Culture Unbound

CULTURE UNBOUND:

DIMENSIONS OF CULTURALISATION

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PREFACE

The Department of Culture Studies (Tema Kultur och samhälle; Tema Q) at Linköping University in Sweden was founded in 2002 and is a leading site for interdisciplinary cultural research. Its main activities are research and PhD education, covering a broad range of research areas such as uses of history and cultural heritage, cultural production and cultural politics, local culture and regional development, mediated culture and creative processes, communication and cultural history. Tema Q's research activities are further expanded through close cooperation with adjacent units such as the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden ACSIS, the Swedish Observatory for Cultural Policy Research SweCult, the East-Sweden Municipality Research Centre CKS, as well as other Linköping University units and departments for history, media studies, etc.

Starting a new theme programme like Tema Q is indeed a complex and exciting process. All of us who took part in this process have brought our own histories and intellectual combinations with us, and together we thus represent a wide range of disciplinary knowledges and transdisciplinary perspectives. As a useful way to investigate our potential common grounds, we have made several efforts to synthesize our various subfields in developing joint research programmes. Among others, one such line of shared interest was an inquiry into the processes and discourses of "culturalisation". In the 2004-2007 period, this proved to be a particular useful way for us to critically scrutinise a widespread societal trend but also to reconsider the basic assumptions of cultural research itself, underlying its own claims of legitimacy and significance as a scholarly enterprise. This report presents the provisional outcome of such an exploration, in the form of some preliminary observations and a mapping of the various dimensions of this fascinating problematic. It thus poses as many questions as it provides answers, cutting out a field of inquiry and provisionally structuring its main dimensions, intended to inspire future research.

The report is the result of a collective work, with me as coordinator, and with important contributions by other colleagues in our milieu, for which we remain deeply grateful. It serves both as a presentation of a general research perspective and as a working report on what we have hitherto achieved in this specific direction. These topics remain in focus

in our current research, but also belong to what we have already made a vital part of the broad platform on which we now continue to initiate new directions of research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report discusses ideas of a radical increase in the significance and scope of culture in modern society, where industrialism is said to have been followed by a society of information, knowledge and experiences. Issues of cultural identity and community are increasingly focal concerns, the virtual worlds of media culture seem omnipotent, and the cultural sector is growing with each of its recurrent redefinitions. Politics and the economy are supposedly aestheticised, culture and design boost regional development, creativity is a core value. The theses of revolutionary "culturalisation" of society and everyday life have a long history through the various cultural turns proclaimed by scholars as well as in society at large. The report scrutinises some main arguments and their implications, pointing at a need to distinguish historical trends, material processes and ideological discourses. A differentiation is made between five main dimensions of the concept of culture that are associated with specific sets of culturalisation ideas and corresponding transformations of boundaries around and within the cultural field. This discussion also touches upon the position and role of cultural research itself. Examples are given from five focal arenas for these processes: academic work, politics, public spaces, constructions of history and border struggles.

In several dimensions, culture seems to become progressively less bound, liberated from traditional fetters, invading all possible sectors and practices, expanding across the whole of society and everyday life, and blurring all conventional distinctions. After science, technology and industrialism, a new Prometheus seems to be unbound in the globalised, mediatised, late modern and post-industrial world. There is a worldwide contemporary conviction that "culture" is becoming increasingly important economically, politically and socially, including ideas that we are entering the "Experience Economy" where "Art Takes Command", that global mediatisation and a pervasive process of aesthetisation restructure most social practices, that entertainment, fiction and virtuality are increasingly omnipresent, that traditional borders transecting the cultural sphere are increasingly blurred and that accelerating cultural processes and cultural practices are radically transformed. Linked to processes like modernisation, secularisation, urbanisation, aestheticisation, mediatisation and reflexivisation, each with its own genealogy and implications, claims of such changes may be termed "culturalisation".

Ideas of a cultural turn circulate widely in academia as well as in society at large, but their empirical support, significance and implications are unclear. Which claims can be empirically verified, and which are just new versions of modern myths of epochal change? How deep do changes go? From where do they arise? What effect does the rhetoric of culturalisation itself have on culture and society? How can such discourses be related to processes of "real" change in the positioning of culture in society? These questions may be answered by two combined strategies. (1) To summarise, analyse and evaluate on a *practice level* key features of "real" cultural transformations, assessing to what extent they can be empirically operationalised and interrelated. (2) To map and critically scrutinise at a *discourse level* the roots, trajectories and effects of such ideas of radical cultural shifts. Since each discourse has a "reality effect" in that naming and talking are social acts that affect other actions, the two aspects are profoundly linked. Culturalisation claims are partly self-confirming in that the belief that culture is more central also makes it so. Both concerns relate to transformations of (a) *external borders* delimiting and defining culture as a societal sphere, sector or field; (b) *internal borders* dividing culture into different sets of subsections; and (c) the qualitative *forms and practices* within this cultural sphere of production, distribution, consumption and regulation.

This report is an outline of key dimensions of culturalisation, opening up a new field of study with far-reaching implications for the scope and legitimacy of cultural research today. A stronger theoretical understanding and empirical qualification of the claims of culturalisation would indirectly qualify the basic claims and tasks of interdisciplinary cultural research today, reflexively problematising the foundations of our own work as cultural researchers. Such self-reflexive research needs to make an interlocking series of perspectival and methodological combinations. (1) *Practices and discourses* need to be studied as they together shape culturalisation as a societal phenomenon. (2) *Mapping and critique* can be combined to both outline the place of culture and problematise commonplace convictions. (3) This demands that *humanities and social sciences* scholars work together, to catch sight both of the specificities of cultural formations and of their anchorage in societal contexts, in an interdisciplinary and intersectorial co-operation that remains too scarce in modern academia. (4) Combined *historical and ethnographic perspectives* makes possible comparisons between different periods as well as close investigations of contemporary cultural practices. (5) *Interpretive and quantitative perspectives* provide a structural

contextualisation and positioning of qualitative readings of signifying practices and symbolic forms while securing a reflexive and contextualising reading of facts and figures. (6) *Local and transnational perspectives* enables a situated knowledge that puts local experiences in the context of global trends and flows thematised by an international field of cultural studies.

2. THEMATICAL DIMENSIONS

The classical figure of Prometheus, benefactor of human civilisation, who cleverly helped humanity master the tool of fire from the gods, was for a long time fettered to a Caucasian cliff by Zeus' mythical and traditional bonds, only to be again set free the by Enlightenment and industrial revolution to symbolise both the engineering inventor and the creating artist. Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) advocated a Copernican shift to emancipate humanity from its self-inflicted tutelage, as in Kant's famous dictum. A darker sibling was created by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley in *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), whose Victor Frankenstein defied the gods by creating life himself. A creation of humanised Promethean spirit run wild, Frankenstein's monster came to signify the vices of technology that became increasingly obvious, echoed in the philosophies of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Adorno and Horkheimer, and in dystopian science fiction narratives. The ancient and the modern Prometheus have merged and been reinterpreted by later technocritical philosophies, fictions and computer games. First bound by myth and traditional customs, then liberated by the modern revolutions from Romanticism to "risk society", the modern Prometheus is understood as ambiguous and reflexive, creating contradictions, at once liberating hero and lethal villain (Landes 1969, Beck 1986/1992, Kemp 1991, Brown 1992, Bertilsson 1998, Christoforidis 2005).

This reflexive insight often made culture and aesthetics the critical or even healing antidote to science and technology. Like a third, late-modern Prometheus, following the classical one of civilisation and the early and high modern one of technology, culture was long fettered in strict structures of spheres and sectors. During the last few decades, this force of culture is said to have escaped from its enclosed field and now

runs wild. Late modern culture appears to be unbound, making its way into every corner of society and everyday life, expanding across every border. Virtuality, fiction, aesthetics, arts, entertainment and media seem to roam everywhere, losing all fixed shapes and limitations.

Modern times have for centuries loved to coin terms for its defining phase shifts. Modernity itself, as a conceptual invention used for marking a distance of the present to the dark Middle Ages, developed from the Renaissance connecting to Antiquity as an ideal to the Enlightenment ideas of linear progress, and still strongly present in much of historical and social thought, illustrates the utopian and performative character of epochal labels. In the 1950s and 1960s, the epochal labelling was dominated by technical and economic terms. The modern world was an Aeroplane Age, an Atomic Age, a Plastic Age, a Space & Rocket Age, an Age of Automobiles and of Television. High modernity was also a highly developed Welfare Society, an Affluent Society and an Age of Mass-Consumption. The 1970s contributed labels such as the Computer Age, the Information Age, the Post-Industrial Society, the Digital Age and the Service Economy, while the 1980s came up with the Knowledge Society, the Third Industrial Revolution and the Post-Modern Age. Towards the end of the millennium labels like the Experience Society, Media Society, the Network Society, the Dream Society and the Age of Entertainment popped up, accompanied by more ambiguous terms like the Multicultural Society, Globalised Society and Risk Society. Within the persistent popularity of epochal labelling itself, in the long term, the labels appear to shift from techno-material to socio-spiritual terms in an overarching trend summed up in the idea of an Age of Culturalisation. A series of "cultural turns" has been proclaimed in the social and humanistic disciplines, producing a cluster of claims that culture is increasingly important and released from its inherited bonds – in contemporary society and in social analysis. "Culturalisation" is our name for this swarm of ideas about a general shift to culture.

Empirical data are ambiguous. Most economic indices (shares of industry, GNP, labour force, GNI, exports, education resources, etc.) suggest that culture remains marginal, while indices based on time use and life values seem to substantiate the rumours of its new dominance. The figures for cultural production in terms of the share of GNP are modest (2.5% in Sweden 2003) compared to the share of time use devoted to cultural activities, with an average Swedish daily media consumption of nearly 7 hours, the average Swede spending three times more life-time consuming media than working (Carlsson 2005). This

incoherence reflects misleading habits of classification of cultural production and consumption, as well as difficulties in distinguishing consumption from production. Cultural goods and services typically require a time-consuming productive effort from the consumer – like reading a book. Substantial shares of cultural transactions take place outside of markets and are therefore unregistered by official statistics. Culture fills some 5% of total consumption (in Sweden), but if consumption is reclassified according to its value content and cultural goods are identified in terms of their "spiritual value", the share of cultural consumption is likely to be about 60% (Fogel 1999). The gaps between these measures require critical examination. The recent term of "experience industries" has lumped together previously separate fields of production into a widened cultural sphere. Though the size of each sub-sector might be rather constant, the effects of such new ways of thinking can be considerable, as names do matter. Besides quantitative growth, culturalisation also concerns the qualitative value afforded to cultural practices. Some alleged changes imply a quantitative growth of already existing phenomena, others an emergence of new qualities, a shifting qualitative relation between specific aspects, or moved or blurred borders around and within the cultural field, modifying how culture is differentiated from other societal sectors and internally subdivided. Finally, the new discourses of culturalisation are themselves key factors in culturalisation, as all discourses (including struggles over cultural definitions and epochal shifts) have a "reality effect" and thus belong to the core of culture, as a kind of societal self-reflection with a strong impact on human action.

