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# Results-based steering as a tool for centralized art policy management and instrumentalization? Analysis of the Finnish Arts Council's reformation

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## Abstract

Finland's cultural policy has been relatively stable for decades, but recent years have brought about certain new developments. This article discusses changes in cultural policy management within the Finnish welfare state. The focus is on the reformation of the Finnish Arts Council system between 2013 and 2019. The article considers the evolution of efforts to widen the Arts Council's scope from its traditional art promotion role to harness its work more tightly to serve governmental policies and to adopt performance management practices over recent years. The article examines the steering of the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike), founded in 2013. It analyses different policy instruments used in Taike's steering, such as legal and administrative instruments, as well as subsidies it allocates to cultural actors, to examine general cultural policy intentions and public sector management practices behind Taike's foundation and development. The main research method is a qualitative content analysis supported by data on subsidies to illustrate changes in art funding policies. Taike's scope as an implementer of cultural policy has widened considerably since its foundation. Performance management ties Taike to the government programmes. Social and economic instrumental types are attached thoroughly to Taike's operations along the traditional aesthetic instrumentality. Following the general developments in the Finnish public sector, the role of civil servants has strengthened while the arts field's power has diminished. The current hybrid model of Finnish art policy administration via Taike is found to combine elements of both welfare and competition state steering models. Despite some New Public Management (NPM)-oriented steering mechanisms, the role of laws and resource steering are also central to instrumentalization. Furthermore, endogenous factors, administrative politics, and civil servants of the cultural sector play key roles in instrumentalization.

## Keywords

Cultural policy instrumentalization, performance management, arts council, arm's length, subsidy policy

## Introduction

This article examines the implementation of governance reform in contemporary Finnish cultural policy.<sup>1</sup> On a general level, the discussion considers how strategic performance management and instrumentalist orientations are combined with welfare state cultural policy (e.g. Häyrynen 2018; Duelund 2008). It discusses instrumentalization tendencies within Finnish cultural policy in relation to the changes in state machinery and public management (c.f. Belfiore 2004; Gray 2008). In addition, it discusses how decisive these changes have been (cf. Henningsen & Blomgren 2017). The examinations were accomplished by a case analysis of the restructuration of the Finnish Arts Council system<sup>2</sup> during 2013–2019. The focus is mainly on administrative arrangements. However, as cultural policy is also about continuous political interaction between different stakeholders, such as government and civil society (e.g. Merli 2013; Bell & Oakley 2015: 47–49), the motivation stems from contemplating the broader political actions that are relevant from the standpoint of cultural fields. The focus of the article is on developments during the last 10 years when the Finnish Arts Council (nowadays *The Arts Promotion Centre Finland*, In Finnish *Taiteen edistämiskeskus*, abbreviation *Taike*) reform has been executed.

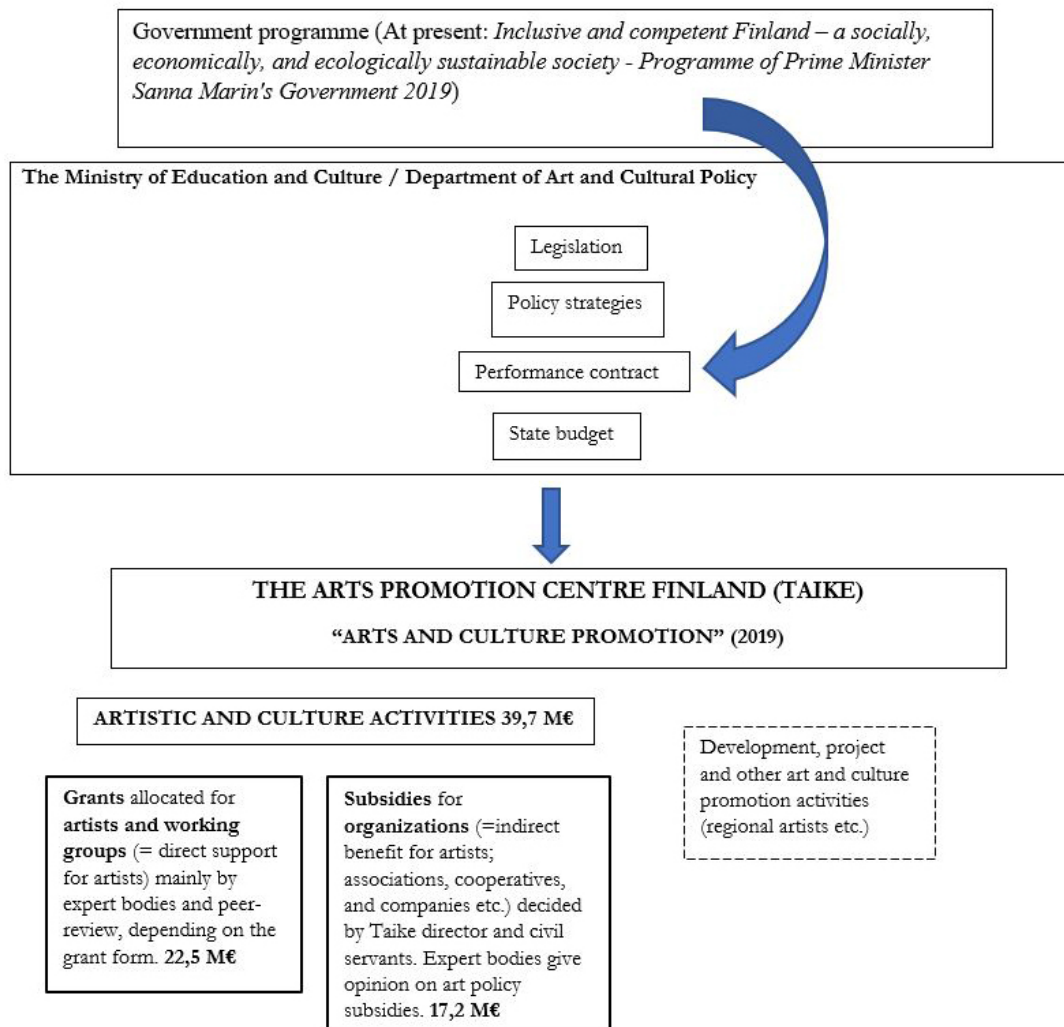
The article is structured in the following way: First, the creation and tasks of the Arts Promotion Centre are illustrated. Then follows a discussion on cultural policy instrumentalization, related developments in Finnish public policy, and cultural policy instruments through which instrumental developments are implemented. Later, research material and questions are introduced. Then, the justification of Taike-reform from the viewpoints of different aspects of instrumentalization is analysed. Taike's performance contracts between 2010–2020 are used to examine what kind of instrumental goals are set for the agency and how it is connected to public policies. Finally, the agency's current operations and subsidy policies are studied to shed light on whether there are, and to what extent, instrumentalist tendencies. Conclusions and implications for further research are made at the end of the article.

