Contradicting Cultural Policy:

A comparative study of the cultural policy of the Scandinavian radical right

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ABSTRACT

Culture is a central concept for the Scandinavian radical right parties, but little research has been done on the cultural policy of these parties. This article is a comparative overview of the party programs of three Scandinavian radical right parties published during the latest decade. It relates the cultural policies of the radical right to the predominantly welfare-based corporatist cultural policy of the Scandinavian countries. Through a discursive policy analysis two problem representations have been identified: The view of multiculturalism as a threat to national culture and the view that public funding is a threat to freedom. The parties share a common understanding of cultural policy, with minor differences. There is an underlying conflict in the discourse: While the parties argue that the political governance of art needs to be limited, they are, at the same time, deeply involved in how cultural expressions and cultural life should be defined. By shedding light on the radical right cultural policy agenda it may be possible to politicize the cultural policy discourse overall and acknowledge the ideological dimension of cultural policy.

Keywords

radical right, comparative research, autonomy, national culture, scandinavia, problematization

ABBREVIATIONS

DF – Dansk folkeparti (The Danish People’s party)
FrP – Fremskrittspartiet (The Norwegian Progress party)
SD – Sverigedemokraterna (The Sweden Democrats)
INTRODUCTION

The relatively small field of public cultural policy in the Scandinavian countries is marked by consensus, in recent years it has been described as becoming more decentralized, depoliticized and technocratic through its adaptation to market strategies. This tendency is a shift from the welfare-based corporatist cultural policy that emerged after World War II (Duellund 2008; Mangset et al 2008; Frenander 2014; Nielsen 2006). Simultaneously, radical right parties that politicize culture by incorporating culture as a central concept in their ideologies are gaining votes and influence in Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. These parties have made cultural policy and politics an essential part of their construction. Researchers conclude that consensus in the political middle is one of many reasons that gives rise to radical right parties (Jupskås 2012). The implications of such a stance for national public cultural policy in Scandinavia have not been thoroughly researched.

A scientific and comparative study of the assumptions and ideas underlying the Scandinavian radical right parties’ cultural policy is needed in order to analyze how the parties use culture as a political object and the ways in which the radical right challenge prevailing cultural policy. This article is a starting point for such an analysis through a comparative overview of the cultural policy suggestions of three Scandinavian radical right parties’ party programs during the latest decade. The parties studied are the Progress Party (FrP) in Norway, the Sweden Democrats (SD) in Sweden and the Danish People’s Party (DF) in Denmark. Radical right is defined as a xenophobic family of parties that uses a cultural perspective when defining the nation (Jupskås 2012: 49–50).

The concept of culture is notoriously elusive. For this article, two different understandings of the concept are used: an anthropological understanding where culture is seen as a way of life and an aesthetic understanding where culture is seen as art (Fornäs 2012). These two distinctions can be described as a broad and narrow definition of culture, which have an impact on the understanding of cultural policy. Cultural policy is for this article defined as «the promotion or prohibition of cultural practices and values by governments, corporations, other institutions and individuals» (International Journal of Cultural Policy Research 2015). Cultural policy refers to both policy actions for aesthetic creativity and to collective ways of life and it has a close historical association with the nation-state and with nationalism (Anderson 2006; Gellner 1997; Miller & Yúdice 2012:1; McGuigan 2004:34). In this article I study explicit cultural policy, i.e. the policy suggestions that the parties themselves refer to as such (Ahearne 2009). While explicit cultural policy is used to describe cultural policy suggestions that are labelled as such, implicit stands for any political strategy that affects culture, i.e practices and values, but that may not be expressed as cultural policy (Ahearne 2009).

This is an attempt to bridge a gap in the research on existing cultural policy and the radical right. A theoretical underpinning is to emphasize the political in
cultural policy research. By this I mean that the researcher should view the field of cultural policy as a zone of conflict (Nielsen 2006:141), where the role of the cultural policy researcher is to make conflicts visible. Focusing on conflict rather than consensus is a way of «forcing» cultural policy to be political. Cultural policy, in other words, is an area of research that should be treated as a political construct and not primarily as part of the art sphere or as a part of public administration. (Engberg 2004:28).

