Erik Sjöstrand

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS TRANSFORMED

A FIELD-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF CHANGING STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS

STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS TRANSFORMED – A FIELD-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF CHANGING STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS

The relationship between state and civil society organizations is often debated in contemporary societies and it has also been the subject for scholarly attention for a long time. Deeply embedded in the popular movement tradition and the corporative model in Sweden, the proximity between government and civil society has at times been so close, that it has been difficult to tell the two spheres apart. Studies have however shown that civil society and its relationship to the state are under transformation.

This dissertation presents a multiple-case study of the on-going transformation of the shared understanding of this particular relationship between state and civil society. By applying Fligstein and McAdam's original work on Strategic Action Fields on cases from the two fields of sports and popular education in Sweden the author shows how the shared understanding of the relationship is being constructed and through which mechanisms it is transformed.

It is concluded that the transformation has important field-level implications for the processes and principles for how the game of securing and dividing resources is played, for how the field boundaries are being drawn, and for the role and nature of the particular governance units internal to both fields. The study contributes to the development of the Strategic Action Field framework by providing two of its key concepts – 'shared understanding' and 'internal governance unit' – with substantially more detail and depth than in earlier research.

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Foreword

This volume is the result of a research project carried out at the Department of Management and Organization at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE).

This volume is submitted as a doctoral thesis at SSE. In keeping with the policies of SSE, the author has been entirely free to conduct and present his research in the manner of his choosing as an expression of his own ideas.

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Uppsala, October 23, 2018

Erik Sjöstrand

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

The relationship between state and civil society

The relationship between state and civil society is often debated and have been the subject for scholarly attention for a long time and approached from a wide range of perspectives and academic disciplines (see e.g. Smith & Grønbjerg 2006 for an overview). From a neo-institutional perspective, we can understand how civil society and its organizations are formed by its institutional environment. In many countries different levels of government are among the most important actors in this environment. This opens up for a focus on how the relationship to government - and the wider society - are a core part in shaping the structure, size, and character of the organized civil society.

From a 'social origin theory' Salamon and Anheier (1998), for example, claim that civil society organizations (CSOs) have deep historical roots in societies and they "do not float freely in social space. Rather, they are firmly "embedded" in prevailing social and economic structures" (ibid. p. 227). While describing the differences and similarities between civil society in Germany and France, scholars such as Archambault, Priller, and Zimmer (2014) argue that answers are to be found in the fact that CSOs are "embedded in administrative and organizational setting, which in many cases date as far back as the latter half of the 19th century – a time when industrialization and urbanization started to exert influence in the western world" (ibid. p. 514). This kind of embeddedness has often also provided

the foundations for a deep-seated shared understanding between government and civil society in many fields regarding the political ambitions, the rules of the game etc (e.g., Cohen & Arato 1994; Salamon & Anheier 1998; Evers & Laville 2004).

Affirming that the state itself does not live isolated, we can instead talk about this as if civil society lives in a dialectic (e.g. Skocpol 2003) or path dependence (e.g. Enjolras & Strømsnes 2018) relationship with the state – the state and civil society influence each other. In this thesis, I have a special interest in this dialectic relationship and in particular on how transformations at field level are being fueled and given direction in changes in this relationship. In line with the main thesis of Skocpol's (2003) study of the development of many large civil society organizations in the US it is possible to identify a similar development in Sweden and the rest of the Scandinavian countries, where the structures of the modern democratic welfare state developed in parallel with the growing popular movements (Kuhnle & Selle 1992; Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007; Wijkström 2011).

Much of the Anglo-American based early writings on state–civil society assumed a fundamental opposition and antagonism between the state on the one hand, and civil society on the other (Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007). In the case of Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia, however, several scholars have argued for and shown a less confrontative and more collaborative relationship characterized instead by close proximity and dependency between the state and the nonprofit or voluntary sector. The Scandinavian countries have been described as 'state-friendly societies', in which the relationship between the state and civil society is characterized by nearness and cooperation rather than distance and conflict (Kuhnle & Selle 1992; Selle 1993; Lundström & Wijkström 1997; Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007).

