

Arts and Hobby Education Within the Shifting Paradigm of Education: The Estonian Case



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Abstract This article focuses on the *change of terminology and implementation* of arts and hobby education in Estonia during the most recent decades. Its aim is to discuss arts education within the paradigm of the modern educational system in relation to the concepts of *Bildung* and *sustainable development*.

Introduction

The article focuses on the *change of terminology and implementation* of arts and hobby education in Estonia during the most recent decades. The aim is to discuss arts and hobby education within the paradigm of the modern educational system in relation to the concepts of *Bildung* and *sustainable development*. We use the word *paradigm* as the set of ideas, approaches that have historically shaped modern mass education—schools, the higher education system and various forms of lifelong education, including arts education. This type of paradigm of education in Europe is the outcome of *modernisation*, the *Bildung* tradition and the development of nation-states.

Historically, the *Bildung* concept and popular education have played a very important, even central role, in Estonian cultural and political emancipation. *Bildung*-based popular and arts education triggered the society and temperance movements which started in the cultural and national awakening period in the middle of the nineteenth

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century.¹ However, getting access to artistic self-expression and arts education was not easy for the native rural population, who had the lowest status in the society of Livonian and Estonian Provinces of the Tsarist Russian Empire. According to Karu (1985, 281), the literacy rate among rural people in Estonia was 96.2% in 1881; in addition, in 1887 there were already 15 Estonian newspapers (Jansen, 2004), but there was no public space where Estonians or rural people could gather and pursue artistic activities.

Access to arts education was created by the people of local communities themselves, by building society houses with a stage, hall, buffet, library and rooms where they could pursue artistic activities. From the end of the nineteenth century, the opera-theatrical spatial programme of cultural hubs enabled the rural population to develop new types of art and lifelong learning aspirations (*Bildung*), an opportunity to express oneself artistically—not only to do choral singing, dancing and acting in plays, paint and do sport but also to gather for parties, lectures and courses. In other words, public cultural space and institutions for arts education and lifelong learning, and a new cultural space model, were created that are still characteristic of Estonian society (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015).

On the basis of these societal activities, the network of professional cultural and art institutions was also developed in the 1918–40 Estonian Republic. In order to organise state support in the cultural field, an innovative financial instrument (Cultural Endowment) was established in 1935. The state systematically supported and developed both the professional arts as well as various fields of popular education, such as libraries, folk high schools, study circles, rural theatre and cultural networks (Laane, 1994, Kulbok-Lattik, 2015).

Estonia (like the other Baltic states) shares the experiences of Soviet state practices (1945–91) and the cultural education system of *Soviet Bildung*. The aim of the Soviet cultural education system was to raise a new person, *Homo Sovieticus*, who was supposed to be a morally and physically high-quality and cultured person. In order to increase the innovation capacity of the Soviet state (an economic objective intended to compensate for the lack of market economy-driven innovation), the state provided hobby education in the natural sciences (houses of technology and nature), sports, and artistic and popular cultural activities, as well as in-depth learning. Further, a widely accessible, standardised art and cultural education system was an important tool in creating and mediating Soviet *mass culture*. As almost all strata of society had access to the culture and arts, it can be described as “*cultural welfare*” in the closed Soviet society. The idea was expressed by the slogan “*Art belongs to the people!*” (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015). The ambivalence of the phenomenon is revealed in the fact that the massively practised, uniform and publicly-funded choral singing tradition helped the Baltic states regain their independence in 1991 through the so-called “Singing Revolution” (ibid.).

With the arrival of the market economy in 1991, in the Soviet, the broadly accessible state-funded system of arts and cultural education collapsed within a few years.

¹ This has been described by many ethnologists and historians, such as Jansen (2004, 2007), Laane (1994), Karu (1985), see in Kulbok-Lattik (2015).

In response to the repressive political nature of the previous era, the meaning of the Soviet system has still not been thoroughly analysed so far, 28 years later. Thus, a modern system of arts and hobby education, which would take into account the historical experiences of Estonia, as well as the established network of cultural institutions, has still not been completely developed under the conditions of the market economy. Moreover, in light of the rhetoric of neo-liberal political views which ruled for almost 20 years until 2016 in Estonia, it was not so evident as to why it was important to support arts and hobby education, mainly seen as a personal choice with individual responsibility, and in which the state should not interfere.

The Estonian historical experience of *multiple modernities* within the different political systems is quite similar to many Eastern European nation-states: looking for a new path after the end of the bi-lateral world within the context of postcolonial processes, changing cultural hierarchies, trends towards globalisation, digitalisation, mass-migration, multi-ethnicity and urban change (Kulbok-Lattik & Čopič, 2018).

In addition, global climate change, environmental migration and green urbanisation show the increasing importance in acknowledging the connections between cultural diversity and biodiversity, as Hanski (2016) and Diaz (2015) have pointed out. Further, Hanski (2016, 78) claims that in addition to the impact of economic interests, culturally constructed normative (aesthetic) beliefs have a strong influence on global biodiversity and shape the biological ecosystem.

The above-mentioned global flows (Appadurai, 1990) of technological, social-economic and environmental change have had a huge impact upon human life as well as on the whole planetary ecosystem. They have shaped the need for an essential long-term vision of sustainable and diverse development in Europe and the world. Referring to the scholars like Jamison and Lahti (2019) et al., changes in education are required for solving the complex problems of our time, such as the climate crisis. In order to solve these, changes to lifestyle and in technology and political decision-making are required. However, as all these phenomena depend on the fundamental ways of thinking and the basic system of values, they require discussion of the modern educational system, including arts education.