## What is the Arts Promotion Centre Finland, and why was it created?

The central role of the ministry and national administration, combined with decentralization and use of expert bodies, have been key historical elements of the Finnish welfare state art administration (Kangas 2003: 91–92; 106; Häyrynen 2018). The Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) is currently a key national expert agency with the objective of implementing the state's arts policies.<sup>3</sup> It operates under the performance management of the Department for Art and Cultural Policy within the Ministry of Education and Culture (there are altogether five performance steered agencies under this department, and many more under other departments). Currently, the Taike has approximately 80 employees (civil servants and regional artists working on projects). In addition, it comprises of 24 expert bodies (central arts council, national and regional arts councils, boards, and a panel). The operations of

- 
1. In many respects the article is based on the material collected and observations made during an evaluation project on Taike (Sokka & Jakonen 2020).
  2. A good overview of the rather complicated Finnish Arts Council system before the Taike-reform is Adams, Fisher, and Ahonen 2004.
  3. In addition to Taike, there are other government agencies and public bodies within the administrative branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Only some of them, such as Taike or the Finnish Heritage Agency, are steered by the Department for Art and Cultural Policy.

the Taike support artistic and cultural activities in the form of awarding both grants for individual artists and subsidies for organizations, as well as development and project activities. Each year, the Taike awards, together with its councils and boards, nearly 40 million euros in grants, prizes, and subsidies. The Ministry allocates the funds to Taike. The amount represents 8% of the total cultural budget of the Ministry (approx. 485 M€ for the year 2020).<sup>4</sup> The funding provided by Taike to support culture and art is divided into several areas (Figure 1).<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 1** The steering of the Arts Promotion Centre Finland and support schemes for arts and culture in 2019.

Taike carries on the activities of the Arts Council Finland (ACF), which was founded in 1968<sup>6</sup> following the examples of the other Nordic countries and Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> ACF was an expert group that took care of art promotion activities within the cultural administration. ACF had

- One must note that more public expenditure on culture can be found in state budget's other sections than the section controlled by the Department for Art and Cultural Policy. For example, the funding for the liberal adult education is located in education budget, and The Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) is funded (over 500 million euros per year) by the Ministry of Transport and Communications.
- The most recent overview in English is “Taike support for Arts Promotion in 2017” (see Karhunen 2018).
- Act on the Organisation of Promotion of the Arts (328/1967), amended several times throughout the decades.
- The Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) was chartered in 1946, and Swedish, Danish and Norwegian models throughout the 1960's and 1970's.

been under repeated, unsuccessful reform attempts over the decades (Kangas & Pirnes 2015:48). The economic recession in the beginning of the 1990s especially placed cultural administration and funding under great pressure. After the millennium, the ministry commissioned an international evaluation of the Finnish system of art councils (Adams et al. 2004). It concluded that an integration of the old, ambiguous system and a better response to societal and cultural needs according to international examples should be, finally, established (see also *Governmental Decision on Arts and Artist Policy*, Minedu 2003: 12). The arts council system was to be consolidated as a “national agency” as part of the “overall clarification” of the cultural administrations structures (Minedu 2009: 29). The Education and Culture Committee of the Finnish Parliament outlined in 2010 that a proposal should be prepared to turn the Arts Council into an “Arts Promotion Centre”. Finally, ACF was converted into a performance supervised, governmental and nationwide agency, Taike, from the beginning of 2013 with a renewed legislation (see HE 52/2012; Finlex 657/2012; 727/2012). The status of Taike as a performance steered, central administration agency differs from the role of the ACF within administrative structures of cultural policy. ACF was an expert and funding body based on the positions of trust and operating in the administrative sector of the ministry. Taike-reform was justified by the fact that ACF had become an unclear and loose structure with mixed job descriptions for authorities and bodies of trust (the national and regional arts councils). Overall, the ministry legitimated the reform by arguing that the whole organization of ACF was “out-of-date” in contemporary society (HE 52/2012; also, Adams et al. 2004).

