

MASTER'S THESIS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
SWEDISH SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Becoming a UNESCO City of Literature

A discourse analysis of the Gothenburg effort to become a
City of Literature in the UNESCO creative cities network

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Abstract: The aim of this thesis is to create knowledge on discursive formations surrounding literature that is being produced and/or reproduced in Sweden today. This is achieved by studying how the project group members responsible for writing the Gothenburg application to become a UNESCO City of Literature, and other key players involved in this process, argue for the values of literature and why a membership in the UNESCO creative cities network would be beneficial for Gothenburg city, its citizens and the literary field. To this end, both documents related to the process of getting Gothenburg's candidature approved by UNESCO and interviews with the project group members responsible for writing the application to UNESCO are studied and analyzed. Eight interviews were conducted with members of the project group using a semi-structured qualitative interview methodology. The theoretical framework for this thesis consists of a Foucauldian discourse analysis, ideology and studies of institutional logics in Swedish cultural politics. While analyzing the collected material, I was able to identify several dominating discursive formations about literature and literary work, as well as minor, competing discursive formations, that can all be recognized in how Swedish cultural policy have been discussed historically. These are later related to overarching ideological and political structures that are connected to them. Key findings include that literature is portrayed as a human right, as essential to a healthy, sustainable democracy and as something with inherent value. The project group members navigate predominant discursive formations and ideological understandings of literature, creating an environment where literary work is prioritized.

Key words: discursive formations, ideology, UNESCO, creative cities network, literature, literary work, cultural policy research

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1. Introduction

In late 2021, Gothenburg became a part of the UNESCO network for creative cities, the third Swedish city to receive the achievement and the first Swedish city to become specifically a City of Literature. To be a City of Literature and a part of the UNESCO network for creative cities means to center literary work¹ and creativity in the strive towards a sustainable future, in accordance to Agenda 2030 (UNESCO, n.dc). On March 4th 2022, during a summit for literature politics, researchers, politicians, public officials and representatives from literary- and culture organisations gathered to talk about what this will mean for Gothenburg and why literature is so important for society. As made apparent during these conversations, literature is supposed to achieve many things; increased democracy, urban sustainability, a free and open society, and citizens that are able to withstand desinformation, able to form their own opinions, as well as able to empathize with their fellow human. It was clear that literature in this space was seen as very important, maybe even essential, to a healthy, democratic society, which is why literature is a worthwhile endeavor (Gothenburg Book Fair, 2022).

Views on literature and reading and their benefits can have a profound effect on both society and citizens. They can be viewed as a means to stave off on-coming threats to society, such as a lack of democratic spirit among citizens or threats to the health and strength of the Swedish economy. In this case, reading and promoting reading among the young can be constructed as a tool to combat these issues, and the non-reader is constructed as an undesirable subject that parents or teachers must make into a desirable reader (Lindsköld, Hedemark & Lundh, 2020). Historically, young female readers were viewed either positively or negatively depending on the type of literature they read, and constructed as either desirable or undesirable members of society. Escapist type reading was for example considered negative for teenage girls in the 1940's, as it was thought it removed the girl from reality and did not adequately prepare her for adult womanhood (Andersson, 2020).

Different discussions concerning literature and reading will necessarily have consequences on how a certain society treats literature and its importance. It will affect when it is deemed valuable and why, whether it is worth spending time and resources on, as well as the expectations on what it is meant to

¹ Literary work is in this thesis defined as any work that has to do with literature or reading promotion.

achieve. This will in turn have consequences for the citizens in that very society, which is why it is worthwhile to study how literature is talked about and understood in Sweden today. Understanding what value society places on literature and when it is willing to spend time and resources on literature will also create knowledge on what value is placed on literary organizations, such as libraries, and what roles they are expected to fill.

This master's thesis will explore the work and thought process behind making Gothenburg the latest UNESCO City of Literature. It will contribute to the library- and information science research field by analyzing the work and thought process of how Gothenburg became Sweden's first City of Literature, and thus creating knowledge on how literature is valued and what it is hoped to achieve at this point in time in history. It will also contribute in the sense that this thesis will explore current sentiments among prominent figures in the cultural field, by studying how they argue for the values of literature and culture, and how they benefit society and the citizens of Gothenburg.

1.1 Problem description

As a researcher within the library- and information science field, I argue it is imperative to not only study literature itself, but also the ideological understanding of literature in society, as well as common views on literature and what literature is for and what it is meant to achieve for citizens and society. How literature is talked about, especially by those in positions of power, and the discourse that is used to talk about it, acts as normative. It is significant because it communicates in what forms literature and culture are allowed to exist, what literary projects will be afforded resources and why, and what language must be used in order to get approval for literary projects. It can also inform views about the reader and non-reader alike, and define how and when literature should be made available to citizens. The language and arguments used when asserting the values of literature coalesce into discursive formations. Discursive formations will in this thesis be viewed from a Foucauldian perspective. In other words, they will be understood as a group of statements about something, in this case literature and reading, that together produces knowledge and a framework that defines how it is possible to think about literature and reading. If one can identify these formations, it also becomes possible to identify the overarching ideological and political structures that are related to them. The UNESCO project constructs a narrative about the values of literature in the current day and about the societal context in which people in the cultural field situate

themselves and their work. Thus I am interested in the discourse surrounding literature that is being produced and/or reproduced and what it could possibly reveal about how literature is understood in Sweden today.

1.2 Study aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to create knowledge on discursive formations surrounding literature that is being produced and/or reproduced in Sweden today. This is achieved by studying how the project group members responsible for writing the application to become a UNESCO City of Literature, and other key players involved in this process, argue for the values of literature and why a membership in the UNESCO creative cities network would be beneficial for Gothenburg city, its citizens and the literary field.

The research questions are thus as follows:

- How is literature talked about?
- What arguments are used when motivating Gothenburg's candidature to UNESCO?
- What discursive formations are made apparent within these discussions?
- What ideological understandings of literature and reading in Sweden today are made possible by these discursive formations?

1.3 Disposition

Following these introductory chapters, chapter 2 consists of background information about the UNESCO creative cities network, the project group responsible for the application and the work process behind writing and sending the application to UNESCO. Chapter 3 details previous research relevant to the thesis. The research areas include cultural policy research, studies of historical and present views on literature and reading, as well as research on creative cities and cities in the creative cities network. The theoretical framework that informed my analysis is presented in chapter 4. It is centered around three themes; ideology, the institutional logics of Swedish cultural politics and discourse analysis and discursive formations, and it ends with a description of my analytical methodology. Chapter 5 describes the methods used and material I analyzed. It consists of two parts. The first includes interviews conducted with the project group members responsible for writing that application. The second part includes two documents, an appeal to the Gothenburg city council and the application to become a City of Literature that was sent to UNESCO. The chapter ends

with a discussion on ethical concerns and reflexivity. In chapter 6 and 7, the research questions are answered. In chapter 6, the results of my analysis are written and discursive formations are identified. The analysis is then discussed further in chapter 7. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with final thoughts, study limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Background

2.1 UNESCO creative cities network

UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was founded in the aftermath of World War II, as an international initiative to preserve and foster a culture of peace. Education, science and culture stands at the heart of the organization's aim to promote collaboration between nations and global peace (UNESCO, n.db). The UNESCO creative cities network was founded in 2004, with the aim to make co-operation easier between cities that use creativity as a means to achieve a sustainable society and sustainable city development. 180 cities in 72 different countries are currently part of the network. The network can be regarded as a platform for sharing knowledge, culture and science that pertains to creativity and sustainability, as well as cultural centers that work towards fulfilling Agenda 2030 (UNESCO, 2021). Agenda 2030 in turn is a United Nations initiative for sustainable urban development in many facets of society, such as economic, environmental, social and matters of equality, among others (Regeringskansliet, 2016).

There are seven creative fields that are recognized in the UNESCO creative cities network; Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music. Any city that joins the network agrees to commit to certain actions, that involve a partnership between civil society and the public and private sectors. These actions are to:

- strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services;
- develop hubs of creativity and innovation and broaden opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector;
- improve access to and participation in cultural life, in particular for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals;
- fully integrate culture and creativity into sustainable development plans (UNESCO, n.dc).

To become part of the network a country must first be a part of the UNESCO Member States and Associate Members. One also has to have the approval and co-operation of the city municipality and co-operation between public, private and civil society stakeholders on a common project with the support of the city. Finally, when writing the application to UNESCO, local actors within the creative field must participate on the

application. The application must be approved by the mayor of the city and the national commission for UNESCO (in this case the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO), before it is sent to UNESCO for judgment. It must be clear from the application that the city is capable of participating in the network long-term and in a sustainable fashion, willing and capable to contribute to the network's aims and goals, and willing to open exchange with other cities in the network. The action plan in the application must reflect all these factors (UNESCO, n.dd).

2.2 Project background

Although the idea that Gothenburg should apply to become a UNESCO City of Literature originated a few years prior, in this study I have decided to delimit the timeline from when an appeal was first written by actors in the literary field to the Gothenburg city council, until the first quarter of 2022. This gives a limited timeline between January 2019 until spring 2022. The appeal was written by members from: Gothenburg Book Fair (Bokmässan), Writers' Centre West (Författarcentrum Väst), Gothenburg House of Literature (Litteraturhuset), Swedish PEN (Svenska PEN), Poesiwerken and Politisk poesifestival and was additionally co-signed by members from various other literary or cultural organizations. This initiative originated from Kristín Bjarnadóttir, then chairperson for Writers' Centre West.

In 2019, the Gothenburg city council decided that a project group responsible for writing the application to UNESCO was to be created. The project group consisted of members from the public and private sector, as well as civil society and academia. The core members of the project group were from City of Gothenburg (Göteborg Stad), University of Gothenburg (Göteborgs universitet), Region Västra Götaland (Västra Götalandsregionen), Writers' Centre West, Gothenburg Book Fair and Gothenburg House of Literature. A large amount of time writing the application was spent by mapping out all different events, organizations or initiatives related to literature that are active in the region of Västra Götaland. Time was also spent making an action plan on how the city of Gothenburg plans to continue working with literature. When the application was all but finished, the Gothenburg city council needed to give a final approval on the UNESCO creative city network commitment, meaning they had to rule in favor of upholding the promises made to the network and the yearly budget requirements necessary. After the council approved it in March 2021, the application was sent for approval by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, who decided the application was indeed good enough to be sent

to UNESCO for a final decision. In late fall 2021, Gothenburg became the third Swedish city to become a member of the UNESCO creative cities network, and the first to become a UNESCO City of Literature. The reasons given for why Gothenburg was elected were for example: Gothenburg having a rich literary sphere and lively community for club activities, being the home to Gothenburg Book Fair, having many active projects for promoting reading among citizens and having an abundance of literary organizations (UNESCO, n.da). Going forward, Gothenburg university, the city of Gothenburg and the administration for cultural development are currently the three actors responsible for the continued work with being a City of Literature. Once a city gets the designation, it will remain in perpetuity.

3. Previous research

If one is to understand how literature is valued in a given society, why the discourse surrounding literature appears a certain way, as well as the reasonings behind why certain literary projects get implemented and how, the topic needs to be approached from several different but related angles. One is the historical views on literature and reading contrasted with modern day perspectives. Another is the characteristics of cultural policy, in other words, when a certain society spends time and resources on culture and the logic that dictates how it should be done and why culture is an important endeavor. In cultural policy, literature or other forms of art can be used in cultural projects as a way to achieve certain goals, such as making citizens into valuable members of society (Lindsköld, Hedemark & Lundh, 2020). This second area is related to ideas and strategies linked to the creative city and what it is meant to achieve in terms of economic growth and city development. Here, research about the UNESCO creative cities network provides further knowledge about how culture can be seen as a tool. In this chapter, research that explore these themes will be presented, in order to give some insight into how literature is understood, the characteristics of cultural policy and creative cities that use culture as a means for societal changes.

3.1 Cultural policy discourse and its effects on society

Cultural policy studies is a multifaceted field of research that concerns itself with examining how cultural policy effects society and citizens, the value of culture and how culture is used as a tool to achieve certain things in the world (Rosengard & Øland, 2018, Kangas & Vestheim, 2011, Harding, 2015, Lindsköld, 2015). Some researchers have specifically written about what characterizes the nordic cultural policy model. Nordic cultural policy models are, for example, welfare-oriented and egalitarian cultural organisations striving towards decentralization, that most often get public subsidies rather than funding from private donations (Mangset et. al, 2008).

However, even if nordic cultural policies share certain characteristics, the particularities of cultural policy also depend on place, time, discourse and current ideological sentiments about culture. In order to fully understand the ideas about culture during that specific time, you also need to consider the specific context – societal and political – that created those ideas and allowed them to become meaning making (Möller, 2021). The hegemonic ideologies in a specific time affect both urban regeneration and city

development strategies as well as normative ideas about culture and its values, which researcher Per Möller (2021) was able to show was the case in Sweden's third biggest city Malmö between the years 1990 to 2012. He argues that culture, the ideas about the values of culture, explicit and implicit cultural policies, dominant ideological meaning-production and areas of conflict changed over this time period. For example, he demonstrates that ideas about the values of culture were stably about "development; promotion; identity making" between 1990-1998 but had changed into "culture as asset for place regeneration" by 2006 (Möller, 2021, p. 450). Dominant ideas of culture and urban regeneration and city development have shaped the way cultural policies are created and for what purpose they are implemented. Since culture is used as a means for urban regeneration and city development, it naturally leads to dominant ideas on cultural policy also producing and reproducing dominant ideas on how society should be shaped, thus also reproducing hierarchical power structures (Möller, 2021). This however does not mean dominant ideas do not have to contest with other, conflicting, ideas. Gothenburg went through similar discursive shifts as Malmö during the 1990's and how globalization processes had a hand in changing the overall focus from the national to the local (Johannisson, 2006). Like Möller, researcher Jenny Johannisson found cultural policy discourse to be an area of ideological conflict.