A starting point is to define, describe and discern how culture is used as a political object by the parties. The result will give insight into what kind of challenges the cultural policy of the Scandinavian radical right present to established Scandinavian cultural policy. The empirical material will be analysed based on problematizations, i.e. how something becomes a problem that a suggested policy must solve (Bacchi 2009). The analysis is approached through the following questions:

- What views on culture are expressed in the programs of the Scandinavian radical right between 2002–2013 (DF, SD and FrP)? Which cultural policy issues are deemed as important?
- What are the similarities and differences between the parties?
- What are the underlying claims and assumptions of cultural policy in the programs?
- How does the cultural policy of the radical right challenge prevailing Scandinavian cultural policy?

THE SCANDINAVIAN RADICAL RIGHT – DEFINITION AND PRESENTATION

I’ve chosen the description «radical right» for SD, DF and FrP. Right-wing extremist or radical parties make up a party «family», although it is more diverse than its liberal, conservative or socialist counterparts (Mudde 1996:226). The radical right, in their occupation with the nation state, argues that the state is based on a certain culture; they use a cultural perspective when defining the nation. The foundation of the radical right can be described as anti-immigrant and based on cultural nationalism. Unlike extreme right parties, the radical right is not anti-democratic or concerned with biological racism (Jupskås 2012:49–50). However, the theory of cultural incompatibility can also be defined as racism or new racism (Fennema 1997:479). Another definition of the radical right by Swedish sociologist Jens Rydgren is that:

1. Critical research is not, of course, limited to the study of the radical right but should include cultural policy and cultural policy research as a whole.

2. Important to note is the definition of culture and cultural policy used by researchers of radical right parties. Cultural policy is mostly used in terms of socio-cultural policy, where reduced immigration and the belief in an ethnic nationality are identified as the main cultural policy issues for the radical right and their voters (see Rydgren 2013:1).
The radical right-wing parties share a core of ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-establishment populism. In their political platforms this ideological core is often embedded in a general socio-cultural authoritarianism that stresses themes such as law and order and family values. (Rydgren 2013:2)

Populism rests on the notion that the greatest conflict in society lies between the people and the elite (Jupskås 2012:53). The concept is elusive but some of its more defined aspects can be applied to the Scandinavian radical right parties, for instance, negative reactions to representative politics and the embrace of an idealized version of ‘the people’ (Taggart 2000:3). That these parties can all be labeled radical right does not mean that I believe they are exactly the same, but rather that they have so much in common that it is reasonable to gather them under a collective name. Following is a short presentation of the three parties being studied:

**Dansk folkeparti (DF)**
DF was founded in 1995 and led by Pia Kjersgaard until 2012 when Kristian Thulesen Dahl became party leader. Since 2001 DF has gained influence in Danish government because minority governments have relied on them for cooperation (Art 2011:156–157). DF are nationalistic and anti-immigrant, and cooperation with the government has given them influence in issues regarding the protection of Danish culture and language (Ivarsflaten & Guldbrandsen 2013:1). In the 2015 election DF gained 21,1% of the votes and became the second largest party after the Social democrats (Danmarks statistik 2015).

**Fremskrittpartiet (FrP)**
Anders Langes Parti (The party of Anders Lange) was established in Norway in 1973. During a short time it was also known as the Reform Party but changed its name to the Progress party (FrP) in 1977. The party gained a breakthrough in the late 1980s when immigration became a salient political issue; immigration wasn’t a central issue for the party until then. There has been an ideological movement in FRP from neo-liberalism to defenders of the welfare state (Art 2011:159–160; Ivarsflaten & Guldbrandsen 2013:2). After the election in 2013 they formed a government with the conservative party Høyre, the current party leader is Siv Jensen.

**Sverigedemokraterna (SD)**
Of the three parties, SD, with party leader Jimmie Åkesson, stems from an explicit racist background. The party was founded in 1988 by former members of the neo-Nazi organization Bevara Sverige svenskt (BSS, ‘Keep Sweden Swedish’). It wasn’t until 1995 that members of SD tried to make the party respectable in a democratic context. At present, the party has moved from an extremist to a radical right stance, partly inspired by DF. In 2010, SD gained entrance to the Riksdag (Art 2011:88–89, 91). Compared to the other parties studied, SD has the smallest percent of voters (Ivarsflaten & Gudbrandsen 2013:1).³
To summarize, all three parties are characterized by anti-immigrant opinions, but political scientist Anders Ravik Jupskås emphasizes that FrP is different from other European right-wing parties. He describes them as «immigrant skeptical» with a populist criticism of the elite rather than a xenophobic approach. However, FrP can be seen as a Norwegian equivalent of the same ideological currents that are visible in Europe as a whole (Jupskås 2012:28–32). The different backgrounds of the parties are also noteworthy; where FrP and DF have roots as protest parties against increasing taxes, the Sweden Democrats have an extreme right-wing past (Ivarsflaten & Gudbrandsen 2013). The parties do not cooperate with each other. DF and SD are in two different groups in the European parliament; DF is in the European Conservatives and Reformists group together with, among other parties, the True Finns party, while SD is a part of the EU-skeptic Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group together with, among others, the British party UKIP (ECR 2012; EFD 2014). FrP, in their turn, mark a distance from both of the other two parties and describe themselves more close to Scandinavian conservative parties (Ingerö 2010).