The modern concept of culture has developed in a series of steps, adding new facets to the discourses of culturalisation (Koselleck 1979/1985, Williams 1976/1988, Bennett et al. 2005). Its constituents have a long prehistory, but in its full width and complexity, it seems to have first crystallised in the mid and late 18th century, when modern discourses of culturalisation also appear to have emerged (Schiller, Herder, etc.). The 19th century seems to have initiated a differentiating phase, giving rise to a set of relatively autonomous academic and aesthetic fields with corresponding sets of institutions, practices and values that divided the problematics of culturalisation into subthemes of economic and institutional rationalisation, democratisation, urbanisation, secularisation, etc. From the mid 20th century, a new dedifferentiation may be discerned, resulting in efforts to a comprehensive understanding of the societal role of culture, in a converging and reflexive turn that is a condition of possibility for researching culturalisation itself. Culturalisa-

tion could then be interpreted as a kind of revenge of culture: a reversal of the 19th-century German fears that organic culture was superseded by technocratic civilisation, Tönnies' (1887/2001) argument that culture as an integrated part of daily life in traditional communities (*Gemeinschaft*) had turned into a separate activity with its own formal institutions in modern civil society (*Gesellschaft*), or similar evolutionary ideas of modern differentiation in Weber (1930/2002), Parsons (1937/1968, 1951/1991) and Habermas (1981/1984-1987). Modernity's "epochalyptic" self-understanding tends to construct linear or stepwise processes, as in this early-modern formation of culturalisation discourses around 1800, followed by high-modern processes of differentiation around 1900 and finally the late-modern dedifferentiations, convergences and problematisations of the last half century. This provisional phase model needs to be tested by empirical investigations of which epochs tend to be identified in different areas.

The main uses of the concept of culture – and the corresponding meanings of culturalisation – may be discussed under five headings, focusing in turn on *ontological*, *anthropological*, *institutional*, *aesthetic* and *hermeneutic* dimensions. Each such understanding of culture relates to a specific set of processes and discourses of change, in turn linked to basic principles of functional differentiation – dimensions and borders that bound and cross the cultural field. These concepts are typically overlapping, and none of them is intrinsically false or correct, but they may all be useful for different purposes, and are all regularly used in public debate.

2.1. ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

First, an *ontological* divide is commonly made between *culture and nature*, linked to dichotomies like mind/matter and artefacts/organisms. Though this divide may today often seem eternal and universal, it should be remembered that it was to a large extent an historical product of the 19th century, when the sacral glue gradually dissolved the bond between the two, putting culture in the hands of humanity and reinterpreting nature as its own ultimate Other. When culture expands, the realm of non-human nature appears to shrink and its boundaries to human culture are blurred. Culturalisation here signifies processes of increasing *artificialisation* making human history less immediately dependent on nature. This has a prominent role in the 19th-century idea of history as a pro-

gressively civilising process, the modern fears for "the death of nature" and the debates on biological versus cultural determinants of human behaviour. Weather catastrophes are no longer viewed as "acts of God" but as the results of changing human life styles on a global scale. Threatening climate changes and other ecological catastrophies testify to the force, dangers and contradictions of artificialisation, and counter-discourses of reflexive modernity (Beck 1986/1992), from Romanticism to Green movements, have debated whether human culture is able to find remedies for its own hypertrophy. This dimension entails *institutionalisation* (interaction increasingly controlled by rules), *symbolisation* (meaning increasingly mediated), *mechanisation* (behaviour dependent on tools) and *synthetisation* (human-made environment). The overlapping but competing discourses of *civilisation*, *modernisation*, *rationalisation* and *secularisation* also belong here. Secularisation marks the ongoing process of deconstructing the mediaeval religious worldview, moving the transcendental to the sphere of nature. Max Weber's (1930/2002) theses of rationalisation and secularisation for instance thematise a growth of human reason and symbolic forms, but has also been linked to a technological materialism that is opposed to aesthetical values in a more narrow sense of culture.

Other related processes – *globalisation*, *urbanisation*, *artefactualisation* and *historisation* – link culturalisation to the basic faculties of space and time. Urbanisation lets people live in environments that appear as increasingly distanced from nature and shaped by cultural practices. Whereas older human societies certainly invested nature with meaning, the steps taken from agriculture to industrialism have also physically transformed all corners of the globe, even reaching out into the rest of the solar system. This points to a material or artefactual side of culture, in the sense of the growing mass of built land- and cityscapes by which non-human nature is further marginalised. It also implies increasingly dense and complex social networks whereby social and cultural capital forms are accumulated. Globalisation across space is matched temporally by historisation, as twin effects of accelerated time-space-compression due to a combination of multiplied media technologies, travel, museums and other resources for transmission and storage. Spatially, migration and communication create a vast number of interconnected social and cultural networks. In the time dimension, accumulated resources for memory work – collections, museums, monuments and narratives – make history available for re-use and reflection. Growing resources are used for preserving these traces of the human past, thus

contributing to a growth of culture in society.

2.2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Second, *anthropological* perspectives differentiate between different kinds of human culture, based on a definition of culture as the collective habits, worldview and values of societies or social groups – "a whole way of life" (Williams 1958/1968 and 1961, Højrup 1983/1989). It should at once be noted that the term "anthropological" is not meant to imply that these ideas are in any way confined to or even characteristic of social anthropology of today. It has certain roots in older and more colonial forms of anthropological research, but current anthropologists are among the most critical against such a totalising perspective (see for instance Barth 1969/1998 on ethnic boundaries). Still, in much of cultural debate, the talk of an aesthetic versus an anthropological view of culture remains widespread.

On a large scale, epochal or global distinctions are made between aggregate societal totalities, for instance Roman civilisation, modern society or Swedish culture. On a local scale, such totalities are subdivided across specific groups, differentiating for instance among bourgeois cultures, rural cultures, political cultures, youth cultures or academic cultures. Such uses of the concept of culture often imply an increasingly ethnic differentiation between social groups, in terms of habits and other cultural traits, and thus an *ethnicisation* of social differences. Differentiations between subcultures imply changes in individual and collective *identity* formation. An assumed process of individualisation and detraditionalisation, whereby individuals are "disembedded" from inherited collective identifications, is connected to ideas of an increasing makeability (whereby identities tend to be experienced as produced rather than given or inherited) and reflexivity (making identifications of selves and others the object of explicit thematisation). This relates to arguments about postindustrial class structures, transformations of gender positions and sexual heteronormativity, multiethnic hybridisation and changing relations between generations and age groups. As conventional identification patterns are contested, identity orders are increasingly interconnected, linking culturalisation to ideas of an ongoing *intersectionalisation*.

This dimension raises issues of *centres* and *peripheries*. The decentring of cultural influence, and shifts between urban centres and rural

peripheries, between hub cities and their satellite towns, between north-
ern and southern hemispheres, between East and West, are said to have
destabilised many aspects of culture, with implications for the location
and operation of power (Foucault 1969/2002, Gripsrud 1999). A process
of "*glocalisation*" changes relations between *global*, *national* and *local*
factors (Robertson 1995, Therborn 1995, Hannerz 1996, O'Dell 1997).
This relates to issues of transnational flows of migration, travel and
media, new global social movements and supranational political and
economic associations, but also to local heritage and identity politics.
Traditional cultural policies framed by nation-states seems to be eroding,
creating new conditions for the formation of communities and identities
in an emergent multicultural or cosmopolitan world culture.

It should be noted that the different dimensions tend to leak into
each other. There is thus a tendency that as a reaction to the highly con-
tested "clash of civilisations" position (Huntington 1996), anthropolog-
ical discussions on life forms often tend to abandon the efforts to con-
struct enclosed totalities, which creates a kind of convergence with the
ontological dimension, in that human cultures are regarded as integral
parts of a shared global culture. This exemplifies how the distinctions
between these main dimensions are always negotiable.

2.3. INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS

Third, an *institutional* dimension focuses on the specific *sector*, *sphere*
and *field* of practices, goods, values and institutions identified as cultural
in a given society, for instance by the operative cultural policy concept
of culture targeted by the Swedish state, including the arts, media, cul-
tural heritage and popular education. Culture is then contrasted to *poli-
tics* and *economy* but also interdependent upon them. Boundaries be-
tween the cultural, social and economic dimensions of social life have
been contested and reinterpretated since the dawn of modern social
theory, as forces of expansion and differentiation dialectically intersect
counteracting forces of contraction and integration, in an incessant dy-
namics whereby societal areas are continually redefined and moved
between institutional spheres. One basis for this differentiation is the
differentiation of specific *cognitive, ethical and aesthetic value spheres*
founded by Kant and institutionalised with the development of science,
legislation and the arts. Kant's model had an ontological intention, but
its strong institutional implications tend to place it under this dimension

rather than the first one, illustrating the intertwining of all these dimensions. Aesthetic autonomy became a cornerstone in the institutionalisation and discourse of art, but was in the late 20th century challenged by hybridising tendencies to cross boundaries between high and popular culture, between media genres, and between art, moral and science. But contemporary signs of a dissolution of aesthetic autonomy are easily exaggerated or misread, as was once Hegel's conception of the end of art or Benjamin's notion of the decline of art's aura.

Contemporary debates on the economisation of *culture* and the culturalisation of the economy revive the early 20th-century debate on mass culture and the culture industry. A number of cultural issues today recur in interdisciplinary discussions where social, cultural and economic approaches converge, with the rise of the so-called experience economy and the cultural turn within economic and organisational life (Guillet de Monthoux 1998, Ray & Sayer 1999, Stenström 2000, Du Gay & Pryke 2002, Power & Scott 2004). In an assumedly new post-materialistic experience economy, tourism is the fastest growing branch and the sex industry the biggest transnational business. There is a growing cadre of cultural intermediaries in advertising, marketing, design and other creative industries – according to Richard Florida (2002), the "creative class" now comprises more than 30% of the entire workforce. Their efforts to articulate production with consumption build on established practices, but older professions have been supplemented by new hybrid branches that exploit production areas where the antipathy between culture and economy has traditionally been low (media, information, fashion, design, sports, tourism, advertising, marketing and public relations), thereby possibly posing new threats to the bipolar and hierarchical structure of the field of cultural production, where the logics of culture and economy are routinely supposed to repel each other.

Parallel to cultural economics, there is a *political* dimension in culture, as well as a cultural dimension in politics. The governance of culture is today of great importance in relation to core political domains of labour, social welfare, family, education and ethnic diversity. Cultural policies have to respond to an increasing migration, expanding multicultural and transnational interconnectedness and new digital media technologies. Nation states have lost their relative autonomy in determining cultural policy, and created a need for transnational or even global policy approaches to the internationalised cultural and media market. So far, measures have been largely confined to issues of cultural heritage (with the World Heritage Convention adopted in 1972), but

both the European Union and the United Nations have recently broadened their outlook (e.g., the Unesco convention on promoting diversity of cultural expression, 2005).