The leadership in the city of Gothenburg during the 1990's started using a different language concerning cultural politics compared to other Swedish cities, a language that for example emphasized culture as a means to achieve economic growth and social development. When studying this phenomenon, Johannisson (2006) spotted three major discourses that characterized Gothenburg cultural policy during this era, that institutional agents made use of; the discourse of quality, the discourse of welfare and the discourse of market oriented alliances. These separate discourses have different aims and use different schemas for justifying their own internal logic. The quality discourse aims to promote and enable culture of good quality. In this discourse, high quality culture has a high inherent value and is seen as having a positive influence on citizens. As such, within this discourse it is above all important to not lose sight of the relevance of artistic creativity and enabling people to create high quality culture as freely as possible, i.e without unduly meddling from the state. While the discourse of quality focuses mainly on the producers of culture, the discourse of welfare focuses more on the general public and accessibility to culture. In this discourse, culture is seen as a means to acquire a good quality of life and thus concerns itself to ensure that culture is easily and equally accessible for all citizens. It

is tied to ideas of welfare, which means the state in this case has an obligation to make certain that citizens are able to access and benefit from cultural organizations. The discourse of market oriented alliances in turn is largely characterized by how it values cost efficiency and coincides with the New Public Management mode of working, that is, using methods derived from private businesses to strive for increased efficiency in the public sector. It considers all actors in the cultural field, such as creatives, public and private organizations or other producers of culture to be part of an ever-changing network, where citizens, now viewed as consumers, can pick and choose what culture they want to engage in. This view makes the cultural field similar to how private businesses compete with each other on the financial market. Although the three were often used in parallel to each other and reinforced each other, it was the market oriented alliance discourse that ultimately prevailed (Johannisson, 2006).

With discourse about the values of culture also comes discourse about citizen participation in culture. In a 2019 article, researcher Sofia Lindström Sol examined how the discourse surrounding participation and democracy appears in cultural policy and how it fits into previously established norms regarding the values of culture. Much previous research has identified a crisis in democracy in modern day society, most likely stemming from globalization, changes in the work market and individualization. This crisis is made apparent by a visible decline in citizen's trust in democratic institutions, a decline in participation in political parties or organization and growing authoritarianism. Participation is seen as a way to boost democracy and counteract this crisis. Lindström Sol argues that one can see tendencies of discursive change in current day cultural policy, that emphasizes participation as a positive and empowering for citizens (Lindström Sol, 2019). While studying Swedish cultural policies, Lindström Sol found two primary discourses, the first being that culture is good because it leads to good things and the second being that culture is good as it prevents bad things. They both however are discourses about how a society should govern culture and they are not necessarily seen to be antagonistic, if the arms length approach is between politics and the arts rather than the arts and the people (Lindström Sol, 2019).

So called meta-studies of cultural policy research provide additional insight to the field. In 2018, scholars Jenny Johannisson and Roger Blomgren offered a critical perspective of Swedish cultural policy research, and claimed that much research in the field does not adequately critique and question the premises on which cultural policies are written. This tendency

runs the risk of researchers reproducing the language of the people writing cultural policies, i.e the stakeholders. Rather than critically examining and evaluating how cultural policies are written, and academia remaining an independent actor, many researchers have instead accepted the stakeholders' values about art and culture and have reproduced them. The authors state that this phenomenon might happen partly because of strong path-dependency and partly because researchers share political values with the stakeholders, such as wanting to protect arts and culture from the forces of the free market. Because of this, the people in power (government officials, state authorities et cetera) also hire researchers and promote research projects that do not question normative assumptions about cultural policy making. They warn that if researchers within the cultural policy field continue on this path it could lead to serious democratic issues, since academia would in this case essentially be part of the policy making process (Blomgren & Johannisson, 2018).

I find the field of cultural policy studies to be particularly important for my own thesis and the research approaches I have highlighted in this chapter will serve as special inspiration on how I conduct my own studies and analysis, both in terms of analyzing how discourse can be meaning-making and in identifying discursive formations within language.

3.2 Views on literature and reading

Views on literature and reading can be indicative of what things are perceived as societal threats, in what situations literature can be used as a means to an end as well as be indicative of views of the readers (and non-readers) themselves. Historically the reader was sometimes problematized depending on the quality or genre of the literature consumed (Anderson, 2020, Hedemark & Jonsson, 2021). As stated in chapter 1, a young girl reader could historically inhabit either positively or negatively charged reader positions depending on what type of literature they read. The genre and quality was for example thought to influence how well a girl would transition into adult womanhood (Andersson, 2020). Children's literature of good quality, it was debated, could foster children into becoming the ideal members of society (Hedemark & Jonsson, 2021).

In modern day contexts society tends to be less concerned over what people read and more concerned with the fact that people don't read enough or that they lack adequate reading comprehension (Hedemark & Jonsson, 2021, Kann-Rasmussen & Balling, 2015). What this means in practice is that the

problem area has shifted from literature to reading as an activity (Hedemark & Jonsson, 2021) or to that of the reader, more specifically the non-reader (Kann-Rasmussen & Balling, 2015). The fact that literature is seen to have such a positive impact on society means that there lies political interests in managing what people read and how (Hedemark & Jonsson, 2021). If one thinks literature has the ability to abate societal ills, then it is not illogical to also think the state has a duty to make citizens read or that citizens have a duty to read. If literature for example is thought to make people into better democratic citizens, then not reading could in turn potentially make someone undemocratic, and therefore a threat to society (Kann-Rasmussen & Balling, 2015). This is a thinking process Nanna Kann-Rasmussen and Gitte Balling found in their study of the reading project "Danmark Læser" and the discourse about reading and literature surrounding it. The fact that the non-readers are also often described as reluctant or incapable of reading means that the negative image of this group is strengthened (Kann-Rasmussen & Balling, 2015). Claims of the positive effects of reading and literature on society might very well be true but, as Kann-Rasmussen and Balling say, the socially constructed negative image of the non-reader is created in connection to these understandings of reading and literature. This process makes the non-reader into a un-desirable citizen that has to be transformed into a reader, a desirable and valuable part of society (Lindsköld, Hedemark & Lundh, 2020).

3.3 Creative cities

When one thinks about creative cities, what function creativity should serve and the role creativity plays in cities today, then one of the most influential people is the economist Richard Florida, who suggested city governments should aim to attract creative young people to live and work in their cities, as a way to boost the local economy and city development. Culture and the creative class he argued had a potent effect on the economy and in fact could very well be necessary for a city to become cutting edge and be noticeable on the global market (Florida, 2006). The field of research about the creative city and what it means and is meant to achieve highlights some common themes that characterizes the creative city, such as regeneration, marketing, sustainability and city development. Andy C. Pratt for example criticizes a universal view of creative cities and the idea that creativity's main function is to promote economic growth. Pratt instead focuses his article *The cultural contradictions of the creative city* (2011) on redistributive strategies, on a situated rather than a universalist "one size fits all" cultural approach and critically examines how current policies adhere to

neoliberal values, to the detriment of creative cities. This in turn often hides hierarchical power structures and unequal distributions of resources. Interestingly enough, Pratt suggests that joining the UNESCO creative cities network could be one such way to encourage creative cities to think outside the box (Pratt, 2011). Others have criticized the focus on flagship events or projects in creative cities while neglecting building a strong and diverse infrastructure of culture. Making a lively, creative and publicly supported environment where local practitioners can create and network and citizens can engross themselves might have a greater impact on the cultural development on a city than isolated events (Comunian, 2010). City development aside, the connection between sustainability and culture and the creative city is another area of research. In the article *Creative cities and/or sustainable cities: Discourses and practices*, Dan Eugen Ratiu (2013) echoes the sentiments of Per Möller in that creating the creative city through culture is more of an ideological affair than a practical one. This is because city development is not only dependent on logistics and resources, but on the values of the agents in charge. Creative city planning thus naturally becomes normative and Ratiu argues it usually reproduces the dominant and un-sustainable market order. The creative city concept can however also enhance a sense of community and belonging among citizens as well as promoting social and cultural sustainability. This is if it focuses on building viable, creative urban communities, where artists are able to create freely, rather than profit margins, entertainment and property development (Ratiu, 2013).

3.4 Cities of literature

The UNESCO creative cities network has itself become a topic of academic research ever since it was founded. Since Edinburgh was declared the first UNESCO City of Literature in 2004, there has been research dedicated to exploring the intentions, effects and meanings behind the distinction. Laura Kostanski and Guy Puzey (2014) made a comparative study between Edinburgh and Melbourne, two cities of literature, and how becoming a City of Literature effected the identity of these two cities as well as aided in how they are promoted to the outside world. With a starting point on toponymic (i.e city name) identity and how becoming City of Literature might affect or add to that identity, in addition to how toponymic identity is used to promote the unique literary merits of each city, Kostanski and Guy discovered that Edinburgh and Melbourne had fairly different approaches to literary work, but that emphasizing a unique toponymic identity was very important both in becoming a City of Literature and in supporting local

literary efforts (Kostanski & Guy, 2014). This is partly because a connection to the "place identity" helps citizens feel an attachment to the place they live in and because it allows the city to create a unique and marketable identity to the outside world, for example as a tourist destination. When these two factors are connected, citizens and city can both feel an attachment to the toponymic identity and the identity as a City of Literature (Kostanski & Guy, 2014).

This also means that becoming a City of Literature can be used for various goals. Authors Maria Patricio Mulero and Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins argue in their 2017 article that the city of Barcelona aimed to use their candidature to the UNESCO creative cities network partly as a means to promote the city globally, boost citizen participation in culture and local cultural efforts, and partly as a way to capitalize on the local literary heritage and the sense of identity stemming from Barcelonian literature (Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins, 2017). In post-industrial western societies, the link between culture and economic- and city development became stronger and so also the importance of cultural policy as an instrument for economic and societal growth. The organizing of "mega-events", building museums or clusters of cultural industries have been commonly used to achieve this growth, however, the instrumentalization of culture and mega-events also had their downsides. The entrepreneurial cultural policy model started to get critiqued in favor of focusing more on community participation and cultural branding as well as promoting the publishing industry and literature as a whole. Barcelona's UNESCO City of Literature program was built around three core elements; promoting reading among citizens, supporting writers and enhancing the book industry. Rather than focusing on one or a few big events, this new approach aimed for development in all literary fields, from poetry to children's literature to comics, and had a more all-encompassing and integrated view of cultural work. The authors conclude that the candidature was positive for Barcelona. It made literature a focal point and a stronger part of Barcelonas cultural identity and made it easier to identify what strengths and weaknesses the city's literary work possessed. It also made workers in the literary field reach consensus and work towards a common goal, and allowed for unity within the Catalan government. Lastly, it helped Barcelona in the strive towards international recognition and social cohesion (Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins, 2017).

A positive outlook on a membership in the UNESCO creative cities network seems to be common in academic research. From the Academy of Economic studies in Romania came another article in 2012 that discusses the social

and economic benefits of becoming part of the UNESCO creative cities network, while arguing for the possibility of the city of Sibiu becoming part of it. While studying the cases of three creative cities in the United Kingdom, the authors identified positive outcomes in all cases, for example making the cities into attractive tourist locations and hubs for learning about and sharing local culture. The analysis in this article hinges upon previous research about creative cities and culture as a means for city development. Concluding the article, the authors remain convinced that Sibiu becoming a UNESCO City of Literature would positively influence the economic and social development of the city, though some weaknesses and challenges could also be identified (Popescu & Corboş, 2012). In general, it seems like a lot of research that has been done surrounding the UNESCO creative city network is rather positive, and many researchers want to advocate for other cities to become part of it too. It is clear that being a UNESCO creative city is seen as a net positive for cities who want to boost global recognition, a sense of community identity and economic and social development.

4. Theoretical framework

4.1 Ideology

In this thesis I aim to understand how project group members responsible for writing the application to UNESCO, and other key players involved in the process argue for the values of literature and why a membership in the UNESCO creatives cities network would be beneficial for Gothenburg city, its citizens and the literary field. As such I'm interested in making a critical analysis of the values, norms and ideas that informs these arguments. Ideology is a concept that is used in a variety of academic disciplines, where it is usually understood and utilized differently depending on how it is defined. Some are based more in philosophy and concern themselves with how human social interactions work, while others deal with more concrete criticisms of prevailing power structures. The term was coined by the French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy to study how ideas are formed, whereas in modern contexts it is more commonly used to refer to political beliefs (van Dijk, 2005). To give one general definition of what ideology is, it can be described as a collection of normative ideas that form an understanding about something, most often a group of people or the order of society. These ideas are often naturalized as absolute truths or are claimed as truths (Minar, 1961, Eagleton, 1991). Ideology becomes ideology when the collection of ideas are shared collectively in a social context. In other words ideology is not opinions held by a lone person, but ideas and a language that are shared with many (van Dijk, 2006). Ideology does not have to be exclusively associated with a dominant social group, where it is used as a form of propaganda to perpetuate their own power. Any social group can create, share and spread an ideology (van Dijk, 2005). However, many researchers, like Per Möller in his 2021 doctoral dissertation, acknowledge overarching power structures and political claims to power as important facets to how ideology function in modern society (Möller, 2021).

