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The Swedish Arts
Grants Committee*

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Summary

Artists' income (part 1)

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, in collaboration with Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB), has published a study of artists' income. Within cultural policy, artists are singled out as a professional group whose social and economic conditions have been the subject of several inquiries, reports and analyses carried out by government agencies, universities and artists' organisations. This study should be regarded as a contribution to an essential survey aiming to clarify circumstances for artistic practice in Sweden today.

The study accounts for SCB's basic data of income information for the tax years 2004 and 2005 for approximately 21 500 Swedish artists. These have been divided into 22 different professional categories (from visual artists to translators) and in certain cases into seven areas of art.

Part 1 was published in January 2009 and accounts for the total earned income (=income from work and income from self-employment). In addition, the study charts income from self-employment, capital gains, wealth, net income, income mobility and how income is divided between different types of income (salary, business, transfers, and social benefits). Comparisons are consistently made between artists and the general population.

Part 2 was published in 2010 and is based on a questionnaire and a closer examination of specific areas, including the proportion of income from artistic work compared to income from other work (so-called day jobs).

Some conclusions:

- Artists have a lower income than the general population. This applies to gross income as well as net income. In 2004, the median income for the artists of the study (aged 20–64) was SEK 183 000, which is 84 per cent of the income of the corresponding age group in the general population. The variation in income is large in the artist group – between different artistic professions as well as within each category.

- The difference between artists and the general population is most prominent in the lower income brackets. Large groups have considerable problems to support themselves. Half of all the artists, i.e. a little more than 10 000 people, earn less than SEK 15 000 per month. One in four earns less than SEK 8 000 and one in ten less than SEK 2 500 per month. Despite this, the artist group does not receive more social benefits, such as housing allowance or economic benefits, than the general population, with the exception of unemployment benefit (30 per cent, compared to 13 per cent for the general population, have received unemployment benefit at least once during the year). The high figures for unemployment benefit are often related to professional groups with short-term employment, such as dancers, musical artists and actors.
- Many artists are self-employed. In 2004, 44 per cent of the artists in the study declared income from their own businesses compared to some 10 per cent of the general population. However, limited companies, economic associations and non-profit organisations are not included in the evaluation of income from businesses as income gained from these activities is accounted for as salary in the tax return. The actual percentage of artists running their own businesses is thus even higher.
- Income from self-employment varies but is generally exceptionally low. Half of the self-employed artists have a monthly income of less than SEK 1 000. A majority of artists therefore also have a supplementary income. *Kombinatörer* (people who combine salary-work with self-employment) whose salaries are greater than their self-employment income have the highest average income. Artists who only have income from self-employment have the lowest income.
- In general, artists are a highly educated professional category. In the selection, approximately two thirds have a university degree (in the statistics labelled “post-secondary education”). In comparison with the general population, the incomes of artists with higher artistic education are considerably lower in every respect. Among the general population, the income for people without further education is on average higher than for artists with post-secondary artistic education.
- Gender differences in income were considerably lower among artists than in the general population, where women’s median income was 79 per cent of men’s. In 2005 the percentage among artists had increased to 89 per cent and decreased in the general population to 78 per cent.

Artists' Income from a Gender Equality Perspective (part 2)

Part of the Arts Grants Committee's remit is to keep watch on artists' financial and social conditions and to monitor policy developments and the implementation of social security systems as they relate to artistic activity. One of the Committee's principal tasks is to apply a gender equality perspective, which involves analysing the respective conditions of women and men as a special theme.

The aim of the report, *Artists' Income from a Gender Equality Perspective*, is to shed light on the current economic gender balance in the arts by analysing the income, assets and transfers of female and male practitioners. This report is the second interim study undertaken by the Arts Grants Committee in its series of report on income among artists in Sweden. The study is empirically based on register data from Statistics Sweden, drawn from the 2007 income year. This material shows the number of women and men working professionally in the arts, their total earnings from employment and self-employment, the composition of their earned income and how it is distributed according to level of education, plus their income from capital, property and transfers. By showing the average number of children that professionally active women and men in the arts have, the report also examines the relationship between self-support, work and family life.