The relations between *civil society* and the structural systems of *market* and *state* have been central to social theories of cultural value spheres, from Weber's (1930/2002) analysis of rationalisation and disenchantment to Habermas' (1962/1989) theories of public/private spheres and systems/lifeworlds, or Bourdieu's (1979/1984, 1992/1996) models of differentiated fields and forms of power. These have also obvious relevance to the changing organisation of culture. The bourgeois *public sphere* was an arena for criticism of the exercise of state power as well as of the expanding forces of the market, but the distinction between the public and the state is unstable, as in the talk of "public spending" and the "public sector". Also, mediated communication makes public interaction cut deeply into private spaces while intimate issues become publicly available, further undermining simple dualisms. Much of cultural life and research further relies on a division between *production* and *consumption*. These roles became naturalised through industrialisation, intertwined with moral dichotomies of activity/passivity, moderation/hedonism and autonomy/manipulation. Since the mid 20th century, the role of consumer has been claimed to become more important than that of producer to the formation of lifestyles and identities. Others maintain that the whole distinction has become outdated through technological changes, the decline of manual work and expanding service industries. Production always entails moments of consumption and vice versa, and they constitute each other also in terms of time, as *work* time and income delimit *leisure* activities that in turn influence work ethics. The expansion of leisure for young and old citizens is a demographic basis for the increasing cultural consumption invoked in culturalisation diagnoses. At the same time, many cultural artefacts and performances are actually produced by amateurs in their leisure time. The distinction between *amateur* and *professional* forms of cultural practice is fluid, having to do with whether the practice is economically self-sustaining (i.e. professional), but also with how the skills involved are acquired (self-taught versus institution-based). There is a growing leakage between these spheres, for instance in reality television or avantgarde arts.

Pine & Gilmore (1999) claim that after the phases of agrarian, industrial and service economies, world economic history has now seen the rise of the theatrical "experience economy". It is not only the pro-

verbial balance between "bread" and "circus" that has turned heavily in favour of "circus", but "circus" has become the "bread" of the modern economy. European regions and cities tormented by de-industrialisation turn to culture to find new hope. This "post-industrial society" is no less industrial or less commercial than was industrial society. The range of effective industrialisation has extended to cultural goods and services that were previously often conceptualised as opposites to the material and instrumental values of industrialism. There are many historical traces hidden in this discourse of *experientialisation* in business and regional planning. It links back to the late 19th-century neo-classical revolution in political economy that anchored all economic values in individual mental experiences: if all demand is in the end a demand for preferred experiences, all economy is always an experience economy. It also connects to Walter Benjamin's reflections on the commercial spaces of the modern city as arenas for making and communicating experiences. Experientialisation theses have been formulated and transformed into social action by commercial entrepreneurs, state policies and municipal actors, related to tourism, entertainment, shopping environments, urban planning and regional development.

2.4. AESTHETIC DIMENSIONS

Fourth, an *aesthetic* perspective identifies culture with the arts, sometimes also including forms of popular culture and entertainment. Aesthetic perspectives are increasingly linked to ethics of consumption and production and environmental concerns over the goods and materials used. This activates a qualitative differentiation between *high* and *low* culture, both in theories of world history as a civilising march into cultural refinement and in taste struggles within a given society. Culturalisation is here viewed as a victory not only over nature but also over qualitatively inferior cultural forms. While 20th-century democratisation and globalisation have diminished the ethnocentric arrogance of colonialism, the high/low divide is still prominent in the intellectual and aesthetic fields, where the hopes for qualitative culturalisation have been accompanied by fears for nivellation or decline, not least by the global rise of commercial mass-mediated, "Americanised" popular culture. This divide is co-articulated with similarly blurred polarities of domestic/foreign (transnational migration, travel and mediated communication) and culture/non-culture (hybrids like infotainment that blur borders

between politics and aesthetics, fact and fiction, economy and culture) (Gripsrud 1999, 2000, 2001).

Discourses of *aestheticisation*, *fictionalisation*, *virtualisation* and *theatricalisation* imply a growth of importance of aspects and practices traditionally associated with the high arts and popular entertainment. In Jean Baudrillard's (1988) postmodernist vision of a new hyper-real world order, simulations, symbols and copies have exceeded all boundaries and become indistinguishable from reality, materiality and originals. The idea of radical fictionalisation or virtualisation extends back in time, for instance to the widespread social critique of the 18th-century novel which supposedly enticed young and female readers into improductive dream worlds. Each new form of mediation has created yet another version of this combined fear and hope, from literarisation over cinematisation to cybercultural virtualisation. Ideas of a "virtual reality" have a long history (Langer 1953, Ricoeur 2000/2004), but recent digital network technologies in films and games production have led to an inflation in ideas of a brave new world where situated materiality has been dissolved into fictive lives, reviving philosophical debates about the relation between culture and nature in terms of mimetic artifice versus real experience. A related line of thought is the mass culture critique that goes back via Adorno & Horkheimer (1944) to various reflections on modern industrial and urban culture in the mid and late 19th century. Hybrid genres like reality TV, infotainment and edutainment mix fact and fiction, rearticulating politics and the arts/entertainment. During the last few decades, it has been argued that there is a new phase of aestheticisation of politics, economy, everyday life and society at large, whereby aesthetic components of all kinds of commodities have gained in importance (Schulze 1992, 2003/2004). This also relates to Inglehart's (1990) thesis of an epochal shift from materialist to postmaterialist values. In other variants, inspired by the theories of Goffman (1959), Debord (1967/1995) and Sennett (1977/1986, 1994), the assumption is that there is an increased theatricality or dramatisation of everything from car sales or museums to news and politics. When dramaturgical metaphors are applied to political life, it becomes evident that aestheticisation is far from a completely new phenomenon, since it recalls quasi-feudal forms of a "representative" public sphere, though in new and different shapes. In fact, all symbolic interaction opens some scope for a signifying surplus, a style of communication and interpretation where aesthetic forms are more than just neutral carriers of meaning. More complex and globalised societies multiply communications between

social groups, expanding the technological tools and textual genres for connecting across time to memory and history, and across space to other geographical and social contexts. This leads to greater variation in communication style, placing greater demands on interpretive processes. Recent transformations of the public sphere have multiplied the interfaces between politics and culture and made it increasingly problematic to neglect the role of entertainment and the arts for the formation of identities and communities. The visual arts frequently break out of the institutionalised boundaries of galleries and art museums and engage in local or global communities. This has questioned the division between artistic practice and the knowledge production of museums or academia.

Related to this, discourses of *mediatisation*, *digitalisation* and *visualisation* thematise the changing genres and technologies of communication on which culture depends. Complexly growing communication technologies affect time, space and social relations. Media use fills a growing part of everyday life everywhere. Practices of mediation are intrinsically about crossing borders in time (history) and space (geography), linking people (individuals and groups) and texts (symbolic forms and genres). The historical processes of mediatisation thus problematise key cultural thresholds and challenge inherited divisions between public and private, politics and culture, fact and fiction, reality and virtuality. These grand assumptions about the revolutionary effects of mediatisation (including McLuhan 1964/1987) deserve critical reconsideration, as even the much smaller number of media in previous centuries may have been quite as central in life and society. Current digitalisation of storage and transmission of information has enabled a further interweaving of textual and interactive forms that were previously separate, resulting in new aesthetic forms and a transformation of the relationship between producers and consumers. Digital network technologies bring about an experiential compression of time and space and a convergence of media branches (institutions), genres (symbolic modes) and uses (practices) (Fornäs et al. 2002 and 2007). Yet, much culturalisation talk – whether utopian or dystopian – is based on problematic technodeterministic assumptions (Mosco 2004).

The cultural sphere is divided along aesthetic *subfields*, defined through *sense modalities*, *symbolic modes*, *media types*, *art forms*, *sectors* or *genres*. The production of culture is distributed across different cultures of production dominated by aesthetic or economic value criteria. Different distinctions intersect in complex ways: visual/aural, text/performance, temporal/spatial, commercial/aesthetic, private/public.

All such divisions are fluid results of historical and socially mediated negotiations. A series of intertextual, interartial and intermedial flows and hybrids have recently been discussed as part of culturalisation. One example is the *visualisation* talk of an increasing importance of visual media, often heard in the growing field of visual culture studies (Becker 2004). Late modern society has been depicted as one of visual simulation and spectacle (Debord 1967/1995), where new forms of surveillance affects public behaviour and reaches into the private sphere through reality shows and other genres of media entertainment. Still, no historical situation ever found looks and appearances unimportant and the circulation of printed images has influenced culture for several hundred years. Also, music and speech remain equally influential, and the hegemony of verbal modes of communication seems far from broken. The changing interrelations between symbolic modes and media circuits thus need to be rethought.

2.5. HERMENEUTIC DIMENSIONS

Fifth, a hermeneutic perspective allows an anchorage of the concept of culture in systems of meaning, in contrast to demographic, geographic, technical and other dimensions and aspects of human action. Hermeneutic scholars have thus defined culture as *symbolic communication* or *signifying practice* (Ricoeur 1965/1970, 1974 and 1981, Geertz 1973, Williams 1976/1988 and 1981, Hannerz 1990, Fornäs 1995). This concept analytically highlights the relations between the previous ones, by adding an epistemological perspective. Though with ancient foundations, it is a relatively recent conceptualisation, potentially transgressing the dualist models of individual/collective, subject/society and objectivism/relativism by adding a third, mediating level of intersubjectivity. It has become possible through a dimension of culturalisation that may be called *reflexivisation*, related to a denaturalisation of inherited epistemological categories, producing a higher degree of reflexivity in media genres, personal identities and social lifeworlds as well as in the social and natural sciences. The late 20th century gave birth to a nagging disbelief in the clear-cut distinction between science and culture. A major vehicle for this was the strand of *constructivism*/*constructionism* within the cultural sciences (Berger & Luckmann 1967; for a critical account see Hacking 1999) as well as in science and technology studies (Latour 2005). There has been a growing interest in questioning traditional truth

regimes and legitimate authorities in the name of fragmented, overlapping practices of contestation (Foucault, de Certeau). Beyond the polarity of relativism and objectivism, others have argued for a third solution, seeing the recent "cultural turns" as a shift from subject/object dualisms to an intersubjectivity paradigm (Bernstein 1983, Habermas 1985/1988). Research itself is no longer conceivable as standing outside the epochal shifts that it studies. Culturalisation discourse is thus part of a wider historical moment of restructuring traditional categorisations and understandings of modern society.

2.6. CRITICAL CONFIGURATIONS

While critically mapping such discourses, critical cultural studies must also reflect upon how its own premises and activities can be legitimised in the face of its critical readings of culturalisation processes. It is necessary to link the five sets of concepts and dimensions, critically analysing how their mixing tends to create confusion, tension and struggle. For instance, cultural policy and cultural debate often slide in contradictory ways between narrow and wide definitions, in strategic manoeuvres that enable ideological power plays. Shifting between talking about culture as specialised artistic practices and as ways of life makes it possible to transfer authority and legitimacy from one sphere to another, for instance between high arts and identity politics. The ways such shifts are made and used, including in our own cultural research, is therefore a central critical theme of cultural studies today.

