

A REVIEW OF NORWEGIAN FESTIVAL RESEARCH, POLICY AND FUNDING MECHANISMS

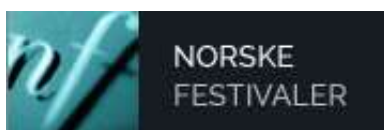
Content

Anders Rykkja.....	1
Jorid Vaagland.....	1
Lillehammer, Norway, September 2014	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Status on Norwegian festival research.	3
Suggestions for further research.....	9
3. Festival research in a European perspective: Questions, challenges and conclusions	10
The FESTudy project	10
The survey study	11
The qualitative studies in each country	12
FESTudy’s main conclusions	12
The Norwegian reality.....	15
The role of public authorities in cultural policy	15
The arm’s length principle.....	17
Transparency	20
Interest organisations’ influence.....	20
The public festival support system	22
Two “classes” of festivals	23
The current situation for festivals of different genres	26
4. The current status quo for the Norwegian funding system.....	28
Challenges	28
5. Recommendations for a future festival subvention scheme	29
Literature:	33

Anders Rykkja

Jorid Vaagland

Lillehammer, Norway, September 2014





This document is part of project "Norway-Bulgarian partnership for transparent and efficient public support of the cultural sector in Bulgaria" implemented with the financial support of the NGO Programme in Bulgaria under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009 - 2014. All responsibility for the content of this document lies with the "Bulgarian Festivals Association" and under no circumstances can be assumed that this document reflects the official opinion of the Operator of the NGO Programme in Bulgaria under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009 - 2014. "

www.ngogrants.bg

1. Introduction

Certain of today's festivals in Norway date back to the 1920s, but it was not before the 1960s that festivals became a significant phenomenon. During this decade, several big festivals were established and played an important role in the Norwegian cultural life. Several of them are still among the most important ones in the festival landscape. Especially after 1990 one talks about a real festival boom in Norway. Many festivals started up, an equal number disappearing after few years. The festival situation today is, therefore, one of both stability and instability - old and traditional festivals as well as many festivals coming up one year and disappearing after short time.

In 2010, 75% of Norway's municipalities reported having hosted at least one festival during the year, which means festivals take place all over the country and in small and remote places as well as in bigger cities (Storstad 2010).

There are several public grants for festivals. Some of them are set up to support festivals belonging to specific genres. The largest scheme, financially speaking, is the node grant, which supports a small number of festivals with national position and national responsibility for their genre. The nodes receive much more public support than other festivals and are subject to an exhaustive system of reporting and control. The public support to the nodes, as

well as to other festivals and kinds of cultural activities, comes primarily from the state government level, but the local and regional levels are also obliged to contribute.

The development of festival research more or less follows the development in the festival field. Until the 1990s, there appeared certain studies on individual festivals, mostly with a historical perspective and intending to describe how the festivals' content and position developed until its present position. The dramatic rise in number of festivals and festival audiences during the last decades has inspired more researchers to study and analyse the festival phenomenon. Certain studies consider the relations between festivals and public government at all (3) levels. The role of public support is an important aspect of this, but certain studies also address other aspects of these relations, like municipalities affording administrative resources and technical equipment to all or certain local festivals.

2. Status on Norwegian festival research.

In August 2011, the Ministry of Culture set up an external research and development committee led by Professor Jan Grund from the Oslo and Akershus University College. The committee published their report ("Knowledge based cultural policy") in May 2012.

Two key issues affecting cultural research in general were highlighted, primarily production capacity and secondly access to financing for carrying out research projects. These issues are interrelated. On general level Grund describes the national research field as "...consisting of many small and fragmented clusters, that are at the same time underfinanced and lacking organisations" (Grund et.al 2012:30). The report primarily points out that the number of commissioned reports and specialist research programmes are too few to maintain a large decentralised infrastructure of researchers and institutions. Additionally, the report focused on the issue that many of the most active researchers are or will shortly be retiring. Regarding recruitment, a general lack of resources for basic research leads to little recruitment through the Universities PHD programmes (Grund et.al, 2012).

Norwegian research into festivals is predominantly qualitative, as for cultural research in general (Grund et.al, 2012). Significant number of research projects are either privately funded by festival organisers, interested in reports investigating specific aspects, frequently related to economic impact. Public research programmes with specifically defined themes, such as rural or regional development, provide funding for other research projects.

In a book edited by Professor Aksel Tjora at the Norwegian University of Technology and Science (NTNU) he describes festival research as a discipline that: “...moves in a landscape between a genuine curiosity-driven academic research and a more pragmatic directed questioning about the festivals role in generating new local industrial and economic growth”. Tjora divides festival research into two main categories – one linked to theoretical or empirical studies within the humanities and social sciences, the other public or privately commissioned reports where the importance of the event as part of the regional or local experience economy is studied (Tjora 2013, ed: 12.).

The sociological approach focuses on the audience experience, the cultural impact of the event, its position in a local, regional and national context, the roles and motivations of the organisers, festival events as a vehicle to strengthen local identity and finally the sense of community (communion) resulting from taking part in the festival experience. Festivals’ effects on local identity take the perspectives of both audiences; people involved in the festival organisation and the general local community. Audience studies document the importance of good programming and the cultural and social experiences of the festival audience, often focusing on festivals as “liminoid” phenomena offering experiences that are contrastive to daily life and having aspects of mythical and symbolic images and stories (Wollan 2009).

The second category of research consists of impact studies and research that tries to document the economic impact of the event (and other cultural activities) on the local and regional economy. These studies often have their focus on effects on local economy, identity, reputation and recommendation. Not least, measuring growth in other sectors of the local economy generated by festivals has been the intention of many studies. They consider, for instance, to what degree local industries benefit from the festival organisation and activities, and festival visitors’ use of money in local shops, restaurants, hotels etc. Some of those studies conclude that festivals generate - or have potentials to generate – enormous effects on local economy (Aronsen, 2006, Dahle et.al 2013a). Other researchers (Ericsson 2003, Ringstad 2005, Ericsson and Onshus 2008, Bille 2009, Vareide and Kobro 2012) have been cautious or at times directly reluctant to accept the figures. Their main criticism is that the methodology yields at best inaccurate or flawed computation of the economic impact. One of their many arguments against the conclusions of these reports are that calculations are inflated and built on models that do not clearly divide the expenditure of the local and extra-local

inhabitants visiting the event. This could potentially be the result of a substantial number of such studies being commissioned by the event organisers themselves. The reason for this is a need to justify the events' position in a local or regional economic context. The facts, figures and arguments can subsequently be used as a tool to attract additional public funding and generate more private sponsorship income. Therefore, many of these studies are highly contested.

Public grants, sponsorships and ticket sales are the most important sources of income for festival events. The importance of public support and the fact that there are several grants specific for festivals, means that festivals are also a theme within general cultural policy research. The fact that certain public grants are quite controversial within the festival field makes this an interesting theme of research. Curiously enough, few studies have specifically looked at the relative importance of public funding on various levels. In their response to the Ministry of Culture's report on the state of culture in Norway Festivals analysed figures reported by their member festivals. The conclusion was that festivals receiving consistent and predictable levels of public funding granted for multiple years produced better financial results and more diverse and eclectic programming (Norske Festivaler, 2013).

Other fields of research are organisational studies. Organisation studies analyse leadership, work cooperation and use of voluntaries. Voluntary workers are crucial to any festival in Norway, and their motivation, roles and experiences are among the themes most often studied, as well as leadership and cooperation. Many studies document that festivals may strengthen local pride and local identity among those directly involved in the festival, either as organizers or as audiences. The fact that festivals often make use of arenas and competences that are not always recognized by the local community, also affects local identity. Not least, successful festivals tend to strengthen inhabitants' pride of their local community. Media coverage is crucial to this recommendation. Strengthened local pride due to festival activities is considered important for general local well-being and for hampering emigration, which is an everlasting threat to small communities today. Certain studies conclude (without really documenting it) that successful festivals may make the local community more attractive for visitors, not only during the festival period. Studies on general trends in contemporary Norwegian cultural life are also relevant, for example the fact that time-limited projects is becoming a common form of organisation, also in cultural life, and the fact that public support is also more and more given to projects instead of institutions.

