



Invitation to workshop: Cultural Institutions and the Culture War

The Library and Cultural Policy Studies Group and the Knowledge Environment *A Questioned Democracy* invite interested researchers to a workshop at Linnæus University on the theme of *Cultural Institutions and the Culture War*. The one-day workshop will take place on October 24th, 2024, at Linnæus University in Växjö, Sweden. The workshop aims to unite researchers from different disciplinary settings who share an interest in exploring democratic challenges and consequences of far-right discourse and hostility directed at cultural institutions.

Cultural Institutions and the Culture War

The political successes of the far-right have been described as the most significant political change of recent decades (Rydgren 2018, Mudde 2019; Norris & Inglehart 2019). This turn is noted in all parts of society, and the cultural sector is no exception. The pervasiveness of far-right discourse has irrevocably affected the ability of the cultural sector to promote pluralism and democracy. Cultural institutions, such as museums and public libraries, are increasingly politicized and turned into ideological symbols in an escalating ‘culture war’ (Harding 2022; Hanell, Carlsson & Engström 2023). Librarians are urged by politicians and the public to cancel LGBTQI-themed or multicultural events (Carlsson, Hanell & Engström 2023), and cultural institutions have resorted to undertake such measures to mitigate the risk of encountering hate speech and harassment from far-right sympathizers. This development presents a challenge to the promotion of key democratic principles within the cultural sector, such as freedom of speech and the free formation of opinions and are by extension challenging democratic governance as such. Recognizing the severity of this development, this workshop seeks to explore ideas, concepts and approaches that allow for new understandings of how to address democratic challenges and consequences of far-right discourse and hostility directed at cultural institutions.

The workshop will also raise questions regarding the challenges cultural policy as a political area faces in the wake of authoritarian values and political parties gaining ground. Liberal democracy still serves as a common foundation for many countries. However, its efficacy in addressing societal challenges is increasingly questioned (Mounk 2018; Norris & Inglehart 2019). Challenges to democracy often stem from critiques of individual and minority rights in favor of populist attitudes, as well as authoritarian and nationalist values. Also, an increasing number of politicians and citizens are engaging in establishment critique, questioning the independence and impartiality of traditional media. This occurs at the



same time as the tone in public discourse is becoming increasingly polarized and heated. What implications does this development hold for cultural policy and cultural policy research?

Join us

If you want to join us, please submit an abstract of app—300 words by June 7th, 2024, on topics related to *Cultural institutions and/or Cultural policy and the culture war*. The event is free of charge. We do not offer any accommodation or support for travels, but meals will be provided. Notice of acceptance and invitation to register for the workshop: June 14th.

Please send your abstract, or any questions concerning the workshop, to hanna.carlsson@lnu.se or fredrik.hanell@lnu.se

When: October 24, from 11.15 to 17.15

Where: Linnaeus University, Växjö, Sweden

Preliminary program

11.15 – 12.00 Welcome and introduction

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch at Teleborg castle

13.00 – 14.00 Keynote by Tobias Harding, Professor in Cultural Policy at University College of South-East Norway

14.00 – 14.10 Break

14.10 – 15.00 Presentations of proposals

15.00 – 15.15 Coffee break

15.15 – 16.00 Presentations of proposals

16.00 – 16.10 Break

16.10 – 16.50 Presentations of proposals

16.50 – 17.15 Closing of the workshop and next steps

18.00 - After work with dinner and drinks (optional and at one's own expense)