A Bildung perspective on the Norwegian arts education model

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ABSTRACT
Norwegian cultural policy is characterized by an ideology of democratization, which has prompted an alliance between the culture and education sectors, aiming to render arts and culture available to every child. The concept of Bildung is prominent in that respect, harbouring a potential in explaining the discourse behind much educational and cultural policy. Three educational schemes that together make up the Norwegian arts education model are described and analysed in a Bildung perspective: The music subject in the core curriculum, the culture schools, and the arts in school program, the Cultural Rucksack (DKS). There is a duality inherent in the Bildung concept, as it is used to describe both the individual process of self-cultivation; an individual journey, as well as the cultural content that is regarded necessary to fulfil this process. Using this duality as an analytical perspective, the article shows that the arts education model is characterized by both sides of the Bildung concept, in addition to a critical perspective evident in the use of the concept – the anti-instrumentalist perspective.

Keywords
educational and cultural policy | bildung | Norway | music subject | culture schools | the cultural rucksack | arts education

INTRODUCTION
Democratization of culture is a prominent ideology of cultural policy in Norway. Intertwined with the idea that culture and social welfare are intrinsically linked, culture is regarded a welfare benefit that all citizens should enjoy, regardless of social background and location (Mangset og Hylland 2017; Meis-
The state is considered responsible for providing culture and for ensuring people’s access to culture, both as participants and consumers. The key words are inclusion and participation, as reflected in the white paper *Culture, inclusion and participation* (Meld. St. 10, 2011) sustaining the goal to promote equal access to and participation in culture.²

The political incentive to invest in culture in Norway was reflected in the strategy known as *The Culture Initiative* program (Kulturløftet), which was launched by the red-green coalition in 2004. One of the goals set was that by 2014 one percent of the fiscal budget should be spent on culture. During this period, the budget allocation to the cultural sector increased considerably. Nevertheless, research reveals that there are still social differences in Norway in terms of cultural participation, associated with factors such as education, occupation, age, location and gender (Mangset 2012; Nilsen and Lind 2013; Bjørnsen, Lind and Hauge 2012; Danielsen 2006; Rosenlund 1998). Children and youth have been identified as an important target group for the national cultural policy, partly in order to reduce these differences. Through initiatives to promote culture locally, and involving children and youth, the goal is to build a “cultural foundation”, aimed at improving the prospects of cultural diversity and participation in society at large. This has prompted an alliance between the culture and education sectors in Norway, in which a specific *educational and cultural policy*, aimed at promoting arts and culture to all children through school, has developed.

A concept frequently used in association with the educational and cultural policy for children in Scandinavia is *Bildung*, in Norwegian translated as *dannelse* or *danning*. With roots in German 19th century Enlightenment philosophy, Bildung has become a central term in Norway both within an education and curriculum context and in wider discourses about people’s enlightenment, personal growth and democratic behaviour. Consequently, it is also a highly relevant concept for cultural policy and cultural policy studies (cf. Belfiore and Bennett 2008, p. 115ff). Bjørnsen and Woddis (forthcoming) suggest that the
Bildung concept harbours a great potential in explaining the discourse behind much educational and cultural policy. In this article, we will discuss Norwegian educational and cultural policy in light of this concept, and by focusing on three educational schemes to promote culture. These schemes constitute what we will refer to as the Norwegian arts education model: 1) the music subject in the core curriculum, 2) municipal culture schools, and 3) the arts in school program known as The Cultural Rucksack (Den kulturelle skolesekken, abbreviated DKS).

The music subject and DKS can be found in all public schools in Norway. Culture schools are established in every municipality in Norway, but in contrast to the two other schemes, the culture schools are non-compulsory and mainly organized as an after-school activity. The culture schools are embedded in a relatively long tradition of participation-driven music and arts activities, whereas DKS focus on exposure to music and arts.3

All three schemes contain different music and arts subjects. We will primarily focus on music education. Music is arguably the most prevalent and widely dispersed kind of artistic expression, and numerous studies have been preoccupied with the alleged positive social impact of both exposure and participation in music (Hallam 2010; Bjørnsen and Woddis, forthcoming). The question addressed in the article is: In what way can the three arts education schemes, what we refer to as the Norwegian arts education model, be analysed as Bildung? As a part of this, we also address what kind of aesthetic4 considerations that are integral to this model, and reflect on the dichotomy of the intrinsic vs. the instrumental value of the arts within the arts education model.

These questions will be addressed through a descriptive idea analysis. The empirical research is based on an examination of policies, reports, and other grey literature dealing with music and arts education in Norway, as well as a review of previous research. According to Bratberg (2014), descriptive idea analysis involves a filtration of ideas and a consideration of the context within which the ideas are embedded. We have aimed to follow this kind of analytical strategy. The texts reviewed were selected based on a snowball sampling procedure. We started with the core authoritative texts describing the different

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3. It is worth mentioning that other state-supported initiatives to promote cultural access and participation among children and youth exist in Norway. Important in that respect is the Art Boost project (Kunstløftet), established by the Arts Council in 2008, and designed to improve the quality of art produced for children and adolescents and to raise the profile of art for children and adolescents in the public eye, through granting support to diverse cultural activities (see Haugsevje, Heian and Hylland 2015). The state also supports initiatives in the civil sector, such as school orchestras and school concerts, and offers specific funding initiatives in order to promote culture among children in poor families. Apart from the state-funded initiatives, children participate in a wide array of cultural activities, organized locally and on a voluntary basis, such as theatre groups, choirs, bands etc.