There are also many other studies of cultural policy that are relevant for festivals without having these as their specific themes, for example studies on “the arm’s length distance” and its consequences and effects. The growing number of freelance artists is also an aspect of this general development, and should be investigated further.

This is why we found it difficult to make use of literature that clearly says something about the national festival landscape in general and the public funding mechanisms and their impact for all festivals specifically. As will be evidenced, a large number of reports are based on case studies where the focus of the paper, article or report is on individual or clusters of selected events.

We have yet to see an ambitious programme with emphasis on the national dimension. In those national reports that exist there is a need to pull data or information from reports that often have festivals as part of a different research focus (e.g. event management, the regional and municipal cultural infrastructure, Official Norwegian Reports, White Papers, travel and tourism, experience economy).

The main challenge for the objective of this report is the lack of plurality or more precisely national or genre based approach to research projects. That said there are a few notable exceptions. A survey of Norwegian film festivals, with extensive data on their funding and financing, organisational structure, audience development and geographical reach was recently published (Dahle et.al, 2013b). Another comprehensive texts on the national festival landscape across genres is a chapter in the report “Kommunal kultursektor i endring” (“Changes in the municipal cultural sector”) written by Oddveig Storstad (Storstad 2010) and commissioned by the Arts Council of Norway. The research Centre at Diakonhjemmet Høgskole and the Centre for rural research produced the report. It consists of three case studies (Aagedal et al. 2009) and a survey report (Storstad, 2010). Statistical data is from a survey questionnaire sent to all 428 municipalities in Norway with a response rate of 73 %, or 318 municipalities (Storstad, 2010: 10). The aim of conducting the survey was to acquire sufficient data to evaluate and describe the situation and report on shifts or changes in cultural life and production in Norway’s municipalities.

One section of the questionnaire concerned festivals. Respondents were asked the number of large cultural events and festivals taking place in their municipalities on yearly basis. A total numbers of 765 festival events and 63 spel (historical site specific plays) were reported . The

distribution per genre was as follows:

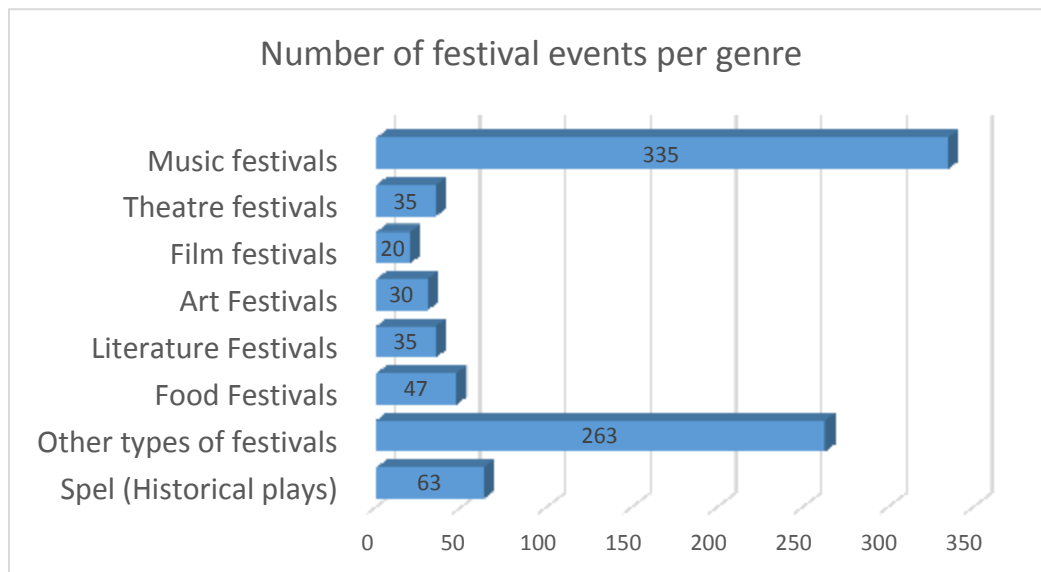


Figure 1 – Festival events promoted in Norway’s municipalities in 2007 distributed per genre (Storstad, 2010:90)

Storstad reported that 570 of these events, 74 %, could qualify as being “cultural festivals”, meaning that it was easy to assess that the event was based on an artistic program featuring one or multiple artistic genres.

Storstad estimated based on these figures that the total number of festival events taking place in Norway is at least 900 (Storstad 2010:90). The exact number is difficult to compute because what types of events are or could be labelled festivals is not given and different criteria are used to define what a festival is (Storstad 2010:89). Some of these events would therefore not qualify as being categorised as a festival if reviewed more closely. To exemplify, a large number of events reported by the respondents falls into the category of “other types of festivals”. It is probable that some of these could pass for being traditional village fairs or market days, where the cultural or artistic dimension of the event is secondary.

We do not know the exact number of festival events, but through the membership lists of some of the national network and interest organisations having arts and culture festivals as members we have a good idea of how many medium to large scale professionally organised festival events there are. The table below shows how many member festivals the formal organisations and informal networks (Sammenslutningen av litteraturfestivaler) have:

Name of organisation	Festival members	Main genre
Norske Festivaler	77	Multiple Genres
Norske Konsertarrangører	90	Rock
Norsk Jazzforum	20	Jazz
Sammenslutningen av litteraturfestivaler	57	Literature
FolkOrg	10	Folk- and World Music
Total	254	

Table 1 National network and interest organisations with festival members divided by name and genre

These members represent all of the node festivals¹ and most of the regionally and nationally important festival events in Norway. The organisations representing these festivals differ in their organisational forms. Many are formally organized, have employees, statutes and a board while some are semi-formal networks or platforms. In total, they would represent between 25 and 30 % of the festivals in the country.

Storstad's chapter does not provide detailed insight about the organisation behind these events (e.g. whether they have an artistic mission statement, are commercial ventures or non-profit entities). This is mainly due to methodology, as the informants providing survey data are employees working for the municipal administration reporting from an external point of view.

The methodology also opens for estimated conclusions. A third party (employees in the municipal administration) provided information concerning the level of permanent employment in the festival organisations (Storstad 2010:91). Storstad's evaluation of the data yields an estimated average of 0.3 permanent positions per festival or 270 in total (Storstad 2010: 92). The member festivals of Norway Festivals (53 out of 77 festivals) reported that they created the equivalent of 141 work-years, with a median estimated figure of 1.2 permanent positions per festival in 2012². Which of these conclusions is correct needs further research, with the right answer probably somewhere between 0.3 and 1.2. In any case this example illustrates how little precise the statistical knowledge on festivals is.

Therefore, and probably as expected, there are no complete register of Norwegian festival events. A side effect of not having exact figures is that it becomes possible to make claims, like the threat of "festivalisation" for the local cultural economy (NOU 2013:4).

Festivalisation has a number of potential definitions, but for the purpose of this report, we focus on the use of the term in the Official Norwegian Report. Here, festivalisation is used to describe how the public funding of the "local cultural infrastructure" in municipalities,

¹ Norway Festivals 13 of 16 Node Festivals, Norske Konsertarrangører 2 out of 16. The last Node for Visual Arts (Nordnorsk kunstsenter) is not a festival and is therefore not part of the list.

² Reported to SSB – Statistics Norway (national statistics office)

meaning the cultural schools, institutions and service providers offering access to education, participation and access to arts and culture (e.g. public libraries, schools, local promoters, cultural arenas, program offered by voluntary organisations) are threatened by increased expenditure on medium to large-scale cultural events.

