting of NCM's agendas and strategies. This process is closely related to the strategy and uncovers a point where political strategic guidelines and objectives are being translated into or become real-life practices.

Finally, advisors communicate with potential applicants, read through all the incoming funding applications, making sure main requirements for funding are met, and then, after accepting them, advisors send the applications for a further assessment done by the expert group. In addition, they read all final reports provided by granted projects. This process provides advisors with a broad understanding on current trends in the art and culture field, as well as main actors and a scope of working methods.

Role of Experts. Final decisions on which projects will be funded is made by the group consisting of eight independent experts, which each has a mandate of three years. Expert group has a particular importance in the assessment process because it serves as a guardian for the arm's length principle that aims to protect funding decision from improper political intervention. Experts' role in relation to arm's length principle was already analysed in-depth in the first analysis part.

Experts are expected to read and comment all incoming applications, make preliminary decisions that are then discussed in the Expert meeting. It is important to note, that experts do not read final project reports received after funded projects were implemented, as it is something done by the advisors.

The expert group also has a chairperson, who is responsible to ensure that experts are working as effectively as possible, which means resolving any conflicts, encouraging discussions, ensuring that the expert group is well informed about the objectives of the current cultural policy of NCM. They also have to provide a brief annual report which

includes tendencies of applications, major changes in genre, themes, collaboration constellations, artistic ambitions etc. Also, the chairperson can provide with a recommendation or a feedback to revise the programme.

Finally, experts are expected to participate in the annual Joint meeting organized by the Nordic Culture Point where both Nordic cultural officials, funding administrators and experts meet. In the meeting experts of different funding programmes have an opportunity to exchange experiences, scrutinize assessment criteria and decisions, develop working methods, discuss with other experts' groups as well as communicate with officials. One could say that there are ways for experts to influence revision of the programme by giving feedback in the annual report or during these annual meetings.

Programme's strategic criteria

Previous sections have introduced the funding process, the roles of advisors and experts as well as the main general criteria for Culture and Art Programme (CAP). In addition to those criteria, a set of strategic criteria as well as overall several areas of strategic perspectives are incorporated into the programme. These strategic perspectives act like horizontal perspectives that permeate the whole Nordic cultural co-operation, including the funding schemes for art and culture administrated by Nordic Culture Point. This section will take a closer look at the strategic criteria of the programme.

According to an internal document of Culture and Art programme handbook, which serves as a main programme description, the independent expert groups should in addition to the general programme criteria take into consideration main strategic programme criteria and the current political strategies of Nordic Council of Ministers. Currently there are two that are pointed out, that is the Co-operation programme on culture policy 2021-2024 and general NCM policy for mainstreaming sustainable development, gender equality, and a child rights and youth perspective.

This shows that inclusion of political overall objectives and strategic interests are considered to be an important part of funding decision making. A question to be asked is whether and

if so in which ways such integration of policy's horizontal perspectives into expert's assessment of applications might steer expert's interpretations of artistic content of incoming project applications? In addition, could such inclusion of strategic guidelines potentially negatively influence arm's length principle, which intends to create favourable conditions for artistic practices to be independent from political influence?

According to the Culture and Art programme description on Nordic Culture Point's official website, the assessment of incoming applications also depends on how "how well the application has managed to convey" (Nordic Culture Point, n.d., para. 16) programme's strategic perspectives. There are four main strategic programme criteria for Culture and Art programme: Nordic dimension, cooperation, quality and sustainability.

The Nordic dimension is assessed by how a project promotes cooperation between Nordic countries, or these countries and the rest of the world. Projects are looked at from the perspective of how it contributes to knowledge of Nordic artists and their works. In addition, the website description states that "it would also be an advantage if the project promotes language comprehension in the Nordic region" (Nordic Culture Point, n.d., para. 17). To sum up, the projects have to have a concrete relation to Nordic region both geographically as well as content wise.

Cooperation is assessed based on creation of new networks between art and culture professionals and their exchange of knowledge and experience. Quality aspect of the assessment is defined as how much a project aims to develop and raise of artistic and cultural quality by being innovative and having ambitions for competence development. Therefore, quality is related to innovation and competence development. In addition, quality aspect is related to applicant's ability to carry out a project in a "good manner" (Nordic Culture Point, n.d., para. 18) referring to financial planning and statements as well as long lasting effects of project results.