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Radical right and cultural policy

This article unites two fields of research, namely research on radical right ideology and political parties, and research on cultural policy. The radical right believe that it is the state’s responsibility to maintain, protect and express the cultural and religious heritage, as well as the values, of the ethnical majority. In this view, the ‘original’ culture is given precedence over other minority cultures, which have to be assimilated (Jupskås 2012:49–50). Research on radical right parties in Europe has gained momentum since they have been winning more and more votes. (Ignazi 2003; Mudde 2000; Jupskås 2012). Although cultural policy seems to be an obvious source for analyzing the significance of nationalism in countries (Duelund 2008:19), most radical right research contributions focus on voter’s behaviour, ideology and policy impact (Rydgren 2013). Little research has, in fact, been conducted on the cultural policy of radical right parties. The research that has been done supports the claim that public cultural policy is a policy area where the radical right can exercise great influence (Minkenberg 2001; Murphy 2002).

An ideological trend in Europe called the new right or nouvelle droite has been studied as a part of the ideological construction that radical and extreme right parties build upon. In this movement the works of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci are used, especially his notion of cultural struggle or metapolitics. The idea is that culture is a fundamental part of human development, and to

3. They are, however, gaining votes at every election. In the 2014 election, they received 12.8% of the votes and thus became the third largest party after the Social Democratic party and the Moderate party (Valmyndigheten 2014).
gain cultural hegemony is to gain political results (Dahl 2001:128–129). Sweden’s extreme right movement has used cultural struggle in their political struggle, for instance, using their own record labels and local radio to present their ideas (Wåg 2010). Cultural struggle as a strategy is visible in the literature on the cultural policy of the radical right. Political scientist Michael Minken-berg has studied the agenda-setting and policy effects of the radical right in Austria, Italy and France. He found that a change in cultural issues, a cultural struggle, is the most substantive impact of these parties (Minkenberg 2001:18). An example is the Austrian Freedom Party FPÖ. Jörg Haider, party leader of FPÖ 1986–2000 explicitly named the cultural scene as a political enemy and attacked artists and cultural figures, such as Elfreide Jelinek, through election posters in Vienna. The party and Haider also attacked experimental art and the state policy of subsidizing artists. FPÖ’s cultural policy can be described as anti-modernist, moralistic and traditionalist (Murphy 2002). A study of the cultural policy of the Norwegian party FrP concludes that the party has influenced Norwegian cultural policy discourse. There is an interesting contradiction where FrP claims that they want to abolish cultural policy, while at the same time active in increasing state support to culture for children (Hylland 2011:52, 65). The cultural policy of the radical right can be seen both as opposing cultural policy, as well as influencing the policy area itself.4

Studying problem representations

A Foucauldian archaeological analysis is used as a theoretical and methodological framework to investigate the formation of the discourse on cultural policy. An archaeological analysis aims to define a discourse and the rules governing it. The intentions behind statements made by authors are therefore irrelevant; rather it is the statements themselves that are studied as parts of a discourse (Foucault 1993:42, 2002:169–170). A theoretical assumption underpinning this article is that policies are based on problematizations, i. e. underlying claims and assumptions. This is a way to politicize assumptions that are taken for granted as truths (Bacchi 2012). The problematizations, rather than ideas of the Scandinavian radical right will be studied through a discursive policy analysis (see Foucault 1984/2002:14). In this article a policy, or policy proposal, is defined as a public action suggested by politicians and/or party organizations.