Thus, here, a discussion on the paradigm shift or change of ways of thinking about education in the context of sustainable development goals and *Bildung* will be opened. The authors will discuss the role of arts education in the shifting paradigm of education focusing on the Estonian case. The main research question is “*What is the role of arts and cultural education in the changing paradigm of education?*”.

In order to answer this, we (1) provide a theoretical context for discussing the central theoretical concepts related to the *Bildung* and sustainable development, (2) discuss the role and impact of arts education on the *changing paradigm* of education and (3) discuss and reflect on the discursive changes in Estonian arts education since 1991.

The method of the article is transdisciplinary, based on sociological analysis of cultural and educational policies, unlocking the historical links between policy-making and discursive political change in society. As empirical material, we mainly use previously conducted research on education and arts education as well as the

results of a survey of Estonian arts and hobby educators produced by Kulbok-Lattik and Saro in 2021.

Theoretical Framework and Terms

In this chapter, the transdisciplinary approach as a critical and knowledge-integrating research principle will be used, which implies the cultural, sociological and historical examination of European and Estonian experience within the context of socio-economic, political and cultural transformation. Transdisciplinarity *as a research method*, as noted by Bernstein (2015), is the most important component in modern knowledge management, as any transdisciplinary effort is implicitly a critique of the existing structure of knowledge, education or culture.²

Paradigm and Discourse

In a broader sense, a paradigm is a set of norms, philosophical attitudes and scientific assumptions that unites not only a specific research community but also has a wider influence on society. In science, Hirsijärvi and Huttunen (2005, 177) define a paradigm as a dominant line of research in a field of science with corresponding recommendations and norms. They also point out that in revolutionary times there is inter-paradigm controversy. In this case, not all researchers follow the general paradigm, so new competing paradigms emerge alongside the dominant trend.³

Discourse is understood as an outcome of articulation, which is a practice of creating “a relation among elements such, that, their identity is modified ‘as a result of this’ and politics is understood as a battle for meaning” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, 2014, 91). They propose that *meaning is not a given*, but rather dependent on clashes and balances, a continual “war of position” with episodes of movement, and also the balances of forces *frozen in institutions* in order to constitute the sides (the identities), terms and the battleground itself.

In this chapter we use the term *discourse* in the *Foucauldian* sense within the framework of social theories (Ruiz, 2009), as being linked to *power and state*, insofar as the control of *discourses* is understood as a hold on reality itself (e.g., if a state controls the official rhetoric, media, they control the “rituals of truth”). Foucault’s concept of governmentality refers in a very general way to the administrative powers

² Bernstein (2015).

³ Paradigm as a term was introduced by the historian of science, Thomas Kuhn (1962), in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. According to Kuhn’s definition, a paradigm is a specific scientific achievement recognized by all researchers in a particular field of science, which for a certain period of time is an example to the scientific community on how to raise and solve problems. As the term *paradigm* has many different meanings, many scholars prefer to use other terms: *perspective*, *tradition* or *approach* instead of paradigm.

of modernity, concentrating not only on the disciplinary regulatory apparatus of the state but also on the economy and civil society, “each of which has its power relations, disciplinary technologies, and modes of functioning” Foucault (1971 [2005]). According to Foucault’s theory of power,⁴ in order to be able to dominate, power has to create reality through “*the rituals of truth*”. In this process, the individual obeys power not because of threats but because of discipline. Foucault (1971 [2005]) states that with the help of discipline an individual is created through supervision, control, distinguishing, hierarchisation, homogenisation and elimination—in short, through standardisation.

State interference in culture and education, with its dynamics of institutional meaning-making, creates discourses, shapes the selective tradition of culture and Foucauldian “rituals of truth” and thus has an extended impact on the social order or the structure of feelings in society. Thus, Foucault’s ideas indicate national cultural and educational policies as one of the central instruments of power of the ruling ideology, identity and memory-work in society. According to Kulbok-Lattik (2015), each political system creates a specific set of institutional tools for cultural production in society.

In this chapter, we use a historical sociological research approach, which reveals the discursive nature of cultural and education policies: the discourse is shaped by official statements and with the formal rhetoric of official policy documents the attitudes and values move into the practical world of the cultural and educational field (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015). Therefore, in studying a phenomenon or changing concept of arts education, it is important to consider not only contemporary discourse but also historical context as this helps to highlight the discursive path, dependency and interruptions.

Terms for Arts and Hobby Education

There are terminological problems related to arts, cultural and hobby education or non-formal education in Estonia, as well as in Europe more broadly. As described by Stofer (2015), there is no universally defined and direct term for marking leisure educational activities apart from school or work, which include arts, culture, sports, natural sciences, technology etc.

The terms relating to arts and hobby education have been discursive over time, specifying the time-specific objectives and those of the particular political system. For example, *free education* has been understood as the historical extra-curricular comprehensive interest-based education of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Estonia (and elsewhere in Europe), including the development of singing and theatrical performance, and later systematic educational activities in libraries,

⁴ Analysing the various disciplinary institutions, Foucault shows that administrative control enables a modern state to become a coordinating centre of the disciplinary power which intervenes in a societal domain, structures the social regulation and, thus, affects the social order.

lectures, courses, folk high schools and study circles (Laane, 1994, 10). During the Soviet period, informal education was a state-funded, ideologically targeted and deliberately regulated policy, named “*cultural education*”.