Sustainability is based on the overall Nordic cultural policy rationale – sustainability is divided into social, economic, cultural and ecological aspects. All those aspects are being taken into consideration while granting financial support for the projects. A project's

significance for the development of a sustainable and varied arts and cultural life in the Nordic region is assessed based on whether a project contributes to creating cohesion and promotes and inclusive and diverse cultural life. It could be said that programme's strategic criteria are closely related to the aspect of social sustainability.

These strategic perspectives should be reflected in the experts' assessment of incoming funding applications. It appears that Nordic Council of Ministers establishes quite specified support schemes and formulate their general as well as ideological strategic criteria. In addition, if quite specified support schemes are introduced, they limit the freedom of action of the arm's lengths body, Nordic Culture Point, which administers these schemes (Mangset, 2009). Nordic Culture Point (NKK) cannot formulate specific criteria or do any changes without confirmation from its political authority – Nordic Council of Ministers.

Such incorporation of additional strategic perspectives effect funding decision in many ways and was widely reflected in the opinions and experiences of the advisors and experts. In the group discussion with the advisors of NKK, one participant has noted that, experts "agree on that not all projects need to fulfil all the criteria from the policy documents. But that all granted funding needs to go to projects that fulfil the programme criteria". Programme criteria that the advisor refers to are the previously described ones, with a particular importance on Nordic dimension and artistic quality. It is clear, that experts of the programme agree on the importance of these strategic horizontal perspectives in their funding allocation decision.

In addition, the advisor has noticed that "when funding is less generous [aut. ed. *for the Culture and Art programme*], when there is a big competition, all these different perspectives from the policy documents become more steering". So, if funding for from the Nordic Council of Ministers decreases, strategic perspectives from policy documents might play an important role in the final funding decision of the independent programme expert group. This suggests that the less generous funding, might threaten arm's lengths principle, as the experts might experience pressure to grant support for projects that would justify the public expenditure on art and culture field. In such event, instrumental view of art and culture may the start to play a significant role in relation to artistic freedom and expression.

In addition to such opinion of the advisors, experts have also described their views related to the strategic programme criteria. The main tension that can be identified from the experts' questionnaire answers and expert's interview is a tension between artistic integrity or artistic autonomy and other assessment criteria. As one expert stated:

Artistic integrity is very important in the assessment of a project, although it isn't decisive in itself. Artistic integrity is at the heart of a project's quality, but it has to be seen in the context of the other assessment criteria - cooperation, Nordic dimension, cultural and artistic sustainability etc.

In addition, another expert has said that "it is always difficult to find a balance between artistic value and commission". By a commission, they referred to a project that would perfectly fit within programme's strategic framework. This leads to a suggestion that horizontal perspectives and instrumental view on art and culture affect experts' discussions and might create tensions while allocating the grants.

Such tensions create an active discussion within different agents within Nordic Culture Point. Not only experts, but also advisors question the underlying tension between artistic autonomy and instrumental cultural policy objectives. One advisor has rhetorically asked: "What would happen if a project that had very strong artistic quality does not focus on social sustainability in comparison to other projects in competition in the application round. How much value do we put on it compared to artistic quality?". The question asked is closely related to the discussion on value and quality, that is what type of art is seen as valuable in the context of artistic freedom and in the context of strategic criteria.

In this section, main strategic programme criteria for Culture and Art programme were introduced. According to the Nordic Council of Ministers' guidelines, these strategic aspects have to be taken into consideration while allocating funding to the applicants. As data has suggested, such incorporation of strategic elements in the funding scheme leads to ongoing discussions between advisors and experts. Underlying tensions while making a funding decision is based on balancing between artistic integrity and instrumental artistic values. Even though these tensions might be seen as an integral part of cultural policy and

public funding for art and culture debate, it might also affect arm's lengths principle in a negative way. Political objectives, in, for instance, of decreased public funding for funding scheme, may lead to experts prioritising projects that align with political guidelines.

Result evaluation

Previous analysis section has shown that strategic programme criteria play a significant role in funding allocation decision. These criteria also influence the way projects application and report forms that applicants have to fill are designed. In this section, I will focus on the design of those forms and how it effects advisors and experts' work as well as how it may influence applicants to adapt a specific policy language into their project descriptions.

To begin with, it is important to specify what application and report forms are. Application form is a form that a potential applicant needs to fill in while seeking for funding for their project. Report form, on the other hand, is a form that applicant has to fill after they have implemented their project with the help of financial support granted by the Nordic Culture Point. These forms primarily function as administrative tool to collect all needed information. In addition, they also function as a tool to measure the overall quantitative and qualitative success indicators for Culture and Art programme.