## Cultural policy and art councils as a part of public policy and the logic of instrumentalization

Cultural policy can be analysed as part of public policy (e.g. Bell & Oakley 2015: 6). As a result, instrumentalism is an inherent feature of cultural policy—it is the conditions, justifications and the nature of instrumentality that varies in different eras<sup>8</sup> (Vestheim 2007). For several decades, regarding the state changes and reforms of public policies that emphasize outputs and use-values (e.g. Gray 2007), public, cultural and art policies have become increasingly connected to strategic policy requirements to achieve a wide variety of societal goals set by central and local governments and active cultural policy actors themselves. The legitimacy of cultural policy has shifted from aesthetical, educational, and democratic instrumentality to the economic and social (Vestheim 2007: 233). There have been varying tendencies to develop cultural policy as an instrument of various non-cultural policy goals and outcomes outside the cultural field (e.g. Kann-Rasmussen 2019; Mangset 2018; Hadley & Gray 2017; Duelund 2008; Belfiore 2004). From the perspective of the cultural sector, both endogenous (internal) and exogenous (external) promoters of instrumentalization have contributed to the development (Gray 2008). In Finland, government programmes and other political strategies have already recognized since the 1990s, the new strategic and instrumental roles of culture in socio-political decision-making (Kangas 2003). As the cultural policy strategy by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture stated over a decade ago—at the time of Taike-reform—the cultural sector is “expected to produce evidence of their impact on societal development” and “cultural policy should address the implementation of integrated themes that cross sectoral boundaries (Minedu 2009: 20; 23).”

8. Already as a part of welfare-state ideology since 1960s, Finnish cultural policy gained instrumental elements as it was included in the discussions of social policy and technocratic planning (Kangas 2003: 86).

Yliaska (2015) analysed that Finnish administrative reforms that fall under the label of New Public Management (NPM), apart from being neoliberal responses to the welfare state crisis (see Häyrynen 2018; cf. Hall 2011), were also a part of a new kind of state interventionism. These doctrines were used as a tool for centralising strategic and financial power in central government. In Finland, NPM has also been applied in the governance of cultural policy from the 1990s onward in the form of performance management, emphasis on policy effectiveness, strategic objectives and increased reporting and evaluations (Häyrynen 2018; Kangas & Pirnes 2015). In Finland, performance management and agreements between sector ministries and their agencies constitute a key steering instrument for central government. Performance management aims for the integration of other steering methods. It is linked to strengthened political control in the overall state machinery, and specifically to the implementation of inter-sectorial policies and the government programme (Peters 2018; Murto 2016; Matthews 2016). In this respect, it is also an instrument for democratic control of arts expenditure—to align the goals of the government representing the people's will with those who benefit from that system (cf. O'Hagan 2016: 249). In addition, after the first wave of disintegrating NPM-reforms since the 1990s, there have been varying tendencies to reorganise government structures and centralize policy steering in Finland since the beginning of the 2000s (Mykkänen 2017; Raunio & Kekkonen 2011). Finnish central governments have continued to apply procedures and reforms to achieve policy cohesion, implement more effective and strategic performance management, and greater coordination of inter-sectorial programmes and policies (Peters 2018: 342; cf. Gray 2008: 213). The goal has been to get each administrative branch of the entire government to adopt broad-based societal objectives and evidence-based practices, such as the use of effectiveness indicators (see Minedu 2011). As Gray (2008) has analysed, these kind of developments have contributed, in complex ways, to instrumental policy forms in the cultural sector. Consequently, in relation to instrumentalization, the ideological question of making actual cultural policy ("value choices") has been translated gradually into more technical ("neutral") issues of impact assessment and evaluation methodologies (Belfiore 2012).

Taike (and its predecessor ACF) can be regarded as a Finnish application of the arts' council model central to cultural policies in Nordic but also many other Western societies (e.g. Throsby 2010). This model has usually been based on an "arm's length" principle in its varied forms and strengths, depending on national and cultural contexts<sup>9</sup>. The "arm's length" is obviously a vague and idealistic concept, but it can be considered a dimension of cultural policy for defending artistic autonomy and the cultural field against inappropriate political interventions (Mangset 2009). Within cultural policy, it can refer to both the presence of an autonomous funding body and decision-making by peer assessment, by either artists or other experts (Bell & Oakley 2015: 125). The Finnish arts council system resorted to the arm's length principle by using the expert bodies in decision-making, but it was never an arm's length organization in the style of e.g. Great Britain. ACF was mainly "an administrator of politically designed statutory support schemes to (individual) artists organized with strong corporatist relations to artist unions (Mangset 2009: 295; cf. Mangset 2015)." Since its foundation in 1968, ACF generally operated at arm's length from government but did not enjoy full

9. Of course, there are many different types of capitalist regimes and varieties of capitalism with different political backgrounds (e.g. Sevänen & Häyrynen 2018: 12). Furthermore, there is also a lot of variation within the state models for cultural policy itself (e.g. Duelund 2003: 20–22; Bell & Oakley 2015: 116). Followingly, there is a lot of variation internationally on how the arm's length principle is actually implemented. The principle is more of an ideal type rarely achieved anywhere as "pure" in practice (Bell & Oakley 2015). Mangset (2009) calls the arm's length "a multidimensional continuum" rather than an absolute principle.

autonomy because the latter gave detailed directions on budgetary matters and the council's financial management was to a large extent carried out by the ministry (Adams et al. 2004).

Like other public organizations, arts councils have also been connected to performance management systems during the past decades following NPM-oriented administrative reforms (Woronkowicz, Rabovsky & Rushton 2019). In addition to the historical task of allocating funding to especially high-quality arts and artists, there have been contemplations on wider objectives and societal benefits of arts funding agencies and arts councils in Finland (e.g. Adams, Ahonen & Fisher 2004) and internationally (e.g. O'Hagan 2016). In many countries, a willingness to develop active cultural policy has contributed to diminishing the impact of the "arm's length" principle (Mangset 2009: 297). Furthermore, Bell and Oakley (2015: 125; see also Lindqvist 2007: 313) have described the development as "shortening the arm's length" which is "attributed at least in part to broader trends in policy, such as the rise of the 'new public management' and the 'instrumentalisation' of culture". Belfiore wrote (2004: 199; see Hadley & Gray 2017: 1-2) that "...the recent evolution of cultural policy can also be seen as one specific area where broader changes in public management style and policy making are reflected." Duelund (2008: 17) illustrated these tendencies by stating that, from the 1990s, Nordic cultural policies entered to a period of "political colonisation" aiming to "increase the political regulation of arts and cultural institutions by means of performance contracts, via administrative centralisation and by transforming the 'unspecified means' allocated on the basis of expert evaluation to 'earmarked' pools for specified and politically defined purposes." Taike-reform has been described (Häyrynen 2015: 68–71) as the biggest revolution in Finnish art administration since the end of the 1960's. It has diminished the power of art fields in comparison with bureaucratic and centralized power. Taike has moved to the decision-making system of the monocratic office, emphasizing the power of the director of the agency. At the same time, the reform enabled the reduction of corporatism in Finnish art administration (Rautiainen 2014; cf. Mangset 2015).