The relationship between state and civil society in Sweden

In the Swedish context, the basis for the relationship between state and civil society is not to be found primarily within the fields associated with welfare provision as in many other countries (Lundström & Wijkström 1997; Reuter, Wijkström & von Essen 2012). The foci have instead been on the dialectic and interdependent relationship between the state and the so-called popular movements. The affinity and close bonds between the popu-

lar movements and the state originates instead as a result of the ideological proximity between the Scandinavian social-democratic welfare state regime whose foundation were laid in the first half of the 20th century, and the political values and aims of many of the at the time expanding popular movement organizations (Wijkström 2011). Consequently much emphasis in academic writings has been placed on the role played by the mass membership based popular movements and their role in shaping the democratic political system and the Swedish welfare state (see also Micheletti 1994; Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007; Lundåsen 2010; Lundberg 2014; Gavelin 2018).

The relationship between the Swedish state and civil society has at times been so close, that the boundaries between them have been blurred to the extent that it has been difficult to tell them apart (Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007). Wijkström (2011) points out that the close proximity between the popular movement organizations and the Swedish state have led to that we can describe the Swedish popular movements as being heavily hybridized. They can be understood as a kind of hybrid "half movement, half government" solutions that have played important roles in the previous Swedish social contract of the 1900s (Wijkström 2012b, 2015) – or, in other words – as core pillars in the "Swedish model" (Trägårdh 2007).

In the foci of this thesis are two fields dominated by civil society actors that must be understood as deeply embedded in – and strongly defined by – this popular movement tradition. The two fields, which will be presented in more detail in Chapter 4, are the field of sports and the field of popular education in Sweden. Since the beginning of the 20th century, both these field have, as I will show, developed in a dialectic and proximate relationship to government. Highly involved in both policy formulation and policy implementation processes many of the actors in these two fields have been prime examples of the Swedish corporative model.

The Swedish state and civil society are by this arrangement coupled – or embedded – through a myriad of stronger and weaker connections. One of the most important formal connections between the state and civil society is different forms of government grants. Public funding plays a significant role for civil society organizations (CSOs). Previous research has shown that in Europe about 45 percent of the total income for CSOs

comes from governmental funding. The actual share may vary due to different civil society regimes and in Sweden, as a part of the Social democratic regime, it counted for around 30 percent of the overall income in the sector in the 1990s (Wijkström & Lundström 2002).

For a long time concerns have been raised about how CSOs are affected by a heavy reliance on governmental funding. The Swedish political scientist Heckscher already in 1951 raised the question about how the organizations could keep their distinctiveness and autonomy when they cooperated as closely as they did with the state (Heckscher 2010[1951]). Often using a resource dependency approach (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978) other scholars have expressed and demonstrated relevant concerns about bureaucratization, governmentalization, loss of autonomy, and goal deflection as a result of the same type of close and resource-bound relations between government and civil society (e.g. Smith & Lipsky 1993; Evers 1995; Anheier, Toepler, & Sokolowski 1997).

Transformation of relationships

One important strand of civil society studies has thus focused on different dimensions of the relationship between nonprofit or voluntary organizations and government. Scholarly interest has been directed towards various forms of transformation of the relationship between state and civil society. Such transformations of the relationship have often been studied within the wider area of welfare production and provision. This has been made both in terms of CSOs getting a more prominent role as provider of welfare services and in terms of the changes in the way the welfare production is governed (e.g. Smith & Lipsky 1993; Lundström & Wijkström 1995, 2012; Gavelin 2018; Selle, Strømsnes & Loga 2018). In this thesis, my primary focus is however not in transformations of the relationship connected to the area of welfare production. My focus is instead on transformations of the relationship taking place within two of the core sub-sectors of the Swedish civil society sector; namely sports and popular education. This does not, however, prevent me from drawing on valuable conclusions and insights from this stream of research.