A critical, marxist interpretation of ideology was introduced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the article *The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas*. In it, they discuss how the ruling class in a given society and the values or personality traits that are seen as most desirable in that society are linked. This is because those personality traits or values mirror what benefit the ruling class the most and what ensures their continued reign. Under feudalism, these values where concepts like loyalty and honor while capitalism promotes work ethics and individualism. Ideology thus becomes a tool to preserve and safeguard power (Marx & Engels, 2012). With this

view of ideology, it is evident that ideology affects reality in the sense that it begets action. Like scholar Teun van Dijk say, a racist ideology will affect a country's immigration policies and thus directly affect how people of color are treated. A feminist ideology can effect how a society deals with wage inequality or abortion rights (van Dijk, 2006). Ideology has the power to organize and control society, and the group of people who holds the most power in society can use it to build a society most suited for them.

4.2 The institutional logics of Swedish cultural politics

As society and political ideologies shift over time, it is only natural that the cultural politics of a given country should shift with them. In the 2016 book *Kampen om kulturen*, Jenny Svensson and Klara Tomson aimed to understand what signified this shift and its effects on modern day cultural politics in Sweden. The cultural politics in Sweden had and continues to have a strong connection to ideas of mass education, freedom of speech and the strengthening of a democratic spirit in Swedish citizens. This is because culture itself is seen as a bearer of democracy and equality and as part of the core identity of both citizens and country. Swedish cultural politics as such was thus historically characterized as a humanistic project to strengthen democracy and as an effort to curb any potential negative effects of the commercialization of culture (Svensson & Tomson (ed.), 2016). In the late 1990's and early 2000's however, there was a shift in Swedish cultural politics. Neoliberal ideology became more and more apparent in how culture was valued and what it was supposed to achieve, which was made obvious by discourse about how culture can contribute to economic growth and that cultural work should be streamlined, evaluated and its results properly measured. In addition, the idea that culture should be decentralized and as a consequence, it was thought, become more democratic and of higher quality also gained foothold. With the emergence of these three new perspectives on culture, a shift occurred where the old and the new understandings of culture re-shaped Swedish cultural politics. Jenny Svensson and Klara Tomson together with a number of other researchers explore this new era of Swedish cultural politics in the book *Kampen om kulturen*, with the aim to understand what characterizes it and how it effects the cultural field and cultural politics (Svensson & Tomson (ed.), 2016).

One of the theoretical concepts the authors use to analyze how Swedish cultural politics changed over time is that of institutional logics, which are understood to have the potential to make institutional changes when several incompatible institutional logics coincide and clash. After neoliberal

ideology gained a foothold in Swedish cultural politics, Svensson and Tomson identify five such institutional logics, which fight for dominance in the cultural field, each with its own goal and ways of gaining legitimacy. The first is the logic of the cultural profession, which has the goal to create culture of high quality and gains legitimacy by creating or promoting cultural events, producers of culture or cultural organizations. It is centered around the inherent value of culture and the importance for humans to be able to both create and enjoy culture, in addition to holding working within the cultural field and producing culture of high quality in high esteem. The second is the logic of bureaucracy, which has the goal of implementing political decisions and gains legitimacy by following rules. Within this logic, it is above all valued to follow political rules and decisions as closely and effectively as possible. The third is the logic of democracy, which has the goal of active citizen participation and ability for citizens to make their voices heard and gains legitimacy from the level of equality and equal rights present. This logic is centered around the idea of culture as a means to strengthen democracy and promote equality among different groups of people with differing needs. These first three logics were historically dominant in the field of cultural politics, but were joined by a fourth and fifth logic. The fourth is the logic of management, which has the goal of streamlining cultural organizations or projects and gains legitimacy by working through previously approved models for streamlining and having a good, strong leadership. The most important aspect of the logic of management is being as effective with time and resources as possible, minimizing any waste, and being able to adequately measure and evaluate the effects of a certain cultural project. The fifth and final logic is the logic of the market. It has the singular goal of maximizing profits and gains legitimacy from the making of "rational" decisions. Historically, this fifth logic was largely shunned in cultural politics but has gained an increasing foothold in modern day Sweden. It is characterized by the idea that culture can be used as a means for economical growth and for profit (Svensson & Tomson (ed.), 2016).

Sometimes these five logics are in conflict with each other, while other times two or more logics can be combined to achieve a certain goal. For example, combining the logics of democracy and bureaucracy can be seen as a way to ensure the implementation of democracy strengthening cultural initiatives, while combining the logics of management and market can be seen as a way to maximize both effectivity and profit. I will use the concept of institutional logics in this thesis, with the aim to analyze how the values of literature are discussed and what arguments are used to motivate

Gothenburg becoming a UNESCO City of Literature, and to study whether any of these aforementioned logics are present in the discursive formations in these conversations.

4.3 Discourse analysis and discursive formations

Discourse analysis is most often a method that studies language, spoken or written, and that analyzes the productive, meaning-making qualities of language. It is usually based on a social constructionist understanding of language, in the sense that it assumes knowledge as socially constructed by humans rather than as objective fact and that is dependent on social and historical context. As such, discourse is a social process that produces meaning, affects what is considered true or not and is a social practice that allows a group of people to form a collective understanding of certain phenomenon (Phillips & Winther Jørgensen, 2002, Fairclough, 2013a, Fairclough, 2013b). For this thesis I will implement a foucauldian discourse analysis, which echoes the idea that knowledge does not mirror reality but is instead a reflection of what is considered true and false in a given society and what is and was is not allowed to be said about a given subject. A foucauldian discourse analysis carries with it an assumption of the intimate relationship between language, knowledge and power. It considers discourse as a way to produce knowledge and societal "truths". Foucault viewed discourse as any kind of statement or assumption that wants to decide what is an acceptable and true way of viewing the world. A discursive formation is in turn a collection of such statements, that together forms a regime of knowledge, a regime that greatly affects what people are allowed to feel or say about something:

We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; it does not form a rhetorical or formal unity, endlessly repeatable, whose appearance or use in history might be indicated (and, if necessary, explained); it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined (Foucault, 1972, p. 117).

Producing or reproducing a discursive formation is not necessarily something that people do consciously, just as producing or reproducing an ideology is not necessarily done consciously. They can rather be so naturalized that for the individual person they can be hard to discern from objective truth and from knowledge itself. Discourse, according to Foucault, thus has the power to define and restrict how we as humans move in the social world, in a given time and place. As with ideology, discourses are not just used by dominant groups in order to subjugate marginalized groups.

Like Foucault states, any social group has the power produce or create regimes of knowledge. As such, discourse is not unquestionably repressive but rather productive (Foucault, 1980).

4.4 Methodology

For this thesis, I have focused on theories and methods that will allow me to examine the discourse used to argue for the values of literature and the possible benefits of becoming a UNESCO City of Literature. To this end, two different types of material related to the project will be studied. The first type is studying documents, how they are formulated and why. This includes the appeal to the Gothenburg city council to approve of the candidature to UNESCO and the application to UNESCO. The second type of material is conducting interviews with the project group members and later analyzing them. I am interested in discerning the arguments being used and what discursive formations, i.e groups of statements that form a discourse, concerning the values of literature or the benefits of a UNESCO creative cities network membership are made apparent. To do so I will use the following theoretical frameworks: a foucauldian discourse analysis, ideology and institutional logics.

If ideology can be considered a collection of normative ideas, then discourse analysis can be considered a tool to take notice of how those ideas are made apparent and utilized in practice (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). These two theoretical approaches will work in synergy with Svensson and Tomsons concept of the five institutional logics that signify modern day Swedish cultural politics, in order to identify and make sense of ideology and discourse present in the material I will study. I liken these institutional logics to discursive formations, since they too are formed by values that coalesce into unified understandings of cultural work. If comparisons can be drawn between Svensson and Tomsons (ed., 2016) findings and the discursive formations I can identify in my material, then it could indicate what institutional logics have informed the work that went into the UNESCO application. I believe it is also worthwhile to discern what arguments and motivations are successful in getting literary projects funded and backed by politicians and institutions with power, such as UNESCO. This because it is generally hard for workers in the cultural and literary field to find funding for their work, especially since the institutional logic of the market started gaining a foothold in Swedish hegemonic discourse about culture and literature (Svensson & Tomson (ed.), 2016).

5. Methods and material

5.1 Conducting the interviews

My interviews were conducted in Swedish, since this is both mine and my interviewees native language, and it lessened the risk of miscommunications or misunderstandings due to language. For citations or referencing of the interviews in my results and analysis I have opted to translate these parts into English. By making my own translation of my interviewees' quotes, I realize I am adding a layer of my own interpretation that does not exactly correlate with the original quote. My interview subjects were chosen due to being members of the project group who were tasked with the application process. As previously mentioned, the project group consists of members from public, private and civil society, as well as academia. In order to get the differing perspectives and the viewpoints of each unique organization, it was important to interview at least one member from each organization present in the group. I set my goal at between 5-10 qualitative interviews, in order to properly exhaust information relevant to my interview themes. Since the number of project group members are limited and would at maximum result in 10 interviews, it did not seem prudent to exclude any member when requesting an interview, even though some were members of the same organization. There was however one member in the project group that was excluded, which will be explained and discussed in chapter 5.4.

In total 9 interviews were conducted, out of which 8 were used in the analysis. One interview was omitted from the analysis, because the requirement of written consent was not fulfilled. Two of the interviews were conducted over Zoom and recorded with the built-in record function, while the others were conducted face-to-face and recorded with a mobile phone. If possible, it would have been preferable to conduct all interviews in person. This is in part because communication in my opinion is easier and less prone to misunderstandings when both parties can see each others body language and facial expressions and hear the other clearly. It is also because Zoom can sometimes experience technical issues, which can result in it being hard to hear what is actually said in the recording or can act as a distraction during the actual conversation.

In accordance with GDPR laws and for privacy reasons, the recordings were swiftly transferred from my personal devices to the google drive account provided by the University of Borås. The interview subjects were lastly also offered to comment on and suggest clarifications to any excerpt or citations

by them used in the thesis. A majority of the interviewees gave no or only a few comments. Some suggested edits meant to clarify the meaning or context behind certain quotes or statements made. When using quotes from the interviews in the analysis, I chose to de-identify the members by not using their actual names or any names that could denote their gender, instead opting to refer to them by letters ranging from A to H and with gender neutral pronouns.

To enter the interviews more informed of the language and arguments used by project group members and other key players in the application process, I read the documents I had chosen as material for my study, which are further described in chapter 5.3. Two of the questions in the interview guide are quotes from the appeal to the Gothenburg city council and the application to UNESCO. This is because I wanted to hear the project group members reflections on what is said in these documents and hopefully get added perspectives on the thought process of writing them, and the arguments in them. After the interviews were conducted, the interview transcripts and documents were studied and analyzed parallel to each other, in order to discover potential similarities – or discrepancies – in the language and arguments being used in them.

5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted with members of the Gothenburg UNESCO project group in order to gain insight into the work and thought process behind writing the application to UNESCO. They were conducted in a semi-structured way, with an interview guide that was built around pre-determined themes constructed to illuminate the research aim. The interview script had questions that follow these themes, but were formulated openly enough to allow for follow-up questions and allowed for the conversation to flow naturally into areas that could still be deemed relevant in the moment. The interview guide with the original Swedish questions and a translated English version can be read in appendix 2. Semi-structured, qualitative interviews are typically used when there are specific themes that need to be addressed but when interviewees individual perspectives, thoughts and feelings are also given more weight. For example, giving room for the interviewee to think freely also provides insight into what they consider relevant and important to the topic at hand and can highlight problem areas that the researcher might not have previously considered (Bryman, 2012, Wildemuth, 2016). Choosing an semi-structured interview approach thus allowed me to go more in-depth with the themes I wanted to explore,

allowed for follow-up questions when deemed necessary and gave my interviewees the freedom to expand on their thoughts in a way they felt was relevant. In the interview guide I organized and formulated my questions with four themes in mind. The first were oriented around an introduction into the work role of the informant, when they got involved in the project group and their overall impressions and feelings regarding the work process of writing the UNESCO application. The second was about their thoughts on UNESCO and the creative cities network itself, the third about literature and its potential significance for society and citizens. The fourth and final theme had questions regarding the collaboration between the members of the project group.

The act of transcribing an interview also requires careful consideration. Spoken language and written language can be interpreted very differently even when the meaning of the sentence is the same (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). In addition, when spoken language is translated into a written format in a very direct and literal way, a sentence that sounded precise and logical can suddenly seem incoherent and confused, which has the potential effect of making the interviewee feel uncomfortable or misrepresented. On the other hand, being too heavy-handed when transcribing spoken language into something that makes sense and flows well in written form has the potential of losing nuance or even changing the essence of what the interviewee was trying to convey (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). With these thoughts in mind I opted to find a middle ground when transcribing my interviews, making sure the sentences had a natural flow in written form while also trying to stay true to the original quote.