Following these notions, the rest of the article explores the instrumentalization of Finnish art policy through the case analysis of Taike reformation. Both endogenous factors and exogenous pressures related to instrumentalization are analysed. Within this article, the main focus is on the relationship between the ministry and the arts' agency, but also tentative observations are made on how the reformation has affected the relationship between administration and cultural fields (the expert bodies and subsidized art organisations). The article investigates 1) in which ways is instrumentalization manifested in Taike-reform, 2) how and to what extent has the instrumentalization advanced using different policy instruments, and 3) what has changed and on the other hand stayed unaltered in Finnish cultural policy when the ACF was turned into Taike?

## **Research material and methods: cultural policy instruments**

Next, a framework is created for the analysis on whether and how cultural policy instrumentalization is implemented through different instruments used in the steering of Taike: "[T]he use of [a] large number of distinct governmental tools can push actors within policy sectors towards emphasizing certain activities within their work (Gray 2008: 218). " A central question within cultural policy—as within all policies—is what the appropriate policy instruments and organizations are to utilize in turning policy into practice (see Signe 2017; Gray 2015; Vestheim 2007: 226; Duelund 2003a: 22). A policy instrument refers to the techniques, tools or means of government intervention in society to accomplish goals or to solve problems. What is important, according to Vedung (1998: 50), is that the discourse on public policy instru-

ments is ultimately a discourse on power. In Finland, the national cultural policy pursued by the state is steered by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Civil servants are in central position within cultural policy implementation as they prepare strategies, legislation, and budgeting (e.g. Vestheim 2012). To analyse policy implementation crucial for policy instrumentalization, a typology of policy instruments according to the practices of the ministry is used. Performance steering and guidance<sup>10</sup> is usually seen as a “soft” instrument instead of stricter resource and regulative steering (Minedu 2011: 6). The main policy instruments available for the ministry when implementing cultural policy objectives and targets are (Minedu 2017:31): legal regulation (“sticks”), economical means (“carrots”), information (“sermons”), and performance steering (“negotiations”). Note that all the instruments illustrated here were already used in the steering of the former ACF (also performance contracts from the 1990s onwards). Instrumentalization is thus understood particularly as varying changes in the contents of these instruments. Several patterns of different research material related to the different policy steering instruments are deployed. Some material can be regarded as information (e.g. policy strategies), negotiations (e.g. performance contracts), resources (e.g. state and subsidy budget documents), and legal (e.g. Proposal and Act on Taike).

## **The formation of the Arts Promotion Centre from the perspective of instrumentalization**

Connection to the economic instrumentality of the public sector: Enhancing general performance management and effectiveness of the art administration.

The creation of Taike occurred at the moment when developments concerning the possibilities of effective and evidence-based political steering by the Finnish central government were implemented also within cultural policy sector (see Minedu 2011: 6–7).<sup>11</sup> Additionally, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2007–2008<sup>12</sup> the economic and operational resources also for public cultural service production were getting scarcer (e.g. Minedu 2009: 20). This was manifested in Taike-reform as a demand that the new agency “should not produce new financial costs” and concentrate on the “core functions” by “cutting down some operations” (HE 52/2012, 16; 18; 21). The establishment of Taike was linked to long-term Finnish governmental development goals, such as the gradual centralization of power to the central government through more strategic leadership, evidence-based practices, and performance management (cf. Mykkänen 2017). Such NPM themes as enhancing and modernizing the performance management and leadership as well as the more efficient use of resources—economic instrumentality—were used as key justifications for the creation of Taike. It was indicated that the new organization was to be of a central agency type with a “centralized but flexible” organizational structure and a well-functioning and receptive information system. The establishment of the agency was also linked to the development of unification, efficiency, and performance management of the public administration. The performance steering was to be modernized according to the principles of

10. Within Finnish cultural policy, performance agreements are concluded with the agencies and units under its administration, which specify objectives and resources for social impact and operational performance. See <https://minedu.fi/en/culture>

11. Taike was established as part of a program called “Effectiveness and Productivity (2011–2015)” coordinated by the Ministry of Finance in the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education and Culture (see Sokka & Jakonen 2020).

12. Already after the recession and tightening public finances from the early 1990s onwards, more result-oriented and neo-liberal public policies were implemented in Finland.



“state agencies in general”, thus imposing a top-down model of instrumental policy management for the Finnish art sector (cf. Gray 2008): “The reform would improve the Ministry of Education and Culture and its agency’s performance management system compared to current practice. Position and responsibility of the supervisor and the supervised would be clarified (HE 52/2012: 22).”

Away from the aesthetic instrumentality? Taike as a ministry-controlled cultural policy implementer.

At the time of Taike-reform, it was stated that state’s cultural policy’s expanded role—in scope and goals—should also concern Taike (Minedu 2009: 20; 23). The government proposal (HE 52/2012: 23) preceding the establishment of Taike emphasized the integration of the arts’ council system to make it more “effective” and to “implement art and cultural policies nationwide”. Taike was to be tied to the strategic policies of the Ministry, and thus public policies, stronger than its predecessor (cf. Yliaska 2015). For the old ACF, the promotion of art and artistic activities was the key task for decades (HE 52/2012, 8). The tasks of Taike were widened from the aesthetic instrumentality:

The Arts Promotion Centre would be a performance steered agency by the Ministry of Education and Culture, whose remit would include, among other things, promoting the arts and culture as well as the artistic work and livelihood of artists, widely in accordance with the Ministry’s guidelines (HE 52/2012: 17).