Grønbjerg and Salamon (2012) argue that the "always complex, multifaceted, and in flux" (ibid. p. 549) relations between the nonprofit sector and government have undergone significant changes in the United States over the last several decades. They mean that the implicit partnership that characterized the relationship during much of American history (and fundamentally expanded during the 1960s and 1970s) has been substantially redefined in the following decades. The nonprofit sector has grown massively but it has since the 1980s been challenged by e.g. retrenchment and marketization of government funding, further devotion of government decision making to the fifty states, narrowing of available tax advantages, tightening of government regulation, and risk to core mission objectives as a result of pressures to lower the unit cost of services. Even if it appears that nonprofits have responded effectively to these challenges it has come to some cost to their basic character and operations such as an increased competition from for-profit providers, a growing marketization and commercialization of the sector, and also an increased scrutiny and regulation of some crucial nonprofit functions (ibid. p. 578).

In the Scandinavian context Selle, Strømsnes and Loga (2018) have examined what has characterized the historical relationship between state and civil society in Norway and the important changes in this relationship since the millennium shift. The Norwegian situation shares many traits with the Swedish situation, and these scholars show that public authorities to a larger degree than before are looking at CSOs as something that can be used in the implementation of public policy. In combination with an increased dependency on public finances, they argue that this shift may represent a threat toward the autonomy of civil society, which traditionally has been a very strong component in all the Scandinavian countries.

A major change for the relationship has since the early 1980s been the introduction of new public management (NPM) reforms and models within the public-sector administration. As an idea – and ideal – NPM has spread around the globe and has been introduced in a wide range of areas dominated by publicly owned and controlled entities (e.g. Hood 1991; Pollitt 2002), leaving strong imprints not least in the Scandinavian countries. In a recent book on civil society and social transformation in Scandinavia, Enjolras and Strømsnes (2018, p. 3) state that:

> The last two decades have witnessed how the introduction of new public management within the public sector in the Scandinavian countries implies a relationship between public and civil actors that, to an increasing extent, is based on measurement and control rather than trust. In other words, the introduction of this system breaks with a core characteristic of how the relationship between the public and the voluntary sector traditionally has functioned within these state-friendly and corporative pluralistic countries.

The implementation of different New Public Management models was primarily designed for the internal management of the administration of government (Sundström 2003). However, as indicated by the quote above, these rationalistic governance models focusing on competition, cost efficiency and quality performance assessment have come to have a significant effect also on the relationship between the state and CSOs (Johansson 2001; Wijkström, Einarsson & Larsson 2004; Grix 2009; Fyrberg-Yngfalk & Hvenmark 2014).

Taken together with other social and organizational changes, scholars have talked about the significance of the changes for the civil society sector in Sweden and the relationship to the state as a "renegotiated social contract" (Wijkström 2012a) or as a "system shift" (Trägårdh 2012).

Transformations of the Swedish corporatism

Sweden has for many decades, together with the other Nordic countries, been regarded among the most corporatist liberal democracies in the world (Lijphart & Crepaz 1991; Siaroff 1999). Strong traditions for involving interest organizations in the policymaking process can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century in core policy areas such as the labor market, agriculture and industrial relations. In the decades following WWII, the development continued in other policy areas such as education, health, and environmental protection and fields like popular education and sports were also included. With a start in the 1980´s, there is, however, ample evidence of a declining corporatism in Sweden (Lewin 1992; Micheletti 1994; Blom-Hansen 2000; Lindvall & Sebring 2005; Christiansen et al. 2010; Jahn 2014). Some researchers even talk about the magnitude of the changes as "the Fall of Corporatism "(*Korporatismens fall*) (Rothstein & Bergström 1999) or as if "the Old Model Disintegrate" (*Den gamla modellen vittrar bort*) (Hermansson

et al. 1999, p. 21). The de-corporatization has however been a successive transformation and has been more radical within some policy areas than other (ibid. ch 2).

The reasons for the de-corporatization are still debated. The economic crises in the 1970s and 1980s (Lewin 1992), an increased individualization and a decline of consensus-culture combined with new political actors (Micheletti 1994) and problems connected to the possibility to govern are some explanations. In their analysis of the labor market policy field, Rothstein and Bergström (1999) argue that changes in state administration policy and the introduction of new governance models where the government reclaimed large parts of the policy formulation privilege diminished the power and influence for different forms of interest representation in government agencies boards. This development, for example, had the unintended consequence that the powerful employers union withdrawn from the different joint boards where they negotiated with their counterpart the trade unions and the core of the corporative organizational arrangement was abandoned.