These indicators can be grouped into five categories related to promotion of Nordic cooperation, diverse Nordic region, sustainable Nordic region, high artist and cultural quality and creativity. In order to measure effects funded projects have on these aspects, application and report forms include specific quantitative and qualitative questions. For instance, quantitative indicators include information on a total funding amount, distribution of applicants and participants' countries, distribution of different art and cultural forms, applicant types, project and production forms, languages and gender. Qualitative indicators focus on project's content, production and communication, creation of new contacts, working methods, intentions, artistic and cultural quality and reference etc.

Data and statistics on these indicators are gathered through the application and report forms and is represented in Nordic Culture Point's annual report. In order to define how

project meets all the criteria and to help to evaluate project in the context of indicators of success, programmes' application and report forms adapt a number of specific questions, for instance:

- How does the project promote innovation within the field of art and culture?
- How does the project help to convey new knowledge and experience?
- How does the project benefit the field of art and culture in the Nordic region?
- How does the project take social, ecological, or economic sustainability into account?
- Will new contacts or networks be created through the project?
- Do your activities have stated goals for gender equality? (see Appendix 3)

This type of strategy to measure the impact of an individual project as well as the overall Culture and Art programme is based on the idea that Nordic cultural policy is informed and developed by the help of sound evidence that might help to secure future funding for the arts. Therefore, a lot of questions in the application and report forms are quantitative and are aimed to be a neutral measurable way to measure the outcomes of the funding. In addition to qualitative indicators, other questions like "how does the project take social, ecological or economic sustainability into account" are incorporated. When questions are formulated in such manner, they may presume that each project has to incorporate, for instance, sustainability aspect into their activities.

This, could be argued, does not ensure the neutrality of evidence measurement and could distort the effect measurement due to applicant's will to adapt and fit their project within a specific given framework. Such practice was noticed by both advisors and experts. As one advisor has stated: "It can be tricky to measure like how much it is about these buzzwords and only just answering in applications as one thinks they are supposed to". In addition, they noticed, that "posing questions about how concrete project is going to deal with some perspectives may also develop thinking or ways or working".

This opinion illustrates a paradox that effect measurement tools applied in the application and report form might provoke. Forms incorporate a set of specific questions related to strategic programme criteria, that applicant might feel they need to include to their project in order to get funding. In return, the distorted results might be received. The neutral way

of measuring the funding effect is not neutral because answers to these questions might be influenced by applicant's use of a favourable policy language in order to secure the funding for their project.

The advisor has used a term of a buzzword, that relates to a use of terms that are thought to have a particular importance in the current times and in the relation to the funding granted by the Nordic Culture Point. A buzzword in this context could be sustainability, ecology, gender equality and so on. These are words that are frequently used without offering a clear meaning or explanation and therefore risks of becoming floating signifiers. In addition, another advisor has also used the term while expressing their opinion:

I'd say with policy documents and strategies you can't really be free and create whatever you want because it has to be within certain policy frames. And when we talk about these buzzwords maybe these are the outcome of something you do to stay in line with policy set by the public entity.

This suggests that questions in the application and report forms might lead to the use of buzzwords as one of examples of policy language adaptation practiced by the applicants. Moreover, it may lead to the creation of the buzzwords themselves based on the logic if application form asks about sustainability, this might be understood as an important term, and therefore it should be used.

A critical view towards application form was also expressed by another advisor who questioned the application design and its effects while discussing how several strategic criteria are mirrored in applicant's language: "How these values are reported, how do we articulate, do we want applicants to answer "yes, yes, yes" or we want them to reflect on them". Question formulation in the application and report forms also cause tension behind the close door while allocating funding decision. Advisor recalls an event where an expert said that questions do not fulfil anything in terms of artistic content because they believed application was steering artists way too much into them saying "yes, I'm going to work with this, yes, I'm going to work with that" just to secure funding. In addition, the advisor said

that the expert commented several times “they couldn’t understand why we have such questions”.

It may be assumed that the design of the application may be one of the main ingredients causing tension while evaluating incoming applications and making funding decisions. The problematic aspect of such tension is that it may have an adverse effect on artistic freedom. Questions in the application form aim to assess the foreseeable impact of funded project and in turn may intervene with the funding decision making. One expert has stated:

Well, it is policy documents, you have to fulfil this and that and so on. Artistically interesting projects didn’t get money because of that. It was pity. Which I understand of course that you need a direction what do you want with this money of course.