Taike’s role expanded significantly from artist and art policy to a broader cultural policy developer and implementer, as the new act (3§ Tasks) states, rather ambiguously: “...to promote culture nationally and internationally to the extent that it is not the responsibility of any other authority [...] to perform such other duties as may be prescribed or assigned by the Ministry of Education and Culture to promote the arts and culture.” Interestingly, it was noticeable from the official documents that many experts from the different fields of arts (for example within the art councils) feared that Taike’s extensive mission also in terms of culture could mark a transition too much on cultural support at the expense of promoting the (high-quality) art (cf. Belfiore 2004).

Centralizing the decision-making and changing the instrumentality of subsidy policies.

The fortification “arts autonomy” was stated as one of the key justifications of the reform (HE 52/2012: 17; 23). The Taike-reform aimed to adjust the old ACF’s functions and structures to better respond to the changes in the operating environment, but in a way that peer review related to art autonomy was secured. The existing principle of arm’s length was especially connected to securing the independent decision-making power of the national and regional arts councils based on expert evaluations—at distance from politicians and civil servants—but only in the matter of individual artistic grants, not state subsidies. It was stated (HE 52/2012: 16) that with state subsidies “it is not about peer review in the sense of individual artists grants”. The arts’ autonomy and transparency of decision-making were argued to be augmented by a clear separation of expert bodies’ and art field’s work from the civil servant’s decisions.<sup>13</sup>

13. The autonomy was also fortified in part by establishing, in addition to the bureaucratic agency, a new Central Arts Council that would serve as an advisory body to the ministry in policymaking regarding the arts. The decision-making power was to be moved from the government and the ministry to the Council consisting recognized experts of art and culture. Instead of the administration, the Central Arts Council makes decisions regarding the number of national arts councils, their names, and their roles. It also appoints the members of the national and regional arts councils for two-year terms. The Council is appointed by the ministry for a three-year term. See <https://www.taike.fi/en/central-arts-council>

By distinguishing the peer review (artist grants) and Taike's official functions by civil servants (such as subsidy policies implementing cultural policy) from one another, Taike was converted to an implementer of active and strategic cultural policy according to the strategic lines set by the ministry (HE 52/2012: 27). In general, professional bureaucrats are in crucial positions in the cultural policy process (Vestheim 2012) and thus key players managing possible endogenous instrumentalization (Gray 2008). These definitions meant that the subsidy policies of Taike were converted as an instrument for strategic policies and wider purposes—economic, social, political—apart from supporting traditional “high arts”. It was seen that the Ministry should also be able to delegate operative duties and subsidy forms related to culture to Taike. Thus, along with these changes, compared to the time before the reform, the power of officials and especially of the director has increased in relation to the fields of arts. This reflects the ambivalent relationship between democracy and NPM-oriented managerialism (cf. Poutanen et al. 2020). With this change, peer reviewers within the expert bodies, the art councils, only give an opinion on subsidies intended for art organizations. Since 2018, the regional arts councils have not allocated any subsidies for communities as subsidy policies overall in this respect are centralized as an instrument of the agency and the ministry. These subsidies intended for the organizations will be decided by the Taike director after the recommendation process by the civil servants of the agency (see Finlex 727/2012). This was a prominent change, because before the reform, the art councils possessed the power to also allocate art organization subsidies (see Kangas 2003: 97).

Battle of interests—the reduction of corporatism and power of art fields.

The Finnish system has a long tradition of peer review, although from the outset, due to the strong position of key civil society organizations already in the 19th century, a strong corporatist feature was also built into it. Corporatism—decision-making power and active lobbying of art organizations and tight links between bureaucrats and pressure groups—is a deeply rooted historical element of the Finnish cultural policy system. (Sokka 2012; Kangas 2003). Naturally, it is impossible to set up independent expert bodies that are neutral or impartial (Kangas 2003: 92; Mulcahy 2017); it is always a question of battling interest, rationales, and arguments for public intervention in culture. The ministry saw the stripping of art fields’ power to allocate state funds to “equals” as fortification of “arts autonomy”. The Finnish peer group review system—comprised of artists and their organizations—was regarded a closed system that was not sufficiently connected to the rest of the society (Adams et al. 2004, 20). Along these lines, in Taike’s reform, the Finnish system’s corporatism was stripped down in favour of centralized decision-making. It meant a reduction in the traditionally strong corporatist decision-making power of artists’ associations and committees. The art organizations no longer have a monopoly to nominate the members of the regional or national arts councils within Taike (as this is the task of the new Central Arts Council appointed by the ministry).<sup>14</sup>

14. Not surprisingly, many of the art field experts of the national and regional arts councils were highly critical towards these tendencies in Taike-reform. All of the statements of the experts bodies are available in Finnish: <https://www.taike.fi/fi/uutinen/-/news/99290>

## From “high art” policy to strategic and instrumental orientations: Development of Taike as an implementer of cultural and governmental policies 2010–2020

Almost 20 years ago (Adams et al. 2004: 21), it was concluded that the Finnish government should be able to set broad policy frameworks in which “arm’s length” bodies such as the arts council operate. It was seen “unrealistic in contemporary society” to presume that arts councils (anywhere) could operate without connection to the policy of the government of the day. Already, ACF concluded result-oriented contracts with the ministry. However, it was evaluated (Adams et al. 2004, 12) that the steering had [in 2004] been more “in principle” than “in practice”. Our evaluation revealed that performance management was sharpened, and Ministry control strengthened after the creation of Taike (Sokka & Jakonen 2020).