3. FOCUS AREAS

Depending on which concepts of culture are thematised, discourses of culturalisation have different implications, but they typically tend to be mixed in rather confusing ways, making it even more difficult to assess their validity. On an *ontological* level, culturalisation implies a general growth of the human sphere in its natural surroundings. On an *anthropological* level, a differentiation and interaction of different lifeforms seem to make issues of collective identity and representation increasingly challenging. On an *institutional* level, the field of cultural politics

tends to be widened and increasingly important to other societal sectors. On an *aesthetic* level, it is often assumed that mediated virtual and fictional worlds proliferate and invade all spheres of individual and social life. On a *hermeneutic* level, cultural practices turn reflexively onto the cultural dimension itself, critically reconstructing the concepts and distinctions that have traditionally been taken for granted. With varying emphasis, these thematical dimensions intersect in a wide range of societal domains and arenas where processes and discourses of culturalisation are enacted.

Against this general background, a series of more specific questions may be asked, relating to the most important societal arenas where culturalisation discourses have been particularly common, in any of the thematic dimensions mentioned above. This may be exemplified by in five highly provisional *focus areas of culturalisation*, selected to cover some key arenas, spheres and sites of society in and for which culturalisation theses have been raised: academic theory, politics and economy, media and public spheres, collective representations, law and regulation. Several other areas may also be thought of and elaborated, but these are the ones where we have at this moment in our own research environment made and/or planned specific studies. The following focus areas are thus meant to illustrate important problems, rather than strictly defining any specific research programme.

3.1. ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: CULTURALISING HUMAN SCIENCES

A first focus area is formed by the ways in which culturalisation theses have been formulated in *academic scholarship* – how they have emerged and developed, and with which implications for the production of knowledge in the human sciences. A series of overlapping cultural turns have in academia given rise to a plethora of processual and epochal models for conceptualising culture and culturalisation in all the dimensions mentioned above. This historical evolution of intellectual discourses can be discerned in the development of theoretical tools for understanding culturalisation within the humanities and social sciences. The conceptual histories of each of the five thematic dimensions of culture and culturalisation interact with the formation of specific fields of knowledge and academic disciplines.

Culturalisation can be traced long back, but is particularly notice-

able in the human sciences of the last half-century, and in four interdependent forms.

1. *Culturalisation of explanatory perspectives* through a number of "cultural turns" in and between most disciplines that have increased the assumed weight of cultural aspects in the human sciences at large, including social constructivism, deconstruction, narratology and discourse analysis.

2. *Culturalisation of academic structures* has accompanied this trend by a steady rise of new disciplines and subfields for specifically studying these cultural aspects, including cultural branches of history, geography, sociology, anthropology, economics etc., but also interdisciplinary fields such as cultural studies, media & communications studies, science and technology studies STS and studies of gender, ethnicity, leisure, heritage & museums, sports, tourism, etc.

3. *Culturalisation of knowledge interests* has further made various aspects of perceived real world culturalisation into a fast growing area of study for old and new disciplines alike, including research into new media, globalisation, cultural consumption, ethnic complexity, value systems, etc.

4. *Culturalisation of societal diagnoses* has also resulted, as human sciences have bred grand theories of modern epochal changes stating that the cultural has in some sense grown more important, in terms of mediatisation, virtuality, creativity, post-materialistic values, postnational globalisation, multicultural diversity or a new network/information/knowledge/experience/leisure/dream society etc. (Inglehart 1990; Pine & Gilmore 1999; Jensen 1999 and many others).

CULTURALISATION IN THE HUMAN SCIENCES

Key-term inventories, bibliometric studies, citation databases, research project databases and lists of names of journals and research departments belong to the data that indicate how the trends of culturalisation have actually spread through the academic field. The interrelations between the appearance and growth of the four aspects mentioned above would indicate patterns of influence and point at the precise mechanisms and logics behind these intellectual trends. There appears to be a straightforward connection between the culturalisation of research interests (aspect 3) and the production of epochal culturalisation theories (aspect 4), while the connection of the latter to changes of academic structure (aspect 2) and of explanatory perspectives (aspect 1) is more

ambiguous, as for instance the rise of constructivism seems fairly independent of theories of epochal culturalisation.

The trajectory of the breakthrough of general cultural topics in human sciences in turn relates to the more specific genealogy, sense and basis of epochal culturalisation theories within these scholarly fields. Three major and partly overlapping families of theories or doctrines in particular deserve closer scrutiny. One is that of mediatisation, another is that of a post-materialist shift in individual values and consumer preferences underpinning much of the talk about an experience society, and the third a more general idea of artificialisation of the human world. They are all currently influential and share a long history. Comparing the two first illuminates basic differences in conceiving of the basic nature of the prime forces of culturalisation in either technological or psychological change. As for artificialisation, it may be regarded as a more general metatheory of culturalisation as a world-historical march from Nature to Culture in an ontological sense. This idea of progress has been criticised (Molander & Thorseth 1997, Skovdahl 1996) on the basis of environmental concerns, technological dangers, market deficits and democracy problems.

MAKING CULTURAL RESEARCH USEFUL

All four aspects of culturalisation further imply challenges to the legitimation of humanities and social sciences as useful to society at large. The culturalisation of explanatory perspectives has created tensions between old style positivist, structuralist, economistic, reductionist and progressivist attitudes and new style constructivist, contextualist, culturalist, pluralist and relativist attitudes. The rise of new disciplines and fields (including cultural studies) has created rivalries between old disciplines and new ones. Many theories of epochal culturalisation are intellectually challenging because of their sweepingly dramatic character and their claims for critical distance to "the illusions of the epoch". The primary challenge focused in this direction is however that of the rationale, motivation and social usefulness of cultural research and the human sciences generally.

Discourses on the usefulness of scientific work have had a shifting focus (see Belfiore & Bennett 2006; Kylhammar 2004; Kylhammar & Battail 2003, 2006; Kylhammar & Godhe 2005). During the breakthrough of industrialism and its technical engineering around 1800, it was primarily technology and the natural sciences that were targeted.

After 1900, the formation of welfare societies engaged economic, behavioural and social sciences as means for social engineering. Culturalisation seems in the present third phase to let culture and cultural research play a new role as tools for "cultural engineering". The economic, political, technological and social importance of culture research seems to rise, but also a prospect of marginalisation of the traditional humanities, where the initiative in instrumentally useful cultural research is taken over by schools for business, engineering and planning. Such fears have repeatedly been voiced, for instance in the wake of C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures* (1959; Eldelin 2006).

The modern history of arguments for culture research and for public support of such research reveal several ambivalences.

1. One is whether the societal value of culture research is intrinsic or instrumental. Intrinsic arguments for culture research are basically the same as those for quality arts and cultural production, making culture research a part of high culture, while there is a large variety of different possible instrumental values.

2. Another ambivalence concerns if culture research contributes to positive or reflexive knowledge: empirically testable knowledge about the real facts or rather human understandings of the world, where a trend in the second directions links culturalisation to increasing reflexivity in many disciplines (as discussed above under the hermeneutic dimension of culture).

3. A third ambivalence is found between research in the fields of expertise of the cultural sector institutions and research about these institutions as social, economic and political fields of action (Aronsson & Hillström 2005).

Quantitative data on the scope and extent of cultural production, distribution and consumption remain notoriously insufficient, which is problematic both for practitioners and for researchers (Beckman 2001, 2003). Significant changes have recently widened the statistical meaning of culture, as a rising interest in the "creative sector", "experience industries" and "cultural indicators" has led to reclassifications (*Upplevelseindustrin* 2003, Mercer 2002). Recent Eurostat, EU and national initiatives to expand cultural statistics and revise its measures, definitions and discourses of culture have implications for understanding how societies think culture.

The activities of the Department of Culture Studies (Tema Q), the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS), the Swedish Observatory for Cultural Policy Research (SweCult) and the East-Swe-

den Municipality Research Centre (CKS) at Linköping University to-
gether form a unique resource for improving the exchange of informa-
tion between cultural research at universities and actors and organisa-
tions in the cultural and political fields. Tema Q today employs seven
full professors dealing with uses of history, cultural production, cultural
politics, local culture, mediated culture, communication history and cul-
tural history, and organising a PhD programme where more than two
dozen dissertations are published in just a few years time. ACSIS is a
national centre with a board consisting of representatives of all Swedish
universities, chaired by professor Dan Brändström, former head of the
Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. With Johan Fornäs as the di-
rector, ACSIS has a wide-ranging programme of activities including ex-
changes of visiting scholars on advanced levels, seminars and network-
ing, with successful national and international conferences. SweCult is a
new resource for overviewing research that is relevant for the cultural
policy field and connecting scholars to the actors of that field. It is
funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and headed by
Svante Beckman, with Emma Stenström chairing the national board.
With strong support from the municipalities in the East Sweden region,
CKS, headed by Tora Friberg, has a particularly massive set of activities
for research on regional and local issues. Developing these tools in an
effort to understand the processes of culturalisation is one way of mak-
ing cultural research truly useful.

3.2. POLITICAL UTILITIES: CULTURALISING POLICY APPLICATIONS

A second focus area moves from academic theorising to investigating
how culturalisation claims have been used and applied in the *political
sphere*. This is where ideas about a changing role for culture in society
are instrumentally institutionalised and have material effects by being
operationalised in specific policies and implemented in practices of
reorganising social life, as instruments for local, regional, national and
supranational development.

A principal sign of culturalisation is the increasing interest in cul-
tural policy in all political sectors and levels, in Sweden and elsewhere.
Except for ethnic and religious conflicts and diversity issues, this in-
crease has hardly put cultural policy as such at the top of the political
agenda locally, nationally or internationally. As a political and economic

public domain culture is small (1,2 % of total state expenditure in Sweden, 2,5 % of EU GNP) and the conflict level in cultural policy areas is usually low, but with a clearly growing interest. Three factors may explain this political awakening of culture: new information technologies, multicultural society with mass migration and global media, and the instrumentalisation of culture as a resource for economic growth, not least in areas tormented by withering industrial employment (*Compendium of European Cultural Policies and Trends* 2007). A level of cultural policy and systems of regional development funds for culture-related projects are emerging within the EU, whose debated new constitution explicitly emphasises the importance of various symbolisms of European identity, offering an indication of the pivotal role of cultural dimensions also in this initially primarily economic union (Fornäs 2007b).

There seems to be a growing belief among local politicians in culture as a positive social force creating happiness, prosperity and work for inhabitants, as part of a post-industrial discourse (van den Berg 2001, 2002, Evans 1997, Hauptmann 2001, Braunerhielm 2004, Larsson 2003a, 2003b, Karlsson 2003). A process of urbanisation provokes new counter-measures in rural and small-town provinces where issues of culture, tourism and recreation gain in importance (Edling 1996, Aronsson 2000, Zander 2001, Edquist 2001, Ljungström 2002, Rodell 2002, Gemzöe et al. 2006). There is a curious dialectics of culturalisation and economisation here, in that the culturalisation of political and economic areas goes hand in hand with a marketisation or instrumentalisation of the cultural sphere. The new roles for culture are increasingly embedded in (other) political spheres, such as those for trade and industry, regional and infrastructural development or social integration.