This opinion shows how questions related to impact evaluation may have influenced the decision making. One could argue that experts should foresee the possible impacts of the project even before it has started or was implemented. In addition, example of this opinion may lead to an assumption, that questions on strategic criteria of the programme were prioritized more in relation to artistic innovation or quality. This would suggest that at times, horizontal strategic perspectives and criteria might have been interpreted in relation to the artistic content or concept. This of course, might be problematic in relation to arm’s length principle. The expert states, they understand the need for instrumental rationale, but later added that “it must not prevent other projects from happening”.

Another important aspect that was previously briefly touched upon is the tendency to adapt specific political language by the funding applicants. One of the experts identified one of the biggest challenges in application processing being a difference between application filling styles. They made an insight: ‘I think that one difference that slowly grew, is a difference between an artist and a bureaucrat. By this they referred to applications who were clearly written by the professional in the arts administration sector and artist practitioners’. The informant also said:

We also often got very very beautiful [aut. ed. *applications*]. Everything was perfectly written, they had a huge work to do with this application, but it was nothing behind it, you know. It was perfect application, but the project wasn't good and the other way around. That was the most difficult thing, I think. It's easy to get stuck in those beautiful words and descriptions and then you suddenly noticed there is nothing there.

In addition, another expert has pondered around question that "institutions often have better possibilities of fulfilling all criteria than that of a private person/private project". It is important to notice that the chances of an application to be granted may have been affected by the applicant's ability to adapt the specific rhetoric and language used in the policy documents. The expert has identified this type of applicants as 'professional applicants', meaning they have been writing similar applications before, know how to use and adapt the language which would increase their chances to secure funding for themselves. In contrast, if the applicant does not show such ability, they fall into a risk of having their application denied as the informant mentioned before. As the expert mentions: "perhaps a fantastic project, and they had no idea how to write".

Examples and opinions above uncover underlying tensions caused by the design of application and report forms. They tend to not only function as a tool for collecting general information on projects, but also function as the effect measurement tool. First of all, it aims to gather information that can be used as an evidence of art's positive impacts in order to secure a political funding for the field. Secondly, it functions as a risk management tool, by asking targeted question that would allow to bypass funding projects that might carry a risk of not being in the framework of strategic criteria of the programme. Thirdly, it works as a control tool that leads applicants to adapt specific language or adjust their project in relation to what is considered to be important by the cultural policy. This may also lead to a conclusion that such evidence measurement is not neutral as it may lead to distorted results on art's and culture's effects and will not describe the reality because of applicants' tendency to adjust their project to the funding framework. Moreover, it might leave to falsely informed policy making in the future as the policy may not include perspectives that are relevant in the art field but will instead perpetuate the use of buzzwords.

Arm's length principle and funding process

This analysis part focused on a concrete Nordic Council of Ministers' funding programme for art and culture administrated by the arm's length body Nordic Culture Point. As the analysis suggested, the strategic criteria of Culture and Art programme are closely related to the overall Nordic cultural policy strategic horizontal perspectives.

Since Nordic Council of Ministers introduce specific programme criteria that may lead to a limited sense of institutional autonomy of Nordic Culture Point. In addition, in some events might have a negative effect on arm's lengths principle as artistic freedom is evaluated in relation to project's ability to reflect or include the overall political objectives of the Nordic cultural policy.

Analysis also suggests that programme's strategic criteria might influence or limit artistic autonomy. Experts and advisors have expressed their opinions, that reveals a tendency used by applicants to adapt a specific policy language while aiming to secure the funding for their projects. This is mostly related to the question design in the application and report forms, that are used as a tool to collect information and assess the overall success and impact of the funding programme. Analysis suggest that such way of gathering information and evaluating the programme might leave to distorted results of the programme's effect and will perpetuate the favourable outcomes for the Nordic cultural policy.

05

Conclusions

In this thesis I have taken an explorative reflexive approach while closely analysing Nordic cultural policy. Exploration was inspired by asking sometimes uncomfortable questions related to cultural policy making, that is to what extent culture and art are seen as tools or resources that help reach other welfare policy objectives; what type of art and culture is considered to be valuable in relation to instrumental rationale incorporated in policy; how policy position itself in relation to artistic freedom; what a proper line between political intervention and artistic freedom is.