### Gradual instrumentalization and widening the role of Taike as a cultural policy implementer (2011–2015)

Performance contract **2011–2013** had a vision that the ACF and national and regional arts councils should “function as a performance steered agency” within the cultural administration. Furthermore, there was an expressed effort to renew the art administration according to the “strategic lines” expressed in the strategy for cultural policy by the Ministry. As for the subsidy policies of the renewed agency, the contract emphasized, for example, the applied use of art and subsidies to enhance cultural diversity alongside the traditional tasks of artistic support. The operations of the agency were connected to the targets of the cultural policy, but connections to the wider governmental, non-cultural policies were not evident at this point. The first performance contract of the newly established Taike for the years **2013–2014** brought out the new legislation (2013) and its emphasis on the agency’s control by the ministry: the central task of Taike was to “implement the basic tasks defined in the Act and to establish the functions related to these tasks”. Still, the outlined tasks did not include support for “culture” at this point—only art and artistic activities, as was the case with ACF. However, social and economic instrumental objectives were included to the specific performance targets: Taike should advance “creative and cultural economy” and “applied use of the arts”. New political instrumentality (cf. Vestheim 2007: 233) of the agency was outlined: Taike should take “an active role in society” as a promoter of arts and artists, makes oneself “better known among the public” and inspires “confidence among artists and citizens”. Serving only the fields of arts and artists was not enough anymore since there were “pressures to cut down public financing of art”. The contract for the years **2015–2016** widened the tasks of Taike from the basic arts and artist support: the agency should also support culture (as stated in the Act). At this point, the concept of “cultural support”, apart from “artistic”, was included also to the statistical reports of the agency. Evidence-based practices were emphasized as the transition to “programme management” that would allow better “monitoring of the strategic goals”. Interestingly, at the same time, when corporatism and the power of art fields were diminished, Taike was stated to “take measures to ensure impartiality and objectivity” (cf. Belfiore 2012).

### Strategic connections to the instrumental objectives of government programme (2016–2023)

Juha Sipilä’s conservative, right-wing government<sup>15</sup> (2015–2019) strived for stronger overall political steering within the Finnish state with its strategic, intersectoral priorities in the

15. The Government consisted of three parties: the Centre Party (Prime Minister’s party), National Coalition Party, and Nationalist Finns Party.

government programme. The strategic objectives were materialized in the form of 26 key projects.<sup>16</sup> Subsequently, Taike's supervision for the period of 2017–2019 was further instrumentalized compared to the previous ones. The link between performance management and the government programme was strengthened. The “attachment” (Gray 2008) of Taike to the goals outside the cultural field was strengthened. Altogether, five specific “strategic choices” were formed based on the goals set by the government for the whole state and the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The choices were influenced also by the goals of the steering ministry and the strategies of the agency and the goals of the state budget. A specific “key project” for culture inscribed by Sipilä's government (Finnish Government 2015: 17) strived for “greater recognition” of “the wellbeing aspects of culture”, i.e. social instrumentality. One of the measures aimed to increase and establish the supply and use of arts and culture as part of social welfare and healthcare sector services. The project was based on an inter-sectoral policy programme on health and well-being that dates to 2007. Within cultural policies, it focused on art and culture for well-being between 2010 and 2014 (Liikanen 2010). Now as an implementer for cultural policies, Taike was authorised to implement this key project. Social instrumentalism was further strengthened by initiating a strategic “Development programme for the use of art to promote wellbeing” in 2015.

The centre-left government of Sanna Marin<sup>17</sup> elected in the spring 2019 aims to create new jobs, which will be achieved by measures that boost the demand and supply of work. Besides a higher employment rate, sustainable growth also builds on more robust work productivity.<sup>18</sup> A new performance contract of Taike for the years 2020–2023 was published in the early 2020. This time, the contract of Taike adopted 10 goals from the government programme. The most essential are goals related to the employment rate and job creation. Also, inter-sectoral cooperation in public administration is implemented. Other “social policy” targets are also among the governmental goals for Taike: integration of immigrants, diminishing inequality and social exclusion etc. Compared to the selections from the previous Sipilä's government programme, more “cultural” goals are among the governmental targets of the Taike performance contract. This is also since there is factually a way more detailed and longer cultural policy section in the Marin's government programme to choose targets from. The key governmental target on employment rate, economic instrumentalism, has been adopted as the leading societal impact goal of Taike: “The employment of artists has improved, and paid work has increased”. Furthermore, during this contract period, Taike's overall socio-economic instrumental orientation and other strategic services and partnerships with regional authorities, municipalities, and development projects are emphasized. Taike will initiate an expert service for the different actors and artists to increase the use of art in the social and health sectors, and the agency will also “help municipalities, regions and other actors with its services to promote art and culture with the aim of e.g. economic and welfare effects”.

16. “Government and central government management processes will be reconciled with the Government's strategy work. Knowledge-based management and implementation reaching across administrative branches will be strengthened” (Finnish Government 2015: 27).

17. The Government is formed by the Social Democratic Party (Prime Minister's party), the Centre Party, the Greens, the Left Alliance, and the Swedish People's Party of Finland.

18. Naturally, the corona virus pandemic during 2020 turned everything upside down both in cultural policies and economy and society in general.

## The current operations and funding policies of Taike from the perspective of instrumentalization

The realization of the arm's length principle in Taike's operations?