Between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, the proportion of women artists increased. Since then, the ratio has stabilised. In the 1995 income year, artists as a group comprised 47 per cent women and 53 per cent men. The report shows that in 2007 the same group comprised 46 per cent women and 54 per cent men. Consequently, the artist group can in principle be said to be in gender balance, although with a slight male dominance. The way in which gender is distributed varies, however, depending on which artistic category is involved. The Visual Art & Design, Film, Word & Literature and Theatre categories are all in gender balance. The Dance category is female-dominated: 70 per cent of the practitioners are women. The Music and Musical categories are male-dominated, comprising 71 and 64 per cent men respectively. The professional categories that have changed most in terms of gender composition are Film and Word & Literature. In 1995, these comprised 64 and 65 per cent men respectively, while in 2007 the figures were 58 per cent men in the Film category and 55 per cent men among Word & Literature artists. Worth noting in this connection is that the proportion of male artists in the Music category has not changed in 12 years.

Like earlier studies, this study shows that compared with other professional categories, artists are highly educated but that their median income is nevertheless lower than that of the labour force in general. For the artist group as a whole, the median value of total earnings in 2007 was SEK 205 559, compared with SEK 240 563 for the rest of the working population. This means that the median income of artists as a group is 15 lower than that of the working population as a whole.

In 2007, median earnings for women in the artist group was SEK 194 720, while men earned SEK 217 356. Thus women's median income was 90 per cent of that of men. The difference is somewhat larger in the general population, where women's median income is 78 per cent of that of men. The proportion of artistically active women in the upper income bracket, however, is tending to decline. The study noted that the SEK 240–399 900 income bracket comprised 42 per cent men and 58 per cent women. The group with total earnings in excess of SEK 400 000 comprised 67 per cent men and only 33 per cent women.

Since being a woman means per se having fewer financial resources, and since women in general earn less than men, the relative loss resulting from the choice of an artistic career tends to be smaller for women than for men. The report notes that embarking on an artistic career does not always mean losing income. Women in the artist group earn 91 per cent of the median income of women in the population as a whole, while the corresponding figure for men is 79 per cent. Both women and men in this group, however, have relatively little income, which means that women artists are a particularly disadvantaged social group in income terms.

The largest number of women is to be found in Visual Art & Design, which among artists is the professional category with the lowest level of median income. The largest proportion of men is to be found in the Music category, which has the second highest level of median income. The highest level is in the Theatre category, but this is where the gender gap in terms of median income is largest. Women's median income here is 88 per cent of that of men. Music and Film are the professional artistic categories with the smallest income gaps between the sexes. In these groups, women have 97 per cent of men's median income.

Women in artistic professions are particularly highly educated. The study shows that 73 per cent of the women have a post-secondary education of less than three years, while 53 per cent have studied in higher education for three years or longer. The corresponding figure for men was 62 and 45 per cent respectively. Another important finding in the report is that women possess a considerably larger net amount of net property than their male colleagues. The median value of men's net property in the artist group in 2007 was SEK 234 089. The corresponding figure for women was SEK 323 650.

Also, the proportion of self-employed women in the artist group is larger than that of the working population in general. Of all self-employed artists in 2007, 45 per cent were women and 55 per cent men. The fact that women in general earn less than men is discussed in the report in terms of a negative gender effect, where womanhood per se means having a reduced level of income resources. Having fewer resources may mean that women in professions exposed to tough competition need to be better equipped than men in similar positions. For someone embarking on a professional career that requires considerable educational input but tends to result in low income, possessing some form of venture capital may be an advantage. Women artists' higher level of education and larger net amount of property is described in the report as a type of venture

capital that women can fall back on when choosing an insecure professional career. This raises the question of how important gender and class may be in connection with a career in the arts.

Earlier studies have shown that artistic work often involves an uncertain income and employment situation, inconvenient working hours and the need to invest considerable amounts of time. This may cause artists to delay starting families or to abstain from such a course altogether. The report shows that childlessness is more common among artists than among the population as a whole. Of artists in the 20–71 age group, 34 per cent are childless, while the corresponding figure in the general population is 32 per cent. Artists are also more likely to have only one child (21 per cent in the artist group, 16 per cent in the general population). A slightly lower proportion of artists than of people in general have two children (30 and 32 per cent respectively). The same applies in the case of three children or more (16 per cent and 20 per cent respectively). The study illustrates the importance of gender-segregated statistics, since the most pronounced difference in the number of children is to be found between women in the artist group and women in the population in general. Of women artists, 35 per cent are childless, while the corresponding figure for the population as a whole is 27 per cent. Male artists, on the other hand, are childless to a lesser extent than men in the population as a whole. In the artist group, 32 per cent of the men are childless, while the figure for the general population is 36 per cent. In all the professional fields discussed in the report, men have three children or more to a greater extent than women. For the population as a whole, the opposite is the case. In the performing arts, in particular, the gender gaps are substantial: one man in five and one woman in ten in the Music and Theatre categories have three children or more.