This thesis was not motivated by advocating for public support models that would only focus on art's intrinsic values. Instead, it acknowledges the inevitably instrumental nature of cultural policy. As a result, it aimed to closely analyse the attempts made by Nordic cultural policy makers to balance support for artistic freedom and artistic autonomy together with instrumental rationale that is based on a view that art and culture benefit the societal development.

This inquiry was a qualitative case study of Nordic Culture Point, a Nordic cultural institution that among other activities administrates Nordic Council of Ministers' funding programmes for culture and art. Focusing on concrete existing institution and its practices has allowed to form a deeper perspective while analysing Nordic cultural policy and its implementation. Focusing on case study example has revealed what kind of practices policy becomes or, in what ways it is translated into real-life activities.

The extensive analysis has focused on various aspects related to Nordic cultural policy implementation and its respect to arm's length principle, that aims to refrain political intervention from negatively affecting the artistic freedom. First analysis chapter has focused on governmental attempts to build an organisational institutional distance between Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) and Nordic Culture Point (NCP). It suggested that arm's length principle (ALP) is seen as an important integral part of the Nordic cultural policy. However, regardless of some successful governmental attempts to design its activities with respect to ALP, analysis have suggested a short institutional distance between NCM and NKK. In addition, it has led to the assumption that NKK's institutional identity is also closely related to overall Nordic cultural policy objectives. To conclude, arm's length principle was not strictly defined by the policy, but it was successfully applied in some parts of organisational level. Nevertheless, the analysis suggest that ALP may be also used as a general rhetoric tool while justifying the legitimacy of the policy.

Inquiry has illustrated how the current Nordic cultural policy is designed following the Nordic cultural policy model tradition. It aims to support high quality art and free expression, but at the same time acknowledges the benefits art and culture may have to the overall welfare society. Therefore, the second part of analysis focused on how Nordic cultural policy's design, what kind of policy attachments it incorporates, that is what objectives other than art's intrinsic values policy views to be important. To do so, the analysis has uncovered the underlying architectural structure of the policy. It explored the different layers of instrumentality that the policy tends to apply while aiming for its main goal and policy attachment – the sustainable development.

Instrumental aspect of the policy was analysed with the help of Vestheim's (2008) typology of instrumentality. The analysis has led to a conclusion that Nordic cultural policy adapts a deeply complex instrumental rationale that included aesthetic/educational, economic, social and political mobilising instrumentality. In addition, analysis have suggested a possible addition to Vestheim's theoretical framework, that is environmental instrumentality. Nordic policy revealed itself as a complex instrumental system, that keeps expanding its instrumental perspectives and suggests new ways to re-think the already existing academic attempts to discuss cultural policies. Finally, the analysis has suggested that Nordic cultural

policy may overstate instrumental values as they sometimes be more present than the intrinsic values. In doing so, it might threaten the balance between artistic freedom and instrumental rationale that arm's length principle aims for.

The third analysis part has moved towards concrete funding practices administrated by the Nordic Culture Point. It explored Culture and Art Programme criteria in relation to the current Nordic cultural policy. Nordic Council of Ministers introduce specific programme criteria that may lead to a limited sense of institutional autonomy of Nordic Culture Point, as the institution has little agency in designing the programme. This analysis part has also uncovered underlying tensions by introducing the opinions and experience by Nordic Culture Point programme advisors and experts. As these opinions have suggested, strategic programme criteria and expectations from the experts who allocate funding decisions, might influence expert's choices. Both advisors and experts have opened up about tensions caused by trying to balance artistic integrity and policy objectives. This was also evident that artistic quality and value may have sometimes been assessed in relation to strategic goals. In addition, they have expressed a worry that when general funding for the programme is decreased, political strategic horizontal perspectives and criteria become more steering while making grant allocation decisions.

In addition, advisors and experts' opinions have shed light on issues related to applicants' tendency to adopt a particular policy language in order to secure their project funding. This allows to suggest that political objectives expressed in Nordic cultural policy directly affects the language applicants tend to practice. Hence, policy does not limit itself to a document, but moves beyond and constructs as well as designs discursive practices exercised in the arts field.