4. Aesthetics generally denotes processes of ascribing artistic value and beauty to certain objects. In this article, the concept of aesthetics is used with reference to the content and genres of the educational schemes.
schemes: The music curriculum in elementary school and lower secondary (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006), the framework plan for the Culture Schools (Norsk kulturskoleråd, 2014), and the two white papers about the Cultural Rucksack (Meld. St. 38 (2002–2003), Meld. St. 8 (2007–2008)). From there, we moved on to diverse grey literature, i.e. non-commercial and non-academic materials and research, such as government reports, policy statements etc., in order to obtain an insight into the political discourse related to the Norwegian arts education model. Most of these texts referred to academic research, whereof the majority was commissioned. As we followed these traces, we also searched for non-commissioned research publications on the Norwegian educational and cultural policy. We will start with an outline of the Norwegian cultural policy for children and youth. Next, we will attempt to unpack and operationalize the concept of Bildung before we move on to a presentation of the three educational art schemes and a discussion about their Bildung potential.

THE NORWEGIAN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Norwegian researchers tend to sort the Norwegian cultural policy after the Second World War into three distinct periods. During the post-war period, access to culture was high on the agenda. The country was recovering after the war and culture was regarded as an important component of the national recovery and re-building. According to Vestheim (1995) the goal was to spread the so-called high culture to the people, clearing the road for the establishment of important cultural institutions such as the National Touring Theatre (Riksteatret), Concerts Norway (Rikskonsertene), The Mobile Cinema (Bygdekinoen) and the National Touring Exhibitions (Riksutstillingene) (Mangset and Hyl-land 2017, p. 47ff). During the 1970s, a more decentralized cultural democracy ideal emerged where the attention was on participation. Fuelled by a fear that the increasing international cultural influence would impoverish the national cultural heritage, initiatives to increase cultural innovation and participation locally were taken. A wider concept of culture emerged, which included amateur art, sport and leisure. The attention turned towards the individual and the social effects of culture. Culture was just as much about active participation as it was about passive consumption. However, an instrumental turn in the cultural sector during the 1980s and 90s turned the focus towards a perception of external and instrumental effects of culture. Culture was increasingly justified as a social investment, allegedly having the potential to improve education and health, promote diversity and participation, as well as making economic profit⁵.

The Norwegian model of arts education developed in the intersection between the education and culture sectors. The seeds of the contemporary understanding of this policy in Norway can be traced to the establishment of Concerts Norway in 1968, which had an explicit ambition to make music of high quality available to as many people as possible across the country (Bjurström and Hyl-
land, forthcoming). School concerts was an important part of this strategy. Yet, the current educational and cultural policy is more commonly connected to the strategy entitled *Broen og den blå hesten* [The bridge and the blue horse] (KUF 1995), which was launched in 1995. The main purpose of this strategy was to develop a better integration between the education and culture sectors, through bringing “arts to the schools and schools to the art”. The strategy cleared the ground for the invention and implementation of The Cultural Rucksack in 2001, and it involved an increased attention towards professionalization of arts subjects in school (Breivik and Christophersen 2013).

Two political programs are relevant to address the current educational and cultural policy in Norway: The abovementioned *Culture Initiative* program, from the Ministry of Culture, and the educational reform known as *The Knowledge Promotion* reform (Kunnskapsloftet), from the Ministry of Education and Research (Meld. St. 30 (2003–2004)). One of the main goals in the Culture Initiative program, which was launched in 2004, was to allocate more financial resources to the culture sector. This was based on the understanding that the sector was impoverished and underfunded, and that increased resource allocation was needed to promote culture. Since then the culture sector has indeed flourished. The strategy was renewed in 2009 and in 2013. The renewal in 2009 involved an increased budget allocation to the culture schools and implicitly an increased acknowledgement of their role in society (Kulturskoleutvalget 2010).

The Knowledge Promotion Reform was effectuated in 2006 in the 10-year compulsory school and in upper secondary education and training. The reform set the development of so-called fundamental skills in the forefront, i.e. the ability to read and express oneself orally and in writing, to do arithmetic, and to make use of information and communication technology. Critics of the reform have argued that it disfavours practical and aesthetic subjects. This critique is accounted for in subsequent political strategies, such as *Skapende læring* [Creative learning] (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2007), stressing the importance of developing artistic, aesthetic and creative competency among children, students and employees in kindergartens, schools and universities. In the white paper *On the right course* (Meld. St. 20 (2012–2013)), a strengthening of the practical and aesthetic subjects in school is suggested, through capacity building and introduction of a free hour of culture school for children.