5.3 Documents

Apart from the interviews, the materials for this thesis will consist of two documents. The first is the appeal to the Gothenburg city council and culture committee, which was written in 2019 by affiliates from Gothenburg Book Fair, Writers' Centre West, Gothenburg House of Literature, Swedish PEN, Poesiwerken and Politisk Poesifestival. The appeal is twelve pages long and contains a brief description of what is being asked of the Gothenburg city council and culture committee, which is for Gothenburg to apply to become one of UNESCO's cities of literature and the aims of doing so. It also contains background information of the UNESCO creative cities network and the experiences of other nordic cities who previously got the distinction, as well as a time plan for writing the application and the anticipated economic consequences of writing the application and in case Gothenburg

should become a City of Literature. The signed organizations also outline what resources and work hours they are willing to provide in order to finalize the application. The content subject for analysis for this thesis however, is how the values of literature is discussed and the arguments used to motivate why the application to UNESCO is a worthwhile endeavor for Gothenburg.

The second document is Gothenburg's application to UNESCO. There are two versions of this document. One in Swedish, which was sent to the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO on the 20th of April, 2021. The other version is the same document translated into English, which was subsequently sent to UNESCO after the Swedish National Commission gave their approval. For this thesis, I will be analyzing and including excerpts from the English version, since the translation will then not be colored by my own interpretations but stem directly from the project group responsible. The application is largely based on a form created by UNESCO, that all cities who applied to be a creative city had to fill in. For example, UNESCO wants to know how the city applying is currently "using creativity as a driver for action", how the city prepared for the application, and how they expect a membership to impact the city and its sustainable development. This as well as naming current efforts, major events, educational programs, collaborations between civil society, academia, the city et cetera or other initiatives concerning literature that is already being done by the City of Gothenburg city and Region Västra Götaland, that shows the city's commitment to literature. The application states that it is signed and supported by the mayor of Gothenburg as well as the Gothenburg city council and states how the City of Gothenburg, University of Gothenburg and Region of Västra Götaland plan to collaborate if UNESCO appoints Gothenburg the award.

I will not include this content in my analysis, but rather focus on how the different sections in UNESCO:s form are answered and the many letters of support from various organizations that are included in the application. The letters of support were not all written by the project group members themselves, but were selected by them as part of the arguments to UNESCO as to why Gothenburg should be appointed a City of Literature. I hence consider them relevant for study and analysis for this thesis. Like with the previous document, information in the application that is not related to arguments or motivations for the values of literature, or for why Gothenburg's application should be approved will not be taken into account for this particular study, as it does not relate to the study aims or research

questions. When referencing the different documents in the analysis, I will use "appeal" and "application" respectively for those particular documents, but for the letters of support I will reference the specific organization that wrote the letter I'm analyzing. In the reference list, they can be found under "Documents", City of Gothenburg. (2021). *Letters of Support*.

5.4 Ethical concerns and reflexivity

In early 2021 I was brought into the project group as a researcher on the initiative of one of the members of the project group. The aim for this was to have someone evaluate the work and thought process of the UNESCO application. This evaluation was to be done as a part of my master's thesis and so I was not hired by any of the organizations involved in the project group nor received any payment for writing this thesis. Since I was already involved in the project with the aim to study and analyze the work and thought process of the project group, the project group members were familiar with me and the basic ideas of my thesis when I started writing it in January 2022. This however does not mean there was an expectation or agreement for me to approach this subject with an uncritical eye. Echoing the sentiments of Johannisson and Blomgren (2018), on the contrary I believe it is my duty as a researcher to do a critical assessment and evaluation in this thesis. An issue that complicated matters is that one of the members of the project group is a family member of mine. They did not have a leading position in the project group and were not the one responsible for or the one who instigated bringing me on as a researcher. Nonetheless, it did present a situation where there was a conflict of interests. To mitigate this we maintained a distance from each other during this process and I did not conduct any interviews with them nor asked them for any input. Fortunately there were other members in the project group that also worked for the city of Gothenburg, with similar or equivalent work roles as that of my family member, which meant I could still access that organization's unique thoughts and standpoints. Lastly, I have formulated my research questions and written this thesis completely independently and without input or suggestions from any of the project members.

Concerning ethical questions related to the interviews, the interviewees were informed that the information being collected regarded their thoughts about literature and the work process with the application, not their personal lives. They were also informed that they were free to give or rescind their consent to participate in the study at any time. The quotes and excerpts used were de-identified, since the focus of the analysis lies in the language and

arguments used by people who inhabit certain positions in the literary field but not the specific position that the individual interviewees spoke from. The interviewees were given the opportunity to edit or add to their statements before print. This is because even though they were de-identified, it is reasonable to assume their identities could still be discerned given the public nature of the project. Giving the interviewees extra opportunity to ensure their quotes truly represent their thoughts and feelings was thus deemed fair. Lastly, the contents of the interviews were handled confidentially and, as stated above, in accordance with GDPR laws.

I also wish to discuss potential pitfalls for researchers studying cultural politics and/or cultural policy. Stavrum (2013) is one researcher that points out certain factors that might make it hard to engage in critical research of cultural politics. Such factor can be the often indisputably good intentions of initiative makers or the strong consensus among policy makers of the positive effects culture has on citizens and therefore also the inherent good in culture initiatives or projects, which makes critical assessment of them seem misplaced or ill-advised (Stavrum, 2013). I am studying this topic critically, because I believe politics and ideology concerning literature has a profound impact on within which framework literature is allowed to exist and thrive and I take seriously the effects language has on the material conditions of society and citizens. Regardless on whether I personally agree that a certain literary project or initiative will have positive consequences or not has therefore no impact on whether it is worth to critically examine it or not. I want to study the language being used and any discursive formations present, not to find fault in the work or thought process of the project or to criticize the values of literature, but precisely because I respect the literary and cultural field as worthy objects of study and academic evaluation. And hopefully, like Stavrum (2013) also says, provide some sort of insights or reflections that might be helpful to the field of culture, literature or cultural politics at large.

6. Results and analysis

In the appeal, the application, the letters of support and the interviews, there are certain phrases, words or arguments that frequently appear. They are used to motivate Gothenburg's candidature to UNESCO and to argue for the values of literature. In this chapter I will present how these phrases, words and arguments coalesce into discursive formations and analyze the logics that form the base of these formations. I reiterate that the appeal was written in Swedish and the interviews were conducted in Swedish, but translated into English by me, while the application and letters of support were written in English. All references to the appeal and interviews or quotes used are thus colored by my interpretation of them. Firstly, I will discuss the dominating discursive formations I have identified, followed by competing discursive formations. The chapter ends with an analysis of how the membership in the UNESCO network is hoped to bring legitimacy to and illuminate literature.

6.1 Dominating discursive formations

Two primary arguments for the values of literature in the documents, the appeal, the application and the letters of support, are made apparent. The first is that literature will lead to great benefits for both society and citizens. The second is that literature itself has an inherent value and that people have the right to freely enjoy it and create it. Together with a number of value-charged words or phrases, these arguments form two different discursive formations that I have chosen to call the democracy discursive formation and the literature as art discursive formation.

6.1.1 Democracy discursive formation

The democracy discursive formation hinges on several factors; human rights, benefits for society and benefits for the individual person. Value-charged words or phrases for this discursive formation include; democracy, cultural welfare, freedom of speech, health, quality of life, participation, sustainability, equality, multilingualism, inclusivity, sharing/exchange, collaboration, right to work and education and right to finish school. Literature is here either seen as a way to improve society or as a solution to a perceived threat to society. For example, in the application when the authors exemplify how Gothenburg uses creativity as a "driver for action", the following is said:

Gothenburg is a segregated city with widening social divisions. The project *The City Where We Read to Our Children* began in 2015 to improve children's reading and language skills, giving them a better foundation for formal education, since a completed education is important in achieving a better quality of life (Application, 2021, p. 5).

Segregation and social division are presented as societal negatives in Gothenburg, and the reading project for children is presented as a way to counteract them while simultaneously improving the quality of life of children. In fact, literature is presented as an essential factor in overcoming segregation and for creating a socially sustainable Gothenburg: "Literature is a key to social sustainability. As part of our active efforts to promote equality, we expect literature to help overcome segregation and to advance our multilingual city through Gothenburgers' own stories and reading." (Application, 2021, p. 6). This point was also reiterated by project group member G, who succinctly stated that "Over all it is about decreasing divides and inequalities in society and for this, reading is the absolute strongest force." (G, 2022). Under point 10.11 in the application, it is further described how Gothenburg works with reading promotion in marginalized or vulnerable groups to increase equality and participation in the city and to reduce crime:

The Overcoming Obstacles to Reading project: As part of efforts to promote an equal city, Gothenburg libraries are working to increase the number of talking book-users so as to promote reading regardless of obstacles via a downloading service offered by the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media.

Made in Backa: A literary magazine by children aged 10–17 years, where each issue begins with writers' workshops, has developed in multiple multilingual city suburbs in recent years. Projects that combine sport and reading have also clearly improved participation and reduced crime (Application, 2021, p. 11).

The two discourses Lindström Sol identified in her research of Swedish cultural policies (2019), that culture is good because it leads to good things and because prevents bad things, can be recognized here as well. Reading will make society more equal and will reduce segregation and crime.

Not only literature itself but access to literature through public libraries is also said to improve quality of life and citizens participating in society:

Libraries have been central to Gothenburg's expansive urban development since its first public library opened in 1861. The impact of expanding services to include the homeless, new immigrants and asylum-seekers during the 2000s is clear: free services and free library cards promote quality of life, participation and education (Application, 2021, p. 8).

The secretary general of the Swedish Library Association speaks of how public libraries in Gothenburg work for democracy and citizen participation through reading as well in a letter of support: "The City of Gothenburg and its libraries (public libraries as well as school libraries) works strategically to develop reading and democratically active citizens." (The Swedish Library Association, 2021).

Apart from libraries having a positive impact on society, the positive effects of reading on children is also emphasized, in particular their development and future lives:

Research clearly shows that reading aloud early increases children's verbal skills, has a positive influence on readiness for school as well as somewhat impedes the development of socio-emotional difficulties. Reading aloud early in life has great long-term effects and is therefore an investment for the future. Storytelling and reading aloud increases children's vocabulary, reading ability and ability to express themselves (Appeal, 2021, p. 5).

Reading having a positive impact on children and their future was a repeated standpoint in my interviews as well, in particular aiding in finishing elementary school and paving the way for entering the work force successfully:

It's about getting through elementary school and it's about finishing high school. Or even more importantly, that people manage to finish high school, and I think the City of Gothenburg should have a 100 percent goal here, of high grades. Because if you manage to finish high school with complete grades, you will succeed in the work market and if you don't manage to finish elementary school and end up in individual choice [individuellt val, A/N] and get off on the wrong foot in individual choice, then it seems very hard to get a job that enables you to make a living and take a step into society. And that's where I believe reading and reading comprehension to be the absolute key (A, 2022).

Another project group member also brought up literary projects for reading promotion as a way to combat school drop-out rates in Region Västra Götaland:

Reading promotion is a big area that is included in Gothenburg, City of Literature. The City Where We Read To Our Children and also the concentrated effort we're doing on a regional level that's called "Fullföljda studier". We did a study a few years ago about school drop-out rates after ninth grade in Region Västra Götaland and in some municipalities almost 50 percent do not continue their studies into high school (F, 2022).

The connection between literature, school and future work life lies in part with language and knowledge, according to one project group member, but also in developing a strong sense of self and your own rights:

We know that if you get read to, you gain a richer language. [...] It's hugely important for your own identity, for your own knowledge, your ability to obtain more knowledge, finish school, get a job, that whole ripple effect. But also for the development of your own identity, your uniqueness, the meaning of life so to speak, to be able to stand up for your opinions and being able to speak your mind and disagree and retort. And self-respect in language. To me there's both social and economical meaning in having access to your language. It's also quite simply a human right for all people, but especially children (G, 2022).

Power, critical thinking and independence is gained through knowledge which is gained through reading and this connection is thought to ring true for adults as well. When asked about their thoughts on what effects literature might have on society, project group member F reminisced what was said during the summit for literature politics in spring 2022:

The Speaker of the Riksdag attended and held an inaugural speech about the significance of literature for democracy and for the work of the Riksdag, and it might seem like a given but he also pointed out that through reading and writing we become critical persons who take in differing opinions and puts them against each other. And that's the foundation of politics, to exercise your politics, your political freedom and rights (F, 2022).

With this power and with knowledge comes the ability to change one's own life as well. Two project group members discuss how historically, reading was used as a political tool for change and for empowering the working class:

Early studies of the workers' movements traditions of mass-education [Folkbildnings-traditioner, A/N] can in an incredibly interesting way tell that story. That reading and mass-education gives power to the

individual and in parentheses enables changing your work situation, but is also the foundation for social mobility (A, 2022).

In this point of view, access to power through education creates opportunity to fight for your rights as an individual of a marginalized group, and enables social mobility.

Once upon a time, literature was truly leverage for huge change in society and social mobility that you almost can't believe. That's just two generations away. It hinged a lot on taking power over how and where knowledge was created and was largely about reading literature and writing and also organizing library politics from a conscious idea of literature as a sort of ... both, frankly, as a resource for knowledge and as a sort of citizenship. And a good life (H, 2022).

Reading and literature is thus seen both as a way to improve an individuals life and as a means for larger scale political changes.