However, it is important to note that the thesis did not aim to make a strict demarcation line between policy objectives and real-life practices in the artistic field. It did not aim to portray the policy as 'bad' and artistic practices as 'good'. Such simplified distinction would not have allowed an in-depth perspective into issues related to cultural policy implementation. It is important to notice, that a lot of art and culture practitioners already work around the topics that policy identifies as priorities, such as green production, social sustainability,

gender equality, inclusion, participation, norm criticism etc. It could be even argued that art field due to its explorative and expanding nature tends to incorporate these themes quicker than they are adopted by the policy language. Nevertheless, it suggests the interconnected relationship between the policy and real-life cultural life. On one hand, policy may adapt the important topics reflected in the cultural field, on the other, policy might also shape the language or ways of thinking around the topics, as the analysis suggests. To get a better view on this, analysis could also incorporate the views and opinions by the funding applicants in the future.

Moreover, thesis data has uncovered even more important aspects related to cultural policy implementation. However, due to the scope of Master's thesis, some of these perspectives unfortunately were chosen to be left out. Nevertheless, they could serve as a basis for future research. An important topic for research could be the social trust. Data has let to assume that trust has a particular role in the Nordic funding system. It acts as a gluing agent that keeps the funding structure intact. Trust can be both implicit and also concrete in relation to Nordic art and culture funding practices. In addition, it may also serve as an overall fantasy, the aspiration towards which Nordic cultural policy was built. Nordic funding schemes for art and culture are arguably more flexible compared to, for instance, European funding schemes. For instance, Nordic funding does not require an extensive financial reporting related to funded projects. This may raise a rhetorical question related to democratic funding allocation – what type of funding model is presented as more democratic and transparent – the one that is built on trust and leaves some open space, or the one that tends to highly manage their processes.

Moreover, other aspirations such as Nordicity could be analysed in the context of nationalism and Nordic story of identity construction that is applied and formulated in the Nordic cultural policies. Questions on what types of identity cultural policy seems to value and aspire to form may provide with a deeper understanding of ideological paradigms Nordic cultural policy was and continues to be built upon.

In addition, analysis has suggested important future research directions related to art's value and quality. Data has identified a distinction between these two aspects of art. Value

was more connected with art or cultural projects ability to meet political objectives, whilst quality was associated with artistic exploration and integrity. Cultural policies inevitably shape our understanding of what art we see as valuable.

To conclude, this inquiry has been built on concepts of artistic freedom, instrumentalisation and arm's length principle. They showed to be valuable tools while discussing cultural policy and its application. Moreover, they allowed to uncover hidden tensions that are associated with cultural policy making.

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List of figures

Figure 1.	Vestheims's (2008) typology of instrumentality. Translation by me.	16
Figure 2.	Application of triangulation in the analysis.	27
Figure 3.	Collection of data.	29
Figure 4.	Policy language examples related to the three pillars of sustainability and strategic priorities.	51
Figure 5.	Environmental instrumentality – addition to Vestheim's typology.	57
Figure 6.	Application assessment process at Nordic Culture Point.	63

Appendices

Appendix 1. Invitation letter to participate in a survey

Dear xxx,

You are receiving this letter because you were a member of the expert group for Culture and Art Programme administered by Nordic Culture Point (NCP). On behalf of our funding team, I once again would like to thank you for your great work and input.

I am Gintare Ruksenaite, MA student of Nordic Visual Studies and Art Education (NoVA) in Aalto University, Finland. I have worked as a funding assistant at Nordic Culture Point for almost two years now and we have probably already had the chance to meet in person during Joint meetings.

Currently I am writing my MA thesis project in collaboration with NCP. The study focuses on Nordic cultural policy and sustainability. I am taking a closer look at how art and culture are seen in the official Nordic regional cooperation in the context of sustainable development. I plan to examine how Nordic cultural policy is designed and how it affects funding administrators, experts and grantees.

I would like to invite you to participate in the study and fill the provided online interview form. The interview is interested in your opinions on your experience while working as an expert for the Culture and Art Programme. Questions will also focus on your personal opinions on main aims set by Nordic Council of Ministers as well as your understandings of concepts such as sustainability. Your answers will help to further develop the Culture and Art Programme.

This research will be public. However, all answers will be anonymous, and the data material will be treated confidentially with respect to ethical research guidelines. Participating in this research will not affect your professional relationship with Nordic Culture Point. The administrators of grant programmes will not have access to the data and will not be able to identify interviewees.

You can also choose to answer the questions in the following Scandinavian language: Danish, Norwegian or Swedish. Please note that this might make it easier to reveal your identity. Therefore, in order to secure the anonymity, I highly recommend writing your answers in English.