It is difficult to assess to what extent or how seriously festivalisation threatens this local infrastructure. Primarily, because we do not have a clear definition of what is an artistic or cultural festival it is hard to define to what extent this festivalisation is a large public event with some artistic content or an arts festival with cultural content exclusively. Secondly, public funds allocated to finance these events are reported and classified to Statistics Norway (Norway's central institution for producing official statistics) along with figures on costs of building cultural venues, grants to organisations, support of activities, local festivities, cultural days and events based on voluntarism or run by voluntaries” (NOU 2013: 249 – 250). It is therefore difficult to assess the portion allocated to arts and culture festivals specifically. The classification only enable categorization between investments in infrastructure and a number of diverse cultural activities. The report is probably right on its assertion that public funding for events have risen in the last ten- year period. That said, we are in a similar position as with the abovementioned employment statistics. Finding out how and what type of festivalisation threatens local culture will require more investigation, as the statistical material opens for various interpretations.

Suggestions for further research.

Based on the previous examples it should come as no surprise that there is a need for good general statistics, preferably updated yearly, providing data on audience figures and development, funding of arts and culture festivals, artistic activities and performance, irrespective of genre. We suggest some research topics and projects for consideration:

“The Festivals’ role as employer in arts and culture.” A report investigating the type and scope of artistic employment / assignment (commissions, invitations to present a production, performance, concert, recital). Additionally, the type / scope of employment for cultural workers and producing the festival event (formal and informal qualifications and requirements organising relating to education and skills for cultural workers working with festivals, gender balance within the festival organisations in relation to positions of responsibility)

"Networking Europe: Festival Program and cooperation". Measure the effect of collaborative efforts to produce joint programming between festivals on national and or international level. What is the basis for these co-operations? Is it membership in festival networks and associations, genre-specific or artistically related, other criteria (economic) and motivation? Do festival directors collaborate artistically because they want or out of necessity?

"Travel and tourism – from nature to experience and activity based tourism". Measure effect and potential of the ongoing shift from the (in Norwegian context) traditional nature based tourism offering to provide an offer based on attending cultural events, taking part in activities or travel for different purposes.

"The effect and impact of public funding of festivals and large cultural events". Measure the impact of funding mechanisms, schemes and grant systems and their functionality and aptness for reaching measurable goals or targets in relation to cultural policy, creation of economic activity and new ventures and finally artistic quality and diversity. Developing definitions and theoretical framework to distinguish between arts and culture festivals and events.

3. Festival research in a European perspective: Questions, challenges and conclusions

The FESTudy project

A big European study on festivals was published in 2013 (Négrier et al 2013), called FESTudy. This is one of the biggest comparative festival studies ever made on international scale. The fact that Norway was among the countries participating in the project and that the project and its results are documented in English makes it relevant to take this study as a point of departure. We will therefore describe the intentions, methodology and participants of the FESTudy project, present the questions and challenges raised and the main conclusions of project, before describing in more details the Norwegian festival reality.

The FESTudy project included 390 events in nine countries, namely Belgium (for most purposes regarded as two countries, Flanders and Wallonia), Finland, France, Ireland, Norway, Quebec, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). Researchers from each country consisted the research group and carried out the research in their respective countries.

The broad and almost universal notion of “festival”, saying that it is “an event limited in time and space which develops a specific artistic project and takes place at regular intervals” was

found inaccurate to the contemporary festival field. For the purpose of the study one chose a more narrow definition of festivals, including only those having organized at least two seasons by 2011 and having scheduled at least five concerts over the course of a minimum of two days. It was also decided to retain only music festivals, but of all possible forms of music.

Two kinds of studies were made: One survey among festivals in all the countries, by help of an extensive questionnaire translated into each country's language, and qualitative studies in each country, to investigate the specific national festival landscapes and how their respective national frameworks influence festivals.

The survey study

Covering a certain degree of diversity in terms of aesthetic, economic, and political data for each country was an objective, but representativeness was not pursued, partly because it was unobtainable since some countries (like Norway) lack basic data about the festival sector.

Three hundred and ninety festivals answered the questionnaire, which consisted in four parts:

1. The "identity card" of the festival: status, locality, season, dates, age and audience. This section also investigates the festivals' strategic, artistic and cultural practices, how its program was developed and which sources of inspiration affected the programming. The festivals' evolvement over the previous four years were also investigated.
2. Public relations strategies, aimed at a thorough understanding of how the festivals use the press, new media technologies ranging from the Internet to smartphone applications, and their international position.
3. Human resources were studied based on five main axes: a) Employment practices in general (working hours, employee status (permanent, temporary, voluntary) and what kinds of work are performed, b) The gender ratio within each of the following branches of festival work: artistic, technical, administrative and human resources.
4. Finance, including cost structure, expenditure (related to artistic, technical, administrative and communication purposes) and revenues (festival-generated incomes, subsidies, patronage and other sources). It was also investigated how budgets have evolved since 2008, in order to measure the impact of the economic crisis on

festivals. Ticket price policy was also a theme in this section, including the number of free concerts, discounts for certain audience groups, festival passes etc.

The qualitative studies in each country

Three additional countries were included in the qualitative part of the study, namely Hungary, Italy and Great Britain. The researchers had a large degree of liberty to present the specificities of their specific countries and use their personal approaches. Three broad axes were identified for the studies: how festivals emerge and are consolidated in their country, the financial aid policies set into place, and the challenges festivals face today in an economic context strongly marked by the global crisis in public funding.

FESTudy's main conclusions

The FESTstudy project gave several insights, which will be summarized shortly in the following:

- 51 % of the festivals take place in July and August, with a higher proportion of summer festivals in countries with cold climate, like the Scandinavian countries. However, festival activity extends far beyond the summer months, with 21 % taking place in June or September and 28 % in the “winter” period. There are two main reasons for this level of activity beyond the summer season: 1) The large number of festivals during summer leads many organizers to schedule their activities during the months immediately before or after the summer. 2) Festivals often work with music schools and other local operators in the cultural sector, which are not operative during summer. Local authorities also often prefer festival activities beyond the summer season, to ensure that local residents can benefit from it.
- Festivals range from organisations closely connected to the public sphere to those that are run as commercial enterprises. Generally, they are more often privately run organisations than is the case for permanent cultural venues. Ticketing receipts are an important source of income, as well as other commercial or para-commercial activities (merchandizing, catering, marketing etc.). Also, private partnerships and sponsoring play a great role and are commonly relied upon. Nevertheless, festivals should rather be characterized as a mixed model of organisation, since public authorities contribute to the resources of the majority of festivals, seeing them as specific tools for achieving overarching policy objectives.

- The differences between festivals and permanent cultural venues are blurring, both in temporal and spatial characteristics. First, one out of every two festivals is not clearly limited in time, since they schedule events outside of the official dates of their season. Second, the same group of festivals has become less closely identified with its original artistic orientation, very often including other art forms in their programs. These strategies reflect a tendency long recognized by sociologists, namely that music audiences are characterized by a high degree of eclecticism. Openness to artistic diversification and variations on a theme may thus be seen as ways festivals try to apply to changing audiences.

- Three trends toward cooperation were identified involving festivals, namely: 1) Cooperation among festivals, to a larger degree by occasional exchanges (co-productions, exchanging information) than by structural links (definition of a common strategy, resource sharing). 2) Cooperation between a festival and local social or cultural bodies, i.e. community centres music schools, cultural venues and heritage sites. 3) Festival associations. These are mostly national associations, fairly young, often thematically organized, and originated in a specific music genre before possibly opening their membership to a wider musical field. Influencing public policy, lobbying and commissioning studies are among the objectives of such associations.

- Temporary employment is a characteristic of festivals. Only 5.4 % of the festival workers are employed throughout the year and the same proportion are employed only during the festival, many of them as volunteers. On the other hand, festivals are indeed professionalized enterprises with specialized personnel working in marketing and communications, adapting rapidly to new technologies.