The general intellectual ideas of culturalisation outlined in the first focus area are thus operationalised in political discourses and practices, which in the reverse direction also inspire the development of new theories. This area of political applications may be approached from two directions. On one hand, one may comparatively study cultural policy debates and documents on local/regional, national and international levels. A substantial policy differentiation seems to have occurred since the 1970s, separating the foci of cultural policies on the local, the national and the international level, thus creating new tensions between them. On the other hand, case studies of practical policy making on the regional and local level, focusing on the use of cultural resources and means for development, cast light on the complex dynamics involved in

such processes of planning and regulating the role of material spaces and places for everyday life, movement and empowerment.

The meaning of culture in national and international cultural policy rhetoric has changed considerably during the post-war period. Up to the 1960s the master paradigm was still that of "civilisation" and "spiritual cultivation" – an *elevatory paradigm* introduced in the 19th century as a modern, "progressive" supplement to the long tradition of political uses of culture for the public representation and celebration of power and social order (Bauman 1997, Bennett 1995). In the 1960s and 70s this paradigm shifted into the *cultural welfare paradigm*, focusing on the public procurement of resources for the consumption of artistic goods of ascertained aesthetic quality (Nilsson 2003).

A new *civil development paradigm* has recently emerged internationally, marked by (1) an *instrumentalisation* of culture for boosting economic growth; (2) an *anthropologisation* of cultural policy as tool for social development and multicultural integration; and (3) a *civilisation* of cultural policy into mobilising civil society resources for sustainable development (Cliche et al. 2002, Mercer 2002, Duelund 2003). The worldwide success of culture as a means of local socio-economic development combines these characteristics in various proportions, depending on the policy level. Preliminary investigations suggest a process of differentiation: in the 1970s cultural policy rhetoric on the local, national and international level were much more coherent than today, when responsibilities are more divided between levels. The rise of interest in cultural policy on the international level (Unesco, EU) primarily relates to social cohesion, ethnic conflict and cultural diversity. On the local/regional level culture is mainly utilised as a resource for economic growth and regional development. Only on the national level, cultural policy remains centred on arts, heritage, media, liberal education and popular creativity. Countries like Sweden here reveal stability, while a few countries – like the UK under Blair – have embarked on an instrumentalising economistic path refocusing cultural policy on the cultural industries rather than on arts and heritage. This level-differentiating tendency has created tensions in the system of cultural policy generally, as regions want to escape state regulations, while emergent EU policies sometimes challenge national policies, with §151 in the Maastricht Treaty as a cornerstone, restricting EU cultural policy competence over

member states.

Cultural policy trends may be discerned by comparative studies of documents from Unesco, EU and NGOs like the European Cultural Foundation, including the Council of Europe project *Compendium of European Cultural Policies and Trends* annually updated since 1998 with information on 38 European countries as well as regional and local trends. The growing number of Cultural Policy Observatories all over the world is also useful here, including SweCult. Recent materials on cultural policies at the national level are available on Government web sites. A questionnaire carried out by Tema Q in 2003 on the content of cultural policy in 40 Unesco member states is also relevant to this thematics (Cavallin & Harding 2003). New work at Tema Q has also shed light on national and multicultural aspects of Swedish cultural policy (Egeland 2007 and Harding 2007; compare also Frenander 1999 and Sundgren 2007)

LOCALISING IDENTITY, ATTRACTION AND EXPERIENCE

The politics of industry, trade, transport and building links culture with politics, channelling conflicting sectors and group interests, with asymmetric class, gender, ethnicity and age implications, where for instance economy tends to be more highly valued than culture and production more than reproduction (Friberg & Larsson 2002, Friberg 2006). Local and regional policy processes shed light on what precise role cultural factors are given in political practice and regional planning, where certain conceptions of human life tend to be dominant. The rhetoric of a new role for culture for economic development and political practice on various levels often carry hidden implications for values and norms.

Three principal kinds of processes may be discerned, focusing on efforts to either identify localities, attract people or market experiences, even though they are all in most cases normally combined. These examples of local cultural enterprises emphasise the stern competition on this peculiar market and the lack of knowledge of what actually creates success (Törnqvist 1983, 2004; Andersson 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Lagergren 2002).

1. One example is the culturally based strengthening of a local identity, for instance in the North Sweden ISKA project for Cultural Heritage of Industrial Society in Västernorrland (www.iska.nu). Each region formulates its developmental strategies by marking its unique identity on the map, as an effect of increasing competition between

regions on both a national and a European level. Still, the strategies tend to be rather similar everywhere, dominated by economic growth linked to strong industries with improved transport and other physical as well as educational and cultural infrastructures. The centrality of communications make region into "flow spaces" where administrative borders erode but are also safeguarded. Municipal representatives use culture as an instrument to display the attractiveness of their locality, thus aestheticising their own municipality as a cultural commodity filled with pleasant experiences and promises of a good life. Public arts, design and marketing take part in culturalising trends where processes of modernisation tend to look for situated qualities in historical roots. However, there is a limit as to how far such cultural engineering can be driven without losing touch with citizens' own collective identities. At some point, successful local empowerment turns into alienating failure. The quest for identity often refers to some glorious past, from the heyday of those industrial enterprises that once made up the backbone of local society. Small local museums, various collections, theatrical performances initiated and run by local amateurs or semi-professionals get support from the municipality. The aim is not primarily to attract tourists, but also to make inhabitants feel proud and want to stay. A strong local identity is a latent force for empowering the municipality and its inhabitants. Different cases offer shifting evidence as to which segments among old and new inhabitants (including migrants and young people, men and women) are actually integrated by the dominant local visions of identity, as there is a precarious balance of including and excluding mechanisms.

2. Another example concerns strategies used by large, mid-size and smaller cities as well as rural municipalities to attract taxpayers to live there. These strategies include efforts to provide competitive housing, community service, communications, environment, leisure and cultural supply that utilise aesthetic and experiential aspects, for instance by opening previously protected waterfront areas for new lakeside settlements. The small town feeling once had an attractive aura in itself, but today the urban image of big cities seems increasingly popular in this struggle. Inner cities tend to be condensed, with a multiplicity of fancy buildings, gated communities, transport centres and cultural institutions. But there is also a demand for ecological values, refreshing nature and quiet peace. There are numerous tensions and mutual dependences in this competition between communities and regions for inhabitants and commuters. Again, shifting political processes and practices are in play

here, resulting in a dynamic balance between diverging interests. The prevailing visions of politicians and town planners are sometimes anchored in common people's lifestyles and long-term preferences, at other times less so, resulting in conflicts and debates arise around the role of culture for enhancing local life.

3. A third way for municipalities to attract people is to create new cultural environments for experience production, to be examined in a third case study. This has long been an international trend, particularly for recovering decaying industrial big city areas through docklands developments, but is now spreading and under different circumstances translated also to smaller municipalities, in Sweden and elsewhere. Old industrial buildings are restored and filled with craftsmen and cultural workers; the rural Österlen in south Sweden is marketed as a paradise for artists and galleries. Festivals, markets, popular sports events and hybrid arenas for thousands of spectators (used for everything from ice hockey and horse shows to rock concerts and musicals) are other examples. The host municipalities are often deeply involved in these enterprises, and such economically motivated culturalisation of local environments have effects that need to be more closely assessed. Some municipalities may drive each other out of the market in their competition for visibility, while in other cases new forms of inter-regional co-operation and even fusion helps avoiding such disasters. Again, it is interesting to investigate which activities are prioritised, and how decisions are made – by whom and on behalf of which citizens, in terms of gender, ethnicity, class and age.

3.3. PUBLIC LIFEWORLDS: CULTURALISING PUBLIC DOMAINS

A third main focus area is formed as processes and discourses of culturalisation affect the communicative arenas of *media and public spheres* that interconnect people's everyday lifeworlds. As related to collective human activity, culturalisation is clearly discernible in the particularly dense locations of such activity. This is true for cities, but also for communication media. Where cities are condensations in the networks of society, media are likewise nodes in the grids of culture. Their shifting interrelations and the expansion of both of them testify to a growing weight of the cultural in the social. Here, the alleged expansion of culture is thus visible in at least two ways: in a penetration of

mediated communication in city centres and other physical locations of human interaction (activating ontological and hermeneutic dimensions of culture), and in an expansion of the cultural public sphere and corresponding media genres (related to the aesthetic dimension).

Media have been defined as machineries of meaning forming the specific technology of culture (Hannerz 1990, 1992). Culturalisation therefore closely links to mediatisation: a processual growth in extent, efficiency and urgency of media. It is often assumed that communication media through processes of mediatisation and fictionalisation tend to replace the real with the virtual, substituting symbolic spaces for material worlds of interaction. The number of media clearly rises, as does the human time spent on using them, but it is not quite as clear whether such quantitative trends also imply a qualitative growth in importance. Mediated images and symbolic forms played an enormous role also for pre- and early modern societies, where narrated myths and religious rituals strongly determined how people thought and acted. The importance of the Bible centuries ago might for instance be fully comparable to that of television today, and most Europeans of the 19th century got their image of America almost exclusively from letters and the press, while increasingly many today have first-hand experiences through mass tourism. People's lifeworlds have always been mediated and "artificial", and against the idea that the world has turned into an endless array of simulacra, one may equally well identify the interaction with media as itself a highly real, material and embodied practice. Another common diagnosis is that the political public sphere of news, information and serious debate is losing ground to the cultural one of entertainment and popular culture. Again, this may partly be balanced by a kind of politicisation of the latter. It remains unclear whether hybrid forms blurring the borders between cultural and non-cultural media genres are an index of culturalisation or the reverse. Yet, the relation of the cultural to the political public sphere appears crucial to understanding culturalisation. As has been shown by a range of media reception studies, media have both differentiating and homogenising effects, and authoritarian as well as emancipatory potentials, so that the political and ethical implications of mediatisation form an open dialectic (Habermas 1981/1984-1987).

Many culturalisation discourses thus relate to forms of communication in spaces for human interaction, as part of a third sector of civil society and lifeworld-based media and public spheres where culture is rooted in the everyday lives of citizens and consumers. Such discourses activate ontological and aesthetic dimensions of culture, by thematising

the human imagination and signifying practices in relation to material nature as well as the role of arts and entertainments in social interaction. If culture expands, this is not only visible in theoretical concepts and political planning, but also in the urban environments, geographic locations and media genres that function as both physical and virtual forums for human interaction. Combining media studies and urban studies makes it possible to cross-read the developments of media genres and of urban spaces, shedding light on the balance and interfaces between physical locations for situated, co-present social practices and the interactive virtual worlds formed by a differentiated set of communication media. There is much theoretical speculation but little empirical evidence of changing relations between public places, spaces and spheres. The symbolic level may have been expanded through the addition of new media and the increasing time people spend on media use, but this remains to be firmly proved. There is still a lack of knowledge of the precise place and role in and for big cities of some key genres and forms of media culture, such as news journalism, film, popular music and Internet websites. Two aspects may be discerned in the double determination whereby media represent urban public spaces and are simultaneously framed by them, focusing on either the mediatisation of urban space or the aestheticisation of media space.