In line with these new governance models, the Swedish government is also directing more precise expectations on CSOs that receive different forms of government grants (Johansson 2003, 2005; Wijkström et al. 2004; Amnå 2008). This is due to the fact that government agencies responsible for grants are to a larger extent governed by an economic logic in line with NMP reforms (Sundström 2003) and legally oriented control and governance systems (Johansson 2006).

Without specifically mentioning a de-corporatization, Amnå addresses these changes when he summarizes the development: "If the old corporatism mainly was about the input in the political process, the revived partnership is about output" (Amnå 2008, p. 161). The core of this idea is identified and described already in the mid-1990s by Lundström & Wijkström (1995) as a silent shift of balance "from voice to service" (*"från röst till service"*) clearly visible in the changing role of the Swedish nonprofit sector (c.f. Wijkström & Einarsson 2006; Lundström & Wijkström 2012).

The de-corporatization and on-going transformations of the corporative model are of course something that also will influence civil society and its organizations. In the corporatist model different CSOs have been core

actors both in the formulation of policy and its implementation. So when the model is being transformed this implies that also the organizations of civil society will be pressured into different types of transformation processes. Transformations in state – civil society relationships and its impact on civil society actors have for long been an interest in scholarly activity also in Sweden (e.g. Hecksher 1951; Trägårdh 2007). These transformations have more recently been studied both on a sector level, often focusing om CSOs increasing part in welfare production (e.g. Sivesind 2008; Henriksen et al. 2012) and departing from their impact on an organizational level with e.g. an increased managerialism (Meyer & Simsa 2014; Hvenmark 2016; Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner 2016) or changes in the advocacy work of organizations (Naurin 2000).

This is all highly relevant to understand the transformation and its impact on civil society. I have, however, in this dissertation not held my primary focus on the impact on the sector level, nor on the level of a single organization. Instead, my main interest remain with how the transformations in the relationship affect the dynamics and character of two fields dominated by actors from civil society and characterized by its historical corporatist nature.

Fields – a level of analysis

State-civil society relationship and ongoing transformations of this relationship will be in focus in this thesis. This could be studied on different levels of analysis, and approached from different perspectives. Instead of taking the perspective of the state and government as my starting point, as often done within e.g. political science, my perspective will mainly be from the civil society side of the relationship. This means that I will delimit my analysis primarily to the implications a transformation of the relationship has on the civil society and not focus on the effects that a transformation of the relationship has on government or the public sector.

The level of analysis for this thesis will further be the field-level. Fields; both as a theoretical concept and as a level of analysis, is inherently relational (Diani 2013). This does not, however, prevent me from analyzing single organizations within the field. But the aim with these analyses is then

to further elaborate on the organizations' role within the field, and more specifically on how certain organizations participate in the transformation of the shared understanding between the different actors in the field.

Fligstein and McAdams (2011, 2012) recent work on Strategic Action Fields (SAF) will be applied as a main theoretical framework for the field-level analysis in this thesis. Its clear incorporation of a field's relationship to the government field as well as its ambition to bring actorhood, power and hierarchy back into field theory is some of the arguments for choosing this particular framework for my analysis. Fligstein and McAdam (2011, p. 23) also affirm that the development of their theoretical framework is just at a beginning and that it needs both further elaboration and to be applied and tested on fields with different dynamics. In this thesis I accept the invitation and in Chapter 2 I will provide additional arguments for my choice and also elaborate on the different building blocks of the theory.

The fields of sports and popular education

As argued above, transformations of the state-civil society relationships have often been conducted with a focus on changing roles of CSO within different types of welfare production. In the Swedish context, firmly rooted in a social-democratic welfare regime, the role of CSOs as producers of welfare services has however been limited. Instead, the major parts of the Swedish nonprofit sector is to be found in sub-sectors such as culture & recreation including the sports movement, labor market & business including the unions, and education & research including popular education with its study association and folk-high schools connected to different Swedish popular mass movements (e.g. Lundström & Wijkström 1997; Wijkström & Einarsson 2006). In this thesis, I will study transformations of the relationship with the state within two of these core sub-sectors of the Swedish non-profit sector, namely: sports and popular education.