Please click [here](#) to be forwarded to online interview form. I kindly ask you to [fill in this form by Friday 20th March](#).

I would also like to invite you to participate in an online face-to-face interview. I would appreciate if you would let me know if you are interested in participating [by replying to this email by 17th March](#). Your contribution would be very valuable.

As a contributor to this research you will receive the results of the study in October 2020.

Thank you for your cooperation!

In case you should have any questions concerning the research project, please don't hesitate to contact me or programme administrator xxx (xxx@nordiskkulturkontakt.org).

Best regards,

Gintare Ruksenaite

Appendix 2. Questionnaire form for Culture and Art Programme experts

Thank you for participating in the survey. This study focuses on Nordic cultural policy and sustainability. I am taking a closer look at how art and culture are seen in the official Nordic regional cooperation in the context of sustainable development. These survey questions deal with your opinions on your experience while working as an expert for the Culture and Art Programme. Your answers are very valuable, and they will help to further develop the programme.

This research will be public. However, all answers will be anonymous, and the data material will be treated confidentially with respect to ethical research guidelines. Participating in this research will not affect your professional relationship with Nordic Culture Point. The administrators of grant programmes will not have access to the data and will not be able to identify interviewees.

You can also choose to answer the questions in the following Scandinavian language: Danish, Norwegian or Swedish. Please note that this might make it easier to reveal your identity. Therefore, in order to secure the anonymity, I highly recommend writing your answers in English.

I kindly ask you to fill this form by Friday 20th March, 2020.

I would also like to invite you to participate in an online face-to-face interview. I would appreciate if you would let me know if you are interested in participating by writing an email to gintare.ruksenaite@nordiskkulturkontakt.org by Friday 20th March. Your contribution would be very valuable.

If you have any questions, regarding the survey or the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,
Gintare Ruksenaite

Consent of participation

I agree that my answers will be used for this master thesis project:

Yes / No

1. What would you describe as valuable final results that a project aims to accomplish?
Please choose 5 of the following options.

A sense of belonging

- Considers environmental issues
- Inclusion of marginalized art forms
- Inclusion of minorities
- Inclusion of people of different ages/gender/ethnicity
- Introduces innovative ideas and methods
- New partnerships and networks are to be established

- Sustainable finances
 - Targeting new audiences
 - Other, what?
2. Would you rather support a few big scale, already established initiatives, or more smaller projects at the beginning stage? Please describe why.
 3. How relevant is it for you that the effects of the work will continue after the funded project period?
Scale from 0 to 100.
 4. According to your opinion, what aspects affect the quality of a project? Please choose 5 of the following options.
 - Applicant is professional
 - Balanced gender representation
 - Big audience-reach
 - Clear and reasonable budget
 - Inclusion of diverse social groups
 - Innovation
 - Intentions
 - Norm-criticality
 - Participants age
 - Social impact
 - Takes into account ecological and environmental sustainability
 - Well-written application
 - Other
 5. Please briefly describe how you understand a good manner in "The applicant's ability to complete the project in a good manner will also be assessed".
 6. Is it important for you to fund marginalized or under-represented art forms? For instance, street art?
Scale from 0 to 100.
 7. In your opinion, do enough applications include new innovative methods, thoughts and ideas?
 - Yes, a lot of applications include it.
 - Some applications include it, but the number of such applications could be higher.
 - I don't know.
 - No, too few applications include it.
 - Other opinion, please describe her.
 8. In your opinion, what are 3 key components in Nordic cultural collaboration? Please type your answers down below.
 9. To what extent do you think Nordic cultural policy reflects current themes and trends in the regional art fields?
Scale from 0 to 100.

10. Do you think Strategy for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013-2020 reflects the needs of creative fields in the Nordic region?
Yes / No.
If you chose 'no', please comment what needs in your opinion are not reflected.
11. Do you think that artists' interests are represented in the Culture and Art Programme criteria?
Yes/ No.
If you chose 'no', please comment, why you think so.
12. How important for your assessment is it that a project promotes artistic integrity?
13. How important for your assessment is it that a project includes social benefits?
14. To what extent do you support the idea that art and culture should promote sustainable development/well-being?
Scale from 0 to 100.
15. How would you define sustainability within the context of Nordic cultural co-operation?
16. How would you define social sustainability?
17. Do you think of your work as an expert for Culture and Art Programme as a sustainable practice?
Yes / No.
You may choose to briefly explain why.
18. Do you think it would be valuable for the experts to participate in the evaluation of the final reporting of the funded projects?
Yes / No.
19. In your opinion, is the Nordic cultural policy flexible enough for interpretation?
Yes / No.
20. If you chose 'yes', does this flexibility make your decision making more challenging?
In what ways?
21. Do you feel that the policy limited your choices too much while assessing incoming applications?
Yes / No.
If you chose 'yes', please describe in what ways you have felt restricted.
22. Do you feel that you can influence the further development of the programme?
Please choose:
 - I can't influence that at all