Lastly, I want to highlight how literature is further presented as a gateway to democracy, by strengthening freedom of expression: "We view democracy as a counterweight to disinformation and propaganda and the active defence of free speech as important ideas, and our city and region are members of ICORN." (Application, 2021, p. 5). ICORN is an organization of cities and regions that are committed to safe-guarding freedom of expression, defending democratic values and offering protection for writers and artists under threat of persecution, censorship or harassment (Icorn, n.d). One project group member told me that they during the process of writing the application had been in contact with a director of culture in Lillehammer, another City of Literature in the UNESCO network and member of ICORN like Gothenburg, and that this director had expressed excitement that another city with these two identities would join the network and help safeguard the freedom of speech within it (D, 2022). In the application to UNESCO, it is further explicitly mentioned that the city of Gothenburg wants to work with strengthening free speech and with different forms of writing for a healthy democracy:

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN A NEW ERA

In a time of waning democracies, growing threats and persecution. After 25 years as an ICORN City of Refuge and with Region Västra Götaland and Uddevalla joining it in 2014 and 2016, respectively, Gothenburg aims to: bolster free speech via new strategies; start collaborations among Cities of Literature and ICORN Cities of Refuge; boost alliances in the Nordic region, Europe and globally; introduce research, journalism, literature and media and information

literacy to support a robust democratic society (Application, 2021, p. 17).

Again, literature is seen as a way to combat threats to society. It's an initiative that was also brought up in one of my interviews:

Yes, I think it's interesting to explore because one of our missions is strategies for freedom of expression in a new era. It is not a positive era we are in, absolutely not. And it has been a powerful time to enter the network for that same reason, that it comes to a head when other commitments have perhaps faded away, this very much has not (G, 2022).

Supporting literature, and by extension freedom of speech and freedom of expression, becomes a way to strengthen democracy, safeguarding freedom of speech and protecting society against threats of disinformation and propaganda. Four letters of support further explicitly mention freedom of speech or freedom of expression as important reasons to engage in literature (Letters of support, 2021). Considering the point in history we are currently at, one of my interviewees said, it seemed prudent to enter the creative cities network, since questions about culture and the arts are so intertwined with questions regarding democracy, freedom of speech and peace (H, 2022).

The democracy discursive formation bares some resemblance to both the discourse of welfare Johannisson found in her dissertation (2006) and the institutional logic of democracy identified by Svensson and Tomson (2016). There is a genuine belief among the project group members that literature has a strong ability to do good, for society, democracy and for individual people. For citizens, it's not only about being able to provide for yourself or speak for your own causes, but also about attaining a good quality of life. These ideas are closely tied to that of the welfare state, both in the sense that every person deserves to have a good life and that ensuring this, in this case through making literature easily accessible, is an obligation of the people in power. I therefore relate the democracy discursive formation to Johannisson's discourse of welfare. The emphasis on freedom of speech and expression as a means for strengthening democracy in turn runs reminiscent of the institutional logic of democracy, as does using culture as a means to combat inequality. Considering this institutional logic has been dominant in Swedish cultural politics for a long time, it stands to reason it would still influence people who work in the cultural field.

6.1.2 Literature as art discursive formation

While literature is considered to have great effects on society, there is also a great emphasis on the inherent value of literature and the right to literature in the material, in particular the appeal and interviews. Words or concepts connected with this discourse include: inherent value, accessibility, literature as an artform, enjoyment, being seen and heard and authors rights. This discursive formation has two primary bases for argumentation. The first is that literature, and all cultural expression, both writing and reading, is an intrinsic part of what it means to be human. Literature is something humans engage in because we derive joy from it and because we want to be seen and heard. As such, literature has an inherent value. The second, that it is a right to be able to make a living as a writer and time and resources should thus be spent making this easier for people. In this discursive formation there is more focus on what human needs literature fulfills, rather than the socio-economic effects of reading, and there is added focus on the rights of authors.

Literature, within this understanding, has the ability to connect people to each other and what it means to be human, even in the presence of differences:

At the end of the day, we're all human, and if you look at the UN-charter or the declaration of human rights or the American declaration of independence, then they're all about us humans wanting to be free, wanting to be happy or striving towards happiness. We want to be able to provide for ourselves and our family, and this is something all humans share in common. Then we start differing from each other in all different kinds of ways, but I think that what literature can convey or what art can convey is precisely that which is deeply human and to create encounters between different cultures (B, 2022).

This sentiment of literature being a gateway for communication is repeated. It is discussed as a way to express yourself as an individual and as a way to see other people: "[...] I think that many of us aren't seen today. We don't get heard today. And that's where literature has an important ability to make other people visible. That we listen to other people." (B, 2022). One part of it is thus to see and be seen. Another part is being able to communicate directly with other people, and connect with them by sharing and discussing literature:

I think that it [literature, A/N] has been an inalienable part of how we think about society. And it is built for it, so to speak in its very DNA, that it is about it being a space where you discuss and share and talk

and read and write. That it is in truth both an inner world and an outer world that connect to each other all the time, and that you can have these discussions and argumentations. That is one part of literature. The spoken element of literature or the processing. That is also literature. So to me it is simply an inalienable part of what I think of as society (H, 2022).

The social aspect of literature is highlighted, and is portrayed as a necessary space for conversation and contemplation, both in relation to the self and to other people. Through it, people can be made visible while also getting the chance to understand others better. Project group member F reflects on this apparent need many have to mirror themselves in others: "Yes, I do believe there is a, wherever it comes from, if it's a genetic or social condition I don't know, but this need to take in other people's stories and compare with your own story. It's very strong." (F, 2022). However, another facet that was discussed in one of my interviews is that humans also engage in literature and art simply because it's pleasurable and fun. Literature is a necessity and brings positive effects for both individuals and society but engaging in things purely because we as humans enjoy it also has value in and of itself:

I believe that culture is both a means and an end, almost like with food. We need food to survive and eat, but we also eat because it's tasty and because it's pleasurable. It's the same with culture, it brings a lot of positive effects and can be used to attain democracy, unity, understanding, integration and so on. But it is also an end. It is also that we work and struggle and study just to be able to enjoy culture (D, 2022).

In this sense literature has value because it leads to good things but also because humans enjoy it, strive towards it and long for it.

Another aspect of this discursive formation is that because art has inherent value, it means that enabling the free creation of art is necessary. If art or literature is something humans need, then we also need creators and available space for artistic creation. In the application, the City of Gothenburg vows to make this happen:

The City of Gothenburg (CG) and Region Västra Götaland (RVG) are important culture strategy actors. CG's cultural programme combines its aim to make Gothenburg a premier culture and events venue with art and democracy initiatives intended to uphold art's integrity, independence and inherent value, support artistic freedom of expression and quality, and promote accessibility, participation and intercultural dialogue. This includes creating good, sustainable conditions for art and artists (Application, 2021, p. 12).

In one of my interviews, this notion was reiterated:

I want to say that the application has two parts and I think it's extremely important to differentiate between these parts. One could call one part artist politics and the other social politics. When it comes to artist politics, literature is not a means but an end. It's about that maximum artistic freedom create great environments for production or that a literary artist, whether it's poetry or non-fiction or novel art, should be able to create as freely as possible (A, 2022).

There are however challenges to strengthening artistic creation and aiding artists. Being a City of Literature is thought to aid the efforts meant to ease these challenges:

There are a lot of things that need to be done in order to bolster authors in Sweden and Scandinavia. It is possible that this designation could also make us work a little more distinctly for the development of art forms and to strengthen the possibilities to be an author in all of Sweden and in Gothenburg. One could talk about terms for retirement or an investigation for looking at how creators might get an SGI.² How is creative work valued by society? Can you take time off to take care of a sick child when writing a book? Who should assess what you would have done during a regular workday on such an occasion? There are lots of work to be done to support creators. And I think we are only in the starting position of continuing that work. And I hope we would have done that regardless but possibly we can insist with more emphasis that we should be a good to live and work in as a writing person (D, 2022).

Project member D highlights how difficult it might be from an economical standpoint to be an author, partly because the current society does not know how to value creative work and partly because it is unclear how creators should be compensated for the unique work situations they are in. A way of honoring the inherent value of literature and culture is thus deciding how to best support the creators and facilitating making a living as a creator.

I liken this discursive formation to Johannisson's (2006) discourse of quality, in the sense that the project group members in this case also emphasize the importance of creative freedom and enabling people to make a living as artists. The main difference is that Johannisson in her dissertation found that there was a lot of focus on the quality of the culture being created and that ideally culture available to the public should be of the highest possible quality. Among the people I interviewed and in the documents I found that

² SGI is the income that determines how much sick pay one can get in case one becomes too sick to work and earn a living.

while the literary work being done in Gothenburg is thought to have positive effects, the core issue is not whether or not the literature is of high quality (and who should be the arbiter of what constitutes high quality literature) but that literature should be made accessible to both reader and author. Time and resources should not be spent on literature in order to make it high quality and by extension so it can have a greater positive effect on people. They should be spent because literature has inherent value, because it does humans good and fulfills our human needs. It also bares similarities to Svensson and Tomsons (2016) institutional logic of the cultural profession. Like the logic Svensson and Tomson describe, in the case of Gothenburg's candidature to UNESCO, significance is given to culture's inherent value and how essential it is for people to be able to both enjoy and produce culture. Since this logic gains legitimacy by creating or promoting cultural events, producers of culture or cultural organizations, it makes sense why in this case it is deemed important to safeguard the interests of authors. Within the logic of the cultural profession, creators have a very important function in society, an opinion that is shared by my interview subjects and in the application. Its focal point of the importance of high quality culture is however, as previously discussed, not present.

6.1.3 The reader in the City of Literature

Since Gothenburg's candidature to UNESCO is so intrinsically tied to views on reading and literature and what effects they will have, I found it interesting to juxtapose the discourse in my material with the socially constructed image of the undemocratic/undesirable non-reader (Kann-Rasmussen & Balling, 2015, Lindsköld, Hedemark & Lundh, 2020). In the interviews and documents studied, reading and literature are consequentially upheld as positive phenomenon that lead to positive outcomes. Many arguments are recognizable from the studies of Kann-Rasmussen & Balling and Lindsköld, Hedemark & Lundh, for example how reading can lead to a stronger democracy, a better quality of life or greater understanding for your fellow human. However there are two major differences between those discursive formations and discourse of the problematic non-reader.

Firstly, the documents and the project members are not focused on the negative aspects of not reading but focus solely on the positive aspects of reading. This means that the problematic non-reader is not present in these conversations and is thus not made evident as a societal problem that needs to be fixed. While on the topic of how a membership in UNESCO and

literary work could benefit the city of Gothenburg, a project member had this to say about segregation as a societal issue:

For Gothenburg to be able to be a good city, then Gothenburg needs to do everything in its power to fully break segregation and create movement between center and periphery. Bring together the city in as many different ways as possible. [...] And also that Gothenburg as a city admits that this is a challenge. In previous eras of politicians there has been a refusal to acknowledge segregation and who have said that Gothenburg is an amazing city. "If only we create jobs and low unemployment rates then we'll fix everything" (A, 2022).

The problem with segregation is here framed as the city of Gothenburg and its politicians historically not having done enough to combat it or not looking broadly enough at solutions. Likewise, when talking about the values and abilities of literature another member spoke like this:

[...] literature has a very affirming role, I think, but it is also an eye opener. For example, at Gothenburg Book Fair we signed the declaration of democracy and through that we have taken it into account and committed ourselves to ensure that literature written by people of color is especially highlighted. And to consider that when we create our content and program. This is another way to remind ourselves of that, the power of literature to narrow the gaps (C, 2022).

Again, literature is seen as one possible solution to uplift voices of the marginalized and to bridge the gaps between people. Focus lies on the power of literature to do good, not on the negative aspects of not reading or on the non-reader as a threat.

Secondly, there is an absence of the paternalistic views on promoting reading that Lindsköld, Hedemark and Lundh discovered in the 2012 Swedish Government Commission report on Literature and Government Bill from 2013. In these documents the responsibility of adults, particularly teachers and parents, to make children into readers is emphasized, regardless of initial aversion or reluctance to read in the child (Lindsköld, Hedemark and Lundh, 2020). The project members in contrast emphasize that while any limits or thresholds that keep people from literature should be counteracted, literature is not something that can or should be forced on anyone. One example is the following statement:

It [literature, A/N] might not be the road to happiness for all people. It wasn't long ago that people said "Go out in the sun, don't stay inside here with your nose in a book! You'll get pale, lazy and fat. This isn't

healthy.”. Now there’s a big focus on the public good. That all children have to understand why we must read and that it’s the key to everything. There’s no end to the effects people place on it and I think there’s a danger in that too, that it becomes too instrumental. I think that the desire to read has to come from within the individual child or adult (D, 2022).

The same person continues with more thoughts on what effects literature can have:

It can have a huge impact and you can’t in advance say when and to whom, but I believe in creating the conditions required for it. Because that’s very important. But to not overemphasize instrumentalism either. You have to be able to keep two thoughts in your mind at the same time. Reading is very important and I would claim there is literature for everybody, but as with all art and culture, there can’t be an element of force present but freedom to seek it out willingly (D, 2022).

This project member criticizes an instrumentalist approach to literature, that risks overemphasizing what literature is able to achieve and thus forcing citizens to engage in it for the greater good. In my interviews, I found that being cautious of using literature too much as a tool and being cautious of considering literature an obligation for citizens is a standpoint that is shared in the project group as a whole. There exists a belief that approaching and engaging with literature should be made easy and does have a range of positive effects, but should not be used as a tool to create desirable citizens.

While arguing for the values of literature and the positive outcomes of reading, the non-reader is not constructed as a societal problem that needs to be fixed. Reading is seen as one possible way to alleviate many issues but that does not lead to the conclusion that not reading is causing or exacerbating societal problems.