4. One example of how the cultural policy of the radical right has influenced the dominant cultural policy discourse is the case of the new contract for the Danish Public Radio in 2011. In Denmark «Danishness» and national identity have become major cultural policy issues (Duelund 2008:19). For instance, this shift has resulted in a reformulation of the contract for Danish Public Radio 2011–2014 where radio is now required to mediate both Danish cultural heritage and Christian cultural heritage (Münter Lassen 2012:236). In the ensuing public debate, this was considered to be the work of DF, even though the Minister of Culture, Per Stig Møller from the Conservative People’s Party, argued himself for the necessity of educating the Danes in their Christian heritage (ibid.:242). The use of cultural policy as a ‘national revitalization’ is probably more visible in Denmark than in the other Nordic countries.
A starting point for the analysis is to identify what the main issues and/or suggestions are for cultural policy in the material. This will be done by utilizing the methodology developed by political scientist Carol Bacchi (2009; 2012). Inspired by her approach I will focus on how an issue in the material is represented as a problem that must be solved. I will identify central concepts in the material and analyze how they are defined and used, especially paying attention to the definitions of culture. After this first step of identification of problem representations, the study of silences and effects begins. What is left as unproblematic in the problem representations is investigated as well as the effects that are produced (Bacchi 2012:48.) Thereafter the parties’ suggestions will be compared with each other. Focus will be on finding the gaps and/or common ground. Studying the use of central concepts and how they are filled with meaning in policy suggestions will enable insight into the theoretical underpinnings of the radical right (Bacchi 2012:6). Although I compare different texts written within their own political and social contexts they are studied as part of the same cultural policy discourse.

A note on self-reflexivity is necessary; the researcher is herself creator of the discourse that is being studied. Furthermore, my own assumptions need to be acknowledged. The section on public cultural policy in the Scandinavian countries can be seen as an acknowledgement of the author’s assumptions about cultural policy. Another aspect is the author’s familiarity with different political and cultural contexts. Since the author is Swedish, there may be a lack of references and intertextuality in the material from the other countries. One way to level the field is to use research on cultural policy from the different countries as a contextualization.

When doing a comparative study of this kind it can be tempting to polarize and exaggerate differences between the radical right and the nations’ public cultural policies. The author wants to emphasize that even though aspects of the cultural policy of the radical right can be described as nationalist, anti-immigrant or even racist, this does not mean that public cultural policies in the Scandinavian countries are automatically free from such traits.

**Material**

The empirical material consists of five party programs and one motion to parliament and is shown in the table below.

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<td>Program of principles (SD 2011)</td>
<td>Program of principles 2013-2017 (FrP 2013a)</td>
<td>Program of principles (DF 2002)</td>
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<td>Motion to the parliament on cultural policy (SD 2013)</td>
<td>Program of action 2013-2017 (FrP 2013b)</td>
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All documents have been published between 2002–2013. As stated, cultural policy is defined as what the parties themselves labels as such. Cultural policy is usually dealt with in one or two pages in the programs. Five of the texts used for the analysis have been published on the respective parties’ web sites, either directly on the website or as a part of a pdf document. The exception is the SD motion to parliament on cultural policy from 2013.

It is important to make visible the distinction between different arenas. Political parties act in relation to a) other parties in parliament where the goal is to gain a parliamentary majority, b) to voters where the goal is to gain votes and, finally c) to their own members, where the goal is to gain support (Hinnfors 1992:14). The party programs are not primarily intended for other parties; rather they are a declaration of opinions around which to rally party members and presumptive voters. Even though none of the parties have been in a governing position during the time of study they all have had a place in parliament. The suggestions in party programs may not be realized as actual policies, my results must therefore be viewed at a general level. A closer study of what is said in parliament would give more complex results. The results should not be seen as a definite analysis of the cultural policy of these parties, rather as a starting point for further studies of the cultural policy of the Scandinavian radical right.

«THE NORDIC CULTURAL MODEL» – PUBLIC CULTURAL POLICY IN THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

A short overview of cultural policy in the Scandinavian countries is needed to contextualize what the radical right is in opposition to. The Social Democratic worker’s movements in Sweden, Denmark and Norway contributed in creating «a social, political and ideological foundation for the development of the welfare-based cultural policies that took shape after the Second World War» (Duelund 2003:485). The welfare orientation entailed public institutions taking responsibility for cultural life. Strong interest organizations have led to corporatist developments where aid to the arts and culture from sponsors or donors has become rare. Culture in the Scandinavian countries is provided for on state, regional or local levels through public institutions (Bennich-Björkman 1991; Larsson 2003:181; Mangset et al 2008). In Sweden, the conventional aesthetic concept of high culture has been a nodal point in the cultural policy discourse from the 1950s. Welfare politics is discursively strongly connected to a bourgeoisie view of aesthetic quality (Frenander 2007:404; Lindsköld 2013).