CULTURE IN URBAN SPACES

Culturalisation seems to imply a growth of the number and capacity of mediated representations and mediating tools, and a wide and deep penetration of mediated communication in all spaces and places where people interact. This is often taken for granted as valid for all conceivable locations in society, and not least for city centres, where media play a key role in identifying and ascribing meaning to the places people populate – either physically or virtually. In interplay between place, media and meaning, representations of a metropolitan place contribute to its magnetic attractions and interrelate with the confrontations between social groups who invest it with contrasting meanings.

The relationship between physical and virtual space is complex and dynamic, as cultural processes construct contested meanings of contemporary urban settings. Cross-reading studies of how cities are represented and imagined in media texts with research on how media are situated and used in city spaces open up the full dialectics between the two nodal sites of interaction summed up in the fusion concept of "Me-

diaCities" (Fornäs 2007a). The media/cities interface is to be understood relationally, approaching the communicative interactions between different cities (for instance capitals and metropolitan centres in a handful of different countries) and genres (news, songs, televised entertainment, films, tourism information and websites), to find the ways they link to each other by identifications and distinctions. Media fuel people's movements through and between cities, actively co-constructing geographic space.

The interplay between material sites and virtual representations affects hierarchies of local, national and transnational identifications. The construction of place is a central theme in a period where global cultural flows span great distances at the same time that localised "place identities" are carefully crafted. The double image of city space as both specific and universal is mediated in a variety of ways through monuments, works of art, songs, poetry, novels and the press (Benjamin 1982/1999, Lefebvre 1996, Sassen 2000, Blum 2003, Massey 2007, Pile 2005, Ristilammi 2005, Østerberg 1998/2000). Urban spaces are dominant contexts and themes of media texts, as sites of transitory meetings and experiences, but also as carriers of memory and tradition. People are drawn to city cores, seeking excitement and stimulation in "the centre of events". Conflicts arise over access to urban space between public institutions, commercial interests, criminal networks, oppositional movements and marginalised groups, in an intersectional interplay between gender, class, age and ethnicity. Some locations acquire a "secular holiness" as sites of pilgrimage. Traces and memories of events charge places with meaning, being regularly re-enacted and commemorated. Transnational networks emerge of metropolitan cultures, in which city identifications compete and intersect in processes of "glocalisation", mediatising city spaces as locally specific but also as symbols of transnational urbanity. Cities may also raise their profiles as environmentally safe and sounds places to live and work. A growing set of media and symbols are used in this process, articulating processes of aestheticisation, visualisation, fictionalisation and reflexivisation in city space.

In city sites (and media texts representing such urban spaces), cultural borders are negotiated along such dimensions as centre vs. periphery, hegemonic vs. subcultural forms of expression, private vs. public activities, and intersections between gender, class, age and ethnicity. There is also a tension of culture vs. nature, for example between buildings and access to green space and water. This culturalisation of nature is a particular feature of the Nordic tradition, and is evident in the me-

diatisation of its cities, blurring the border between nature and culture. Cherished quasi-rural city places tame and domesticate nature but also exploit wilderness, in a complex interplay with the built environment that is experienced as an urban jungle, full of adventure and danger. For example, specific physical sites in central Stockholm, such as the ancient Kungsträdgården and the new Sergels torg, are experienced and mediated as either linked or contrasted to other sites in Stockholm and to other capitals, and activating shifting historical trajectories and memories of previous events in these sites. The role of mediation, imagination and symbolism in making place identities is thus one way to approach the processes of culturalisation in public space.

CULTURE IN MEDIA SPHERES

A second sub-direction in this focus area focuses the media world, mapping the relative position of cultural public spheres, topics and genres, and overviewing how culturalisation topics have been represented in key texts of selected aesthetic fields. Besides political institutions and discourses, the public sphere has always also had a cultural branch, including high and popular art but also sports and religion, which is quite as influential to the formation of opinions and identities. Compared to the political public sphere, the cultural public sphere has been largely neglected by mainstream media research and political science. Still, it was essential in the early formation of the modern public sphere (Habermas 1962/1989) and is often seen as having grown in importance in late modernity, as entertainment and aesthetics are seen to invade all kinds of factual information and news genres as well.

The cultural public sphere has in different historical phases been variously constructed and framed by the press, book publishing, the cultural industries, public broadcasting, the Internet and other media of communication. Culturalisation may be mapped by the shifting balance and interface between cultural branches or genres in relation to other media areas, but also through the ways it has itself been thematised in selected narratives within the press, literary fictions, films, songs and websites.

In both these directions, a considerable amount of research at Tema Q has started to make considerable advances. Johan Fornäs, Karin Becker and Erling Bjurström have for a long time been involved in several contexts with such a focus. In the second half of the 1990s, they took part in Jostein Gripsrud's Nordic network programme "Cultural

Disorder", where late modern changes in culture and the media were discussed, related to transformations of the public sphere. A focus was there on how borders were challenged between high and low, foreign and domestic, and fiction and fact, and where the latter in particular implies a moving boundary between culture and non-culture (in the aesthetic sense).

In the late 1990s, Fornäs, Becker and Bjurström started the large media-ethnographic Passages project, in which some fifteen scholars from various disciplines studied culture and media consumption, starting in a Swedish shopping centre (Bjurström et al. 2000, Becker et al. 2001 and 2002, Gemzöe 2004 and Fornäs et al. 2007). On one hand this project developed ideas of intermediality and media transformations that belong to the second line of thought. But equally important, the project came to focus much on the control over public space, and thus the interfaces between media uses and the built urban environment, feeding directly into the first subtheme.

Meanwhile, Fornäs and Becker were also active members in the European Science Foundation programme called "Changing Media, Changing Europe" (1998-2004), where their particular team of fifteen reknown European cultural studies and media scholars made a series of study visits to European cities (Amsterdam, Berlin, Bilbao, Budapest, Copenhagen, Istanbul, Nice, Palermo etc.) and collectively investigated how various media were used to form local, urban, national and regional cultural identities. For a joint edited volume they have contributed analyses of transnational identifications in tourist photography and euro money designs (Uricchio 2008, Fornäs 2007b), and another book from the same programme has analysed changes in the concepts of audiences and publics, which is also highly relevant to this focus area (Livingstone 2005).

This ESF programme in turn built a useful international network that has since then been used to prepare for new European research on how cities and media interact. A EU research project is being discussed, and as a first step, Fornäs organised an ESF Research Conference called "Cities and Media: Cultural Perspectives on Urban Identities in a Mediatized World" 2006, with the other Tema Q professors as session chairs (Fornäs 2007a).

Besides these collective ventures, much of the individual research work and writing of Becker, Bjurström and Fornäs, but also Bodil Axelsson, Martin Kylhammar, Patrik Lundell and several doctoral students at Tema Q are relevant for understanding the transformations of me-

diated culture and the public sphere, both historically and in the present, depicting the faces of mediatisation in a range of different media genres and sociocultural settings (Axelsson 2003, Egeland 2007, Fredriksson forthcoming, Gunnarsson 2006, Jarlbrink 2008, Kylhammar 2004, Kylhammar & Battail 2003 & 2006, Lundell 2002, Nyblom 2008, Seifarth 2007, Werner forthcoming). The more recent addition to Tema Q of Roger Qvarsell and two PhD students with an interest in visual culture and the history of consumption adds further momentum here (see for instance Qvarsell & Torell 2005; Lee forthcoming). Part of the ongoing work on urban culture is likewise highly relevant, since they also touch upon how media processes intervene in city planning and urban tourism (Brusman 2008, Friberg et al. 2005, Legnér 2007, Rindzeviciute forthcoming).

3.4. COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS: CULTURALISING THE PAST

A fourth focus area can be constructed around the ways in which processes of culturalisation are shaped or thematised by *collective representations of history*. Myth and tradition seem to be superseded by a reflexive historical consciousness, where change and progress are key values. Collectively organised forms of narrating, performing and understanding historical progression are themselves crucial keys to culturalisation, linked to hermeneutic reflexivity as well as the ontological dimension.

One of the main features of the long-term culturalisation process is the creation of a reflexive historical consciousness that denigrates myth and tradition as pre-modern modes of relating to the past (Iggers 1997, Breisach 1994). Change and progress became new dominant modes for the meaning of history, with the "End of History" (Fukuyama 1992) as an extreme case. Such transformations of the acknowledged formative powers of the past may be studied through the shifting ways in which the past is made present (visible, alive, performed and meaningful) by collective representations in the present, thereby interpreting the possible horizon for action and producing guiding utopias. The professionalisation of history as a scientific endeavour mapping "wie es eigentlich gewesen" (Ranke) placed academic historians in a marginal position in the dynamic history culture driven by quite other motives. Recently however, academic research has acknowledged the power of public

history and the heritage industry, interrogating the existential, economical, political, ideological and social uses made of culturally represented and recreated pasts (Eriksen 1996, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, Eriksen 1999, Aronsson 2004). The *uses of history* concept depicts processes that activate specific parts of the culture of history to form public opinions and communities of memory, leading in turn to a historical consciousness that links past, present and future (Koselleck 1979/1985, 2002, Lowenthal 1985, Assmann 1997, Rüsen 2002, Petersson 2003, Ricoeur 2004). The impact of a specific form of historical narrative depends on its combined uses in several spheres: commercial, political and personal. When a specific past epoch, event or place attracts more interest than others, this occurs because it co-articulates values in all these channels. Ideas of culturalisation are rooted in a changing historical consciousness, which is made visible in the ways the past is reconstructed and used for present concerns, in particular for constructing collective representations in the public sphere.

The development of historical culture is commonly traced as a progression of changing uses of the past, from the pre-modern (traditional, religious, dynastic), over the modern (rational, scientific, national), to the post-modern (fragmented, marketised, individualised). This Western idea of rapid epochal change is here re-examined as a process of culturalisation that may not be new but an increasingly reflexive project where a widening sphere of phenomena are pulled into the quest for historical consciousness that assigns meaning and legitimacy to the past. Culturalisation affects the forms of past representations and expands its main contents and actors from state and politics over the social and economic sphere to culture and religion. Different aspects of life are in different historical periods historicised and brought into the reflexive production of cultural identity, making the past privately and publicly viable. Shifting narratives, institutions, media, experiential modes and aesthetic techniques are thereby used to bring the past to presence. Textual and visual representations are constantly renewed by technical and market innovations, for example cheap printing techniques that facilitated historical novels, or digital techniques that offer the possibility to follow combat scenes from a moving subjective position. Reconstructions of cultural heritage at institutions like the museum have assimilated forms from commercial display and entertainment (Ekström 1994, Bennett 1995, Sandberg 2003). The past is never forgotten but constantly reinterpreted and re-presented in new experiential modes, with reliance on inherited knowledge, institutions and narratives as well as a dynamic

traffic between private and public arenas.