Employment, Labour Market, and Income: Time Allocation and Earning Patterns of Swedish Artists (part 3)

This third and final interim report on the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's research project on artists' incomes and working conditions in Sweden. The main part of the report presents the results of an investigation into the working patterns and time allocation of professionally practicing Swedish artists: how much of their working time they devote to their principal artistic occupation compared to time spent at work that is non-creative but arts-related and work that is entirely non-arts-related, and how this affects their incomes in each case. In addition, the report looks at artists' labour market situation, focusing especially on the experience of career interruptions and unemployment among the artists studied. Different forms of self-employment and salaried/wage employment among artists are examined, as is the number of employers and/or clients that artists in Sweden typically have. The analysis covers seven different fields of artistic practice – Musicals, Word & Literature, Music, Dance, Visual Arts & Design, Theatre, and Film – with the results broken down by gender. The data source for the study was a questionnaire survey conducted by Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån, SCB) in 2009. Of the total of 3,500 artists surveyed, 42 per cent returned the questionnaire. All the information collected was for fiscal year 2008.

As the report shows, artists' labour market situation in Sweden differs significantly from that of the country's general population. Of all the artists earning salaries and wages in their own professional field in 2008, 35 per cent were employed full time on a permanent basis and 15 per cent were employed part time on a permanent basis, while 20 per cent were employed either full time or part time on a temporary basis; of these, approximately 35 per cent had been engaged for a specific project. The figures contrast with those for the country's working population as a whole, in which 85 per cent of all those receiving salaries and wages were employed in a permanent position. The survey results further indicate that the artists' labour market in Sweden is characterized by great mobility. One in every three professionally practicing artists surveyed reported having had at least six different employers or clients during 2008 alone, and one in every seven artists had more than 10 different employees or clients during the year. The art fields most affected by such notable mobility were Musicals and Music: one in every three professionally practicing artists in these fields had had more than 10 different employers or clients during 2008.

Also unemployment was high among the artists surveyed. Of all those returning the questionnaire, 25 per cent reported having experienced unemployment at some point during 2008. Most of these artists, however, had been unemployed for less than 25 per cent of the time; only two per cent of the artists responding to this survey question had been unemployed for at least 75 per cent of the time.

The main issue examined in this report concerns how artists' time allocation between different types of work affects their incomes. To examine this, a classification model is used which differentiates between *arts work* (artistic production including activities related to the creative practice such as research, rehearsal, and preparation), *arts-related work* (work that involves one's artistic competence but not artistic production per se), *non-arts-related work* (other paid work not involving one's artistic competence), and *administrative work* (work in support functions necessary for the professional practice of arts such as marketing, sales, fundraising, and accounting). A classification along these lines is necessary to better understand artists' paradoxical labour market situation in which they, despite their high qualifications and specialist skills, face fierce competition for scarce work and low-paying temporary jobs as well as the necessity of having to often find supplementary sources of income just to make ends meet.

As the report shows, artists work more than the general population, in that their workweeks average more than 40 hours. This was the case in all of the art fields studied, even if the situation varied even quite considerably from one field to another. On average, the artists working the longest hours were those working in Film (49 hours per week), followed by visual artists and designers (47 hours per week) and those working in Word & Literature (46 hours per week). The shortest average workweeks were found among those working in Dance and Musicals (41 and 43 hours per week respectively).

The artists devoting most time to their principal artistic occupation were those working in Theatre (31 hours per week), followed by Film artists and Music artists (29 hours per week). In Visual Arts & Design the corresponding figure was 26 hours per week, and in both Musicals and Word & Literature it was 24 hours per week. The artists devoting least time to their principal artistic occupation were those working in Dance, in which the figure was 23 hours per week. The art fields in which one devoted most time to arts-related work were Dance and Visual Arts & Design, a fact that, the report goes on to suggest, likely reflects the high level of involvement in teaching activities on finds in these areas (7 hours per week).

Those devoting most time to non-arts-related work were the artists working in Word & Literature, whose average weekly hours spent on professional activities not at all connected to the professional practice of the arts amounted to 13. In both Visual Arts & Design and Musicals the corresponding figure was nine hours per week. The artists devoting least time to non-arts-related work were those working in Theatre: their average weekly hours spent on this type of work were no more than four. The corresponding figure for both Dance and Music artists was five hours per week and for Film artists six hours per week.