There are, of course, differences between the countries’ cultural policies, due in part to the specific histories of the nation-states, which must be acknowledged in a comparative study. Sweden and Denmark have been autonomous states for hundreds of years, while Norway is a new nation in comparison and have a shorter national history to build upon (Duelund 2003:481). But even between generally, rather similar countries, there are notable differences, for
example regarding nationalism. Danish cultural policy is strongly characterized by nationalism, while the cultural policy of Sweden is less nationalistic in comparison. However, there are more similarities than differences between the cultural policies of the Scandinavian countries (Duelund 2003:482–483, 485).

In the last decade, Scandinavian researchers have identified a shift in cultural policy from welfare-oriented to tendencies towards technocratisation, depoliticization and market-oriented instrumentality. At the same time, research indicates that cultural policy is defined as something morally good by both politicians and artists (Langsted 2000; Nielsen 2006; Reyseng 2007). According to cultural sociologist Peter Duelund, Nordic cultural policy development 1960–2003 can be described in different phases where cultural policy has fluctuated from a «democratization of culture» where cultural policy became a part of the welfare state, to an «economical and political colonization» where the link between art and the private sector was strengthened. The national aspect of cultural policy was put forward, particularly in Denmark, to strengthen a national identity in a globalized and individualized world (Duelund 2008:14–18). The Nordic cultural model is not a model per se, and has been criticized by researchers. A relevant way to re-open the case of the Nordic cultural model is to study how the common traits of Scandinavian cultural policy are challenged from the radical right.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Two main problem representations have been identified: that national and Scandinavian/Nordic culture is threatened by multiculturalism and, that freedom in cultural life is threatened by political governance. In the result presentation I also acknowledge the underlying assumptions and presuppositions of the problem representations and what effects the suggestions create.

Multiculturalism as a threat against national culture

When the parties discuss cultural policy in their party programs they have one thing in common: that national culture is under threat from multiculturalism and foreign cultures/religions. In their program from 2009 DF argues that:

The way of life that we chose in Denmark is outstanding. It is conditioned by our culture, and it can’t survive in a small country if we allow mass immigration from foreign religions and foreign cultures. A multicultural society is a society without coherence and cohesion, and that is why the multicultural societies of this world are marked by open conflict and a lack of solidarity. (DF 2009)5

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5. All quotes have been translated by the author.
Here the multicultural society is explicitly named as a threat to the Danish nation. SD also dissociates from multiculturalism in a motion to the parliament:

Swedish cultural policy has long been strongly characterized by multiculturalist ideology. According to this ideology a common national identity is evil and the Swedish national culture should not have any special position in relation to foreign cultures from other parts of the world. (SD 2012/13:Kr296:3)

The critique of multiculturalism is very explicit in these two quotes where DF is accentuating the Danish nation while SD accuses the Swedish nation of allowing its cultural policy to be influenced by external threats. FrP, while milder in their written statements, is also against public funding for cultural expressions other than the national:

Fremskrittspartiet wishes to preserve Norwegian culture and cultural heritage. Integration of other cultures’ expressions should be naturally paced and not a public task. (FrP 2013b:80)

Unlike the other two parties FrP are more moderate in their cultural policy program. Freedom, voluntary participation and personal commitment are put forward as the ideal building blocks of cultural policy. However, in parliamentary debates on cultural policy, FrP expresses a different rationale for having a cultural policy than the other parties and they disavow Norway as a multicultural and diverse society (Bjørnset 2009:272).

Culture is defined in a broad sense by the parties, as a sum of the values of the people of a nation (FrP 2013a; SD 2011:14; DF 2002). The conception of culture outlined above is defined anthropologically and not confined to the realms of aesthetics but is used as a term collecting common habits, traits, values and beliefs; culture is defined as a closed unit (Fornäs 2012:19–20). Culture is treated as something static, bound to certain groups in society. But anthropological definition of culture is not confined to radical right ideology. The concept of cultural policy has been used in different ways in different historical settings. A cultural political struggle between different ideologies was, for example, how Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén described the ongoing war in 1915 (Klockar Linder 2014:7). This is similar to the cultural struggle of the nouvelle droite mentioned earlier in this article. The way that the radical right defines cultural policy is in opposition to current views on what cultural policy is and should be. But it is not a radical new idea; rather it builds upon a continuing tradition.