6.2 Competing discursive formations

While the dominant discursive formations about the benefits of literature and joining the UNESCO creative cities network are focused on positive effects on democracy, society and citizens, in addition to accentuating the inherent values of art, there are minor discursive formations that also became evident while I was studying my material. These are more directed at having measurable goals for literature and expecting different results for literary work, such as the successful development of cities and businesses

and economic growth. In this chapter I will showcase what characterizes these competing understandings of literature.

6.2.1 City development and economic growth

There are four letters of support in the UNESCO application that provide a different perspective on the benefits of literature and the creative cities network. These four letters were written by the West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, Göteborg & Co, Business Region Gothenburg and the Consortium of Masthuggskajen. The West Sweden Chamber of Commerce is an organisation from the private sector, concerned with "strengthening the West Sweden business community" (West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, 2021, p. 6), meaning helping businesses with growth and development (West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, 2021). In his letter, the CEO states that he supports Gothenburg's candidature, as their community is interested in Gothenburg "being an attractive city with a rich and varied cultural life" (West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, 2021, p. 6). Likewise, Business Region Gothenburg is concentrated on aiding people in starting and maintaining businesses in the region and creating more jobs. Becoming a City of Literature, they say, would help the development of publishing companies and cultural magazines in the Gothenburg, which is why they offer their support (Business Region Gothenburg, 2021).

The Consortium of Masthuggskajen in turn consists of a group of real estate developers, involved with creating a "new urban district" in the area of Masthuggskajen, Gothenburg (The Consortium of Masthuggskajen, 2021). They state the following:

The Consortium of Masthuggskajen aims to develop and strengthen the cultural life by creating new space for culture, where both existing functions and expressions are mixed and co-exist with new ones. The contrasts create a stimulating and dynamic cityscape. Becoming one of UNESCO's Cities of Literature would be a great acknowledgement enhancing our ambition to strengthen Gothenburg as a rich cultural city (The Consortium of Masthuggskajen, 2021, p. 10).

As real estate developers, The Consortium of Masthuggskajen, one can assume, have a personal interest in making Masthuggskajen an attractive area to live and do business in. Culture from this point of view is thus a part of making Masthuggskajen desirable, by creating a dynamic urban area, together with housing, offices, retail, restaurants and civil society organisations (The Consortium of Masthuggskajen, 2021).

Göteborg & Co is a company owned by the city of Gothenburg. Their mission is to develop Gothenburg into an attractive and sustainable city. By achieving this, all Gothenburg citizens will then be able to reap the benefits of a "growing hospitality industry" (Göteborg & Co, 2021, p. 8). In their letter of support, they state how Gothenburg is turning 400 years old, which Göteborg & Co is celebrating by developing it into a city which people want to live in, work in and visit. Bringing up the reading project "The City Where We Read to Our Children", they emphasize how reading can help children finish their education and become part of the working force, improving their chances for a life filled with good opportunities. By connecting the reading program with their aims for making Gothenburg into a sustainable city that people want to live, work in and visit, literary work becomes one way for Göteborg & Co to develop the city. It is one part of making Gothenburg into a more attractive city for both visitors and citizens (Göteborg & Co, 2021).

In these letters, focus shifts from literature benefitting society at large or individual citizens, or the inherent values of literature, to making Gothenburg attractive to visit, live and do business in. Similar to Richard Florida's theories, the primary focus here lies in the perceived capabilities of literature and culture to aid city development and economic growth. Literature's main function from this viewpoint is not the strengthening of democracy or free speech, ensuring a good quality of life for the marginalized or that literature is a natural part of human life but rather that literature will be a catalyst for economic growth, a healthy business climate and making the city of Gothenburg desirable, which in turn will benefit residents of the city. In comparison to the institutional logics present in the dominant discursive formations in my material, these four can most closely be likened to the institutional logic of the market, which premieres economic growth and city development.

6.2.2 Measuring the outcomes of literary work

All cities applying to be part of the creative cities network must include in their application under section 11.1 to 11.2 examples of major initiatives "achieving the objectives of the Network locally (city level) by enhancing the role of culture and creativity in the sustainable development of the city" (Application, 2021, p. 16). One part of showcasing these initiatives is by presenting what the city expects their outcome and impact to be. If the city gets selected into the creative cities network, it is expected to report on the implementation of the initiatives. The City of Gothenburg includes

references to TICA, "Thematic indicators of culture", when presenting six such initiatives. TICA:s can be described as a measuring tool by UNESCO to gauge how successful culture has been in reaching certain goals for sustainability in Agenda 2030, both nationally and locally (Unesco, 2019). Furthermore, the city of Gothenburg express commitment to reach UN's Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 10, 11 and 17 (Application, 2021, p. 6). There are six different cultural/literary initiatives in the application whose results will be measured against TICA:

1. The City Where We Read To Our Children. Expected results: better reading comprehension, school grades and equality in line with TICA 13, 14, 15, 17 & 20 (TICA: See Section 7).
2. The City as a Collection of Poems. Expected results: the public space as public land, where literature, poetry and creativity are accessible to all. Results measured against TICA 5, 18, 20 & 21.
3. Interweaving Literary & Social Welfare. Expected results: broader participation will boost well-being; more writing groups. Results measured against TICA 18, 19, 20, 21 & 22.
4. Freedom of Expression in a New Era. Expected results: enhanced efforts supporting free speech, enhanced collaboration, a better understanding of the global situation in line with TICA 13, 18, 19 & 20.
5. The Wor(l)d in the World of Gothenburg. Expected results: increase in exchanges, cultureindustry growth, a more diverse offering, more perspectives given a forum in line with TICA 7, 8, 10 & 12.
6. Exchanges for Change. Expected results: greater knowledge and commercial exchange in line with TICA 2, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14 & 17. (Application, 2021, p. 16-18)

Adequately fulfilling the Thematic indicators of culture will be a way for Gothenburg to prove to UNESCO it was successful in using culture in the strive towards a sustainable future.

When Svensson and Tomson (2016) discuss the logic of management, they observe two identifying aspects. One, that it values effectiveness and minimizing a waste of time and resources and two, that it wants to reliably measure and evaluate the outcomes of cultural projects. While the TICA:s do not, as do not the project members in the interviews, concern themselves with not being wasteful or effectivization, the TICA:s do present a framework for when culture can be accurately deemed to have achieved sustainability, by reaching certain measurable goals. One project group member also touches on measurable goals in regards to working towards a better world:

I saw it then, and today too, as a deeply radical and fairly progressive goal. That they actually made it measurable that between 2000 and 2030, the world should become a better place in these different, measurable ways. There was gonna be more democracy, less poverty. It was gonna be easier to get an education. So I'm an extremely big advocate for the UN's Millennium Development Goals. And Agenda 2030 as an idea, and that's where the creative cities enter as a small part of that (A, 2022).

According to the logic of management, having measurable goals is one way to prove that a cultural project was worthwhile and had positive outcomes that were quantifiable. The TICAs are a requirement from UNESCO and measurable goals for culture were not often spoken about during my interviews, except for the one instance above with project member A. Consequently I am not suggesting that the project group members themselves actively engaged in or promoted a discourse where literature has to have measurable goals. However, making sure that their suggested cultural projects are expected to fulfill these measurable goals was something the project group had to take into consideration when writing the application, which is significant to note as this narrative deviates from how the values of literature are usually talked about in the documents and interviews.

6.3 On bringing legitimacy to and illuminating literary work

In this chapter I will analyze the thought process behind including certain organizations in the support letters in the application to UNESCO, as well as how a membership in the creative cities network is argued to be a way of bringing legitimacy to and illuminating literary work being done in the Gothenburg area. I will showcase how becoming a City of Literature is thus not only seen as a positive because of the positive effects literature has on society and on citizens, in addition to its inherent value, but also because it is hoped to aid the literary field and the people who work within it.

6.3.1 Bringing legitimacy to literary work

The inclusion of the four letters of support from the West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, Göteborg & Co, Business Region Gothenburg and the Consortium of Masthuggskajen stands out in the application. Partly because they are companies and organizations with no clear connection to literary work and partly because their perspectives on how a membership in UNESCO will benefit Gothenburg and its citizens differ a lot from that of

the project group members and the rest of the application. So why the inclusion? One project group member did shine a light on this question:

I'm humbled by the attentive work climate that developed in the project group. One thing I perhaps contributed with was to make the project group see the importance of including letters of support from other areas of society than literature, for example West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, Göteborg & Co, Business Region Gothenburg and the Consortium of Masthuggskajen. And there were two reasons for doing so. The first was to broaden the area in which literature has a place. The second was that what you listen to when you're in the city council is business. It's the business world, it's the companies, it's the real estate companies and it is the part of the city that stand for the heavy administrations. The technical administrations. [...] If you can show in a report that you have their support, then you make the members of the city council less scared. Then they won't feel unsure, because they might not know anything about what a City of Literature is. One or two might, but it's not their area. Then you have to be crafty and strategic as a public official and through a circumferential movement get those parts of the city on board (E, 2022).

It was the project group member's opinion that the inclusion of the business sector of Gothenburg would make the city council feel less unsure about the candidature to UNESCO, because they are the part of the city they respect. If they stood behind this project then it was easier for the city council to seriously consider it, because their support weighs heavy. Ideas and endorsements that stem purely from the cultural sector are thus not necessarily enough to ensure approval from the city council. Literary projects and their presumed benefits to society is not enough of an incentive but they need the added effects of causing economic growth and city development to be taken more seriously. Person E then explains further why they came to this conclusion:

When Gothenburg was to apply to become a European Capital of Culture, the city council was to make a decision about it, and the logical conclusion would have been to let the assignment go to the administration of culture, but it doesn't. It goes to Göteborg & CO, which was surprising for the administration of culture. And I saw this as a sign that the city council values Göteborg & CO higher than the administration of culture, which means you should have Göteborg & CO in the project group if you want to be taken seriously by the city council (E, 2022).

In other words, it would not be enough from the city council's standpoint if you only approached them from the cultural field in a strict sense, according to Person E. They needed the endorsement from sectors of the city that

represents other values, such as economic growth, business and city development and the hospitality industry. It was further their impression that UNESCO viewed the inclusion of the Gothenburg business sector as a positive and a unique approach (E, 2022).

Becoming a UNESCO City of Literature was also viewed by many in the project group as something that could be used as an argument to invest more in future literary projects or discourage politicians making budget cuts to literary work. Two people in the project group, here referred to as B and H, for example mentioned that the Gothenburg city budget for culture has not significantly increased in a long time. For H, this has meant that they have noticed worries within the literary field about how to survive economically:

We look at the members of our organization and everything that is happening and all the growing power and that this was a way to find a kind of structure where you feel like you can open the lid, and let everything grow. Because it felt like you hit a ceiling or limits all the time since the cultural budget in Gothenburg hasn't grown in a long time. It is quite small after all and literature is dealing with a lot of different challenges. The field itself is in a very special stage or development. There are a lot of questions about the economical fate of literature and the life surrounding it. So this is also a way to find new paths to continue growing and to make literature into a truly relevant part of the fabric of society (H, 2022).

Becoming a City of Literature could be a way for the literary field to grow and potentially have a higher chance to avoid economical vulnerability. Person B also points out that there are many art forms within the cultural field that compete against each other for the limited funds in the culture budget, but that Gothenburg from here on out is committed to being a City of Literature in particular:

So of course, by being a City of Literature, instead of being a city of dance or regional centre for film, then obviously you can from the literary field always go to the municipal or regional boards and say "Hello, City of Literature, you have to invest in literature!". So I think that Kristín [Kristín Bjarnadóttir, A/N] and the others who initiated this were very crafty by pointing at literature specifically and working specifically for literature [...] Because now we have a blowtorch on the butt of the politicians: "You have to invest in this now, you don't have a choice, you're in fact a City of Literature. We're not a city of art or sculpture. We are a city of authors and literature." (B, 2022).

According to Person B, being a City of Literature can thus be used as a strong argument to convince politicians to invest resources in literature.

Similarly, Person F says the distinction gives them a stronger case to argue for future literary ventures:

I don't think it can be a bad thing to collaborate around something, and just the fact that I can say to the cultural committee of Region Västra Götaland that we have promised to work for Gothenburg the City of Literature. The fact that I can push that point means I can possibly clear new projects. Because it's a window, something that frames the individual investment Region Västra Götaland makes (F, 2022).

Project member C also expressed hope that the membership in the creative cities network will mean more money for literary work, with opportunities for people within the literary field to think freely:

I do dare to hope that the city will see the benefits to this and invest more money in Gothenburg, City of Literature. The dream is to have the politicians say: "Here you are, City of Literature, here is x amount of money. Work out what you're going to invest this money in. What kind of events? What kind of ventures?" (C, 2022).

Being a City of Literature is hence hoped to provide an additional argument as to why future literary projects should be approved, beyond how literature is presumed to benefit society. The membership is further a commitment that necessitates future spending on literature, in order to keep with the promise made to UNESCO. On the flip side, it is also by some hoped to lessen the probability of downsizing:

The whole application is built on us already doing a lot of good work, and we can do even better and we can above all illuminate all that is already being done. I think that there will be a leveraging effect when we are going to talk about the status of culture and the status of literature especially. It will make it hard to do anything that runs counter to being a City of Literature. I think that, even if it's not an obligation in any official contexts, it is reasonable to think that the libraries can be a motivation for additional investments or projects for the promotion of reading and many different plans we already want to do or currently work on. That it will be easier or that it at least will be harder to do things that go against that. How can you close a library in a City of Literature? (D, 2022)

The hope of being able to prevent the closing of libraries in the future, due to being a City of Literature, was reiterated by project group member A:

Sometimes when one works it feels very hard to get even a small amount of money for improved culture or cultural infrastructure. But

when it is regarding other types of infrastructure there is endless amounts of money all of a sudden. By being able to say that we are a UNESCO City of Literature then at least you have leverage, or an argument you are always able to use, that actually you can't shut down these libraries because now we are a City of Literature. It gives the cultural field better arguments (A, 2022).