In terms of their incomes, working conditions, and terms of employment, the artists surveyed constituted a very heterogeneous group. As the figures analysed in this report show, the differences between the various art fields could be quite notable depending on whether the predominant type of employment in the field was self-employment or paid employment, and whether the artists surveyed in them were primarily authors or performers. While it was chiefly shortage of work

that constituted the main problem for those employed in paid positions and those who were performers, the greatest challenge among authors and those who were self-employed was to receive adequate compensation for their artistic work. As already noted, it was those working in the art fields in which self-employment was found to be highest – Word & Literature and Visual Arts & Design – who devoted most time to non-arts-related work. At the same time, it was in these very same fields with the highest rates of self-employment – Visual Arts & Design, Word & Literature, and Film – that artists were found to be working the longest hours. One of the conclusions of this report is therefore that artists working in these fields do not seem to be cutting back on the hours they devote to their principal artistic occupation in order to supplement their creative income with other income sources: to meet the needs of their families, they merely add more hours to their workweek.

Overall, the artists surveyed devoted 73 per cent of their working time to arts work (their principal artistic occupation and the administrative tasks going with it), while no more than 61 per cent of their total income was derived from that activity. There was, however, significant variation between the different art fields examined as to the proportion of one's working time devoted to arts work and the share of one's income derived from this work. The difference between the amount of time spent on arts work and the amount of income earned from that work was smallest in the art field Music, in which it was no more than six per cent. On average, Music artists devoted 79 per cent of their working time to their principal artistic occupation and the administrative tasks going with it, while their income earned from these activities corresponded to 73 per cent of their total earnings for the year. In the field of Theatre, this difference was eight percentage points.

The gap between the proportion of time spent on arts work and the share of total income earned from that work was at its largest among the artists representing Visual Arts & Design (20 percentage points), followed by Word & Literature (16 percentage points).

How the situation looked like from one art field to the next depended, however, not only on whether the artists working in the field were primarily self-employed or worked for someone else; also the particular form of employment dominant within the field played a role in this respect. In keeping with the so-called Scandinavian welfare model, the cultural labour market in the Nordic countries, to a significantly larger extent than in the rest of Europe, is characterized by permanent employment. Previous studies, however, have shown this form of employment to nonetheless have become less and less common over the last ten years or so, with artists increasingly more often working in self-employment. This report makes the observation that while the more secure forms of employment may indeed hinder labour market mobility, they also seem to diminish the likelihood of intermittent artistic work activity. The art field with the highest proportion of artists working in permanent positions either full time or part time was Music (68 per cent of all music artists), and it was in this field, too, that the

share of artists who had experienced interruptions in their professional practice of the arts was the lowest.

The survey data indicates that 25 per cent of the artists studied had received financial support from their relatives in 2008 to enable them to continue their work as professional artists. This contrasts with the figures for the total population, in which no more than approximately one in every ten adults had received financial assistance from family or relatives. The fact that so many artists are supported by their family members should be looked at as a function of their labour market situation. Economic support from one's family and friends can form a vital resource in managing the small and irregular income flows often associated with professional arts. The report further shows such personal transfers to have been most typical of the art fields Film and Visual Arts & Design, in which earnings levels in general remained very low. Moreover, they involved female artists more often than male artists: of all the female artists surveyed, 29 per cent had received financial support from their family members in order to be able to continue their professional practice, compared to 18 per cent of the male artists. This seems to be in line with the finding discussed in earlier reports in this series that professionally practicing female artists' median income tends to be lower than their male colleagues' (in 2007 it amounted to 90 per cent of the median income of male artists).

As concerns the question of gender equality among professionally practicing artists, one interesting finding of this study is that there were few differences in time allocation patterns between female and male artists, especially when it came to the proportion of working time spent at one's principal artistic occupation. The female artists who returned the questionnaire worked an average of 45 hours per week, while for the male artists the corresponding figure was 47 hours. In this connection it is worth noting again that female artists' median income (in 2007) was no more than 90 per cent of that of male artists. The gender income gap, to be sure, is nonetheless smaller among artists than in the total population, where women's income averages 78 per cent of men's, although women in the total population also seem to work fewer hours than professionally practicing female artists. The findings of this report thus give rise to further questions about gender equality and the extent to which the same-pay-for-same-work principle may or may not have been translated into reality in the field of professional arts in Sweden today.