Despite the intentions to increase the autonomous decision-making power of Taike, the realization of the ideal of an autonomous funding body (Bell & Oakley 2015) is debatable in the case of Taike because of both budget control and performance contracts (cf. Duelund 2003a). Historically, the role of civil servants in Finland is strong in the ministries in matters pertaining to budget and budgetary frameworks (Murto 2016: 205). This is still the case with Taike. Every year, the Ministry's cultural policy department decides in which way the nation's gambling funds will be distributed for different purposes through Taike. By our analysis based on central budget documents (Sokka & Jakonen 2020), these funds are steered in detail for each art form and subsidy form in the yearly plans for revenue use. No lump sum in this respect according to the ideal of performance management (Vedung 2010) is given to Taike. Instead of a flexible and independent expert role, Taike's civil servants still cannot decide autonomously how much funding should be allocated for each art-form or funding scheme.

The increasing amount of cultural and art subsidies decided by civil servants  
The division of responsibilities between the ministry and Taike is mainly based on the "arm's length" principle when it comes to the state grants for artists (see Figure 1). The national art councils of Taike decide, based on peer assessment, the artists who are awarded a state grant. As before, the ministry nor the civil servants of Taike do not influence the decisions that are taken in the allocation of grants to individual artists. These are allocated by the national arts councils. However, some artist grants such as mobility grants are decided by the director and within some grants, such as "regional grants", the decision-making of regional expert bodies is based on proposals by special advisors. When it comes to subsidies for organizations, the power of expert bodies is stripped-down as the director of Taike ultimately decides of all discretionary subsidies. Decisions are based on proposals by special advisors. When it comes to traditional art policy subsidies for art organizations, the applications and the operations of applicants are, at least in principle, evaluated by national arts councils serving as expert bodies. However, the arts councils no longer propose any sums of money as their evaluation focuses mainly on artistic quality, but these expert opinions are not binding. Furthermore, the applications and the activities of applicants for the subsidies representing other than aesthetic instrumentality (such as festival of cultural magazine subsidies, promoting cultural diversity and combating racism or well-being subsidies) are evaluated solely by civil servants and decided by the director.

Although the ministry delegated more cultural policy responsibilities to the earlier Arts Council system<sup>19</sup>, the scope of cultural policy responsibilities, political instrumentality, of Taike are considerably wider than the one of the ACF whose primary interest was that of the artist by means of artistic and art policies. As outlined in policy documents and performance contracts, several forms of cultural policy subsidies previously under the responsibility of the Ministry have been delegated to Taike since 2012. This is an example of both endogenous instrumentalization tendencies within the cultural policy sector (cf. Gray 2008) but also ambiguous implementation arrangement (cf. Gray 2015). For example, some cultural festivals are funded from Taike, but some will still apply their funding from the

19. Already during the 1990s and 2000s, the Arts Council took on, at the request of the Ministry of Education, the responsibility for the children's health and culture initiatives.

ministry based on “national and international significance”. In 2012 (the last operating year of the ACF) altogether 10,5 million euros of subsidies were decided by civil servants. Out of the Council’s total support for artistic and cultural activities, these subsidies formed some 31%. Overall, the total share of subsidies decided by civil servants has been growing since 2012 compared to the peer-reviewed artistic grants. In 2019, the subsidies allocated by the civil servants from Taike formed 43% of the total Taike’s support for the artistic and cultural activities (Figure 1). In short, the share of peer-reviewed funding<sup>20</sup> allocated by expert bodies for individual artists (aesthetic instrumentality) is diminishing compared to the civil servants controlled and steered organization subsidies (other types of instrumentality).<sup>21</sup>

### Subsidy objectives and criterion emphasizing political, social, and economic instrumentality

Hadley and Gray (2017; also e.g. Belfiore 2004: 199) saw a need for further research on how the demands of instrumentalization have led to actual shifts in funding patterns of cultural organizations. The current statutory task of Taike to support culture according to the decisions by the Ministry has expanded the subsidy policies of Taike since the creation of the agency along the lines of the legislation and performance supervision. Many of the current subsidies allocated from Taike come with other justifications instead of traditional art or artist policy. One could say that economic, social, and political instrumentalism or “utilitarianism” (Mulcahy 2017) is attached stronger than before to the justifications of Taike’s subsidies, either on the level of general objectives or specific allocation criteria inside the subsidy types. The funding schemes of Taike have expanded in terms of widening agency’s cultural and political role. Democratic arguments—such as the promotion of cultural rights—have been adopted in Taike’s operations alongside perfectionist arguments, i.e. support to the “best art”. Such instrumental justifications as social inclusion, integration of immigrants, combating racism, and promoting well-being are stated as subsidy objectives. However, in practice, the objectives of these different subsidies mix different justifications—the aesthetic and educational dimension is still strongly present in many cases.

It is important to note that, in addition to the fact that Taike’s expert bodies do not make decisions on subsidies anymore, the steering of the art and cultural organizations applying and receiving subsidies from the Taike has been tightened after the reform. Their performance, especially economic, is more tightly controlled by civil servants (cf. Duelund 2008, 18). The decision-making and allocation criteria for subsidies have developed into more detailed during the last decade as a part of development towards “the formalization of cultural policy effectiveness” (Häyrynen 2018, 170; cf. Gray 2008; Belfiore 2004). This way, instrumental objectives have also been included to the traditional art organization subsidies through resource steering affecting the operations of art fields (Sokka & Jakonen 2020). The issues of financial sustainability and feasibility as well as criteria for “scope of operations”, “networking”, and “social impact”—all non-cultural or instrumental goals as such—are emphasized more extensively in the decision-making criteria. Among the decision-making criteria for art community subsidies, the “artistic quality”—aesthetic instrumentality—is emphasized significantly less than “ambition and quality of operations”, “scope and impact”,

20. The formal decision procedure and the role of agency’s special advisors vary also within different grants. Five-year, three-year, one-year and half-year state artist grants to professional artists and critics are decided on the basis of recommendations by the national arts councils. Within the regional and projects grants, the national and regional arts councils serve as expert bodies of the Arts Promotion Centre based on proposals by special advisors.