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5. One of the most important proponents of this perspective internationally is John Myerscough. His study of the Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain (1988), received massive interest. A central proponent of the perspective in Norway, is Olav Spilling, whose studies of the ripple effects of cultural investments became quite influential (e.g. Spilling 1991; Spilling and Ros 1988). Later, several researchers have warned against the instrumental perspective, claiming for instance that it can be (mis)used by the cultural establishment for the sake of justifying cultural investments (e.g. Hansen 1993, 1995; Peacock 1991; Puffelen 1996; Bille 2012; Røyseng 2011) Nevertheless, a large body of applied research has provided evidence of the so-called ripple effects of culture, e.g. for health (Baklien and Carlsson 2000), and educational attainment (Bamford 2006).
in grades 1 to 4. Moreover, in the renewal of the reform (Meld. St. 28, 2016),
it is suggested to further strengthen the status of practical and aesthetic subjects
and make them eligible for oral examination. The argument for a strengthening
of the practical and aesthetic subjects can be traced to the official report The
School of the Future (NOU 2015:8) preceding the renewal of the reform. The
authors of this report argue that practical and aesthetic subjects are necessary
for society at large and thus need to be stimulated early: “It cannot be expected
that pupils will choose practical and aesthetic subjects if they do not encounter
these subjects in primary and lower secondary school. Working life needs a
high number of competences which the practical and aesthetic subjects in
school offer” (ibid., 56). Yet, as the Arts Council points out in their statement
to the report, this insistence on the value of practical and aesthetic subjects is
not accompanied by increased time allocation.

In a report developed by an expert panel appointed by the Ministry of Culture
and the Ministry of Education and Research (Ekspertgruppe 2014) several
challenges in the educational and cultural policy are identified. The experts
argue for instance, that the art subjects in the core curriculum are marginalized,
that The Cultural Rucksack is too loosely anchored in the schools, and further-
more, that the recruitment to the culture schools is unintentionally selective
and thus contribute to reproducing social closures. Thus, despite the successful
promotion of culture in Norway during the last decade, there is reason to
question whether the educational and cultural policy succeeds in reaching its
objectives. This is underpinned by the fact that the cultural consumption pat-
terns seem remarkably stable, despite several decades of efforts to change
them (cf. Mangset 2012).

In a report on the scope, quality and challenges of arts education in Norway,
Anne Bamford (2012) points out that Norway has placed a particular focus on
improving the place of arts and culture in society, both in terms of access and
participation. Across political parties, promotion of arts and culture programs
has been given priority, and the general public appears to cherish the intrinsic
value of cultural activity, especially music. However, Bamford concludes that
“while much is laudable and worthy of praise, there are some areas that need
to be addressed to ensure that Norway gets value for its money, and the full
potential of previous investment can be realized” (ibid., 10).

The operative and analytically interesting concepts here, are “value for
money” and “realizing the full potential of investment”. These are, evidently,
concepts from the sphere of economy. But what kind of value, what kind of
investment and potential are we talking about? This taps into the controversy

6. Their statement was retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/horing--
nou-2015-8-fremtidens-skole.-formyelse-av-fag-og-kompetanser/id2422874/ (Jan 20,
2017)

7. Social closure is a concept that draws attention to how certain social groups maintain
their resources by the exclusion of others from their group based on different criteria
(e.g. income, educational level, profession etc).
about why states should invest in arts and culture. The arguments are many, but may be separated as two different legitimating narratives: That of culture’s intrinsic value and that of culture’s instrumental value.

The legitimating narrative of culture’s intrinsic value revolves primarily around the meaning of arts and culture for its own value and beauty, and thereby for personal growth and aesthetic experience. Within this narrative, culture has a value in itself and does not need additional justification (Hylland 2009). According to Røyseng (2007, 2012), the narrative of culture’s intrinsic value is a doxa that permeates the culture policy discourse in Norway. Hylland (2009) points out that the current use of the concept limits the general political discourse on cultural policy. In line with this, Stavrum (2013) argues that in the discourse about arts and culture targeted at children and youth a double “goodness” can be identified, where both investments in culture and in children are regarded as good per se, rendering the climate for critical perspectives poor.

The narrative of culture’s instrumental value, on the other hand, must be seen in light of the social investment paradigm, which assumes an input – outcome logic. Within this perspective, culture is valuable because of the added value it generates. The argument presupposes that when people are encouraged to develop their creativity they will become more innovative, obtain better educational attainment, and become more socially aware, which in turn will develop society and generate income. The UNESCO-initiated report about global arts in education programs, The Wow Factor (Bamford 2006), has been particularly influential. The report suggests that education in the arts and through the arts have both educational and societal benefits. In the Norwegian context this narrative is, as we have seen, first and foremost focused on promotion of social welfare and inclusion through democratization of culture, yet it is also linked to the current global education paradigm (e.g. PISA), in which education is regarded as a tool to enhance human productivity and the nation state’s global competitiveness. Sjøberg (2014) refers to this paradigm as the “PISA-syndrome”, characterized by an appreciation of global competitiveness at the cost of Bildung in a broader sense.