Today in Estonia, hobby education means long-term and curricula-based systematic and supervised engagements with one’s interest-based hobbies at one’s will outside formal education or job for the purposes of acquiring intensive knowledge and skills in the selected field.

However, *long-term* and *short-term extra-curricular activities* are two different terms: *long-term extra-curricular activities* are curriculum-based with a fixed duration and provide in-depth knowledge of a particular field (e.g., music and art schools). *Short-term extra-curricular activities* have the aim of creating diverse development opportunities for young people.⁵

Further, the general term *non-formal education* is used as a broad definition contrasting with formal education and refers to extra-curricular learning or recreational activities. *Informal education* has been usually understood as all activities related to personal development, collecting of information and knowledge, which people practise at home, in the family, via the Internet, or with friends, etc. Karu et al. (2018).

Official documents of the Republic of Estonia in the twenty-first century refer to hobby education as youth work and treat it as a sub-sector of this, which in fact is also informative and refers to political and/or institutional choices. In this article, we have used the terms *arts and hobby education*.

The Concept of Sustainable Development

Historically, the concept of sustainable development was based on the green movement, as Andrew Jamison has explained.⁶ According to Jamison, the green movement evolved from the Hippie movement in the late 1970s as part of political protest. In the course of globalisation in the 2000s, the whole process of the green movement transformed into a *holistic concept of sustainable development*, which is the *harmonious development of social, economic and environmental areas*, as explained by Jamison.

By now the evolution of the *holistic concept of sustainable development* has taken the remarkable form of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015.⁷ It provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. At its heart are the 17 sustainable

⁵ <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/glossary-estonia>.

⁶ Jamison has written several books on the issue: <http://people.plan.aau.dk/~andy/Academic%20publications.htm>.

⁷ For more information, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>.

development goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.⁸

The concept of sustainable development is commonly divided into environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Connections to direct or indirect impacts of art education including spillover can be seen in most of the 17 sustainable development goals. Launched by UNESCO in 2015, the Culture for Sustainable Urban Development Initiative seeks to demonstrate the link between the implementation of the UNESCO Culture Conventions and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, Kangas et al. (2018), Soini and Dessein (2016) point out that while a variety of international actors have declared the importance of culture in sustainable development, jointly articulating this has been difficult. None of the SDGs referred directly to the case for integrating culture into sustainable development planning and decision-making. The role of culture and cultural policy has remained unclear (ibid.). In their book, Kangas et al. (2018) define the concept of cultural sustainability as the sustainability of cultural and artistic practices and patterns and refer to the role of cultural traits and actions in informing and composing part of the pathways towards more sustainable societies.⁹

Estonian 18th Sustainable Development Goal: Viability of the Estonian Cultural Space

In 2018, sustainable development *indicators* were published in Estonia in line with the 17 goals of the UN Agenda for Change: *A Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030*.¹⁰ This publication provides a convenient tool with which to observe how Estonia has succeeded in moving towards both global and sustainable development. Comparison with other states of the European Union helps to view Estonian sustainable development in an international context (ibid.).

In addition to the above-mentioned 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are common for all countries, Estonia has since 2005 developed its own priorities for sustainable development.¹¹ The main goals set out in strategy SE21 were *the vitality of Estonian cultural space, increasing people's welfare, a socially coherent society and ecological balance*.

⁸ They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth—all while tackling climate change and working to preserve the oceans and forests.

⁹ Kangas et al. (2018) create links between culture and sustainable development in ways that articulate and contemplate different roles for cultural policy.

¹⁰ Publication (2018) https://www.stat.ee/valjaanne-2018_saastva-arengu-naitajad.

¹¹ The National Strategy on Sustainable Development “*Sustainable Estonia 21*” (SE21) was developed by a broad consortium of experts and approved by the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu) on September 14, 2005. https://www.envir.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/se21_eng_web.pdf.

The sustainability of the Estonian *nation and culture* constitutes the cornerstone of the sustainable development of Estonia also today. The development goal postulating this has a fundamental meaning, in that the persistence of *Estonianhood* is the highest priority among the development goals of Estonia. It is based on the preamble of the state constitution: “*With unwavering faith and a steadfast will to strengthen and develop the state [...] which must guarantee the preservation of the Estonian people, the Estonian language and the Estonian culture through the ages [...]*.”¹² It explains why “*Viability of the Estonian cultural space*” has been designated the 18th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) in Estonia until the year 2030.

The scientific notion of nation is based on the understanding that the *nation* is a cultural symbolic community constructed discursively (Hall and du Paul, 1996, 201), which relies on a common culture, a common perception of history and a common language¹³: “*National cultures construct identities by creating meanings of ‘the nation’, with which we can identify: these are contained in stories that are told about the nation, in memories which link its present to its past and in the perceptions of it that are constructed*” (Hall & du Paul, 1996, 201).

Preservation of a nation “*through the ages*” is conditioned first on the existence of *cultural mechanisms* that enable Estonian national identity (cultural cohesion) to persist and ensure that the values, traditions, behavioural patterns and elements of way of life intrinsic to Estonian national culture are passed from generation to generation and also accepted by new immigrants. The core of such mechanisms is *national-language education* and *cultural creation* (including research), based on the national language, and the functionality of national language communication, national cultural values and behavioural patterns in all spheres of life. The Estonian cultural space has materialised in the Estonian natural, cultural and living environment and in the Estonian sign environment.¹⁴

Thus, the preservation of the cultural space is a precondition for the preservation of national identity, which in turn motivates people both to use the national language and to hold the national values in esteem in a changing and globalising world.