The creative cities network is not seen as a guarantee that more money will be granted for literary projects or that downsizing will not occur, but it is seen as a leverage point and something that gives people working in the cultural field a stronger position to argue for the values of literature in general. It is also a possible line of defense against politics that would make literary projects economically vulnerable or that aim to shut down public access to literature, as provided by libraries. As such, project group member E says when discussing the benefits of joining the creative cities network, you can use this membership tactically to give culture and literature more legitimacy in Gothenburg:

It is that you can use it [the membership, A/N] as a tactic. It is a game. And that you get arenas for contact and festivals and exchanges for authors. That is naturally also an advantage. But I also mean that it is a legitimacy you can use. That these matters are important internationally and thus also should be important here. You can use it as an argument to bring legitimacy to the literary field here in Gothenburg (E, 2022).

And in regards to future hopes as to what being a City of Literature will bring:

Yes, it's naturally that literature slash culture slash the arts get more space in Gothenburg on the whole. And that is where I hope that the legitimacy this award gives will help bring culture a higher status. The hope is that all these things can take some steps forward, so that matters of culture and the arts can be more accommodated by the people in power in Gothenburg, but that's a long journey (E, 2022).

It is clear that the creative cities network is universally hoped to make arguing for future literary projects and against budget cuts and downsizing easier. Furthermore, that the membership in UNESCO is hoped by some project group members to give the importance of literature more consideration among Gothenburg politicians. Both the membership in the creative cities network and including associations like West Sweden Chamber of Commerce and Göteborg & CO in the application is seen as one possible way to make literature be taken more seriously than before.

6.3.2 *Illuminating literary work*

In the 2019 appeal to the Gothenburg city council there is a phrase that gets repeated when motivating why Gothenburg should apply to UNESCO. I have chosen to analyze it as another facet of wanting to bring legitimacy to literature. In the appeal it is said that a UNESCO membership will help "illuminate" ("sätta ljus på") the literary work that is already being done in Gothenburg city. This phrase is said on four occasions. In addition there are statements that can be likened or related to the word illuminate, that are said in connection to arguing for applying to or becoming a City of Literature. Emphasis mine:

"The aim is to *illuminate* [Sätta ljus på, A/N] the work that is already being done in the literary field in Gothenburg and to co-ordinate and give information about it from a unified platform." (Appeal, 2019, p. 1).

This quote is repeated on page 3. Other examples of this turn of phrase being used include:

"An application process would automatically *illuminate* [Sätta ljus på, A/N] the literary life of the city, and the collaborations between city and region (city of Gothenburg and region Västra Götaland), and city and state respectively (city of Gothenburg and the State Council for culture) would be better made *visible*." (Appeal, 2019, p. 4)

"To apply to become a UNESCO City of Literature is good experience for the city – one co-ordinates what is already being done and *highlights* [lyfter fram, A/N] great initiatives in the city. Furthermore it's about what kind of city the citizens want to live in, to be a City of Literature is about the city positioning itself in culture and literature but above all it's about *illuminating* [Sätter ljus på, A/N] the city itself, literature and culture." (Appeal, 2019, p. 3)

"By getting appointed the title of UNESCO City of Literature, Gothenburg can vigorously position itself as a City of Literature, as well as gain access to experience, new knowledge and the latest results in science and development from other cities in the network. By connecting the application to 2021, can UNESCO City of Literature, Gothenburg the City of Literature, become a part of the city's 400 year anniversary and contribute to the international *luminescence* [Lyskraft, A/N] the jubilee wants to be a catalyst for." (Appeal, 2019, p. 1)

"Furthermore, the aim for an application could be:
[...]

- To especially *highlight* [Lyfta fram, A/N] the work that is already being done in the city within different sectors, establishments or organisations in a more co-ordinated way [...]
- To be in the forefront of *paying attention to* [Uppmärksamma, A/N] a renewal of artistic expressions and/or certain modes of production. [...] (Appeal, 2019, p. 4)

What these statements all have in common is arguing for the need to highlight and pay attention to the literary and cultural field and that the candidature to UNESCO is one way to do so. The implications of this could be that it was thought that not enough attention was being paid to literary work, compared to the positive effects it has on society. The candidature could thus be a way to shine a light on literature and be a catalyst for broad collaboration between multiple sectors of society. In the previous chapter I provided examples of discourse that indicate a wish for culture and literature to be given more consideration and taken more seriously by Gothenburg politicians. However, this is hard to achieve if they are not adequately aware of the work the literary field does. Showcasing what is already being done and what effects literary work has on society could thus be seen as the first step to giving the literary field more legitimacy.

7. Discussion

In the previous chapter I have identified different discursive formations about reading, literature and the benefits of joining the UNESCO creative cities network. This chapter is dedicated to discussing the results of my analysis and further relating them to the previous research and theoretic framework I have chosen.

7.1 How is literature primarily understood?

As shown in the research conducted by Svensson & Tomlin (ed., 2016), Johannisson (2006) and Möller (2021), discursive formations and ideological understandings of the values of culture have looked largely the same since the second half of the 2000th century, barring the emergence of discourse originating from neoliberal ideology. Neoliberal ideology impacted how cultural work and cultural policy is perceived, organized and handled in Sweden. Discursive formations that premiered viewing culture as a democratic right, as a positive for citizens and society and that promoted the importance of high-quality culture and cultural producers' right to create had to start seriously competing with discursive formations that presented culture as a means for economic growth, city development and running cultural projects more akin to for-profit driven companies. These patterns are still evident in the discourse surrounding the application to UNESCO, as I have shown in my analysis.

To reiterate how I use discourse analysis as a tool in this thesis, I understand discourse in the foucauldian sense, i.e viewing discourse as a way to produce knowledge and societal "truths" through language. Discourse is a group of truth-making statements that all belong to the same discursive formation. Through it and through them, a collective understanding about something can be defined (Foucault, 1972). By identifying discursive formations, it also becomes possible to see which overarching ideological structures that are connected to them. Among the project group members, the values of culture (in this case literature) are primarily promoted and defended by arguing that literature has inherent worth and that it does good for society and citizens; that literature should be made available, not only so that people can reap collective benefits for it but also because it's a human right. Furthermore, because engaging in literature fulfills basic human needs, like the need to connect with others, being seen and heard and also simply because people enjoy the experience of reading and writing. I identified these values as belonging to two discursive formations, the

democracy discursive formation and the literature as art discursive formation. These discursive formations are part of a meaning-making process about literature, that also acts to set the tone for how literary work in Gothenburg, City of Literature, should be conducted. They form an ideological understanding of literature that creates a framework for what literature is for and what it is meant to achieve. This ideological understanding is in majority in opposition to neoliberal ideology, while having some elements that can be linked to neoliberal discourse.

First, it is significant to note that literature is portrayed as a human right and as something with inherent worth. If literature is a human right, then it is an obligation for world leaders and governments everywhere to provide and make it accessible for people. This makes literature into something that is not simply a pastime, but a basic human necessity and essential part of how humans relate to themselves and other people. It gives literature weight. Furthermore, if literature has inherent worth, then it also does not need to achieve anything in order to prove its value. It does not need to lead to economic growth, less segregation in society or an increased freedom of expression. The fact that it might is, of course, a huge positive, but literature already had value in and of itself, simply for existing the way it is.

Apart from literature being seen as a human right, it is also constructed as something that has the ability to achieve good in society while also being able to counteract societal ills. This line of thinking is observed in the two discourses that Lindström Sol found in her study as well. First, that culture is good as it leads to good things and second, that culture is good because it prevents bad things (Lindström Sol, 2019). As such, literature and literary work is portrayed as something that can be utilized for the greater good, by literary organizations or the government. It is not only governments who can use literature as a tool to achieve something though. Another aspect that was brought up is how literature and reading can be used by the individual to gain a better life. One example given was reading leading to better grades in school, which leads to an easier time joining the work force. Historically, it was pointed out, reading and access to literature partly enabled upwards social mobility for the working class and empowered them to fight for better work conditions. Another example was that reading gives access to one's own language and through it, the ability to express oneself and make one's own voice heard. This will in turn make it easier for people to advocate for themselves and stand up for their own opinions. From this point of view, reading is a source for empowerment to the individual.

Even though it is argued in the documents and in interviews that literature can be used to make positive changes in society and to prevent bad things from happening or escalating, project group members warn against viewing literature in too much of an instrumentalist fashion. It is a contradiction that does not necessarily have an easy solution but it also does not necessarily need to be an antagonistic one. The fact that literature can be used to achieve certain things does not mean it needs to be only or primarily a tool. The project group members seem to choose this approach, cautioning against an overly instrumentalist view of literature, while acknowledging it can be used for positive effects.

In the interviews, the project group members were unanimously positive about the experience of working together and all felt it had been relatively easy working together, with no major disagreements standing in the way. One reason for this could be having had a very clear common goal to work towards. Everyone in the project group expressed a conviction that a membership in the creative cities network would have positive consequences. This is an effect that was also identified by Mulero and Rius-Ulldemolins in their study of Barcelona being a City of Literature, that the candidature helped making literature a focal point and that working towards a common goal allowed for unity (Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins, 2017). Another reason is that strong, ideological understandings of literature and reading were shared among the project group members, which aided in creating a common language and action plan for the application. The discursive formations I have analyzed in this project share many similarities with discourse analyzed by other researchers on other cultural projects (Johannisson, 2006, Svensson & Tomson, ed., 2016). I think is one possible reason why the project group had such strong, shared understandings of literature is precisely because there is a strong canon for how culture and cultural projects and policy is viewed in Sweden, both historically and in the present. This canon still rings true in the effort of making Gothenburg a City of Literature.

7.2 On autonomy versus paternalism

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the primary ideological understanding of literature and reading among the project group members revolves around literature being a human right and an enabler of good and preventer of bad societal phenomenon, as well as being beneficial for citizens themselves. But if literature is seen as such a positive force, why is the same paternalistic viewpoint of the reader, observed by Andersson

(2020), Hedemark and Jonsson (2021), Kann-Rasmussen and Balling (2015) and Lindsköld, Hedemark and Lundh (2020) in their research, not present in this particular project? Ultimately, I think, the answer lies in where one identifies societal problems to be fixed, and where one places the responsibility to fix them. The project group members places responsibility on society to provide what is essentially framed as a human right. It is the government and politicians responsibility to make citizens' lives better by making literature accessible, not citizens' responsibility to make society better by being readers.

The "issue of literature" thus does not lie in the quality or genre of literature being read or with the problematic non-reader being an obstacle, but rather with access to literature, both reading and creating. Literature is not framed as something that should be controlled or forced upon anyone, but as something that should be freely available to enjoy so that both society and citizens can reap the benefits of engaging in it. I think this is also an important deviation from the tendency that Hedemark and Jonsson (2021) detected, to govern what people read and how because there lies political interest in doing so. A common theme in the research written by Andersson (2020), Hedemark and Jonsson (2021), Kann-Rasmussen and Balling (2015) and Lindsköld, Hedemark and Lundh (2020), is that they all identified a want to foster citizens, often children, into ideal, valuable parts of society through reading. This has been done by either controlling that they read or controlling what they read. This is also done with the assumption that the government or a group of experts know best, that someone in some position of power in society knows which books should be read by whom, when and why. On the contrary, project group members state that literature should not be forced upon anyone, nor do they discuss literature as having to be high-quality or discuss what genres people should read. They do not place themselves in the position of being the arbiters of good quality or definers of who the ideal citizen is. The conclusion is thus that in this particular case, literature is not framed as an obligation but seen as something inherently positive for humans in many ways, which is why spending time and resources on it and making it accessible is so important. Literature as one possible way forward, if people so choose to engage with it.

7.3 On becoming a City of Literature

It stood out to me, that the inclusion of West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, Göteborg & Co, Business Region Gothenburg and the Consortium of Masthuggskajen was thought of as an important part of

gaining the approval of the Gothenburg city council. Using culture as a tool for city development and economic growth is of course not a new phenomenon, this tendency is apparent both in the cultural policy research of Johannisson (2006), Möller (2021) and Svensson and Tomson (ed., 2016), as I have previously discussed. Andy. C. Pratt (2011) and Dan Eugen Ratiu (2013) also criticize how neoliberal ideology effect how city development is done in modern society, often reproducing un-equal and unsustainable power structures. Its influence is strong and it is evidently an ideology one has to navigate when the topic of cultural projects or creative cities arises.

One possible conclusion is that members of the project group have experienced an under-prioritization of literature, which leads to people working in the literary field not feeling secure in that they will get political or economic backing for their projects. There are four indications of this, inferred from my material:

1. That some project members see the culture budget in Gothenburg as low and have experienced that the economical situation for producers of culture is often precarious.
2. That a membership in the creative cities network is hoped to make arguing for future literary projects easier, and downsizing harder.
3. That it would be beneficial to illuminate the literary work already being done in Gothenburg.
4. That the inclusion of the "heavy administrations" was necessary for the application to UNESCO to be taken more seriously by the Gothenburg city council.