When multiculturalism and other cultures than the national are described or mentioned in the texts, it is in terms of a threat to national identity and culture. This threat connects to the idea of ethno-pluralism, a notion which suggests that to in order to preserve the national characters of different peoples they
have to be kept separate to avoid cultural extinction (Rydgren 2013:3). This is made explicit by SD who argues that: «The diverse cultures are humanity’s joint heritage and should be acknowledged and protected for everybody’s benefit» (SD 2011:15). Integration should therefore not be prioritized or supported through public means. Culture is rendered a political object where the demarcation between desirable and undesirable cultural expressions are implicitly easy to discern. The view of culture in the programs can be described as a *politicization of culture* where protection of national identity and culture is the underlying priority for all political action.

In their programs SD and DF express the notion that the Scandinavian countries are more developed and democratic due to their superior culture. SD states:

> It is obviously so that some cultures are better than others in guarding basic human rights, creating democracy and material welfare, good healthcare, high education and equality before the law. This, in our eyes, makes these cultures better than those that do not want to or cannot create good living conditions for the people living in them. (SD 2011:15)

An effect of this problem representation is that living conditions are connected to a nation’s culture, rather than to material conditions, what Mahmood Mamdani calls a *culturalization of politics*, where the essence of different cultures makes different politics possible. This reduces political motivations and causes and describes them as the direct result of different cultural essences (Brown 2006:20; Mandani 2004:17). Instead of discussing social or economic factors that affect politics, culture becomes the only explanation of difference. Culture, implicitly understood as modernity rather than capitalism or democracy is presented as the dividing line between civilized nations and terrorism (Mamdani 2004:18). Thus, human rights are depoliticized and the concept of culture, rather than of political struggle, is described as the root of different countries’ notions of welfare. The notion of culture expressed in the texts is far from the idea of culture in an aesthetic sense, and emphasizes that cultural policy for SD is stems from anthropological interpretation of culture. One of the most prioritized issues for all three parties is the protection of cultural heritage. In its text SD claims that cultural heritage has an intrinsic value and is important because it «is working as a binding element» (SD 2011:15). In consequence, SD suggests tax reduction for individuals and organizations who support the maintenance of material and immaterial cultural heritage (2012/13:Kr296:4) and FrP (FrP 2013a:80). Cultural heritage, and art in a more narrow cultural definition, also has political potential as a carrier of national culture and symbolism. This is seen, for example, in the suggestions of DF to promote architecture characterized by Danish culture, to reintroduce morgensang (morning song) in schools, and to promote Danish film and theatre with a majority of Danish actors and Danish as the primary language (DF 2009).
FrP expresses the least hostile views on immigrants and other cultures in their text. However, in a document on immigration policy presented in the autumn, 2013 they frame limitations on the right to asylum as «cultural sustainability» (Fremskrittspartiets Bærekraftutvalg 2013). This is an example of how cultural policy can be closely connected to other policy areas. As cultural policy researcher, Tobias Harding points out, the most urgent cultural policy issues may not labelled as such (Harding 2011).6 This exemplifies an obvious limitation of this study; implicit cultural policy may say more about the full extent of how radical right parties use the concept of culture. I will elaborate on this in the discussion part of the article.

In the party programs culture is described as the root of a nation’s success in establishing good living conditions for its citizens. Discursively, this assumption suggests that change through political means in countries is impossible. This effect is achieved by defining culture broadly, and relating it to cultural struggle. This is not unique for the radical right parties, but is rather part of an ongoing tradition of defining cultural policy to meet different ends. Nevertheless, the radical right standpoint is in contrast to the Nordic cultural model, which is based on a more limited definition of cultural policy as a policy for the arts art where artist organisations have had great influence in policy making. The conventional aesthetic concept of high culture figures in the background when other types of cultural expression are forwarded.