Analytically, actors from these two sub-sectors will be constructed as the core of the two strategic action fields in focus in this thesis: the Swedish sports field and the Swedish popular education field. Although these are two different fields with diverse sets of organizations, they are still similar in several aspects. Both are, in the Swedish context, heavily dominated by actors from civil society – voluntary and nonprofit bodies – cornerstones in

the popular movement tradition or regime and firmly embedded in the Swedish corporatist model. The Swedish government – both through subsidies and different forms of regulation – plays a significant role in both of the fields, and the relationship between the state and civil society has been organized in a rather similar way.

At the same time, we can however also observe differences in how the central actors operate and in the way in which the two fields are internally organized. By studying them in parallel, and allowing both the empirical material and the analysis from one to complement and inform the material and analysis of the other, my ambition has been to acquire a rich understanding of different types of mechanisms and organizational as well as field responses to transformations of the relationship to government.

It could further be argued that compared to other fields, both these fields have so far been fairly protected from more profound changes and large parts of the 'old model' are still preserved. In a general development towards marketization and privatizations, actors within these fields have – while adjusting and responding to the changes – still been able to preserve their more or less monopoly status within their fields of activity and they have also maintained a relatively high degree of public funding. As examples of more profound changes in other fields the dismantling of large parts of the core corporatist arrangement within the Swedish labor market can be mentioned. Further, in church-state relations profound organizational changes have been made with the separation between state and church, formally moving Church of Sweden into the civil society sphere. Finally, also the extensive welfare field has been under transformation as a result of the earlier identified changes and reforms.

The – in comparison – seemingly stable relation to the state within the fields of sports as well as popular education beg for analysis and explanations. These are two fields that in the same time can be described as part of the very core and backbone of the Swedish civil society sphere, which makes it even more interesting and intriguing to study if, how and through which mechanisms, and with which potential effects the on-going transformations of the relationship with the state have in these fields.

Aim and research questions

I have now provided the reader with a background to my research interest. The aim of this thesis is twofold and can be divided into an empirical and a theoretical aim. I have an empirical interest in the current transformation of the relationship between state and civil society in Sweden and my empirical aim with this dissertation is to explore how on-going transformations in this relationship affect fields where civil society actors are active. My theoretical interest lies in the field-level dynamics, more specifically departing from Fligstein's and McAdam's work on Strategic Action Fields. My theoretical ambition with the thesis is, therefore, to take part in the on-going development of this theoretical framework by providing two of their key concept; 'shared understanding' and 'internal governance units' with more detail. My aim is to explore which role the relationship with the government field have in relation to the shared understandings in a Strategic Action Field and to deepen our knowledge about the nature of Internal governance units. My research interests and theoretical aims lead me to the following guiding research questions. Research questions 1-3 relates mainly to my empirical research interest and aim while research questions 4-5 mainly relates to my theoretical interest and aim:

1. How is shared understanding constructed among the actors in the studied fields?
2. Through what type of mechanisms is the shared understanding in the fields transformed and reconstructed?
3. What types of field-level implications does a transformation of the shared understanding have in the studied fields?
4. How can the role and nature of the Internal Governance Units be further conceptualized and developed?
5. How can the arrangement of a Strategic Action Field's relationship to government fields be further conceptualized and related to the shared under-standing in a field?

The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured into seven different chapters, of which this introductory chapter is the first. Here I have given an introduction to the topic and have also situated my research questions and study in a broader context. Chapter 2 will introduce and discuss the theoretical framework that I draw on for this thesis. Using the theory of Strategic Action Fields as a theoretical backbone, I will complement this with governance theory and theories of institutional complexity to further deepen the theoretical basis for the thesis. After that, I will in Chapter 3 describe and expand on the research methods used for this study.

Chapter 4 and 5 are the chapters where I will present the empirical material being analyzed in this dissertation. It starts in Chapter 4 with an overview of the specific Swedish context and a general description of the two fields of sports and popular education in Sweden. This is mainly based on secondary empirical material such as previous research and organizational documents. In Chapter 5 I then present four cases from the fields, two from the popular education field and two from the sports field. Two of the cases will follow processes concerning changes in the funding of the fields and two cases will mainly deal with processes concerning changes of the boundaries and the internal organization of the fields.