- Four variables emerged as particularly influential on the dynamics guiding the festivals. The four variables are as follows: 1) *Musical genre* is the variable that, more than any other, explains the similarities and differences between festivals. It has significant influence on festival length (longer and less concentrated for classical music, shorter and more densely scheduled for rock), the number of concerts, and on employment (higher volunteer presence in rock and world music festivals). The most significant differences between genres are seen in income and expense structures. Classical music and jazz/blues festivals receive more financial support from the public sector than other genres, with rock/pop and world music are the genres that receive the less... Artistic and administrative expenses are higher for classical festivals than others, pop/rock having the lowest ones. Technical expenses show the opposite pattern, pop/rock having the highest expenses and classical the lowest ones. Audiences are also very different among different genres (especially

with respect to age), and ticketing policies are also very diverse. 2) *Budget levels* have a large impact on specific areas of the sector. For instance, the “richer” festivals are often scheduled during the peak summer period, and they use a broad array of communication tools, regardless of their musical genre. The relationship between budget size and attendance figures is less strict than one might expect. All things being equal, festivals with large budgets are also those with the lowest proportion of public funding, and the study concludes that the largest and the smallest festivals are those that have suffered the most from public funding costs. 3) *Festival age* is having a smaller field of influence, but the oldest festivals occupy the peak summer season while younger festivals schedule in the months immediately before or after. Further, the youngest festivals make the most use of digital communication technology and are more involved in cooperation with local authorities or with other festivals. This can partly be explained by younger age of the festival teams found in the younger festivals, but in fact, the age differences between the teams in different genres of festivals are smaller than one might think. 4) *The national variable* shed light on a number of dimensions. Especially when comparing Quebec and European countries, there are big differences of festival size as well as income structure. European festival organisations receive much less support from sponsors and are based on a mixed model, with public support as the most reliable one while private sources of income are regarded risky at best. Nationality also influences how festival teams are constituted, the existence of a specific legal status for artists and technicians, the ways in which organisations can lend personnel to staff a festival organisation, and how non-profit organisations are structured. National cultures also show themselves in the degree of volunteering practices. Finally, there are national particularities of cultural politics, which are summarized in three main points: A) The different levels of government are involved to varying degrees in the festival sector, a fact often linked to the size of the state or its constitutional system. B) There are differences with respect to the intensity of the public policies’ involvement in the festival sector and the degree to which there are clear criteria and control routines attached to the funding systems. C) How festivals are positioned within the array of publicly sponsored cultural offerings varies. Festival strategies are influenced by the presence or absence of cultural institutions or other cultural or sociocultural operators.

- In spite of national differences in festival politics, three areas of convergence are identified: 1) The central government, its Ministry of Culture and its specialized organs (for example the different Arts Councils found in different countries) only play a marginal role in subsidizing festivals, and these subsidies are becoming more and more selective and are disbursed to a relatively small number of festivals on the basis of their artistic quality and

influence. B) Local and regional authorities have taken on more importance. C) The amount of support granted to festivals by all governmental levels is relatively modest when compared to the public funding of cultural venues and institutions. Festivalisation as a growing phenomenon has not led to a shift of paradigm nor a change in policy tools of the cultural sector.

The Norwegian reality

The role of public authorities in cultural policy

Until after World War I, the state (the national level of public government) had a quite passive role in questions of culture, and the notion “cultural policy” was not used until the mid-1930s. Until then, one talked instead about “public education work”, which was the task of museums, theatres, the broadcast, libraries, cinemas and schools.

Unemployment and depression in the 1930s created a fear of “spiritual and moral depression” and a need for new policy of social welfare, which was seen as an important task for national authorities. Building down national differences and polarisations and securing a just distribution of social goods were important goals of this development, which was supported by all political parties.

As part of the welfare policy, an important concern was that of “filling the free time” with meaningful activities. This gave way to what may be seen as the start of public cultural policy with an “active state” in the lead. In the following years several reforms were made in the cultural field, laws were made that are still working, and from 1938 the Ministry of Church and Education got a separate Division for Culture. “Public education work” was still an important aspect, giving cultural policy a touch of science, with expert teams and interest organisations having a role in the planning of political assets. As will be described later, these are still important actors in Norwegian cultural policy.

During the first decades after World War II the ruling Labour Party pursued very strongly the principle “democratisation of high culture”. Culture was to be recognized as a “right” for all citizens, no matter where they lived and what was their social background.

One of the aims was to “bring art to the rural areas”. Several “ambulating” institutions were established for bringing culture (theatre, music, visual arts, opera and cinema) from the

central parts of the country to the rural areas. Stimulating local cultural activities was another priority for the same goal of democratisation of culture.

In the 1970s, there was an important change of course. The goal was still the same, namely democratisation, but new methods were chosen in order to reach it. The main tool was democratisation by upgrading cultural activities of formerly low status. People's own culture, their everyday culture and self-organized activities should be recognized more or less the same way as activities of traditionally "high" culture. The "new cultural policy" was inspired partly from ideas of cultural relativism found in Social Science, partly from populist trends in contemporary west wing political life³. There is also a clear relationship between these trends and the interest in "the culture of ordinary people", ("Culture is ordinary") found in the British Cultural Studies tradition in the 1970s and 80s (Mangset 2012a). In addition, the Norwegian "new cultural policy" was not at all specifically Norwegian. Similar ambitions of democratizing culture by widening the concept of culture and upgrading the local and popular culture were found in many countries during the same period of time (Girard 1973).

Making culture available to all regardless of social and geographical differences has been an important goal in Norwegian cultural policy more or less until today. In spite of this egalitarian policy and all assets established for the purpose that everyone should have access to culture, consumption of culture is still very unequally distributed in Norway (Mangset 2012a).

The "new cultural policy" of the 1970s also brought changes in public administration of culture. All counties and municipalities were obliged to build up their own administrative and political units to handle questions of cultural policy and distribute money to cultural activities (Mangset 1992, NOU 2013:4). Since the 1990s, however, the national level in cultural policy has been strengthened, and the regional and local levels have a less independent role.

At all the three levels of public administration (state, county and municipality) there are, thus, both administrative and political bodies in different sectors, also culture. The three levels have different tasks in each sector, but in certain fields they cooperate, for instance in matters of financing. This is the case in, among others, parts of the cultural sector like the festivals.

³ Among the important questions in Norwegian politics in the 1970s were the question of whether to become member or not in the European Community and how the qualities of rural life could be maintained and made stronger.

The government in power during the period 2005-2013 gave high priority to culture and implemented it in Cultural Initiative I and Cultural Initiative II. One of the goals stated that 1 per cent of the government budget should be allocated to culture by 2014. The national cultural budget rose about 50 per cent from 2005 to 2013 (NOU 2013:4). While the cultural budgets of certain other European countries have been reduced up to 30 per cent since 2008, Norway's cultural budget has increased 30 per cent during the same period.

The role of both national, regional and local levels of government in cultural policy is mainly financial. Cultural quality is the main criteria of national authorities, but to a certain degree also geographical distribution and ambitions of reaching children. Local and regional authorities often stress the potential effects on local and regional economy.

What all the three levels of government do *not* want to do is interfere into artistic decisions. The institutions or organisations of culture have exclusive rights to make such decisions. This brings us to the next important point in our description of Norwegian cultural policy.

The arm's length principle

In most Western European countries, the institutionalisation of cultural policy as a separate field of public politics has led to a more or less strong cultural administration at state level during the post-World War II-decades. This may be seen as part of the development of the welfare state and its goals of equal access to important services, including culture (i.e. democratisation of culture), and that of securing good living conditions for artists and cultural workers (Mangset 2012b). Establishment of a national cultural administration can also be seen as a response to a growing cost crisis in parts of the art production (cf. "Baumol's disease" within performing art) (Dahl and Helseth 2006).

To a varying degree, the national cultural administrations were organized according to "the arm's length principle". In literature on cultural policy this principle is often regarded as "the constitution" within this sector (Langsted 2010).

The arm's length principle is mainly a basis of organisation of national support to the arts, meaning that there ought to be an arm's length distance between politics and art. Political bodies ought not to interfere in decisions about art; politicians ought not to challenge artistic freedom (Mangset 2012b).

Historically, the arm's length principle can be seen as an indirect consequence of the fact that the field of arts was separated from other social fields in the 18th and 19th century and became a relatively autonomous social field. Arts had to survive on a market, the art field got its own institutions and organisations, and the free and autonomous artist appeared (Danbolt 1999).