**Public funding as a threat to freedom**

The second problem representation identified in the material concerns the two key words freedom and public funding. They are closely connected since public financing is described by the parties in terms of a lack of freedom. Public funding is described as a kind of governance where the individual is steered to «government approved» cultural expressions. FrP argues that the individual should be in the foreground when state aid is being distributed: «public financing should be for the benefit of all the people and ensure the largest possible audience.» (FrP 2013a:82) This is also acknowledged by DF: «Citizens should decide themselves what activities to support in the future» (DF 2002). Freedom is, in these examples, closely connected to finance, since both FrP and DF are critical to public aid to culture. Public aid is closely connected to political governance. FrP concludes that cultural life should be free from governance and control and DF argues that sponsors and advertising should be the main supporters of cultural life (DF 2002). FrP focuses on culture as an industry and the importance of economic growth (FrP 2013:82). Public funding is thereby not seen as an unquestionable benefit, but is viewed with suspicion. This is in conflict to a current norm in the cultural policy discourse where the public funding of cultural policy is almost always considered a moral good by the professional field, which in turn makes it difficult for researchers to criticize cultural projects (Stavrum 2013; Røyseng 2007).

6. He exemplifies with integration policy and copyright issues.
Local culture and participation is described as an important cultural policy issue by DF and FrP (DF 2009; FrP 2013a:79). The effects of these proposals are to put focus on citizens. It is up to them to choose what kind of culture should be supported, and to pay for it. Otherwise, it is implied, the state will decide for the people. Still, as seen in the section before, citizenship is restricted; people from «foreign» cultures and/or religions are on one side of a binary where «tax payers» are on the other. This can also be related to the «Nordic cultural model» where the welfare aspect is strong. In the formation of Scandinavian cultural policy, welfare politics are strongly emphasized; culture (i.e bourgeois culture) should be accessible to the people regardless of level of education or geographical location. Still, another strategy for cultural policy in the Scandinavian countries has been the so-called «cultural democracy», where a broader concept of culture and focus on participation and local initiatives are promoted (Duelund 2008). The three parties studied are for an individualization of cultural policy, which can also be related to current tendencies in cultural policy to promote participation (Jancovich & Bianchini 2013). It should be noted that it is freedom to choose (with one’s wallet) rather than participation per se that is promoted by the parties.

Freedom, or autonomy, is a key concept in cultural policy. Institutional autonomy refers to the possibility for public institutions to make their own decisions without being steered by external powers. In cultural policy this can be described as ‘the arm’s length principle’, the government allocates funds but does not have jurisdiction over content by delegating quality evaluations to civil servants or experts. Individual autonomy for citizens entails government’s neutrality to the choices of the individual by refraining to advocate one view of culture or cultural activity over others (Blomgren 2012:523). This is consistent with the suggestions from the parties, at least concerning culture in an aesthetic sense. As seen in the former section the parties oppose public funding of culture that is not perceived as part of the national.

SD does not explicitly refer to how art should be financed in their programs; they refer only to what kinds of culture that should not be state funded. Still, in a motion to the government SD claims that the direct and indirect subvention of «contemporary culture and individual cultural producers» could be decreased because Swedish cultural producers are capable «/…/ of taking responsibility for the provision and distribution of their works» (SD 2012/13:Kr296). A decrease in state support is also suggested by FrP and DF (FrP 2013b; DF 2009). Decreasing state support could be suggested for many reasons; an individualist standpoint is that the artist should be autonomous in relation to the state. From an economic liberalism viewpoint, the market should be allowed to work without intervention from the state (Bennich-Björkman 1991). Both these viewpoints can be discerned in the party programs of DF and FrP.

Freedom or autonomy in the programs is mostly concerned with the citizen’s freedom of choice. This is particularly true for Frp, which has a tag line «for folk flest» which can be translated as «for the common people». SD stands out
in their discussion of what kind of culture, in a broad sense, should be supported through the means of public funding: «The fact that a certain phenomenon is Swedish is not enough for it to be worthy of protection, it must also be compatible with the constructive and democratic development of society» (SD 2011:14). This moral value imposed on cultural expression stands out, even though links can be drawn to DF’s criticism of the vulgarization of language in public service (DF 2009). A presupposition of SD’s statement is that it is necessary for state funded culture to meet certain standards set up by the government. The effect is to limit the autonomy of culture and art. This last example makes visible an underlying conflict in the material. On the one hand it is assumed that the individual citizen should choose freely what cultural expression to be part of and, on the other hand an assumption that it should be possible for the government to strongly control the content of state funded cultural expressions. This conflict can be refined somewhat when taking into account the kind of culture that deserves support and the kind which could survive on its own merits in the discourse. Culture in an aesthetic sense is the kind of cultural expression that the parties argue should have limited funding. Culture in an anthropological sense, like cultural heritage or language, should, in the parties’ views, be more controlled and funded through public means.