21. This implies development towards to the support model in line with the rest of Europe where it is common, instead of allocating direct support to individual artists, to fund collective artistic activities, which indirectly benefit artists (Häyrynen 2018: 157).

and “financial sustainability”. Thus, due to the instrumental and strategic subsidy steering instead of expert evaluation by art fields, art organizations must balance between a social-politico-economic logic and an art-and-quality logic central to the art field (see also Lindqvist 2007). In other words, the civil society and cultural fields are affected by Taike-reform (see Sokka & Jakonen 2020).

## Conclusions

This paper focused on different types of cultural policy instrumentalization in relation to performance steering as a centralizing management tool. As a case study on the “unique” (Kangas 2003: 91) Finnish cultural policy system, this article does not make a claim that the dynamics analysed here have always existed everywhere, even within the Finnish cultural system. However, some important wider implications to understand contemporary cultural policy can be made.

The current paradigm in public administrations, as a supervision administration (Kann-Rasmussen 2019), is highly relevant in Finnish cultural policy. The political regulation of Taike has strengthened as performance management ties Taike to government programmes. The Ministry’s performance steering on Taike has sharpened since the creation of a statutory governmental agency (Sokka & Jakonen 2020). From the perspective of instrumentalization, this has reduced the organizational autonomy of art policies (see Häyrynen 2015) and emphasized different instrumental justifications and outcomes than aesthetic ones as Taike is connected to the public policies. Taike’s scope as a cultural policy implementer has gradually widened since the agency was created. There is a considerable percentage of subsidy schemes that come with social, economic, and political instrumentalism instead of aesthetic and educational logic, i.e. perfectionist argument for public cultural support (cf. Vestheim 2007).

However, the current hybrid model of Finnish cultural policy administration analysed via Taike is found to combine the elements of both welfare state and competition state steering models. Despite the “soft”, performance-oriented steering mechanisms of the competition state model gaining ground, the historically significant role of binding legislation and detailed resource steering remains strong. Instrumentalization, in its varied forms, is implemented on different levels (ministry-agency-art fields) with a combined use of different policy instruments (regulation, budget allocations, strategies, contracts), not solely through NPM oriented mechanisms such as performance supervision. However, the integrative role of performance management is important. The case of Taike shows that performance management is, in part, mere a bureaucratic tool with no clear connection to resources or jurisdiction. Thus, it is simplistic to state that solely performance steering has led to instrumentalization, rather it is a combination of the use of different instruments, delegation of duties and political struggles within the “bureaucratic iron cage” (Mangset 2018) of the public cultural sector.

International analyses (e.g. Hadley & Gray 2017) have feared that the logic of instrumental cultural policy may lead to the loss of the financial subsidies of culture. In Finland, this tendency has not been realised. For example, Taike’s overall support for art and cultural activities has not been cut between 2012 and 2019. This might be due to the relatively small financial size of the overall state cultural budget, i.e. low political significance (see Gray 2008). Despite adjustments in cultural policy management, the broad welfare state commitment has remained in place in Finnish cultural policies (cf. Mulcahy 2017: xi–xii; Häyrynen 2018) and neo-liberal changes have not been significant enough to replace the original Nor-

dic model (Kangas & Vestheim 2010). Still, neo-liberal principles—especially economic instrumentalism—have been coupled with cultural management and funding spheres in Finland by organizing the public sector and cultural administration according to NPM principles (cf. O'Connor 2015).

Furthermore, the role of civil servants has strengthened, and bureaucratic discretion has increased in Finland during recent decades (Murto 2016). Performance management has been one of the centralizing instruments in Finland (Mykkänen 2017). In the field of art policy, Taike has followed the same path when creating a monocratic office connected more tightly to ministerial and governmental policies. Decision-making has been centralized into the hands of the manager and public officials away from art councils representing regions and art fields (cf. Yliaska 2015). Mangset evaluated (2009: 296; see also Mangset 2015; Duelund 2008) that the corporatist structures in Nordic artist policy would probably be gradually dismantled as the political legitimacy of corporatism has been declining in Nordic countries. The long-standing corporatism built into the Finnish system has been, at least in some parts, deconstructed as the Finnish model of “arm’s length” was moved towards a more centralized and bureaucratic system.<sup>22</sup> A tendency towards “shortening the arm’s length” is evident in the diminishing role of peer review. The “arm’s length” in the sense that public art funding should be carried out primarily according to artistic quality—e.g. aesthetic instrumentalism—criteria (Mangset 2009) has been shortened.

Finally, the article has shown that negotiations between civil servants and internal power struggles within cultural administration are key to explaining instrumentalization tendencies (c.f. Vestheim 2012). The tendency of instrumentalization is evident not only in certain strategic statements or subsidy types and objectives but also in the specific allocation criteria set by civil servants. It is important to note that performance steering is also implemented by civil servants, not politicians. This consolidates the power of civil servants when adapting political goals to the agency’s performance contracts and targets. Cultural policy administration is not helpless in the face of exogenous policy demands (see Gray 2008).

Further research in relation to cultural policy instrumentalization could focus on:

- The use and contents of different cultural policy instruments, not solely NPM mechanisms such as performance management coupled with detailed analysis of different types of instrumentality: aesthetical, educational, economic, social, political etc.
- The important role of civil servants in Nordic countries (Karlsson & Olsson 2018) and other endogenous aspects within cultural administration, such as the relationships between different agencies and levels of government. Also, the role of art organizations and the effects of instrumentalization on cultural fields should be inspected more closely (see Sokka & Jakonen 2020).
- The relationship between peer-review, the use of art field expertise and “neutral”, evidence-based policy and other centralized forms of cultural policy that can be detrimental to cultural democracy (cf. Vestheim 2007).

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22. However, more research should be conducted on this topic covering also other areas than Taike.



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