When cultural policy was established as a new and autonomous field of public policy after WW II, the arm's length principle got the position of a kind of principle of defence for artistic autonomy (more or less clearly in different countries).

Mangset (2012b) states that the arm's length principle manifests itself in two different ways:

1) A specific decision making process, where political bodies do not interfere directly in specific and concrete artistic decisions. This means that politicians should not decide which pieces theatres should play, which films should be produced or which artists should receive scholarships. The qualitative decisions must be taken by the institutions themselves or by autonomous expert bodies or individuals. Those arguing most strongly for this principle state that it should apply on the relations between politics and arts on all fields of culture, i.e. both on the relation between the ministry of culture and arts institutions and on that between national authorities and individual artists. The fact that arts have been used for several political purposes is a historical basis for this principle.

2) The arm's length principle also refers to a specific way of supporting arts, where the power to distribute support to arts and artists is delegated from national authorities (parliament and ministry) to an "arts council" or "culture council", i.e. a council of persons with expertise on arts, at arm's length distance from the authorities mentioned. Such more or less autonomous bodies are found in many countries, especially the Anglophone ones and the Nordic ones. How big a proportion of the total national budget for culture is delegated to the Arts Council varies a lot from one country to the next.

The core of the arm's length principle is thus that individual review and evaluation of applications or requests for subventions and grants to fund artistic projects, organisations or institutions should be on artistic qualities. Persons/bodies with artistic competence give the final recommendations and make decisions, not the politicians.

There have been two occasions in recent years where the principle has been under discussion in Norway. These debates started in circumstances where it became unclear where to draw a line between political interference and the freedom to make decisions by those who had been delegated authority to make them. The first instance was the funding letter sent by the Ministry of Culture under our former government to organisations and institutions for 2012. The Ministry came under critique for clearly stating that:

“The cultural sector will play an important role in the selection and the celebration of the bicentenary anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution....Institutions that receive grants from the Ministry are asked to start planning projects and events in connection with the anniversary, in line with and as part of the institution’s activities” (Kulturdepartementet 2011: 60).

The proposal from the Ministry, taking part in celebrating the bicentenary of our constitution, was not the issue debated or criticized; after all, it was an important event for the nation. The reproach was more that there was an implicit obligation that the organisations and institutions should mark or commemorate the anniversary by having to incorporate it thematically or artistically in their productions. The artists, organisations and institutions criticising the proposal did so because they felt forced into an undesirable position where they had to contribute artistically in the celebration of a national event.

The second occasion occurred in the autumn 2013. The newly elected government introduced a number of cuts in the revised proposition for the annual Fiscal Budget for 2014 (Prop.1S Tillegg 1 2013 – 2014). Several of the posts reduced from the original budget draft were allocations for funding the Norwegian Cultural Fund, administered by The Arts Council and used for supporting projects and activities.

Concretely, the approved reductions were 16.5 million kroner (approx. 2.1 million Euros) for one-year projects and 10 million kroner (approx. 1.2 million Euros) for projects running multiple years (Finansdepartementet 2013: 49). Simultaneously, 7 out of the 10 million being cut from the funding originally allocated to multiple year support was granted to two choirs (The Edvard Grieg Choir and The National Soloist Choir) (Finansdepartementet 2013: 49). Besides representing an increase in their funding of 1.9 million kroner (The National Soloist Choir) and 0.6 million kroner (The Edvard Grieg Choir), this decision came in conflict with the arm’s length principle. Previously, the Arts Council administered funding of the two

choirs. The choirs were moved from a position where their financing depended on the Arts Council's qualitative assessment of artistic merits to a budget post used for funding national cultural institutions directly controlled and supervised by the Ministry of Culture.

Additionally, the Arts Council was given permission to decide on where to implement cuts, provided that priority was given to "*grant schemes for funding concert promoters, ensembles and publication of music recordings*" (Prop.1S 2013 – 2014: 49). The trade-off for less funding was effectively freedom to decide where to implement cuts whilst the Ministry decided the level of funding for two organisations previously under the Arts Council's system. Cuts or reductions in budgets will occur anywhere or anytime. That said it is not obvious distinguishing whether this was a competent artistic decision based on the arm's length principle or a political one.

A consequence of these cuts for those music festivals financed by the Arts Council is the risk of seeing their funding frozen or reduced for the first time in nearly ten years. It will also become more difficult to find money to support new festival events and projects.

These two examples show that there are instances where the lines between applying the arm's length principle and political interference are at best blurred

Transparency

Transparency is an important principle in Norwegian public life. The "Act relating to public access to documents in the public administration" or "Freedom of Information Act" gives every citizen the right to access State and municipal documents (and to be present at sittings of courts and elected assemblies). This means one may read all documents regarding the proceedings of concrete cases, like which festivals are supported, the amount of support given and the arguments leading to the decision. Every citizen also has the right to show one's opinion of the decisions made.

Interest organisations' influence

Norwegian cultural policy evolves partly as the result of input, suggestions and influence from a diverse range of NGO's, interest and artist organisations. This process of policy-making attributes these groups a semi-official role in the process of developing cultural policy. Researchers describes this as a form of corporatism within public government (Mangset, Heian, 2007) making it difficult to "*determine whether organisations have*

conquered the State decision apparatus, or whether the decision-making apparatus has conquered them” (Mangset, Heian, 2007 citing Østerud, 1995:82).

The Ministry of Culture regularly require these organisations to take part in hearings on forthcoming Official Norwegian Reports or White Papers. Either they participate in the process by providing written comments, as open-ended answers to forwarded documents, or giving answers to specific questions put forward in the enclosed hearing documents sent out by the Ministry. Key personnel from these organisations sit on the boards of public cultural institutions. They have chairs or positions in committees allocating grants or funding based on applications and sit on commissions preparing public enquiries for ministries and parliament. These past sentences provide a brief description of their formal role in relation to government and public authorities.

Their informal role, as for most unions or interest organisations, is their work as caretaker of their membership’s interest in a broader cultural and political framework. This role involves political lobbying for improving financial conditions through increases in budgets and funding of the arts as well as working to enhance social and cultural acceptance for their members work.

We may exemplify the relative importance of their informal role and abilities to instigate changes by examining the improvement in funding for music festivals in the popular music category for the period 2003 - 2013. In 2003, the Arts Council processed 76 funding applications from music festivals for an applied total amount of 42 million kroners (NRK, 2003). In 2013, 106 music festivals received 47.2 million kroners in funding. The total applied amount of the 154 applications was approximately 109 million kroners (Kulturrådet, 2012). How did that happen?

In the spring of 2004, seven organisations from the field of music came together as the coalition Samstemt! The platform was a direct invitation from cultural politicians that they should join forces and formulate common claims. The precursor for the formation was a discontent amongst this group for the way the Arts Council had been managing funding of jazz, blues and rock festivals in the preceding years after they took over this responsibility from Concerts Norway in 2000 (Ballade, 2001). They presented the Ministry of Culture with a number of suggestions to improve funding for popular music in the preparation of an Official Report of Norway on Culture (Ballade, 2004). Their note described festivals as “important arenas and venues for artists to perform” and “...contribute greatly to the

development of a curious audience, who will happily go to concerts on other occasions too”. The former cultural minister Trond Giske said the proposals overall were good enough to be “copied and pasted” directly into the final document (Brauer, 2005). In brief, the work of this initiative, which to this day still presents their proposals to the government in advance of the yearly annual Fiscal Budget, played a vital part in securing increase in grants and support to new types of music festivals through the Arts Council. Node festivals for blues (2007), rock (2008) and country music (2011) came into being in the following years.

The public festival support system

On the national level, there are several public grants either exclusive for festivals or having festivals as one of more target groups. Most of these grants are administered by the Art Council (ref. the arm’s length principle), but there is one important exception to this rule, namely the Node grant (described later) which is administered by the Ministry of Culture.