However, the dichotomy of instrumental vs. intrinsic legitimating narratives is not necessarily an analytically productive one. As shown by Hylland (2009), the importance of the intrinsic value of culture is emphasized by cultural politicians across the entire political spectrum, none offering a clear definition of what it actually means. It remains an unquestioned and unquestionable rationale for public support of culture. From another perspective, Vestheim points to

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8. A large school of thought has taken part in this controversy, and many different perspectives have been launched and debated. It falls out of the scope of this article to give an overview of all these debates.

9. The program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international survey aimed at evaluating education systems worldwide by testing the skills of 15 y.o. students in reading, science and mathematics. It is worth noting that PISA does not measure achievements in any arts subject.
the fact that, strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as an intrinsic cultural policy, and that all varieties of cultural policy are instrumental in some sense (Vestheim 2008). This is due to the nature of politics, where any political action needs to be legitimized by its beneficial consequences, and because a political rhetoric focusing upon the value of the mere existence of art for art’s sake, uncommunicated and unexperienced, therefore is absurd. Rather than distinguishing between intrinsic and instrumental cultural policy, Vestheim contends that all kinds of cultural policy are in essence instrumental, and that it is simply a question of different kinds of instrumentality. He distinguishes between aesthetic and educational instrumentality, economic instrumentality, social instrumentality, and politically mobilizing instrumentality, in accordance with the kind of arguments put forward to support the public financing of culture. In line with Sven-Eric Liedman (Liedman 1997), who separates between soft and hard enlightenment, we might see the main difference in this respect as a difference between soft and hard instrumentalism: should arts and music education first and foremost benefit the individual, or should it benefit society through economic growth and increased levels of innovation and competitiveness? Put differently, what role does Bildung, categorized e.g. by Vestheim’s aesthetic and educational instrumentality, play? We will look more closely at the Bildung concept in the following.

**Bildung**

The German word *Bildung* has come to denote a combination of self-cultivation and learning. It describes a “total growth process”, as stated by Swales: “*Bildung* becomes, then, a total growth process, a diffused *Werden*, or becoming, involving something more intangible than the acquirement of a finite number of lessons” (quoted in Belfiore and Bennett 2008, p. 116. Emphasis in original). Bildung is associated with individual development and growth, as well as with democratization and social responsibility (e.g. Løvlie 2009).

The concept captures the ideas of cultivation, development and education that were put forward by German thinkers like Humboldt and Herder. The analytical relevance of the term here is that it connotes directly to the two sectors fusing the arts education schemes – aesthetics and (formal) education. As is shown by e.g. Pauline von Bonsdorff, the Bildung concept has potential to analytically relate aesthetics and education (Bonsdorff 2012, see also Hylland and Bjurstrøm, forthcoming). The educational Bildung potential of aesthetics, was acknowledged and theorized already at the end of the 18th century, and developed into a cornerstone for Western cultural policy:

On the basis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment, Schiller (2000) already at the end of the eighteenth century laid the ground for a pedagogical and Bildung-oriented view on aesthetics that would resonate throughout the following centuries with his On the Aesthetic Education of Man. Originating from Kant and Schiller theoretically, and cross-fertilised by thoughts of Goethe, Herder, Humboldt and other German thinkers of the Romantic era,
views on aesthetics and Bildung became a corner stone of cultural policy in the democratic states of the twentieth century, promoting a minority culture: the culture of the, in most cases very small, minority that appreciated the fine arts and presumably were able to make artistic judgments. (Hylland and Bjurström, forthcoming).

According to Øyvind Varkøy (2010) the Bildung concept has a double meaning. It is both a process and the result of a process; both an individual, uninhibited process and the cultural content of such a process; both subject- and object-oriented. In Varkøy’s terminology, this duality of the Bildung concept is captured in two perspectives. On the one hand there is the perspective of cultural heritage, where Bildung is about acquiring a certain valuable cultural content, e.g. valued as part of a cultural canon. On the other hand, there is the perspective or metaphor of Bildung as an individual journey.

Understood as a journey, Bildung is about venturing into the unknown, about dialogue and conversation. Bildung is understood as a process, and not as a product, and it is essentially social. Von Bonsdorff (2012) has a similar perspective. Building on Kant’s concept of aesthetic judgment, she argues accordingly that aesthetics set the mind in play, and that art cultivates sociability and communication, which is fundamental to Bildung. It is the autonomy of aesthetic judgment that makes it particularly relevant in a Bildung perspective. Although our perceptions of aesthetics, e.g. beauty and value, are not entirely subjective (we are all situated), they belong to a realm of action and freedom where novel ideas can rise, according to von Bonsdorff. Hence, “Bildung implies a readiness for a fundamental renewal of culture rather than merely the passing on of inherited values” (p. 135). In other words, it is the role of art and aesthetics as a creative space where new ideas and insights can emerge, that harbours a Bildung potential.

Furthermore, the two fundamental, dual perspectives in the Bildung concept, opens up for a third perspective, according to Varkøy, namely Bildung used as a concept to criticize instrumentalism. This perspective on Bildung directs criticism towards educational means-end thinking, according to Varkøy (2010). The question of interest is what kind of knowledge that counts as Bildung: the technical or theoretical knowledge of the expert or the practical wisdom of the fellow citizen? The first may be an educated person, but the latter may be a more biled, cultured, person. Varkøy refers to the English pedagogical philosopher Peters (1980), who argues that the knowledge of history, literature, and other arts subjects, as well as independent thinking, is more meaningful than learning specific skills, which does not require a high level of reflection. In this perspective, Bildung exceeds education, in a traditional sense, and has the formation of the self, rather than the formation of skills, as its objective.