Modern State, Nationality and Educational System

National identity is explained as a narrative (Geertz, 1973), a *story* that people tell about themselves in order to lend meaning to their social world. National narratives

¹² The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/rhvv/act/521052015001/consolide>.

¹³ Hall and du Paul (1996) claims that a national culture is a discourse, a way to construct meanings which influence and organise both our actions and our perceptions of ourselves. People are not only citizens by law they also participate in forming the idea of the nation as it is represented in their national culture.

¹⁴ Estonian cultural space includes communication, language, symbols, personal and geographic names, colour preferences, building and home design practices, commonly known pieces of art and literature and historical figures, the calendar and historical anniversaries etc.

do not emerge out of nowhere and do not operate in a vacuum. They are, rather, produced, reproduced and spread by actors in concrete (*institutionalised*) contexts (Wodak, et al., 1999). Since modern statehood, national identity is a subject of cultural production, reinterpretation and circulation of symbolic meanings of culture, and is shaped by the tools of educational and cultural policy, or as Gellner suggests, “*the role of the state as the ‘organism’ is to ensure that this literate and unified culture is effectively produced, that the educational product is not shoddy and sub-standard*” (Gellner, 1994).

Here the historical role of the cultural and educational policies of the nation-state appears with a primary goal to form and develop an institutionalised context—the educational system—for arts and cultural practices.

Guibernau (2007) points out the importance of the role the *elite culture* plays in the construction of the narratives of national culture, as “*elite culture, by definition, is a high culture with an established language and a substantial body of literature and knowledge*”. Guibernau explains that “*the control of the learning process lies in the hands of scholars and institutions ready to preserve, develop and inculcate the culture upon a diverse population. Their mission is to achieve a linguistically and culturally homogeneous population able to communicate with each other and to work and live within that culture*” (Guibernau, 2007, 16–19). At the same time, Guibernau argues that “*culture-based unity’ between the elite and the masses stands at the heart of the conception of a shared national identity. A common culture legitimizes the existence of the nation and is employed as an argument in favour of social cohesion and unity among all sectors of an otherwise diverse national population*” (ibid.).

It appears that the modern educational system acts as a mediator of cultural, historical and national narratives which are discursive. Further, the concepts of creativity and art education are socially constructed and not neutral. This is the case as cultural and educational policies never exist in isolation from the major debates (ideologies) of the day, as pointed out by several scholars (Sevänen & Häyrynen, 2018; Kangas, 2018; Kulbok-Lattik et al.).¹⁵

Modernity and Bildung

The contemporary idea of mass education—schools, the higher education system and various forms of lifelong education, including arts education—is the outcome of

¹⁵ Collection “Art and the Challenge of Markets” Volume I. “National Cultural Politics and the Challenges of Marketization and Globalization”, (2018) eds: Victoria D. Alexander, Samuli Hägg, Simo Häyrynen, Erkki Sevänen, Palgrave MacMillan, gives an overview of how arts worlds have reacted to the market-based neo-liberal turn in Western societies since the 1980s.

“Antology Spectra Transformation. Arts Education Research and Cultural Dynamics” (2018) eds: Benjamin Jörissen, Lisa Unterberg, Leopold Klepacki, Julian Engel, Viktoria Flasche, Tanja Klepacki, Waxmann, Münster, New York, gathers the wide range of scientific perspectives on arts education discussed in the international winter school, “Spectra of Transformations” February 2017, at the *Friedrich Alexander Univeristät Eralngen Nürnberg* in Germany.

modernisation. As typically presented, modernisation refers to socio-economic (e.g., industrialisation, urbanisation), political (e.g., democratisation and mass participation) and intellectual (e.g., secularisation, a rise of mass literacy) transformations that had begun in Western Europe by the late eighteenth century, as Martinelli (2005, 19)¹⁶ explains.

Modernity also implies a new cultural code, i.e., a transformed set of values, such as *rationalism, individualism/subjectivity, utilitarianism, the incessant quest for knowledge, innovation and discovery, the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject, the refusal of limits, the principles of liberty, and equality of rights and opportunities*, as Martinelli (2005) summarises. The policies or activities in the process of shaping a common economic, cultural, political space and public sphere are called *nation-building*. Nation-building is closely related to the concept of *Bildung*, which is a specific feature of the modern cultural code.

The modern cultural code is expressed in the German tradition of *Bildung* (German term for “education” and “formation”), which emerged in the eighteenth century and corresponds to the ideal of education, in the sense of that in Wilhelm von Humboldt’s works. The concept of *Bildung*¹⁷ refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation, wherein philosophy and education are linked in a manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation.

In this context, the concept of education becomes a lifelong process of human development, rather than mere training in gaining certain external knowledge or skills.¹⁸ *Bildung* does not consist of only manners, education or knowledge of art and science; rather it has been seen as a goal in order to become more “free” due to higher self-reflection.

The idea of *Bildung* has had a remarkable effect on the popular education work that began in nineteenth-century Europe, including Finland, and the Nordic and Baltic states.