Public support to festivals, like many other cultural activities, is often given by all three levels of government. If state authorities (The Arts Council or the Ministry of Culture) find a festival worthy of national support, it is requested that local or regional authorities also contribute.

In some cases, local and regional authorities also support festivals that are not supported by the state authorities. Some restrict their support to festivals/events lasting two days or more, others say three days or more. Some support only festivals with non-commercial profile, others only festivals with primarily artistic programs. Yet others have high quality culture and/or innovative cultural expressions among their criteria. Often, counties and municipalities also emphasize (potential) effects for regional/local development, tourism or industry in their festival policy. Festivals involving children and youngsters in programming and planning, and having these as their target groups, may also be given priority.

Regional and local authorities may also give other kinds of support to festivals. For instance, they often make arenas, equipment and administrative services available for festivals, in some cases they are also involved in planning and technical organisation festivals (Vestby et al. 2012).

Many counties have specific grants for festivals, mostly for one year’s support, but festivals may also get support to specific projects. Some counties (also) have special agreements with certain festivals, guaranteeing them financial support for several (three to five) years.

During the decades that public festival grants have existed, certain things have evolved, among others regarding what kinds of festivals are supported. In the beginning, there were mainly festivals of classical music that were supported. In the years to come, other cultural styles were recognized as worthy of public support. As stated by certain researchers (i.e. Svein Bjørkås, in a lecture held at Lillehammer University College in 2009), the position of rhythmic music in cultural policy was very low until after 2000. The White Paper on rhythmic music and node status to a pop festival, both in 2008, are indications of the public recognition of this style. Likewise, when country music got its node festival in 2011, some saw this as the ultimate sign that hierarchies were disappearing in Norwegian cultural life.

Two “classes” of festivals

A very important characteristic of Norwegian festival policy is the division between two “classes” of festivals, namely 1) Node-festivals and 2) Other festivals. We describe their financing; discuss what roles they have, as well as the debate caused by this divided public festival policy.

Ninety-five percent of Norwegian festivals receive public support, but to very different degrees. As already described, public support may be given both from national, regional and local authorities, and quite often all the three levels cooperate in financing them. This does not mean that the level of support is always substantial, quite the contrary is often the case.

The great majority of festivals get their national support from grants administered by the Art Council (however, grants to film festivals and theatre festivals are administered by other national agencies). The national support given to these festivals ranges from two thousand to more than two hundred thousand euros a year, and normally it is given for only one year at a time. Several hundreds of festivals obtain such support every year. The rule described earlier, that national support presupposes support from municipal or regional authorities as well, is true here, but the proportions paid by each of them may vary.

Since 1995, several art institutions have been given national responsibility for promoting high-quality art. One category among these, called *knutepunkt* (nodes), is particularly relevant here, since it included some festivals from the start already and from 2007 it is a grant meant exclusively for festivals.

The Ministry of Culture administers the node grant. One would expect thorough investigations by an arm's length body of experts like the Art Council before any designation of a node festival. Paradoxically, it is often the minister him-/herself who assigns the node status after taking advice and discussing the choice with competent persons both within and outside the Ministry. The festivals themselves also actively promote their candidacy to the Ministry. The criteria used in selecting the nodes are not primarily artistic but rather stressing their economic and administrative qualifications, and geographical factors.

In 2014, there are 16 node festivals. 12 of them are categorized as music festivals, representing a broad spectre of styles, namely Classical (3), Folk and World music (2), Pop and rock (1), Jazz (1), Church music (1), Contemporary music (1), Indigenous music and culture (1), Blues (1) and Country (1). The last four nodes are of the following cultural styles: Film, Theatre, Visual Arts and Literature.

The node festivals have a government 'mission' consisting of the following nine points:

- local anchoring, i.e. having considerable local support, being a resource in local culture and mobilizing local volunteers
- festival activity every year, meant for a broad public, and whole year operative resources
- leading national position within its cultural field or genre, with a program of high artistic level
- coordinating and cooperative role among festivals of their genre
- national and international orientation, i.e. presenting artists of high national and international level
- innovative and development-oriented, i.e. taking part in developing their genre and doing experimental programming
- audience development, i.e. working strategically for promoting arts to broad audiences and reaching new audiences
- good resource management securing reaching of artistic, managerial and audience targets
- regional participation, i.e. local and regional public authorities must finance 40 per cent, national authorities 60 per cent (30 per cent-70 per cent in the three northernmost counties)

Node festivals are also expected to give activities not only during the short festival period but also throughout the year, in cooperation with other local/regional cultural actors.

The level of national support to each node festival is decided every year in the annual Fiscal Budget. The level varies very much among the nodes and there is normally an augmentation from one year to the next for all of them. The size of government support decides the amount of money to be given from local and regional authorities. The state support is 60 % of the total public support, while local and regional authorities must give the last 40%. (For nodes in the three northernmost counties, the state authorities give 70% and the local/regional ones 30%).

The level of support to the nodes is very much higher than what other festivals normally obtain. In 2011, for example, the 16 node festivals received in total about 11 million euros from the state (+ 7 million euros from their hosting local and regional authorities), while more than 200 other festivals received in total about 7 million euros from the state (+ 1.5 millions from local and regional authorities) (Vaagland 2013).

Node festivals are guaranteed public support for at least four years, but in fact, no festivals having obtained the node status have ever lost it. Some have had this status ever since 1995 while others obtained it just few years ago (the last one, a country festival, got its node status in 2011).

The fact that nodes obtain much higher economic support than most other festivals normally can obtain, and for a long time span, makes node status quite attractive among festivals. On the other hand, the same fact also trigs debate about the degree to which the nodes really fulfil the criteria attached to their status, e.g. if they really deserve their node status. For instance, in certain cases it is questioned if the nodes are really those having a leading national position within their genre. Some nodes are highly criticized for not cooperating enough with and not dividing their competence with other festivals of their genre. Also, nodes are accused of using their privileged economic position to offer higher artist fees than other festivals can afford, thus making it difficult for others to hire attractive artists.

The node grant is controversial also among municipalities and counties, since they must give 40% (30% in some regions) of the total public support to their nodes. Node support may take substantial parts of local and regional cultural budgets, and the fact that counties and

municipalities are not always involved in the decisions about the level of support, is felt as a threat to the principle of local and regional autonomy.

Since 2008, there have been done evaluations of certain of the nodes to decide if they were still worthy of node status. These evaluations are also highly debated and often criticized, for several reasons. First, they are carried out not by national or international « neutral » researchers with artistic competence in general or on the specific genres that the festivals evaluated represent, but by persons within the Art Council. Second, the evaluations investigate how other festivals of the same genre experience and mean about each node, i.e. how the nodes are valued by their competitors. The festivals asked are also invited to present themselves as potential coming nodes of their genres and argue for their suitability for this status. Until now, none of the nodes have lost their status because of the evaluations.

As described, the nodes differ from other festivals in several ways. We want to argue that they should be regarded as *cultural institutions rather than mere festival organisers*, due to the following characteristics already described: 1) The Ministry of Culture allocates Node status, not an arm's length body. 2) The state support to the nodes is allocated through the Fiscal Budget, not through project grants. 3) The nodes have permanent operative resources and are expected to have activities also outside of their main festival periods. 4) They are subject to quite strict and detailed reporting and control routines.

The current situation for festivals of different genres

Music – 112 music festivals received 47 million kroner (5,9 million Euros) in 2014. There has been a slight increase in the number of recipients and grants over the last three years, for example in 2011, 98 music festivals received 31,5 million kroner (3.8 million Euro). The main reason for this is the effect of the Cultural Initiative I and II, which has led to a general increase of the national budget for culture since 2005. There are 335 music festivals identified (Storstad 2010: 90), which means that nearly a third of the music festivals in Norway receives funding on national government level through the Arts Council.

Performing arts – There are rather few festivals of performing arts. Most of them grow out from the established parts of the non-institutionalized part of the field, and from programming scenes among these. There are several reasons for this. One is that permanent institutions with fixed financial support from public budgets are closed during summer, which is the main

seasons for festivals in Norway. Another reason is that the big institutions are not optimal frames for such kinds of projects that are often initiated by individual driving forces. Especially in the field of dance, festivals have an important place.