According to Oliver Bennett the dominant rationale behind governmental culture policy in many European democracies since the nineteenth century, including Norway, has been what he has termed “the civilising mission” (Bennett 1995, 1997; Bjørnsen 2009). This concept relates to an understanding that cul-
ture has the capacity to transform people who come in contact with it, either through exposure or experience, and that this transformation has societal impacts. Bjørnsen (2009) argues that the Bildung concept is relevant in order to understand this civilizing mission, and furthermore, that it has been a key rationale for Norwegian cultural policy. He claims that the Bildung discourse in the Norwegian cultural policy context can be perceived in two different, yet not mutually exclusive, ways: The subject-approach regards Bildung primarily as self-cultivation, and defines culture widely, taking a relative approach to quality and emphasizing participation and decentralization. The object-approach, on the other hand, relies on the expertise of a strong cultural leadership and emphasizes the “professional arts”. The weight of each of these approaches varies within the discourse itself, and across time, according to Bjørnsen.

How then, can the Bildung concept be applied analytically, and reflected against the prosaic nature of political documents and educational strategies? The remaining part of this article is an attempt to do just that. The close reading of the documents has been done looking for different versions of Bildung arguments in favour of educational cultural policy, focusing primarily on the perspectives presented by Varkøy (2010).

THE NORWEGIAN ARTS EDUCATION MODEL: THREE SCHEMES

In the presentation of the educational art schemes, we will first focus on their purpose as presented in the relevant authoritative texts. These include the music curriculum, applicable to all schools, the framework plan for the culture schools, and two white papers which concerns DKS. Next, we will turn to research on how the schemes are understood and implemented. As Stavrum (2013) points out, a large part of the research on arts and culture for children and youth in Norway are evaluations or applied research commissioned by agents with certain political interest. Illustratively, whereas little research on the music curriculum and the culture schools has been conducted, the implementation of the innovative DKS-scheme has been accompanied by extensive research attention. Though acknowledging the need for drawing awareness to the lack of free and critical research in the sector, our discussion will still be influenced by the prevalence of applied perspectives as we are building on the existing body of research.

The music subject in the core curriculum

Music is in the core curriculum described as a source to self-awareness and interpersonal understanding across time, space and culture (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006). As a subject in school, music is supposed to provide a foundation

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10. This presumably reflects a general trend in the research on cultural policy and activities, where national initiatives have gained considerably more academic research attention than municipal or regional initiatives. A similar claim is made by Jenny Johannisson (1996).
for experiencing, reflecting upon, understanding and participating in musical expressions. Music is perceived to harbour both aesthetic and existential experiences. The learning objectives focus on three areas: performing music (e.g. singing, dancing and playing instruments), listening to music (including music history and verbalization) and composing music (including improvisation). The subject is described as foundational for the development of creativity and artistic skills. In particular, it is stated in the curriculum that music can contribute to the development of positive identity through the promotion of cultural belonging, tolerance and respect for other cultures, and that music transmits cultural values locally, nationally and internationally. The curriculum therefore emphasizes genre plurality and musical diversity.

Espeland et al. (2013) claim that practical and aesthetic subjects in the Norwegian primary school tend to be neglected in the current educational debate. Indeed, arts appear to have status as “cosy” subjects (Bamford 2012), in contrast to prioritized, skill-formative subjects such as reading, writing, arithmetic and ICT. Focusing specifically on the music subject, Grønsdal and Espeland (2013) claim that it lacks the same academic requirements as the prioritized school subjects and becomes a subject that is used to “spice up” the school day. According to the authors, there is a discrepancy between the formal intentions and practice, rendering music “a reduced subject”. For the youngest children in particular, the subject is devoted to songs and games, leaving little room for more demanding activities such as composing music. Similarly, a national report on the possibilities and challenges of arts in education reveals that music education appears to be oriented towards activities, such as singing, playing instruments and listening to music, and fails to address a holistic thematic content involving reflection and understanding of music in a broader sense (Sæbø 2009). Grønsdal and Espeland warn that music education risks becoming an inconsistent subject, where the “cosy arts”- attitude is favoured. This critique was also addressed in the official report The School of the Future raising concerns about the balance between the performing aspects of the subject and the experience and knowledge dimensions of the subject (NOU 2015:8, p. 56). There is, here within, a risk of losing the aesthetic dimensions of the subject out of sight. Intertwined with this issue is the concern about teachers’ competency in teaching music. Lagerstrøm, Moafi and Revold (2014) find that only three out of five music teachers have relevant formal music education. In other art subjects the rate of qualified teachers is even lower. Acknowledging the importance of practical and aesthetic subjects in primary school, a team evaluating the reform of teacher education expresses concern for the poor recruitment of qualified teachers within these subjects (Følgegruppe 2014). As a consequence, Birkeland and his team of experts, in their advisory report to the Ministers of Culture and Education respectively, argue for a strengthening of the formal competency of teachers in music and arts (Ekspertgruppe 2014).