The modernist ethos of established favourable ground for socio-economic, cultural and national emancipation went hand-in-hand with political emancipation (*Bildung and nation-building*) among the smaller oppressed European nations (Finns, Estonians, Latvians and others), as empirically researched and compared by Hroch (1996).¹⁹ For these nations, the end of the First World War in 1918 and the final

¹⁶ Although the roots of modernity include the cumulative impact of key elements in earlier centuries such as the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution. Martinelli, A., *Global Modernization: Rethinking the Project of Modernity*. London: Sage, 2005, p. 19.

¹⁷ <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/589>.

¹⁸ *Bildung* is a German term for “education” and “formation” that does not have a precise English counterpart. The concept encompasses aspects of such English terms as self-cultivation, scholarship, sophistication, civilisation, education, culture, creation and literacy. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/589>.

¹⁹ According to Hroch, the modernisation of many subordinated nations in Europe happened in a similar way: cultural emancipation developed into a wider cultural public, which allowed for the formation of the political public and emergence of nation-states when empires collapsed in the twentieth century.

disintegration of empires was an opportunity to realise their aspirations for national self-determination and to establish modern nation-states (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015).

However, the concepts of modernity, as well as *Bildung*, are not static. Social scientists (Eisenstadt, 2000, 1–3; Wittrock, 2000; 66–67 et al.) are of the opinion that in view of the divergent developments and different political systems of various civilisations and regions, it is more appropriate to speak of “multiple modernities” (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015). We share that idea, thus Estonia, for example (like other Baltic states), shares different modernities or experiences of modern state practices and its discursive interventions of the state’s arts and educational policies. This includes experiences of Western and Soviet modernities with the corresponding form of the different practices of *Bildung*.

Sustainable Development and Changing Concept of Bildung

Finland’s *Bildung* narrative is also strongly linked to the narrative of Finnishness (as in the Estonian case). In his article “Gaps in our Bildung”, Lahti (2019)²⁰ discusses the changing (discursive) nature of the concept of *Bildung*, pointing out that the conception of *Bildung* is not static, and cannot be clearly defined. Instead, *Bildung* should be recognised as a dynamic, or active and living, concept. Finnish social scientists claim that this is a momentous argument that calls for the updating of the conception of *Bildung*: “in order to secure our living conditions, we must re-evaluate *Bildung*’s tight bond to human-centredness by reducing the excessive individualism of the *Bildung* concept. Therefore, an update is required so that *Bildung* could more effectively contribute to the creation of a sustainable society and holistic welfare” (Lahti, 2016).²¹

The promotion of *Bildung* has traditionally been a central part of the Estonian, Finnish and Nordic educational system as lifelong learning. Therefore, updating the conception of *Bildung* could provide new dimensions for lifelong learning.²² The idea of *Bildung* and popular education was a major factor in the creation of the Nordic social model, as several authors claim.²³ In their book, *The Nordic Secret*,

²⁰ <https://www.sitra.fi/en/publications/gaps-in-our-bildung/#the-secret-behind-nordic-success>.

²¹ The idea was discussed by Vesa-Matti Lahti in an international discussion on *New assignments of Bildung*, held at the *Sitra* foundation in Helsinki (Finland) on 27 September 2019. Lahti writes: “While in the early twentieth century *Bildung* had a nationalistic objective to build the nation state and lay the foundation of our welfare state, it could now play a major role in a novel societal transformation – the change required for solving the complex problems of our time” (Ibid.).

²² Lahti (2019) points out the different risks that could occur when *Bildung* is used too instrumentally or in a narrow sense: as a response to the business sector’s complaints about the shortage of skilled workers; or as a new name for the continuing education of employees. In that case, the *Bildung*-related idea of criticality that improves society’s adaptability and develops our ways of thinking is easily forgotten.

²³ Andersen and Björkman; Ojanen et al. The earliest known printed appearance of the word *sivistys*—*Bildung*’s counterpart in the Finnish language—was in the newspaper *Turun Wiikko-Sanomat* in the 1820s. Ojanen (2006) via Lahti (2019).

Lene Andersen and Tomas Björkman, a Dane and a Swede, explain how *folk-Bildung*, that is, liberal education, is the “secret” behind the Nordic countries’ economic and social success stories.

In Estonia (and Europe), the discussion on lifelong learning is important within the context of the general transformation of work, the requirements of a business and working-life skills within the framework of technological transformation. According to Paolo Falco, OECD Future of Work expert, apart from globalisation and population ageing, the technological revolution is the most influential of the megatrends changing the world of work and expected to shape and restructure the future labour market the most (Falco, 2018). And although robots can never take over all jobs (14% is predicted), especially those that require creativity or empathy, OECD experts identify continuing education, retraining and lifelong learning practices as the key policies for population development (Falco, 2018).

This puts the importance of developing different skills and lifelong learning practices, including arts education, in a new light (Fig. 1).