In Chapter 6, I then conduct my analysis of all four cases and draw conclusions relating to the three empirically oriented research questions. In the final Chapter 7 I will then summarize up conclusions of the study and form the theoretical contributions of the thesis which relates to the two theoretically oriented research questions. That chapter ends with a final discussion where I also contextualize my findings in relation to larger trends of development of the relationship between state and civil society.

Throughout the dissertation, the Swedish names of the studied organizations are presented in italic. Quotes originally in Swedish, both from interview data and written sources, have been translated by myself.

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework

In this thesis two different fields dominated by actors from civil society and their relationship to the state will be researched. What is going on within them does not happen in a vacuum; they are all embedded in a historic and country specific context, as well as in different types of relationships that the organizations in the fields need to handle. To further analyze this context, as well as the relationships and dynamics within it, field theory is used. One specific version of field theory, Strategic Action Fields, which suits the purpose of the thesis, is selected. This gives an analytic framework to identify the different roles that organizations have within the fields, how the fields relate to the government field and, how the interplay with the government field influence the rules, borders, and resource division within the field.

Two different fields, the "sports field" and the "popular education field" will be analytically defined and analyzed in the thesis. Using field theory, makes it also possible to chisel out and analyze how different shared understandings (c.f. institutional logics) play out in the fields, as well as how different fields can respond to changes in theses in different ways. Putting the field dynamics as the locus for analysis makes it possible to understand how the seemingly same institutional pressure can give local variations in its concrete expression.

Furthermore, governance theory will be used in addition to field theory. The theories used aim at the better understanding and analysis of the relationship between the state and CSOs as to how different governance tools

are used within a specific field in relationship to different organizations. The main governance tool elaborated on in this thesis is governmental grants. These grants are influenced by different institutional logics. When these grants then enter the two fields they bear with them logics that meet the organizations within the field. By following the government grants and the processes within the two main governance units within the fields (later in the thesis identified as *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet*) it will be possible to analyze how possible conflicts in institutional logics are handled, and how this may potentially influence the character and dynamics of the field and organizations within the field. In this process and in the wake of the grants, it will also be possible to identify effects on important governance issues such as how borders are drawn and resources are allocated.

To be able to take the analysis a step further, literature on institutional complexity is added as a way to understand how, and through which mechanism, organizations in the fields handle the logics that the governance tool is influenced by. The ambition is that this will highlight (a) mechanisms active in the transformation of the shared understanding and (b) which role internal governance units have in theses transformation processes.

Taking a field approach

A key area of research has in the past been to study social movements as organizational fields (Minkoff & McCarthy 2005), even if the link between social movement research and organization theory has yet not been fully exploited and is still under developed (ibid; McAdam & Scott 2005; Davis, McAdam, Scott & Zald 2005). Diani (2013) argues that there has been a "persistent tendency" in academia where social movements, and structures in general, have been studied as aggregates of actors (e.g. organizational) rather than systems of relations. However, if we want to understand the dynamics within a group of organizations and deepen our knowledge on how an organization is affected by its environment, we need a analytic concept such as the `field´ which is inherently relational (ibid.).

Both within organization and social movement theory scholars are dealing with the fundamental question regarding how coordination is achieved. It is possible to identify at least two broad mechanisms that coordinate ac-

tors. These are: resource allocation and boundary definition (Diani 2013). Resource allocation concerns the procedures for how decisions are taken within an organization regarding the use of organizational recourses; procedures that can be both formal and informal, or often a combination of the two (e.g. March & Simon 1958). Resource allocation can also take place outside the formal organization through formal or informal exchanges between different actors (in a field) that may, or may not, influence the organizations' autonomy (Pfeffer & Szalancik 1978).