Despite the Bildung ideal of music education, where music is described as a source to self-awareness and interpersonal understanding across time, space and culture, the research reveals that a focus on skill-formation seems to be
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was not established until 1997, when it was integrated in the Education Act. The first framework plan for the culture schools came in 2003, but it was not until the implementation of the Culture Act in 2007 that the state’s responsibility for the culture policy, including the culture schools, was firmly established (Kulturskoleutvalget 2010). Today, children and youth in every municipality in Norway have, in principle, access to a culture school. Culture school attendance normally requires a fee, yet the municipalities are responsible for offering places at reduced cost for children in poor families and places for children with special needs. This is crucial in order to fulfill the vision articulated in the strategy referred to as the culture school initiative: “Culture schools for everyone” (Kulturskoleutvalget 2010; Norsk kulturskoleråd 2013). In spite of the ambition of universality, the culture schools do not yet have capacity to offer all children a place immediately. In the school year 2015–16 there were more than 120 000 places in the culture schools throughout the country, and more than 30 000 pupils were enlisted waiting for a place.12

Despite their prevalent role in the national culture strategy, there exists surprisingly little research on the culture schools, a concern that has been raised by several agents (Kulturskoleutvalget 2010; Bjørnsen 2012; Kleppe 2013). We will primarily focus on two reports, both commissioned in order to address culture school attendance in light of the vision of “culture school for everyone”. Exploring the correlation between culture school attendance and household economy, Gustavsen and Hjelmbrekke (2010) found that costs appear to be an important explanation for low culture school attendance in some social groups. The report raised awareness about how recruitment to the culture school was influenced by family resources. In a subsequent evaluation of culture school attendance in the five biggest cities in Norway, Bjørnsen (2012) found that there were differences in attendance that correlated with the parents’ educational background. Quite surprisingly, however, price was not reported as a crucial reason for non-attendance. Neither was there evidence to support that children with immigrant backgrounds had lower attendance.13 On the other hand, the evaluation revealed that the awareness about the culture schools was low, especially among the population that is not ethnic Norwegian middleclass. Bjørnsen concludes that it is the culture schools as brand that is the main challenge if the goal is to realize the vision of “culture school for everyone”.

The two reports thus draw attention to the culture schools’ failure to reach its vision. It is the ideology of democratization of culture that is at stake. From a


13. In a report on culture school attendance among the immigrant population, Kleppe (2013) found that costs did represent a barrier to enrolment. Furthermore, the report points out that many parents in the immigrant population do not value the educational offer of the culture schools, or regard it as a transmitter of Norwegian culture, perceived to have little relevance to their personal needs and wishes.
Bildung perspective, an interesting question is whether the schools contribute to maintaining social closures, and thus fail to promote Bildung irrespective of social class. Perhaps typical of the Norwegian case, where the ideology of equality is prominent, there is far less focus on the culture schools as engines for development of talent and individual skills, in spite of the fact that this is an articulated goal. Similarly, aesthetic dimensions are left out of the discourse. We know for instance little about whether the culture schools successfully contribute to realizing children’s allegedly inherent potential for song and music in a way that produces professional musicians, and whether they are encouraged to explore their musicality as a “venture into the unknown” (cf. Varkøy 2010).

The Cultural Rucksack (DKS)

The Cultural Rucksack (DKS) is a national program for arts and culture aimed at all students in Norwegian primary and secondary schools. The program is intended to ensure that all children have an opportunity to experience professional artistic and cultural productions of a wide variety. These productions take place during school hours several times a year, and are supplementary to the art subjects in the core curriculum. The aim is to incorporate cultural encounters naturally into the school day and the different single subject learning objectives. It is assumed that universal access to high quality culture will enable students to develop an understanding of a variety of artistic and cultural expressions, which can in turn be integrated into the learning objectives of the schools (Meld. St. 8, (2007–2008); Christophersen, Breivik, Homme and Rykkja 2015). An important objective of the program is to offer professional cultural productions of high quality, either having artists visiting schools or having students visiting cultural arenas outside of school, or a combination of the two. The program thus involves a political collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Research. It is mainly funded by the surplus from Norsk Tipping, the state-owned gaming company, which supplies funding for both cultural and sports activities.