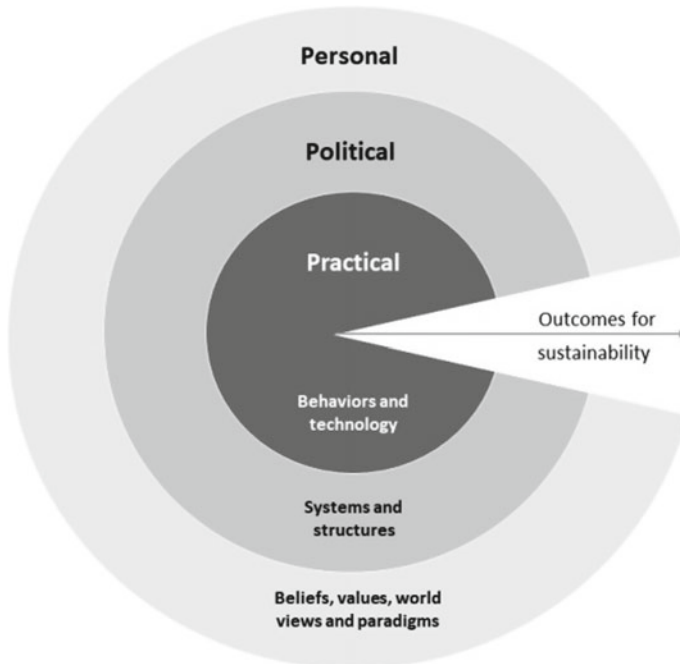


Fig. 1 The spheres of societal transformation. *Source* Laininen (2018), O’Brien and Sygna (2013), and Sharma (2007), cited in Lahti (2019)

Bildung and Change of Paradigm of Education as the Basis of Societal Change

There is a visionary movement in the Nordic countries, discussing the new developmental idea of *European Bildung*.²⁴ The leaders of this movement claim that in order to avoid catastrophic climate change, profound societal change is required—a transformation that cannot be achieved without changing our ways of thinking. Changes in paradigms and educational structures are of particular importance because they have extensive and profound impacts, as shown in the educational model of the “*Bildung Rose*” by Lene Andersen (2020).²⁵

According to this conception, *Bildung* lays the foundation for human development, welfare and adaptability in a changing world. The concept’s roots can be traced back to Classical Antiquity and the Greek term *paideia*. *Bildung* refers to how education, enculturation, life experiences, and emotional and moral/ethical development cultivate responsible, reflective and autonomous citizens (selves). It also refers to the result of such processes and allows us to map the relationship between self and society in a way that orients us towards the well-being and flourishing of both (Andersen, 2020). Given the complexity of modern society, *there is an enormous challenge in fostering the development of coherent identities that are flexible, adaptive, stable, and comfortable about learning and growing throughout life*, as Andersen (2020) explains.

Therefore, it could be said that the core of modern *Bildung-based education* is not the sophistication of people, but the true ambition is to use reformed *Bildung* to provide people with the capacity to respond to the great challenges ahead. Contemporary *Bildung-based education* can no longer lean on traditional top-down instruction. Instead, it requires a purpose that reflects the modern world. After having set out the theoretical basis for our discussion, it is now time to come to our main research question: *What is the role of arts and cultural education in the new paradigm of education in Europe and Estonia?*

The Roles of Arts Education in the Changing Paradigm of Education

Arts education has been discussed from many different aspects. In this chapter, some of these aspects will be introduced. To begin with education in general, Bloom and Remer (1976, 45) have pointed out ten features the arts contribute to education:

²⁴ <https://nordicbildung.org/publication/the-bildung-rose/>.

²⁵ See: Lene Rachel Andersen, Nordic Bildung and the Club of Rome et al., (2020) <https://nordicbildung.org/publication/the-bildung-rose/> According to the *Bildung Rose* model, societies evolve, grow and become more complex across seven domains: (1) production; (2) technology; (3) knowledge/science; (4) ethics; (5) narrative; (6) aesthetics, and (7) power.

1. The arts provide a medium for personal expression.
2. The arts focus attention and energy on personal observation and self-awareness.
3. The arts are a universal phenomenon and means of communication.
4. The arts involve the elements of sound, movement, colour, energy, space, line, shape and language.
5. The arts embody and chronicle the cultural, aesthetic and social development of humankind.
6. The arts are a tangible expression of human creativity, and as such reflect humanity's perception of the world.
7. The various fields of the arts offer a wide range of career opportunities to young people.
8. The arts can contribute substantially to special education.
9. As a means of personal and creative involvement by children and teachers, the arts are a source of pleasure and mental stimulation.
10. The arts are useful tools for everyday living.

The above-mentioned roles of arts education point to the central role of artistic experience as an essential part of education as a process. Thus it is relevant to value the mechanism of the artistic experience as a phenomenon. According to Shusterman (1992), every aesthetic experience draws on the previous. Shusterman draws attention to the accumulation phenomenon of artistic experience, simultaneously directed and open, controlled and captivated, received and constructed.

In addition to the educative impacts of education as a process of thinking and extending one's own abilities, the specific impacts of the arts on human beings have been demonstrated by Konlaan in an extensive study on the arts and well-being in Sweden (Konlaan, 2001, 60). Stimulation by cultural aspects such as fine art had specific effects apart from group effects and attention effects on health determinants.

Better access to arts education as an essential part of *Bildung*, and harmonisation with the arts-related skills and knowledge (folklore, tangible and intangible heritage) of indigenous peoples, may in the future permit more smooth, deep and balanced (therefore sustainable) well-being, practices, and capacity building for all of humanity, especially in an era of climate change and a rapidly changing environment.

In the view of eco-semiotics, it has been argued that culture is connected to the environment and is at the same time dependent on it. Culture as a metalayer of descriptions surrounds the fields of all human activities, including arts education Bodin (2017). It has been stated that being active in culture means changing the environment (Maran & Kull, 2014). Apart from climate change, the importance of biodiversity has been recognised as an even greater challenge. It has been stated that *instead of discussing cultural diversity and biodiversity separately we should aim for biocultural diversity. Cultures of the future will be open to other life forms* (Farina, 2018).