In the same way, boundary definition can be analyzed both on an organizational level and for broader fields. In an organizational perspective, the boundaries for the organization in terms of e.g. membership, authoritative power, and resources are key questions (Ahrne 1994; Hardy & Maguire 2010). At the field-level, boundary definitions are connected to ideational elements and framing processes that classify fundamentals and actors in different categories, while shaping the relations between actors both within and between different categories (e.g. Tilly 2005). Dacin, Goodstein and Scott (2002, p. 51) have shown that boundaries of fields are shaped by an admixture of regulative and governance arrangements such as: cultural-cognitive conceptions of identity; normative and ethical frameworks that provide common rules and standards; and interdependencies borne of dependence on similar types of resources. They also propose that a disruption along any of these dimensions may result in boundaries that will alternate field structure and participant behavior. The process of boundary definitions could therefore be seen as a crucial part of identity building, both for individuals and organizations. Lamont and Molnár (2002) connect boundary definition with resource allocation. They have argued that borders among people and groups will lead to "unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities" and can be seen as "tools by which individuals and groups struggle over" (ibid., p. 168).

Davis and Marquise (2005) further argue that Organization Theory needs to shift away from paradigm-driven work to problem-driven work as the main paradigms for the study of organizations were formed in the second half of the 20th century, reflecting the dominant trends of large (mainly US-based) corporations of that time. The authors mean that focusing on

the field-level and using a mechanism-based theorizing approach best does this, as substantial change does not stay contained within a single organization, and mechanisms because the quality of explanation is enhanced by the focus on how things happens. Mechanism-based theorizing around social mechanisms can be described as "sometimes true theories" (Coleman 1964, p 516, cited in Davis and Marquis, 2005) which explain how things happen but do not aspire to predict when and where they will occur. They serve as "an intermediary level on analysis in-between pure description and storytelling, on the one hand, and universal social laws, on the other" (Hedstrom & Swedberg 1998). As examples on such a social mechanism, Campbell's (2005) categorization of mechanisms that have been used in studies of social movements and organizations serve well. He lists framing (the use of frames such as metaphors and symbols that links problem and action to prevailing cultural conceptions), diffusion (spread of ideas, structure and practices), translation (how ideas are modified and implemented when they enter organizations or other local context), bricolage (where borrowed elements from other contexts are combined, to create new configurations for social activity), and strategic leadership.

It has also been debated if institutional theory in its focus on institutions has shifted its attention too far away from the primary questions how organizations work, are structured, and managed. Greenwood, Hinings, and Whetten (2014) argue that this is the case and that institutional theory needs to be refocused on understanding organizations. They mean that institutional theory has concentrated too much on explaining institutions and institutional processes so that of organizations is thereby lost. Too much focus has been given to understand and explain why organizations are so similar, which has led scholars to ignore the understanding and explaining of differences between organizations. They mean that the institutional logics perspective can be a way forward to refocus institutional theory on organizations and why differences between them can be seen. As the institutional logics perspective has an impact upon organizations at the field-level, focusing on fields is an important aspect for researchers (ibid.). Meyer and Höllerer (2014) agree with Greenwood et al. (2014) in general, but see the danger that the focus on organizations and organizational forms might cause institutional theory to ignore important contemporary development

in organizing. They mean that the scope for the institutional theorist should be to further develop the understanding of the interplay between institutions and forms of organizing, which may be formal organizations but not limited to them. Secondly, they also mean that institutions in their nature are related to stability and similarities between organizations and therefore, it is important not to lose sight of this if you want to study institutions. Even if it is more exciting to study change and difference.

To be able to capture the dynamics and relations between different sports organizations, as well as between different popular adult education ones, field theory will therefore be used as an analytic framework for this thesis. By this I will also be able to analyze their relationship to the state. To this, governance and institutional complexity will be added as a special interest for the thesis.

Different approaches to field theory

Field theory has been seen as a more or less coherent approach in the social sciences that in essence is "the explanation of regularities in individual action by resources to position vis-à-vis others" (Martin 2003, p. 1). In his assessment of field theory, Martin claims that it has the potential to yield general, but nontrivial, insights into theoretical questions and at the same time, can serve to organize research in a productive fashion. He also means that field theory allows for a rigorous reflexivity necessary when sociology attempts large-scale political and institutional analyses.