Again, two intersecting directions may be discerned: on one hand the general forms of popular and commercial collecting, and on the other the institutionalised practices of national museums which are also relevant to political developmental practices where past heritage is used as a resource for survival and growth.

Several projects at Tema Q have already yielded results in this area. Private and public aspects often intersect when a public use of history does have an impact on local and national identity politics, as for the anniversary jubilees of St Bridget and St Olav in Sweden's and Norway's different national contexts (Lindaräng 2007). Norwegian school trips organised to German holocaust camps as sights of evil promote both Norwegian national values and universal human rights, while being ritual steps in the socialisation of youth into adulthood (Kverndokk 2007). This use of places of evil and sorrow as a dominating feature of public political use of the past is in other projects contrasted to other modes of localised remembering, for instance in places interpreted by local history societies as havens of trust and nostalgia (Eskilsson 2008) or in the transformation of industrial decline to industrial heritage as a vehicle for regeneration (Aronsson et al. forthcoming). The ambiguity of the meaning of traditional national heritage in the eyes of the professsional organisers and the public uses of these sights gives a new understanding of what cultural heritage might mean (Andersson 2008). History writing by and on national heritage institutions is effectively producing a neat and tidy ancient road to the present, in order to legitimise the current political agenda, while a much more open-ended use of the past was at hand in the heyday of nationalism around 1900 (Hillström 2006).

An international approach to these issues is made in an ambitious comparative scheme investigating the identity work of national museums (www.namu.se). A Nordic comparative project poses more specific questions concerning how the myth of a common Nordic culture is put to play in different national contexts, starting from the hypothesis that this myth has negotiated conflicts and helped develop a peaceful political culture. Both programmes are coordinated by Peter Aronsson.

COLLECTING PRACTICES

Collecting is a paradigmatic form of ontological culturalisation, preserving traces of the past and contributing to the progressive accumulation and institutionalisation of culture by transforming tools and other

use-objects into cultural items for aesthetic contemplation and for identifying individuals or communities. In highly complex ways, time is a fundamental vector of collecting. Depending on their social biography, objects "possess" and are bound to a certain time (cf. Appadurai 1986), marking continuity or discontinuity in history, symbolising emergence or nostalgia, and contributing to the temporalisation of everyday life. Collecting is thus a basic form of relating to the past and giving meaning to historical processes, including that of culturalisation itself.

Collecting thus expands the reach of culture. It exists almost everywhere, with strong historical continuities (Pomian 1990, Belk 1995). Still, practices of collecting have changed continually since the transit from hunting and gathering to the agrarian economy and then a series of early civilisations. In Middle Age Europe, collecting took on a public appearance, largely confined to royal treasure chambers and the church, while private collecting rose in the Renaissance and expanded in subsequent centuries, with printing, colonialism, capitalism and industrialism. Already the 16th to 19th centuries, cabinets of curiosities heralded contemporary processes of experientalisation, theatricalisation and aestheticisation. The expansion of the consumer market fuelled private collecting, while the consolidation of nation states pushed public collecting forward in archives, libraries and museums, with the 19th century as a golden age where collecting turned into a passion and new mass markets were created for collectibles, with antique shops, curio shops, art galleries and second-hand bookshops. Collectors redefined the use values of many everyday things of consumption, with stamp collecting as a prime example. Collecting is also marked by social distinctions in terms of class, gender, and ethnicity. Serious and professional male collectors of *objets d'art* and rare objects are distinguished from more mundane collectors of ordinary gadgets, and female collecting is made invisible. The historical link to national heritage and colonial relations has added a strong element of ethnic dominance and exoticism.

Contemporary collecting is highly diverse, and driven by sometimes contradictory motives (Belk 1995, Pearce 1995 & 1998, Bjurström 2002). Remaining a fundamental process of culturalisation, its importance to public cultural policy is diminishing. There is an increasing attention to the desires of the collector and the pleasures of the audiences of artefacts on display. There is also a current boom of new kinds of commercial, private or semi-public museum displays and collecting of popular or commercial culture, especially records and music. This process is partly dependent on digitalisation and remediation (Bolter &

Grusin 1999). Other relevant factors are new taste formations, popular connoisseurship and the stylisation of life, creating a demand and use for Internet web pages, auction sites, on-line buying and virtual communities. Media have been attractive collectibles since the dawn of mass production. Presently, record collecting is in a state of transition and strongly affected by the remediation of CD-records to computer-networked MP3-files, replacing the physical record by endlessly reproducible and communicable virtual bits. Music collectors as examples of contemporary transformations of private collecting practices and new commercial forms of display can be compared to institutional museum practices that are also changing in our time. A third example is private genealogists who collect lines of ancestors who, like artefacts from the past, may be used as tools for understanding oneself and representing or boosting identities. Theories of collection, gift exchange, consumption, cultural capital, remediation and memory are relevant here (Bourdieu 1979/1984, Belk 1995, Bennet 1995, Pearce 1995, 1998, Ricoeur 2000/2004, Bjurström 2002, Fornäs et al. 2007).

INSTITUTIONALISED COMMUNITY

The public display of the past in museums grows out of collecting practices and its production of an infrastructure for cultural heritage is negotiated between civil society and the state in the public sphere. Public national museums are official representations of nation states, where narrative and aesthetic techniques are used for bringing the past alive in elaborating national histories that support collective identifications of imaginary communities, renegotiating distinctions between fact and fiction, private and public, nature and culture, male and female, us and them. Different aesthetic forms of documentation, knowledge, narrative and display of the past may be analysed, using theories of performance to understand the enactment and experience of time and place (Klein 1995, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, Gustafsson 2002). Theories on chronotopes, localisation and place/space likewise shed light on the transformation of a territory to a meaningful place and a landscape (Bakhtin 1986, Nora & Kritzman 1996, Rogoff 2000, Massey 2005).

In Swedish history, four periods are characterised by intense interest in history and the uses of artefacts and performances to reframe experiences of the past, making visible how the concept of nation is transformed through culturalisation and to what extent customary epochal distinctions are valid. (1) During the 1660s-1690s the first general

inventory of archaeological sites and artefacts was carried out, assigning them explanatory value in making past bear on the present and future, connecting the state to the narrative of the Bible and to classical Antiquity. (2) The 1820s-1830s were characterised by the discovery of peasant culture as authentic bearer of oral tradition. (3) In the 1890s-1910s, the concept of the "fatherland" as origin and repository of Swedish history gained a dominant role, while the transition from agrarian to industrial mass-consuming society was negotiated by institutional memory. (4) In the 1990s, a crisis of confidence in Swedish culture gave rise to new, individualistic uses of the past in popular media and role-play, fostering a renaissance for national histories in wide public history sectors. Each subsequent use of history contains relics of prior figures, so that meanings accumulate and become refigured.

Even more explicitly than private collections, the past heritage of public museums is politically instrumentalised in cultural policy and regional development. Efforts are made to transgress inherited ethnic constructions of nation-states in favour of multicultural inclusion and hybridity, and to forge transnational links to boost economic development. The EU regional programmes are a key factor, but all over the world, local, regional and national identities based on reconstructions of the past are renegotiated in response to the challenges of globalisation. In spite of professional differentiation, there is always a transfer of aesthetic techniques between these different subfields of history-making, linking art, literature, architecture, markets and identity politics.

3.5. BORDER STRUGGLE: CULTURALISING BOUNDARY DISPUTES

Finally, a fifth focus area concerns where, when and how expansions of cultural areas have made conflicting definitions and values visible in open clashes or *border struggles in public debates and court cases*. If culture is in any way becoming more critical to society as a whole, this should lead to transgression and relocation of its borders, sometimes through negotiations or open conflicts, visible in court cases and heated public debates.

On certain occasions, public struggles erupt when competing actors clash on how to define and delimit culture, momentarily making underlying structures and ongoing transformations visible. Since the 19th century, claims for artistic freedom and autonomy draw boundaries around

the auraticised objects and practices of the cultural sphere. But if culturalisation processes pull new areas into the cultural field, public conflicts arise that strive to decide the status of provoking or contested phenomena and distinguish the cultural from the non-cultural. New borders lead to new confrontations between aesthetic, ethical, judicial, political and commercial criteria. Other borderlines are challenged and redrawn within the cultural sphere, for instance between high arts and low entertainment, fact and fiction, male and female, local and global, domestic and foreign, as well as between different media genres. Border struggles are linked to processes of globalisation and mediatisation, in that intensified cross-global flows confront and problematise established local and national norms for cultural production and circulation. At the same time, new and hybrid media technologies enable unforeseen norm-breaking practices that call for refined regulation, for instance of copyright and other authorial rights, public access and freedom of expression.

The external and internal borders around and within the cultural sphere have been transgressed, challenged and reinforced in different ways in different countries, artforms, phases and directions. The specific societal arena here consists of court cases and public debates with relevance to definitions of culture. In order to understand the linkages between such open conflicts and the discriminations made by people in everyday life, one also needs to relate such open struggles to how cultural boundaries are ordinarily constructed in strategically selected practices within cultural production, consumption and policy.

The external boundaries separating culture from other societal spheres are directly relevant to the definition of culture and the discourses of culturalisation. Just like all social spheres have repercussions for culture, cultural aspects inversely are present in all areas of society, making it a matter of negotiation whether a specific phenomenon or form of activity be classified in cultural terms or seen as something else. Quarrels have for instance been made concerning the inclusion of entertainment, youth culture, design, games or sports into the cultural field. Gendered power structures may for instance lie behind the relative lack of efforts to also include the area of reproduction, care and health under the cultural umbrella.