Therefore, the roles of arts education within the context of the changing paradigm of education (De Souza et al. 2013) can be noticed also in public planning: in the policy document of the Nordic Contact Point in 2017, it is stated that “governments need to utilise ongoing analysis of the arts and trends within society and the economy,

on local, regional and global levels. Sustainable cultural policies and strategies should pay much more attention to the dance and the potential it has” (see footnote 4). A good example is also the World City Culture Report (2018), which states that the residents can present initiatives and projects to change their local cultural context, covering issues such as cultural diversity, ways of solving conflicts, social relations in and around public spaces (including parks, transport and monuments), as well as environmental sustainability (see footnote 3).

Arts and Hobby Education in the Context of Human Development and as Resource for Innovation

Policy measures that empower arts, creativity and innovation have already been implemented in the European Union since 2014, when Creative Europe 2014–2020 was launched. The action was preceded by a study commissioned by the European Commission entitled, *The Impact of Culture on Creativity* (2009). Due to its widespread influence, many European countries have also set national targets for arts education. This has been the case, for example, in Ireland, where a five-year national programme (*The Creative Ireland Programme*) was launched in 2017. Finland, the Nordic countries, Iceland and other European states also envisage arts education as playing an important role in promoting creativity as a fundamental social value.²⁶ The relationships between public health and well-functioning systems of sports, infrastructure and coaching are also well known; it has been shown that active social lives and cultural self-expression contribute to the well-being of society, increases the index of happiness and cohesion. It is also known that active participation by people in communities and civil society increases democracy (KEA..., 2009, Human Capital Project, Kulbok-Lattik & Kaevats, 2018).

Accordingly, it has been proven that creative and active citizens with a diverse education are healthier, more flexible in coping with challenges and contribute more to the economy. It has been found that broad access to hobby education in technology and nature supports the advancement of science and technology. The contribution to society’s innovation systems by human development and people’s talents is clear not only to social scientists and philosophers (Nussbaum, 2011) and to spokespersons of art and culture (KEA, 2009) but also economists. The World Bank (2018) has calculated that the only and most economical way to address global challenges is to contribute to human development.

The other aspects of today’s global challenges are related to the global competition which has been encouraged by the soaring technological revolution, which in the near future will have an impact on the worldwide labour market. A well-targeted talent policy is a guarantee not only for the economy and well-being but also for sustainable

²⁶ In Finland (<http://www.uniarts.fi/en/research>) as well as in other Nordic countries. In Finland, these issues are addressed by various research institutes, e.g. Helsinki University of Arts (Uniarts Finland).

national cultural identity, as the development and application of everyone's talents will enable a small nation-state, such as Estonia, to survive and develop.

Arts and Hobby Education in Estonia Today

In the newly independent Estonia, the tasks related to arts, culture, sports, youth work²⁷ and hobby schools have been assigned to local authorities (Local Government Organisation Act, 2019). After the administrative reform in 2017, there are 79 municipalities in Estonia (15 towns and 64 rural municipalities). This has created a puzzle with various fragments, where the organisation of arts and hobby education depends on the municipal budget, political priorities and administrative capacity (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021). In parallel to municipal institutions and general education schools, private institutions also provide arts education as well as a wide range of hobby education as a service, often competing with the former for subsidies, students and teachers.

In the academic year 2019–20, there were 782 arts and hobby schools in Estonia (of which only 140 were municipal schools), including 310 sport schools, 146 music and art schools, 30 technology, nature, creative-hobby houses or centres, and 296 other institutions. The number of hobby schools has doubled within 10 years, mainly at the expense of private schools. Two-thirds of the municipal hobby schools (97 out of 140) are music and art schools (HaridusSilm).

However, the state's activities in the field of arts and hobby education have been dispersed between several ministries: the model of additional state funding for arts education was formulated by the Ministry of Culture but implemented by the Estonian Youth Work Centre, the implementing agency of the Ministry of Education and Research. Today, in Estonia, arts and hobby education are legally defined *as a field of youth policy which "provides opportunities for the comprehensive development of personality and supports young persons in their development into members of society with good coping skills"* (Standard for Hobby Education, 2007). This has been the case since Estonia's accession to the European Union in 2004 when a number of policies were harmonised, and European youth policy found its way into Estonian education policy. Therefore, the law also interprets arts and hobby education primarily in the context of creativity and talent discovery, socialisation and active lifestyle of young people between 7 and 26 years of age (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021).

Of course, youth work is very important and hobby education plays an important role in it: if people cannot learn about different areas of life when they are young, it may be more difficult to find the right career, i.e. a job that matches their natural qualities and talent, which makes them happy and offers personal fulfilment. Studies have also shown that those who have been schooled in childhood in the creative arts

²⁷ Earlier versions of the Local Government Organisation Act mention youth work alone (§6.1), while the 2018 version refers separately to cultural, sports and youth work.

or engage in a hobby will return to this fulfilling practice later (KEA...2009, <http://www.uniarts.fi/en/research>).

Further, several institutions under the Ministry of Culture concern themselves with arts and hobby education: for example, the Folk Culture Centre and the Song and Dance Festival Foundation, where the focus is on providing access to arts education for all age groups in the field of heritage and folk culture. Additionally, the artistic associations, their sub-organisations are also involved in arts and education, providing a range of training opportunities for the people.