- I can't influence that
- I don't know
- I can somewhat influence it
- I can influence it

23. If you wish you can add additional comments in this space.

24. Can you be contacted in case I have some questions regarding your answers?

Please note, that this will reveal your identity to me. However, your anonymity in a final publication of the study will not be affected.

Yes / No

If you chose 'yes', please enter your email address:

Appendix 3. Application form for Culture and Art Programme (Spring 2022)

Basic information

- What is the title of the project?
- Give a brief description of the project
- Planned start date
- Planned end date
- Funding amount requested (Applied amount, Budget)

Information in partners and participants

- Which countries do the partners in the project come from?
- Who are the project's primary confirmed partners? In which country are they based? What will their role be in the project? (Co-operation partner, country of residence, role in project, link to website)
 - If you wish, please add CVs and work assessments here (max. 10MB). Please attach all CVs as a single document in PDF format.
 - Are there any other participants in the project? In which country are they based? What will their role be in the project? Have they planned their participation, or have they confirmed their participation? (Co-operation partner, country of residence, role in project, confirmed/planned)
- Result how many people will take part in the project?
- Have you applied for funding from Nordic Culture Point before?
- Will new contacts or networks be created through the project?
 - If yes, how?
- What are your expectations of the collaboration?

Project content

- Project description.
- Give a brief description of the project's key objectives
- Outline the project's activities and schedule (what, where, and when?)
 - Do you have a website with more information on the project?
- State the projects primary art field. (Choose from: architecture, visual arts, circus, dance, design, film and media, cultural heritage, literature, music, performance, handcraft and art wares, theatre, cross-disciplinary, other, what?)
 - If you selected "interdisciplinary arts" please specify which fields this covers.
- Main project activity? State the primary activity for which you are seeking support. This information is used for statistical purposes only. (Choose from: art or cultural production, performance, lecture, workshop, meeting, seminar, conference, other, what?)
- How does the project promote innovation withing the field of art and culture?
- How does the project help to convey new knowledge and experience?
- Where will the project take place?

- Which languages will be used?
- How does the project benefit the field of art and culture in the Nordic region?
- How does the project take social, ecological, or economic sustainability into account?
- Does the content, implementation, and/or budget of the project take any special requirements into account? These include physical, cognitive, communicative, geographical and social needs.
 - If yes, how?

Target groups

- Is the project seeking to reach out to new target groups?
- If yes, how?
- Which age groups are included in the project? (Children and young people (0-25), adults (25-65), seniors (66+))
 - If Children and young people (0-25) are engaged in the project, please describe here the available competences and planned methods for integrating a child rights and youth perspective?

Project communication

- What are you hoping to achieve with project communication among your target groups? This can include awareness, change of attitude, change of behavior, introducing new art forms and ideas, stimulating critical thinking. How are you planning to achieve your objectives for each target group?
- Describe the activities and channels that support your communication objectives.

Nordic Council of Ministers' overarching perspectives

- Do your activities have stated goals for sustainable development?
 - If yes, how will you work with sustainable development?
- Do your activities have stated goals for gender equality?
 - If yes, how will you work with gender equality?
- Do your activities have a child rights and youth perspective?
 - If yes, how will you work with a child rights and youth perspective?

Project funding

- What is the proportion of planned and realised funding, and the proportion of co-funding? Please state the amount in euros.
 - Applied from Nordic Culture Point (ie. the amount you state under applied amount on page 1)
 - Funding from other affiliated Nordic organizations, e.g. Nordic Culture Fund
 - Funding from other funds and foundations
 - State and municipal funding

- Tickets, fees, sales income, etc.
 - Other funding, sponsors
 - Self-funding (must be specified in the attached budget)
- Specified budget and funding plan.
 - Do you have any comments on the budget and funding plan?