Performing arts festivals are important arenas for the growing number of performing artists without permanent positions. In fact, the performing arts is one of the fields with a large proportion of freelance artists.

Most performing arts festivals are regular events, organized yearly or every two years. Some of them are part of the core activities of bigger institutions, but more often they are additional activities to those normally programmed by the groups or organisations concerned. They are financed either by a mixture of money from the ordinary budget and additional support, or only by additional support. The festival support comes primarily from the state, but sometimes also from regional or local authorities as well as private sponsors. The artists participating come from all parts of Norway, very often also from abroad.

Film festivals – 31 film festivals received 12.1 million kroner in funding from Film & Kino in 2013 (Dahle et.al, 2013b:11). Film & Kino (“Movies & Cinema”) is an industry organisation whose members are Norwegian municipalities⁴ (cinema owners) and industry organisations from the cinema and video industries. Film & Kino administers the Norwegian Cinema & Film Fund (NCFE).

The Ministry of Culture transferred the responsibility for financing film festivals to Film & Kino in 2008 (Dahle et.al, 2013b:10). This way of organising the funding of arts and culture is a good example of the arm’s length principle in practice. We would argue that Film & Kino, as funder of film festivals, replicate the role of the Arts Council as arm’s length body for funding music and literature festivals through the Norwegian Culture Fund. There is one main difference and that is how these funds get their income. The Norwegian Culture Fund is financed through the Fiscal Budget while NCFE has its income from a levy on cinema tickets and taxation on private sales and rentals of movies. Film & Kino has 85 % of its annual income from NCFE (Dahle et.al, 2013b:9).

Film & Kino’s challenge is a drastic fall in NCFE’s income, most notably as a result of a decrease in sales tax income from DVD’s of 36 % from 2007 to 2012 ((Dahle et.al,

⁴ Most cinemas in Norway are owned by the municipalities

2013b:11). With less income, a forced reduction of allocation of support to film festivals have taken place. The gross amount of subvention has gone from 17.5 million in 2010 to 12.1 million in 2012. This development has forced Film & Kino restructure its operations. They will most likely adopt a proposal under the organisations annual meeting in 2015 that will see support to film festivals reduced to 7.2 million in 2014 and zero from 2016 onwards (Furuly, 2014).

In the same news article Lene Løken, director of Film & Kino comment that: *“What is happening now is absolutely necessary. It is a consequence of the income from the DVD-tax being reduced by fifty percent, and that private companies have bought cinemas from the municipalities and now control more than 50 percent of the Norwegian cinema operations”* (Furuly, 2014). Film & Kino are pushing the Ministry of Culture to take back a funding responsibility granted them in 2008, as a result of the drop in NCFF’s income, making it no longer viable for them to support the festivals.

Visual Arts – There are no proprietary support schemes in place for design and visual arts, and the Arts Council so far only have in place a generic project grant scheme for visual arts (Kulturrådet: 2014). Many festivals have art exhibitions or a festival artist (e.g. Festspillene I Bergen, Festspillene I Nord-Norge, Ultima), but there are few national festival events solely dedicated to visual art or design.

4. The current status quo for the Norwegian funding system

We want first to claim that the Norwegian festival policy described is functioning quite well and that we hardly can see any need for big changes, even if certain challenges can be pointed at. The system is transparent and to a large degree unaffected by the opinions and decisions of politicians.

The main concern in the contemporary situation is rather the risk that there may come political decisions leading to changes in the system, and which may cause new and until now unknown problems for the festival sector.

Challenges

The purpose of the node grant is to identify certain “spearheads” among festivals, for the benefit of the whole festival field as well as cultural life generally. Even if the Node system is

in some ways a controversial one and in need of certain improvements, it is important to have a grant securing certain festivals good and predictable finances, thus making them very good transmitters of different cultural genres in a national and international context.

The current conservative government (since 2013) are very eager to tout reforms, and the node grant is among those considered for closing down. The biggest challenge today is, thus, the initiatives made for removing the nodes, without any plans for replacing by an equivalent system with the same purposes. There is no guarantee that the same amount of money or the same kind of distribution of support will benefit the festival field should the node system disappear. Instead, one risks that the money goes back into to the budget for culture and is used to finance something very different, for instance the planned museum for Edvard Munch's art.

One "luxury challenge" should be discussed. The node system may make festivals presuppose or take for granted that substantial public funding will continue, and possibly reduce their creativity and quality efforts. Alternatively, they might be ridden by what has been called "the logics of project making" (Arbo 1989), i.e. they adapt their work and activities to what they think is expected by potential financing agents. Public authorities are the "neutral" party, reluctant to influence artistic decisions ("arm's length distance), while private sponsors have been seen as the "suspect" player in this regard and therefore less attractive financial supporters.

Festivals are in many way "omnivore" regarding financial means, i.e. they accept (more or less) support from any source. In this regard, festivals differ from other cultural actors, who tend to regard public money as more "clean" than private and expect that private actors will be more inclined to influence in artistic questions. Public authorities are very often, thought of as "neutral", giving support without interfering in artistic decisions (arm's length distance). It may seem a paradox that even after the message in the assignment letter from the Ministry, already mentioned this impression seems to be pertaining in the cultural sector

5.Recommendations for a future festival subvention scheme

To summarise and conclude we have described many aspects of the funding system in place for festivals, which are worth maintaining with only minor improvements or changes. That said there is a need for action and implementation of new mechanisms genres, most notably

film festivals, which have no guaranteed funding from the national government post 2016. The entire system could be drastically changed after the current evaluation of the funding system for node festivals finishes. The gross amount of funding available through the Arts Council's scheme can be reduced or augmented, pending decisions on allocations to culture in future years' Fiscal Budgets.

We have presented and discussed the mechanisms and functioning of the Norwegian grant system for arts and culture festivals in certain details. In this final chapter we will make some suggestions as to how we can maintain and consolidate this system through a proposal Norway Festival's board and administration are working on. We believe that this system generally and the criteria more specifically may help to inform the current work on the white paper for a similar local and national public funding system in Bulgaria.

There are four aspects to consider when formulating criteria for this new scheme. It should be predictable, providing support for extended period of time (duration), be transparent and based on artistic merits.

- *Predictable:* That the level of funding allocated to support the festivals financially should be consistent without fluctuating from year to year
- *Duration:* The scheme should grant funding for periods lasting longer than one year, to allow for planning of artistic projects ahead of time. We believe up to five years or continuous funding for two years in advance, based on evaluation and presentation of plans for the upcoming years along with the application is both a possible and desirable solution from the festivals' point of view. This category of funding would be open for festivals belonging to the upper three categories in the table above. These festivals are predominantly the nodes, major music and literature festivals. Many of these are already receiving funding for multiple years. The system would thus simply serve to regulate practice.
- *Transparency:* That criteria, application procedure and administrative management of the applications are clear and void of potential interference or favouritism by those in charge of processing them.
- *Based on merits:* Professional qualities and merits, in particular capacity for innovative artistic programming and professional organisation of the event, should be the most important evaluation aspects for the committee's decisions when reviewing applications.