Arts education as non-formal education is also part of the field of activity of museums and nature, research and discovery centres (the Estonian Research Council supervises their development activities). Non-formal education and its networks are a separate world: folk schools, adult training centres and day-care centres for the elderly offer opportunities for artistic activities and all kinds of practical self-development (such as language and computer learning, social skills, horticulture, etc.).

Thus, there are many different forms of work in the field of arts and hobby education targeted at children, young people, adults and the elderly: public pre-schools and vocational training institutions, a network of music and art schools run by local authorities, private schools, studios, courses, training providers, etc. It is safe to say that arts and hobby education concerns all age groups in Estonia because of long *Bildung* and lifelong learning traditions in Estonia, no matter what these activities have officially called.

Gaps in Research, Unclearity in Terminology

It appears that the theoretical and conceptual understanding of arts education and cultural sustainability within the general frames of sustainable development remains vague. Despite the notable legal position of the Estonian cultural space as the eighteenth sustainable goal, and the importance of national cultural identity expressed in the constitution, and in various developmental strategies, the role of arts education has also been poorly operationalised in educational policies in Estonia during the past 30 years.²⁸

The homepage of the Ministry of Culture shows that Estonian policy documents do not make a strict distinction between arts and hobby education, as well as recreational activities. The Ministry of Culture defines recreational activities on the basis of the following description by the Ministry of Education and Research submitted to the government on 5 March 2015: “*There is no precise definition of the recreational activity in Estonia. Essentially, recreational activities are the creation of opportunities for the diverse development of a young person through systematic, supervised non-formal learning. This is essentially the same as the definition of youth work and the concept of ‘arts, cultural or hobby education’*”.

²⁸ (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021).

However, based on the wording of the coalition programme, the term “recreational activity” is used for both arts and hobby education and recreational activities in the concept (Ministry of Culture). The broad range of arts and hobby education is mapped by the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), which classifies hobbies into the following areas: (1) sports, (2) technology, (3) nature, (4) music and arts and (5) general culture, including ethnic schools (Standard for hobby education, 2007).

While official documents of the Republic of Estonia in the twenty-first century refer to arts and cultural education and hobby education as part of youth work and treat it as a sub-field of youth work, it refers to political or institutional choices. Elsewhere (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021), we have discussed the Estonian cultural and educational policies which regulate the arts and hobby educational system and pointed out the following problems:

- (1) Estonia lacks a systematic policy of arts and hobby education and recreational activities, which, on the one hand, stems from the fact that, since they are treated as a single area in the policy documents, this area falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Culture simultaneously, actually remaining in a grey area.
- (2) The organisation of arts and hobby education and recreational activities is the responsibility of local authorities and therefore its accessibility depends to a large extent on their financial and human resources. Thus, policies and organisation of hobby education have been dispersed between different institutions which hinder the development of a holistic view and systematic funding.
- (3) Problems and a value crisis arise from the fact that arts and hobby education are treated in the educational system as a sub-area of youth work and not as an independent area of lifelong learning. The lack of a comprehensive perspective is a result of political and institutional choices as well as a lack of sociological research of culture and education.
- (4) The lack of a comprehensive analysis hampers the development of the sector and reduces the role of teachers in arts education. This has led to a blurring of the status and professional identity of people working in arts and hobby education, and problems with the succession of teachers and instructors. Concessions in teachers’ qualifications, on the other hand, lead to a lower level of teaching.
- (5) The currently dispersed approach views arts and hobby education for adults as part of continuing education, linking it increasingly to the needs of the labour market. But practising fine arts, folk culture and sport is first and foremost essential in having a full and happy life.

Finally, it will have negative consequences in the long run if the terms “*arts education or hobby education*” are replaced with “*youth work*” from the perspective of sectoral as well as human development. It is necessary to stop pushing arts, sports and scientific hobby education into being a sub-area of youth work, as this deserves a well-planned independent and holistic approach and organisation involving all strata—youths, adults and elderly people.

Human development and population as a resource for talent can be nurtured via broader access to arts education. Arts and hobby education deserves more attention, conceptualisation and targeting within the context of *Bildung* ideas, overall human development and sustainable development of society, as well as regulation as a comprehensive system. It is important that both arts and hobby education are accessible as part of education, recognised as a human right, a prerequisite for happiness and well-being in society.

Conclusion

It is important to note that whenever the arts are mentioned, arts education has to be acknowledged as well; without an art education, there would be neither arts nor education. Arts and hobby education as an essential part of education enables people to acquire skills and competencies which empower individuals and contribute to social cohesion.

The main obstacle the authors of this article would like to point out is a lack of research on arts and hobby education impacts and relevant analysis from the perspective of cultural policies on those areas of economic and societal activities which are traditionally understood as not related to arts but which should also be researched from that viewpoint.

Research on arts and hobby education as cultural participation in adaptation and capacity building is expected to be useful for the further planning of resources—not only financial but also spatial, educational and cultural. This may help greatly in avoiding problems, tensions and risks. Resources for adaptation should be planned on the basis of a holistic concept of human beings. Besides material resources, mental, spiritual and aesthetic resources will also be needed and, here, the integrative role of educational and cultural policy is the key.

In conclusion, the authors would like to stress the different roles of arts and hobby education, especially in an era of the increasing importance of sustainable and critical thinking. Critical thinking and a diverse range of skills and competencies (as well as empathy, solidarity and responsibility for the environment) will need to be inherited by future generations for survival in a coming era of social crises.

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