DKS was launched in 2001. Although similar programs dedicated to fusing art and education exist in other countries, DKS is according to Bamford “one of the largest programs in the world that aims to bring professional arts and culture to children” (Bamford 2012, 33). As a national program, encompassing all children and all schools throughout the country, it is indeed unique in the world (Christophersen, Breivik, Homme and Rykkja 2015). DKS has been described as an indisputable success, from which more than 800 000 children a year benefit (Stavrum 2013; Christophersen 2015). And this success has not taken place without the attention of researchers. A number of evaluation reports, scientific articles, master- and doctoral theses about DKS have been published (e.g. Heian, Haugseveje and Hylland 2016; Collard 2014; Breivik and Christophersen 2013; Bjørnsen 2009; Digranes 2009; Haukelien and Kleppe 2009; Hylland, Kleppe and Berge 2009; Dalaaker 2007; Evjen 2005; Borgen and Brandt 2006; Selmer-Olsen 2005; Aslaksen, Borgen and Kjørholt 2003; Lidén
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children’s descriptions of activities as fun is not understood as a token of quality.\textsuperscript{14}

Quality is an issue Bjørnsen is also concerned with. In his doctoral thesis he sets out to assess the extent to which the civilising mission has been and still is a key rationale behind Norwegian cultural policy. Bildung is a key concept in this respect, and Bjørnsen pays particular attention to Bildung in DKS. He argues that “the [DKS]-scheme rests on an understanding that what is needed for children to achieve Bildung and dannelse is an object-oriented approach, based primarily on being exposed to what is being referred to as the ‘professional’ arts, where participation and what in some initial policy-papers was being described as children and young people’s ‘own culture’ are given less emphasis. Instead, it is argued that children need to gain ‘cultural competence’, within which rests a Bildung potential in itself, and that such competence is necessary to reap the Bildung potential inherent in the ‘professional’ arts” (Bjørnsen 2009, 290). DKS thus primarily represents culture for children, implicitly transmitting certain specific cultural preferences, and fails to emphasize culture with and by children.\textsuperscript{15} Bjørnsen claims that DKS represents “a certain ‘official’ culture” (ibid., 293) which is contrasted to the commercial cultural industries that children relate to on an everyday basis. The institutionalized discourse of Bildung in the context of DKS thus favours the professional arts, and brands commercial culture as a kind of anti-Bildung, meaning in principle that it lacks potential to enlighten and inspire. Bjørnsen (2012) questions whether a state-subsidized dissemination of “high” culture involves a dismissal of children and parents’ own cultural competence and ability to make personal choices. The question of aesthetical content is immanent in this respect. This is a point Meisingset, Matre and Horrigmo (2012) pick up in their critique of the social-democratic cultural-political agenda. The authors argue that the democratization ideology involves an attempt to mainstream and disseminate a certain cultural capital, associated with “high culture”. Moreover, advocating a liberal stance, they hold that the close involvement of the state in the cultural sector is problematic as it risks inhibiting a free,

\textsuperscript{14} This is a topic also addressed by Beth Juncker (2012). She points out that children deal with the aesthetic-symbic dimension, or fictions, every day, through play and different self-absorbing activities. This dimension arises through a variety of cultural patterns and traditions, rooted in our body, in which aesthetic tools, such as rhymes, rhythms, movements, figures, words, narrative patterns, metrical patterns, patterns of play, are crucial. Juncker argues that although the Nordic countries have recognized the need for change in their cultural policies, they have failed to develop a cultural policy resting on expressive conditions.

\textsuperscript{15} A common expression used about the interaction between children and culture is the term “child culture”. According to Balling (2012) this term has a three-fold meaning. It concerns culture for, with and by children. Culture for children is produced by adults with children as recipients. It incorporates both traditional high-culture (theatre, literature, music) and commercial mass culture. Culture with children refers to cultural expressions in which children are involved, but where the frames are defined by adults, e.g. children’s theatre. Culture by children, on the other hand, is used with reference to spontaneous and ephemeral cultural expressions that are often manifested through play. The claim that DKS primarily represents culture for children is ours.
professional cultural debate and development. It is perhaps illustrative of the prominent role of DKS in the discourse about educational cultural policy (or lack thereof), that this critique is not directed at the culture schools or the art subjects in the core curriculum where research and debate is scarce.

THE NORWEGIAN ARTS EDUCATION MODEL – A BILDUNG PROJECT?

The Norwegian arts education model is immersed in good intentions. It is evident in the texts studied that music and arts are cherished both for their intrinsic and soft instrumentalist value, and that this perception of the value of arts and culture is firmly established in the Bildung discourse. Furthermore, there seems to be a widespread recognition of children’s innate musical and artistic competence. Together, these two perceptions of culture and children serve as justification for the national educational and cultural policy, in a way that renders it almost immune to critique. Nevertheless, the review of research on the three educational art schemes in Norway have raised some different, yet overlapping, concerns. The music subject in the core curriculum is criticized for its lack of consistency, in-depth knowledge and professionalism. The culture schools fail to reach the vision of being “for everyone”, and risk maintaining social closures. Furthermore, there has been little or no research attention devoted to talent-development in the culture schools, despite the fact that this is an articulated objective. The extensive research on DKS raises questions about the definition of quality. Moreover, it has revealed that the entanglement of culture and education raises some problematic issues. Although DKS brings arts and music into a school setting, the artistic and musical exposure does not seem to be sufficiently integrated into an educational setting. Moreover, as e.g. Bjørnsen (2009) points out, DKS seems to reproduce a certain kind of culture, at the cost of more immediate cultural expressions in children’s everyday lives. Taken together, there are primarily two critical issues contradicting the intentions of the model: The culture does not reach everyone, and the quality (understood as fulfilling both professional artistic and educational purposes) is not good enough. In other words, there seems to be a certain mismatch between intentions and practice.