Based on these four criteria Norway Festivals are working on a proposal to adapt the funding scheme for all festivals on national level, regardless of genre. This proposal could incorporate a new system for funding visual arts festivals, incorporate film festivals and to a certain degree be effective for maintaining a level of support for nodes or the most important festivals in each genre. The three main issues such a system may address are as follows:

- The Arts Council's funding scheme for festivals should lack defined categories for the recipients. This creates uncertainty as towards how much funding a festival can apply for and for how long. With every festival placed in a category based on scale of the event and level of grant / support allocated, it becomes easier to predict amount and duration. The festivals should receive information about their placement and the criteria they need to meet to successfully qualify for an increase in funding within their own category or achieve promotion to the next category. (Criterion of transparency).
- The funding system for node festivals should work in conjunction with and as an extension of the Arts Council's scheme and represent the uppermost step within the proposed category system. The nodes funding system would be maintained as a special scheme directly controlled by the Ministry of Culture for a few selected festivals, whilst being seen explicitly in the context of the other national financial schemes for other festivals. Getting or losing node status will become a more dynamic process, something the existing system has been criticised for not being. (Criterion of predictability).
- The system should guarantee funding over a multiyear period (2 – 5 years) where application for extension of the multi-year period could take place in the penultimate year of a current period. (criteria of duration and merits)

To see how this could work in practice, we divided 157 festivals (all recipients of funding for music and literature festivals and the nodes festivals) into six categories in a table below. The classification depicts the number of festivals per category, gross amount received in funding from the central government and average amount in subvention per festival. The numbers are in Norwegian kroner, the figures and information are sourced from the Art Council and the Ministry of Culture:

Level of funding	Number of festivals	Gross amount	Average per festival	Genre - comments
3 - 20. million	8	73 624 000	9 203 000	International Festivals, music,
1 - 3 mill.	23	41 258 000	1 793 826	One film, one literature, others music
0,5 - 1 mill.	13	9 475 000	728 846	One literature, others music
200000 - 400000	34	9 455 000	278 088	Four literature
100000 - 200000	38	4 905 000	129 079	Four literature
250000 - 100000	41	2 450 000	59 756	Twenty two Literature
Total	157	17 215 488		

Table 2 Gross amount of support and funding allocated to Norwegian nodes, music and literature festivals for 2014. In Norwegian kroner (NOK) (Norway Festivals, 2014) Source: Arts Council of Norway and Ministry of Culture.

As illustrated, many of the proposed aspects are already in place and applied informally by the Arts Council. It is easy to define separate categories based on levels of funding to create a hierarchy whereby festivals could move up or down echelons based on review of performance. Well over two-thirds of the festivals receiving funding from the Arts Council in recent years are the same events and applicants, with hardly any new festival being admitted into the scheme⁵. Film, performing and visual arts could become part of the scheme, to ensure a national system for all genres. Therefore, a consolidation of these two systems into one scheme and applying it for all festivals, regardless of genre, would provide equal and fair funding opportunities based on merits.

We hope that festivals and administrators of grants and applications find that such a system has potential to become a solid scheme that provides long-term funding opportunity, is easy to understand and seems fair. Festivals, regardless if they take place in Bulgaria or Norway, need transparent, durable and predictable funding schemes based on artistic merits. Peer evaluation (e.g. the arms' length principle) based on performance and not the interests of bureaucrats and politicians are the fundamental basis for receiving support. We hope that this report may inform the discussion and devising of future schemes and systems.

⁵ For 2014, this was the result of a budget cut; nevertheless, it illustrates our point that on an informal level the system already is very stable and predictable.

Literature:

Aronsen, M, 2006: *Quart 06 – mer enn musikk. Verdiskaping og ringvirkninger. Prosjektrapport 08/2006 Agderforskning.*

Arbo, P, 1989: *Prosjektmakeriets logikk. Fra modernisering til reføydalisering? FORUT, Tromsø*

Ballade (2001): *NRF – Kjedelig og alvorlig stillstand*

<<http://www.ballade.no/sak/nrf-kjedelig-og-alvorlig-stillstand/>> accessed 10. September 2014

Ballade (2004): *Musikklivets tiltakspakke – Slik vil vi ha det!*

<<http://www.ballade.no/sak/musikklivets-tiltakspakke-slik-vil-vi-ha-det/>> accessed 10. September 2014

Bille, T. 2009: *Oplevelsesøkonomiens betydning i økonomien og kulturpolitikken. I Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidsskrift 1:2009.*

Brauer, C (2005): *Stor glede over at Ap, SV og SP er samstemte: 1% av statsbudsjettet skal gå til kultur!*, *Ballade 30.3.05* <<http://www.ballade.no/sak/stor-glede-over-at-ap-sv-og-sp-er-samstemte-1-av-statsbudsjettet-skal-ga-til-kultur/>> accessed 10. september 2014

Dahl, HC and Helseth, T, 2006: *To knurrende løver. Kulturpolitikken historie 1814-2014. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo*

Dahle, M, Høgestøl, A, Musgrave, S, Ryssevik J (2013a): *Kultur, kroner, kreativitet – Kunst og kultursektorens økonomiske og samfunnsmessige betydning i Bergen og Hordaland. ideas2evidence rapport 3/2013*

Dahle, M, Engesæter, P and Ryssevik, J (2013b): *Hodet over vannet – En kartlegging av norske filmfestivaler. ideas2evidence rapport 8/2013*

Ericsson, B, 2003: *Lokaløkonomiske virkninger av kulturfestivaler - et metodisk urent farvann. ØF-notat 2003/06*

Ericsson, B and Onshus, T, 2008: *Peer Gynt 2007. ØF-rapport 4/2008*

Finansdepartementet (2013): *Prop. 1 S Tillegg 1 (2013 – 2014) Proposisjon til Stortinget (forslag til stortingsvedtak) for budsjettåret 2014 – Endring av Proposisjon 1 S Statsbudsjettet 2014*

Furuly, J, 2014: *Filmfestivaler frykter de må klare seg selv*,
<<http://www.aftenposten.no/kultur/Filmfestivaler-frykter-de-ma-klare-seg-selv-7588188.html>>, accessed 10. sep. 14

Girard, A., 1973: *Kulturpolitik – teori og praksis*. Den danske Unesco-Nationalkommission, København.

Kulturdepartementet (2011): *Melding til Stortinget 10 – Kultur, inkludering og deltaking*, Oslo: Kulturdepartementet, Oslo

Kulturrådet (2012) *47,2 millioner til musikkfestivaler i 2013*,
<<http://kulturradet.no/musikk/vis-artikkel/-/aktuelt-47-2-millioner-til-musikkfestivaler-i-2013>>, accessed 9. September 2014.

Langsted, J (ed.), 2010: *Spændvidder – om kunst og kunstpolitik*. Kulturpolitisk forskningscenter, Århus

Mangset 1992: *Kulturliv og forvaltning. Innføring i kulturpolitikk*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo

Mangset, P, Heian, M. 2007: *Kunstnerpolitikk og kunstnerøkonomi: En komparativ skisse*, Paper, den tredje nordiske konferanse om kulturpolitikkforskning, Bø 23 – 24 august 2007

Mangset, P, 2012a: *Demokratisering av kulturen? Om sosial ulikhet i kulturbruk og -deltakelse*. TF-notat 07/2012

Mangset, P, 2012b: *En armlengdes avstand eller statens forlengede arm? Et notat om armlengdesprinsippet i norsk og internasjonal kulturpolitikk*. (Bakgrunnsnotat for Kulturutredningen)

Négrier, E, Bonet, L and Guérin, M (eds) 2013: *Music Festivals, a Changing World*. Ed. Michel de Maule, Paris

NOU 2013:4 *Kulturutredningen 2014*. Kulturdepartementet

Norske Festivaler, 2013: *Høringstilsvar NOU 2013*

<http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/38257985/Kulturutredningen_211_Norske_Festivaler_M.pdf> accessed 08. September 14

NRK, 2003 *Støtte til musikkfestivaler* <<http://www.nrk.no/sorlandet/stotte-til-musikkfestivaler-1.312800>>, accessed 8.september 2014

Ringstad, V, 2005. *Retorikk og kulturpolitikk*. Magma 5:2005.

Tjora, A, 2013: *Festival! Mellom rølp, kultur og næring*. Cappelen Damm Akademisk

Vaagland, J (2013): Festivals in Norway, In: Négrier et al (eds) 2013: *Music Festivals, a Changing World*. Ed. Michel de Maule, Paris

Vestby, G.M, Samuelsen, R and Skogheim, R, 2012: *Festivalkommuner. Samhandling mellom kommuner og festivaler*. NIBR-rapport 2012:7

Wollan, G 2009: *Festivaler og turisme som performing places - en sosio-kulturell analyse*. Rapport 2009:1, Trøndelag Forskning og Utvikling