Like Svensson and Tomson (ed., 2016) point out in their study on institutional logics, logic that stems from neoliberal values or combining seemingly antagonistic logics is not inherently problematic. Having measurable goals in projects of culture for example is a discursive formation that according to Svensson and Tomson (ed., 2016) began to take form in Swedish cultural politics in connection to the neoliberal ideology and started to affect how Swedish cultural policy was discussed and handled. Measurable goals can be a very effective way to show the concrete positive outcomes of a specific effort and ensure the longterm longevity of the project in question. In this context, measurable goals in the form of TICA was a requirement from UNESCO to be eligible for the creative cities network. It is also not inherently problematic to find economic growth and city development important or beneficial, or to want to use culture as a way

to achieve it. However it does constitute a different way of approaching culture, how it is viewed and what it should be used for, what type of society humans should strive towards and how to get there. In this project, viewing literature as a human right and democratic must is valued higher than viewing it as conducive to economic growth and city development. Nonetheless, discourse that originates from neoliberal ideology is hard to ignore in a societal context that values it very highly.

The membership in the creative cities network and commitment to UNESCO is a massive undertaking, both economically and in terms of work hours necessary. This involvement needed to be carefully motivated and argued for. After decades of neoliberal ideology coloring ideas of how culture is valued and what cultural projects should achieve, while also competing with discourse that was previously in uncontested majority, it is logical to draw the conclusion that neoliberal values in culture discourse is something one has to navigate, when working in the cultural field. In the face of an ideological shift that meant neoliberal ideology changing how Swedish cultural policy is seen and acted upon by people in power, the application to UNESCO signifies a new and evidently successful strategy in getting projects aimed at promoting literature and reading approved by institutional powers, such as UNESCO and politicians. It is one that on one hand produces knowledge of literature as a human right and as essential to a healthy, equal democracy. On the other, it knows how to relate to and navigate through predominant discursive formations of culture in Sweden today, in order to create an environment where literary work is possible and more prioritized.

8. Concluding remarks

The aim of this thesis was to create knowledge on discursive formations surrounding literature that is being produced and/or reproduced in Sweden today. It was done by studying how the project group members responsible for writing the application to become a UNESCO City of Literature, and other key players involved in this process, argue for the values of literature and why a membership in the UNESCO creative cities network would be beneficial for Gothenburg city, its citizens and the literary field.

To achieve this purpose, four questions were asked. The first three; "How is literature talked about?", "What reasons and advantages are highlighted when motivating Gothenburg's candidature to UNESCO?" and "What discursive formations are made apparent within these discussions?", were all answered in chapter 6. The way literature is primarily talked about and how the candidature is motivated, as well as the discursive formations I have identified in the analysis hearkens back to how culture has been understood historically in Sweden, with some exceptions. A paternalistic view on the reader or non-reader is absent. Instead focus lies on ease of access to literature on citizens own terms. While past discursive formations have placed importance on culture being of high-quality, in this project attention is rather paid on literature having inherent worth and the importance of people being able to freely create and enjoy it. Literature is also uplifted as something that has a lot of positive effects on both society and citizens. It is for example said to increase freedom of expression, to strengthen democracy, increase one's understanding for oneself and others and increase the quality of life for citizens. Literature is further seen as a way to help with negative social phenomenon such as segregation or drop-out rates in schools. More minor discursive formations that highlighted the ability of literature and culture to encourage economic growth and city development also played a small part in the application to UNESCO, as did having measurable goals for literary projects.

The final question, "What ideological understandings of literature and reading in Sweden today are made possible by these formations?", was discussed in chapter 7. Primarily portraying literature as a human right and with inherent value is ideologically significant because it positions literature as something that citizens have a right to access as well as something that does not need to prove its worth by being economically viable or by achieving certain goals. It can exist and be protected simply because literature is important in and of itself. The project group members navigates

predominant, albeit competing, discursive formations in Sweden today, and found a strategy to get literature and literary work have longterm support from Gothenburg city, with heightened legitimacy. It is an ideological understanding of literature that in majority, but not in totality, deviates from a neoliberal ideology of culture.

8.1 Study limitations and further research

Looking at my study in hindsight, it was a great benefit to be able to interview people who were directly involved in the application process. It gave greater insight into the project group members understandings of literature and motivations behind the application, that only studying the documents themselves would not have provided. If there had been time for more interviews, I would have liked to also interview the people who wrote the letters of support from West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, Göteborg & Co, Business Region Gothenburg and the Consortium of Masthuggskajen. It would have been interesting for example to ask them the same questions about the values of literature and analyze any potential differences or similarities in their points of view compared to those of the project group members. Further, in my interviews I did ask questions concerning how the collaboration between the different organizations in the project group had worked. In the end I opted to not include it in my analysis as the results did not help answer my research questions. I do however think that it could be worthwhile to dig deeper into cross-organization collaborations and how people from such different kinds of organizations, with vastly different target groups, missions and mandates, could collaborate and reach consensus when it came to making action plans and writing the application to UNESCO. If I had for example used research stemming from organization theory or group dynamics in this thesis, this would have been possible. Lastly, I was not able to utilize research about other creative cities in the UNESCO network much in my analysis. In the future, when how Gothenburg was affected by joining the network is clearer to see, I would like to return to the research of Mulero and Rius-Ulldemolins (2017) and Kostanski and Guy (2014) and study Gothenburg's trajectory compared to that of Barcelona, Melbourne and Edinburgh.

In 2026, Gothenburg will have been a City of Literature for 5 years. It will be important to study if the city managed to take advantage of the position in the creative cities network and indeed promote literature through it. Were the project members and other workers in the literary field successful in using the membership to encourage politicians to spend more on literature?

Did Gothenburg become a city that highlights, illuminates and focuses on literary work? Have connections with other cities in the network been formed? Did international collaborations benefit citizens both in Sweden and abroad? What are the ultimate outcomes on literature and literary work that stem from being a City of Literature? Is it actually beneficial for both citizens and workers in the literary field? Going forward, I am also interested in studying the global impact of the creative cities network and if it matches the hoped outcomes, as well as the effects of sharing a network committed to free exchange and culture with dictatorship nations such as China.

Continuing the work of studying cultural policy and how literature and culture is viewed in Sweden will of course also be imperative, not least for librarians and other people working in the literary field. In this thesis I have shown how literature was viewed at this point in time and in this particular project. Politics and ideological structures in any given society can however change and so too the ideas of the values of literature and what it is meant to achieve in society. The fact that ideological understandings of culture and literature are evidently largely the same as they have been for decades in Sweden is however an indication that views on culture are firmly embedded ideologically among people who work in the cultural field in Sweden. Major changes will likely come slowly, if at all.

Appendix 1 – Organizations represented in the project group

City of Gothenburg (Göteborgs stad)

Two different areas of the City of Gothenburg government were represented in the project group; the cultural administration (kulturförvaltningen) and the city management office (stadsledningskontoret). The former has six departments and is responsible for Gothenburg's public libraries, cultural centers, museums and grants for independent cultural events, among other obligations (Gothenburg city, n.da). The city management office supports the Gothenburg city council with strategic planning in the municipality and by organizing and following up activities and economic affairs in Gothenburg city (Gothenburg city, n.db).

Region Västra Götaland (Västra Götalandsregionen)

Region Västra Götaland is one level of Swedish Government that oversees the development and interest of citizens in 49 different municipalities. It is governed by democratically elected politicians and employs over 50.000 people. Region Västra Götaland is for example responsible for the health care and dental health care systems for the people living in the region (Region Västra Götaland, 2016).

Gothenburg Book Fair (Bokmässan)

The Gothenburg Book Fair is a literary-festival that takes place once a year over the span of four days. It is open for everybody, and dedicated to readers, authors, publishing houses, magazines and other people working in the literary field or with literature. The festival hosts both exhibitions and seminars during those four days and every year has a new theme. In 2022 the themes were South Africa, the Climate Crisis, Crimetime and Voices from Ukraine (Gothenburg Book Fair, n.d).

Writers' Centre West (Författarcentrum Väst)

Writers' Centre West is an organization by writers for writers. They are one out of five Writers' Centres, representing writers in regions Västra Götaland, Halland and Värmland. They are dedicated to advocating for the interests of writers and facilitating of authors appearances for example in schools or libraries. Writers' Centre West is also committed to issues such as reading

promotion, integration, freedom of speech and safeguarding local libraries (Writers' Centre West, n.d)

University of Gothenburg (Göteborgs universitet)

The University of Gothenburg is one of Sweden's largest universities, with 49 000 students attending and 6000 staff working and studying there every year. It is multidisciplinary and frequently collaborates with other parts of society, such as Chalmers or the business sector (University of Gothenburg, n.d).

Gothenburg House of Literature (Göteborgs litteraturhus)

Gothenburg House of Literature is a non-profit coalition that has members from around 70 different literary organizations. Their mission is to look after the literary commitment of both members and the public, by hosting literary events and opportunities to meet and discuss literature. One of their primary questions of interests is the idea of democratic mass education (Gothenburg House of Literature, n.d).

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

Tema bakgrundsinformation och yrkesroll

Börja intervjun med att personen får presentera sig och sin yrkesroll

- Hur blev du involverad i projektgruppen?
- Vad är dina generella intryck av arbetsprocessen och projektet?
 - Starkaste minnen?
 - Motgångar?
 - Framgångar?
 - Utmaningar?
 - Lärdomar?
- Hur kommer det sig att du började arbeta inom kulturfältet?
- Hur arbetar du med kultur/litteratur?

Tema UNESCO

- Hur ser du på nätverket för kreativa städer som initiativ?
- Vad innebär det att vara del av det nätverket?
- I skrivelsen till Göteborgs Stad gällande UNESCO City of Literature, där man föreslår till kommunstyrelsen att Göteborg borde ansöka till UNESCO står bland annat följande: ”UNESCOS Cities of Literature är ett globalt nätverk bestående av städer med djuplodat intresse för litteratur och litterär konst. Utmärkelsen ger städerna en stark profil internationellt och blir både en kvalitetsstämpel samt en katalysator för att främja, stärka och utveckla litteraturens roll och ställning i samhället.”. Hur går dina tankar kring fördelarna med att ingå i UNESCOs nätverk?
- Finns det någon aspekt med UNESCO eller nätverket som du är kritisk till?

Tema litteratursyn

- Vad har du för relation till litteraturen?
- I Göteborgs ansökan till UNESCO står bland annat ”Litteratur är en nyckel till social hållbarhet, som i ett aktivt jämlikhetsarbete förväntas låsa upp segregationens dörrar, och där göteborgarnas egna berättelser och läsning ska lyfta vår mångspråkiga stad.”. Hur går dina tankar kring vad litteratur kan ha för betydelse för samhället?
 - Och för människor i regionen?
- Tror du att all litteratur har samma förmåga att påverka samhället?

Tema samverkan

När jag läser ansökan och genom att jag har följt processen ser jag att samverkan har varit en viktig del i arbetsprocessen från början. Dessutom är det ett krav från Unescos sida att det finns ett samarbete mellan civilsamhälle och den offentliga och privata sektorn.

- Hur har arbetet med samverkan gått till i gruppen, enligt dig?
- Vad är din upplevelse av hur det var att komma överens om en gemensam handlingsplan och ett gemensamt språk för ansökan?
- Har du några specifika önskemål med vad du vill att ett medlemskap i Unesco:s nätverk ska leda till?
- Fanns det några specifika behov ni såg från er målgrupp [Här specificera om det gäller t.ex Göteborgs invånare, forskare/studenter vid GU eller författare] som ni såg att ett medlemskap i Unesco:s nätverk kunde uppfylla?
- Hur gick det att få gehör för de behoven inom arbetsgruppen?

English translation of interview guide

Theme: Background information and work role

Start the interview by letting the person present themselves and their work role

- How did you get involved in the project group?
- What are your overall impressions of the work process and the project?
 - Strongest memories?
 - Set backs?
 - Success stories?
 - Challenges?
 - Lessons learned?
- How come you started working in the cultural field?
- How do you work with culture/literature?

Theme: UNESCO

- How do you view the creative cities network as an initiative?
- What does it mean to be part of the network?
- In the appeal to the Gothenburg city council regarding UNESCO City of Literature, where it was suggested to the city council that Gothenburg should apply to UNESCO, the following is written: "UNESCO Cities of Literature is a global network consisting of cities with a deep reaching interest for literature and literary art. The distinction gives the cities a strong international profile and becomes both a stamp of quality and a catalyst to encourage, strengthen and develop the role and status of

literature in society.”. What are your thoughts on the benefits of being a part of the UNESCO network?

- Are there any aspects of the network you are critical of?

Theme: Views on literature

- What is your relationship with literature?
- In the application to UNESCO, the following is written: ”Literature is a key to social sustainability. As part of our active efforts to promote equality, we expect literature to help overcome segregation and to advance our multilingual city through Gothenburgers’ own stories and reading.”. What are your thoughts on what meaning literature can have in society?
 - And for people in the region?
- Do you think that all literature has the ability to enact change in society?

Theme: Collaboration

When I read the application and through following the work process, I can see that collaboration has been an important part of the work process from the beginning. Furthermore it was one of UNESCO:s demands that there exist collaboration between civil society and the public and private sector.

- How did work with collaboration function in the group, in your opinion?
- What was your experience on trying to agree on a common action plan and a common language for the application?
- Do you have any specific wishes for what a membership in the UNESCO network should lead to?
- Where there any specific needs you saw from your target group [Specify here if this is referring to for example citizens of Gothenburg, researchers/students at Gothenburg university or authors], that you saw a membership in the UNESCO network could help fulfill?
- How was it getting those needs heard within the project group?

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