The internal borders between types of culture include the vertical distinctions between consecrated arts and popular culture. This high/low divide has for long been controversial. Its trajectory is part of a longterm process of culturalisation, based on a sacralisation of art, cultivation of the self (*Bildung*), refinement of taste, growth of popular and

higher education, and new institutional frameworks separating "culture" and "commerce", linked to a tension between commodification and state governance. When the acquisition of taste became a matter of proper education more than of social class heritage, art took on a new importance in cultural life, and took over many of the religious functions as site for devotion. In the 18th century, culture, aesthetics, taste and art became controversial topics and got their modern meanings with Hutcheson, Burke, Hume, Baumgarten, Kant, Hegel and others (Williams 1976/1988, Dickie 1996). 19th-century reformers and theoreticians (Arnold, Eastlake, Ruskin, van Falke) then made increasingly sharp distinctions between levels of culture in terms of the serious and the vulgar, fearing cultural anarchy and nivellation of "mass society" that was perceived to threaten the civilising project of cultivation. These distinctions became more explicit in the early and mid 20th century with the concept of mass culture and the highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow triad (Rubin 1992, Radway 1997). A counter movement of desacralisation and "nobrow" culture grew from the 1960s onwards, with pop-art, postmodernism, popular culture theory and a critical reappraisal of the classical modernist critique of mass culture as "the low Other" (Huyssen 1986, Twitchell 1992, Seabrook 2000, Collins 2002). A new combinatory sensibility seems to grow among young elites, where a taste for high arts is no longer necessarily accompanied by distaste for popular culture, indicating a defusing of the polarity (Bjurström 1997, 2000). Opinions today diverge, as Bourdieu's work on distinctions (1979/1984) claims that these borders are reproduced, while other sociologists (Schulze, Peterson, Simkus, Storey, Thornton) have traced deficits in this reproduction, and others again (Lyotard, Lash) argue for a breakdown of the divide. Current public debates likewise waver between emphasising or denouncing the persisting depth of the divide, and hailing or regretting its alleged loss of importance (Svenska Akademien 2006). Yet, there is little systematic empirical evidence of such transformations. How does the high/low divide intersect with other social, economic and cultural boundaries? What factors contribute to its institutionalisation and delegitimation? How is it crossed, resisted, contested – or reaffirmed?

There are several sets of cultural theories where border issues are developed in social, anthropological, aesthetic and historical terms (see also Fornäs 2007c and d). Philosophers, historians and social scientists have studied how action types, societal spheres and institutions have historically been differentiated by processes of modernisation (Parsons,

Searle, Habermas, Luhmann, Fraser, Elias, Foucault). The specific field struggles in the cultural sphere have been theorised by cultural sociology, critical theory and cultural studies (Adorno, Bourdieu, Williams, Hall, Frith, Radway, Schulze, Canclini). Others have studied the contradictory efforts of aesthetic avantgardes to erase the boundary between art and life (Bürger & Bürger, Wolff, Huyssen) and the transgressions inscribed in liminal cultural practices (Bakhtin, Turner, Stallybrass & White). Theories of abjection and moral panic are also relevant (Douglas, Kristeva, Stanley Cohen, Thornton), as are ideas of how late modern mediatisation and globalisation have induced a new understanding of geographical boundaries as performance (Massey, Strathern, Thrift) and expanded the scope of identity politics (Barth, Clifford, Gilroy, Ang, Hannerz, Taylor, Benhabib, Young). Inspiring theories of border contestations are also found in gender studies, queer theory, STS, Actor-Network Theory ANT, cybercultural studies and media history (Butler, Haraway, Latour, Callon, Kittler, Wagner, Peters, Bolter & Grusin).

Two main paths may be followed in this area, supplementing cases of open contestation and crisis with the "normal" everyday practices of drawing boundaries.

OPEN STRUGGLES ON THE LIMITS AND DIVISIONS OF CULTURE

On one hand, open struggles over the limits of culture in various periods, countries and symbolic modes (music, images, print and multimedia) may shed light on the mechanisms behind culturalisation as a process and as a discourse, distinguishing its main historical, geographic and sectorial patterns. A diachronic widening of the cultural field should change the relative weight of aesthetics, knowledge, ethics, politics and economy and affect the relative autonomy of the cultural sphere. International comparisons between Sweden as a North European welfare society and other kinds of countries and social systems indicate transnational differences in this process. There are also be significant sectorial differences within the cultural sector between printed and spoken words, drama, music, visual images and moving pictures, with different ways of institutionalising production, distribution and reception.

Examples include the case of Internet media, pirates and copyright; hate speech, censorship and the control of public space; lines drawn between marketing, information, art and entertainment; differentiated tax levels for certain cultural genres; the struggle for recognition among

professional artists and amateur producers; historical trends in the scope and discriminations of cultural criticism in the press; and post-colonial restitutions of cultural heritage. Such cases address a number of specific questions. Which border issues have been activated in various countries, phases and cultural sectors? Which basic values and distinctions have been challenged or confirmed? What is the intersectional role of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, class and age? Which internal borders between cultural domains or genres have been in focus? Which external borders have been questioned, for instance to technology, economy or politics? Under what conditions do social actors (artists, politicians, consumers etc.) decide to apply cultural instead of economic or political criteria in evaluating a contested phenomenon? Where are lines drawn around and between free expression, private and collective ownership, respect for individual integrity and group identity politics for digital copying or provocative art works? How has the autonomy of aesthetic value judgements changed during recent decades? Has its reach been diminished or extended?

VERNACULAR PRACTICES OF REPRODUCING CULTURAL BORDERS

Court and debate cases may be supplemented by studies of how cultural definitions and high/low distinctions of cultural quality are ordinarily made in various forms of cultural production, mediation and consumption, and in cultural policy. How is cultural quality decided within publishing houses, music industries, film and TV production, art museums, advertising agencies, distributors and other mediators of cultural goods? Where and how are the lines drawn between what counts as (high or low) culture and not-culture in each specific field? Can the increasing role be confirmed of cultural intermediaries in the new political economy, as gatekeepers structuring cultural fields? How do consuming users of books, music, films, museums and advertising make judgements on matters of taste, cultural distinctions and quality? And how do producers' and consumers' distinctions relate to those made by state cultural policy, in programmatic discourse as well as in practice. Combining the open struggle cases with the everyday practices of distinction casts light on the shifting shapes of culturalisation that affect institutional dimensions such as those between arts, religion and politics, but also aesthetic issues of taste and status.

A range of past and ongoing research at and around Tema Q is rele-

vant to this focus area. The aforementioned Passages project showed in detail how an urban public space regulated borders between arts and commercial activities, and how cultural, economic and political factors struggle as well as intertwine. Other studies by Erling Bjurström (e.g. 1997, 2000) and Johan Fornäs (2004) deal with high/low distinctions and negotiations, both in the present and in history. Other studies thematize the shifting borderline between culture and politics (Kylhammar & Battail 2003, 2006), the political and moral struggles around popular entertainment around 1900 (Ivarsson Lilieblad forthcoming), the historical development of copyright legislation (Fredriksson forthcoming) and the political and aesthetic aspects of multiculturalism (Egeland 2007).

4. CONCLUSION

This concludes our provisional mapping of current processes and discourses of culturalisation. We have first described the topic in general terms, then outlined its primary dimensions in terms of conceptual frameworks, and finally discussed some focus areas where closer scrutiny seems to be particularly rewarding. The theoretical foundations deserve to be further developed, but then preferably also in dialogue with empirical studies of existing culturalising practices. Several other focus areas for studies of culturalisation could also be invented, and with good reason.

For instance, the current explosion of discourses on climate changes and ecology crises invites a new thinking on how this relates to a widespread sense that human culture in the ontological sense is overdetermining rapidly growing spheres of global nature and even the solar system, adding on to the feeling inherited from Marx, Freud and Nietzsche that "God is dead" and human beings are left alone with a growing responsibility for their own future. (This ontological dimension of the nature/culture divide is touched upon by Eldelin 2006 and Vinterlycka forthcoming.)

Another obvious example is constituted by flexible work-life discourses and practices of postindustrialism or postfordism, where fashion, design and music are considered increasingly important export sectors of

the Swedish economy, and where established structures in cultural work now seem to become increasingly relevant to larger production sections (Stenström 2000, Allvin 2006). This could be related to the political aspects of economic development discussed in focus area 2, or to the academic trends depicted in focus area 1. But it also points in other directions: towards the private sector and the work market, as well as towards ways to construct life and identities in public and private life.

A third option, partly related to the last one, is to focus changes in cultures of consumption, as an extension of the discussion on both public spheres and collecting above in focus areas 3 and 4. At Tema Q, the consumption studies by Erling Bjurström is relevant here, as is the newly added research by Roger Qvarsell, Jenny Lee and Sarah Vinterlycka (Qvarsell & Torell 2005). The idea of an historical transition in society from production to consumption has been there for quite a while, with a range of links to ideas on postmaterial values and postindustrial service economies. The latter two directions could well also fuse into a more general investigation of how the relations between work and leisure has developed empirically and been reformulated in recent culturalisation discourses.

Finally, there is also an interesting and relevant debate in the wake of media history, which goes beyond the spatial concerns with public domains articulated in focus area 3 above (Kittler 1985/1990 and 1997). The historical changes brought forward by new media technologies are certainly profound, even though there is a certain danger of exaggerating this force, as the older debate on technological determinism shows (Williams 1974 versus McLuhan 1964/1987). Johan Fornäs, Patrik Lundell, Johan Jarlbrink, Andreas Nyblom and others at Tema Q have been engaged in this line of research, which has recently experienced a boom within Swedish humanities (Snickars & Trenter 2004, Ekström et al. 2006, Jönsson & Snickars 2007, Jülich et al. 2008).

While this report does not constitute any binding or delimiting programme, it seems to indicate how fruitful a reflection on the basic concepts by which cultural research divides its world may be for the future development of this research. One may discern three main results from Tema Q's initial work on this preliminary investigation:

1. On an institutional level, the Tema Q department and its surrounding context, including ACSIS, CKS and SweCult, has been efficiently established and integrated. Not only have these units been started and gone through a first phase of consolidation. They have also managed to develop considerable co-operation and to take the lead in Linköping

University's ambitions to develop interdisciplinary cultural research and cultural studies as a core priority within the humanities and social sciences, placing this environment in the national and in fact also international forefront in this field. On this basis, it is now time to take new steps forward, by adding new competencies, resources and research directions. The reflections on culturalisation have been essential to this process of integration and consolidation.

2. On the level of scholarly contents, the research behind this report has contributed greatly to Swedish cultural studies at large, in all the subfields touched upon here. Our diversified research on the changing role of culture in society has productively contributed to a richer knowledge basis for future academic work as well as for cultural and policy work outside academia.

3. Finally, this volume reports on an ongoing process of dialogic and interdisciplinary cultural research that has opened up new avenues for critical reflection, theoretical development, methodological exploration and continued empirical studies. If this also inspires the reader of this text to take part in this evolving process, this is a most welcome result.

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ABSTRACT

CULTURE UNBOUND:
DIMENSIONS OF CULTURALISATION

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This report discusses ideas of a radical increase in the significance and scope of culture in modern society, where industrialism is said to have been superseded by a society of information, knowledge and experiences. Issues of cultural identity and community are increasingly focal concerns, the virtual worlds of media culture seem omnipotent, and the cultural sector is growing with each of its recurrent redefinitions. Politics and the economy are supposedly aestheticised, culture and design boost regional development, creativity is a core value. The theses of revolutionary "culturalisation" of society and everyday life have a long history through the various cultural turns proclaimed by scholars as well as in society at large. The report scrutinises some main arguments and their implications, pointing at a need to distinguish historical trends, material processes and ideological discourses. A differentiation is made between five main dimensions of the concept of culture that are associated with specific sets of culturalisation ideas and corresponding transformations of boundaries around and within the cultural field. This discussion also touches upon the position and role of cultural research itself. Examples are given from five focal areas for these processes: academic work, regional politics, public spaces, history constructions and border struggles.

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