How can we interpret these critical issues in a Bildung perspective, bearing in mind Varkøy’s perspectives on the concept as 1) cultural content/heritage/canon, 2) an individual journey and 3) a critical, anti-instrumental term (Varkøy 2010).

First, let us be reminded of the prominence of the ideology of democracy in the Norwegian cultural policy. The arts education model is firmly established within this ideology, and in line with this it assumes a certain instrumentalism: Culture is promoted in schools for the cause of democratization and promotion of equality. Yet, the instrumental argument within this rationale is, as we have seen, primarily concerned about evoking social awareness and democratic
behaviour, and less concerned about the human productivity argument which characterizes the PISA rhetoric. That cultural exposure and participation may have human productivity effects is just implicitly assumed, albeit taken into consideration in the authoritative texts. It is first and foremost the soft instrumental, self-educating, Bildung value of music and arts that is promoted in the arts education model, tacitly assuming that it has an innate or intrinsic aesthetic value. This is a rationale that accentuates the present and the child as human being, and where experience, involvement and discovery is emphasized, at the cost of assessment and rote learning. Typical of what Bamford calls “cosy art”, it is less directed at the future and the child as human becoming.16 Thus, within this perspective we can identify a double goodness where investment in both children and culture is perceived as indisputably “good”, and does not need further justification (cf. Stavrum 2013). In other words, cultural investment in children is, at least in rhetoric, predominantly justified from a moral stance, emphasizing children’s natural attraction towards music and arts, and not from a hard instrumental stance, where cultural investment would be justified for its’ economic ripple effects. This can explain why educational schemes such as DKS can survive despite the lack of documented “results”.

Yet, in spite of the acknowledgement of culture’s educational value and the emphasis on the child as being – ideas that together express a certain subject-oriented Bildung-agenda with deep roots – this agenda arguably does not seem to be echoed in the approaches to learning in any of the schemes, except perhaps the culture schools. Importantly in that respect, concrete aesthetic dimensions are surprisingly absent. The mere exposure to music and the “cosy arts”-approach to teaching that appear to characterize music education within the school setting, fail to address questions of aesthetic content and leave little room for critical reflection about how and what kind of culture children should experience – questions which would arguably evoke a discussion about quality and cultural diversity. In general, there has been little political controversy about what kind of artistic expressions that should be in focus. What is “professional art” and “culture of high quality”? As Bjørnsen (2009) reminds us, there seems to be a certain cultural capital transmitted through DKS, which does not include for instance commercial culture, and which may appear distant from the everyday lives of children. The scheme thus cultivates a particular cultural taste, and could as such be interpreted to uphold a certain, perhaps provoking, perspective of Bildung, i.e. that of cultural heritage or canonized cultural content (cf. Varkøy 2010). Seen in this light, the Norwegian arts edu-

16. The being/becoming dualism developed within the sociology of childhood and refers to two different perceptions of children (Qvortrup 1994; Uprichard 2008). The perspective of the child as human being sees childhood as a particular life phase in its own right. The focus is on children’s rights and innate competencies. The perspective of the child as human becoming indicates that childhood is a life phase of learning and preparation, and focuses on the importance of preparing the child for adulthood. These two notions of children and childhood are not necessarily contradictory. They complement each other, interact and are mutually dependent (Uprichard 2008). Yet the discourse of the “being” child accentuates the present, and the discourse of the “becoming” child emphasizes the future.
cation model can indeed be regarded as a civilizing mission (cf. Bennett 1995, 1997), emphasizing equal participation and exposure to music and arts, and being aimed at cultivating individuals with a sense of democracy and social responsibility, across social categories. Yet, without explicitly addressing the aesthetic content of this mission, it is difficult to come to terms with what kind of aesthetic valuation that is integral to this dominant cultural taste. More importantly, the civilizing mission involves a risk of leaving the autonomy of the aesthetic judgement out of sight. It is worth questioning, as does Meisingset, Matre and Horrigmo (2012) and Bjørnsen (2012), whether the commitment to equal access and participation takes place at the cost of professionalism and quality, leaving aesthetic considerations out of view. Or more specifically, as Christophersen (2015) puts it, whether it is possible to maintain a democratic participant-oriented music education while also focusing on individual aesthetic experiences of music. Important in this respect is the question of the autonomy of the aesthetic judgment, as described by von Bonsdorff (2012). If Bildung is understood as a journey fuelled by individual aesthetic experiences, these concerns imply a questioning of how successful the arts education model is as a Bildung project.

Naturally, the analysis of Bildung in the Norwegian arts education model is as ambiguous as the Bildung concept itself. The understanding and operationalization of Bildung in this model contains both sides of the fundamental duality of the Bildung concept – the processual and the content-oriented; the journey and the canon. At the same time, this opens up the critical potential of the concept. Seen as a whole, the three parts of the arts education model give evidence of a critique of hard instrumentalism and a strong belief in arts’ intrinsic potential to enlighten, though traces of soft instrumentalism are clearly present. As acknowledged by Varkøy, the arts education model need to tackle the challenge of combining the view that arts have the capacity to foster individual, uninhibited journeys, with the view that not all art has an equal capacity to do just that.

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