CONCLUSIONS

The protection of national identity, cultural heritage, limitations on public finance and the abolishment of support for multiculturalism are the most important issues for the parties and common to all of them. Their definition of culture is first and foremost anthropological, and the majority of their suggestions concern culture in a broad sense rather than the arts and conditions for artists. Based on these results it can be stated that the Scandinavian radical right does have a cultural policy according to the party programs. The parties’ core issues are similar, but differences between issues and rhetoric can be discerned.

To conclude this article I will first give an overview of differences between the parties before elaborating on their underlying assumptions. DF is more concerned with language than SD and FrP. SD expresses itself most aggressively on the topic of multiculturalism, they also take a stance against cultural relativism and cultural imperialism. Finally, they are the only party explicitly arguing that all publically funded culture should be constructive and democratic, thereby eroding the arm’s length principle. FrP is the least harsh in their description of multiculturalism and its effect on the nations. However, as noted, they express anti-immigration views through referring to cultural sustainability in documents that are not explicitly cultural policy documents. This reveals a limitation to the study, further research should encompass implicit cultural policy in its definition. Even though the ideological backgrounds of the parties differ, there are more similarities than differences between the parties’ views on cultural policy. The different backgrounds do not seem to matter.
This raises the question if the same pattern can be seen in comparative studies with other radical right parties in Europe, or even in the world.

The views on cultural policy expressed by the radical right are to some extent similar to the recent, general development of cultural policy, including strengthening ties between culture and the private sector, as well as an increased focus on nationalism (Duelund 2008:17–18). More research is needed to determine whether this tendency is a result of the radical right influence on prevailing cultural policy or if it is a sign of radical right cultural policy adapting to current trends. Still, the main problem representations expressed in the party programs of the radical right regarding multiculturalism and state funding are not supported by the «Nordic cultural model». An obvious difference is that conditions for artists are seldom mentioned by the radical right. This is in contrast to the, at least historical, corporatist traits of the Nordic cultural model where artist organisations have influenced policy making (Bennich-Björkman 1991; Mangset 2011). It is, perhaps, time to re-open the case of the Nordic cultural model. Many questions need to be answered in the coming years; how do supporters of the existing cultural policies in the Scandinavian countries react to the emergence of a radical right cultural policy? How will the relations between interest organizations be affected?

Although a discourse on local culture and participation can be identified most suggestions by the parties concern a retraction of public funding for culture. The conflict inherent in advocating freedom from public funding while at the same time commending an increased steering of cultural expressions is left unproblematised. This could be due to the different definitions of culture. Funding of the arts should be limited in their view, but funding of national culture in a broader sense is encouraged. Another assumption is the culturalization of politics, where issues such as limitations in education and healthcare are attributed to the cultural essences prevailing in different countries. Culture thus becomes a highly political object.

The Scandinavian radical right legitimizes their cultural policy with the idea of a national culture that needs to be protected from other cultures to avoid the risk of, in the most extreme case, extinction. The promotion of national culture is seen as the solution to different societal issues by these political parties. But at the same time some cultural expressions are seen as threats that need to be controlled through public means. There is an underlying conflict or contradiction in the radical right cultural policy discourse. While the parties argue that the political governance of culture needs to be limited, they are, at the same time, deeply involved in how cultural expressions and cultural life should be defined.

Two different ideas of how cultural policy should be conducted become visible through the identification of problematizing practices in the material: one is economic liberal and refers to the desire of a cultural life with limited political involvement concerning the arts; the other is nationalist and argues in its most
extreme form for increased governance of cultural expressions in a broad sense. The last standpoint is prominent in the statements of SD, but can also be discerned in DF’s criticism of the «vulgarization» of language in Danish public service. A version of the problematizing practice that all parties agree on is that national culture should be promoted and that other cultures’ expressions should not be publicly funded. The cultural policy suggested by the Scandinavian radical right parties is in explicit opposition to the «Nordic cultural model». The problem representations put forward by the radical right have not gained hegemony in the Scandinavian countries yet. As stated in the introduction to this article, there are tendencies towards a depolitization in the national, public cultural policies’ of the Scandinavian countries. By shedding light on the radical right cultural policy agenda it may be possible to politicize the cultural policy discourse overall and acknowledge the ideological dimension of cultural policy. There are tendencies towards change in welfare based cultural policy, but whether or not change entails adaption or resistance to the problematizations of radical right ideology can only be addressed through more research.

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REFERENCES


MATERIAL