When trying to explain the basic assumptions for field theory, Martin makes the comparison to electromagnetic fields within natural science. Compared to the natural sciences, in the social sciences "the field serves as some sort of representation for those overarching social regularities that may also be visualized […] as quasi-organisms, systems, or structures." (ibid. p. 8)

Field theory has sometimes been used to handle uncertainty about causal relations and it has then been able to serve as a sort of proxy theory to be able to start the analysis. Three main directions in which field theory has progressed within the social sciences can be identified: the social-psychological theory mainly associated with Lewin, that of stratification or domination most notably associated with Bourdieu, and also of inter-

organizational relations associated with DiMaggio and Powell (see Martin 2003, p. 14). Even if these three directions generally have been seen as rather different, and that they come from different substantive and methodological arenas, Martin shows that there are fundamental affinities among the three, and that they all point in the same direction (ibid).

Scholars developing and using these three different field approaches have all stressed the importance of underlying connections between actors in the field. They also share conceptions of what a field is, how analysis should be conducted, how causality should be interpreted, and how we should understand the relation of fields to individuals and their cognition. On this basis, Martin (ibid) claims that even if there the elements of disagreement and the divergence between the different theories had a reason, the areas of convergence indicate the "nature of field theory as a general explanatory approach for the social sciences" (ibid. p. 28).

In the literature, the word field is used in at least three different senses. The first is a purely topological one where the field is conceived as an analytic arena with simplified dimensions in which we can position individuals or institutions (Lewin 1999). The second sense of a field is as an organization of forces. The third, is as a field of contestation; a battlefield. The first sense originates in the psychology of perception (Lewin 1936, p.14), the second came from the analogy to physics, and the third, which today probably is the most common understanding of fields, is the one applied in this thesis. This more organizational field-approach is used originally both in Bourdieu´s work on field theory of domination and later within that more focused on inter-organizational relations associated with DiMaggio and Powell (1983), as well as Fligstein and MacAdam (2011, 2012). As Martin shows, these different theoretical trajectories can be seen as two parallel developments that nevertheless, have important strings between them. Recognizing this initially, the branch of field theory that highlights inter-organizational relationships will be followed and thereby Bourdieu's work on fields will not be further detailed.

Fields as inter-organizational relations

One of the early field theorists, Karl Mannheim (1940), argued that a field structure tends to arise when "conflict and competition are in full swing,

and individuals have to make their own adjustment" without recourse to concrete groups. A field structure then, develops when units interact in such a way that they develop a mutual influence irreducible to existing institutional channels. Warren (1967) draws on this basis when he focused on the field as something that explained trans-organizational consistencies. This line of theorizing was then brought to its current state largely by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) who tied this perspective to that of Bourdieu (Mohr 2005). They defined the organizational field (originally in a market/business setting) as "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products" (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, p. 148). The early research by DiMaggio and Powell has been extremely influential for the understanding of the importance of the inter-organizational domain. These authors meant that fields develop when there is an increased interaction between organizations and when: defined inter-organizational structures of domination and patterns of coalition emerge; there is an increase in the information load with which organizations in the field must contend; and, there is the development of mutual awareness among participants in a set of organizations that they are involved in a common sphere. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) took theory development on organizational fields to a new level by going beyond; arguing that a field causes the organizations within it to align in some way. They also suggested how this alignment process may occur and how it can be concretely examined. In particular, they suggested that the structuration of the field is largely a result of patterns of relations between different organizations and other actors. Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) continued to develop this tradition by bridging organizational theory with insights made in social movement theory.

The sense of a field of contestation is in line with considering the field as a "game" with certain rules. In contrast to a board game, the field "game" is a struggle both over and within the rules. Conformity or nonconformity to the rules are therefore understood as strategic options that have different advantages in different situations (Goffman 1959). Liberson (1985) argues in line with this: "those who write the rules, write rules that enable them to continue to write rules" (Liberson 1985, p. 167). The idea of

viewing the field as a game is apparent also in the early research by Bourdieu, but it has primarily been developed further for organizational analysis in the line of research represented by Fligstein and MacAdam (Fligstein 2001, 2008; Fligstein & McAdam 2011, 2012).

Fligstein (2001), for example, meant that fields may arise whenever a group of actors frame their action vis-á-vis one another. More generally, Martin proposed that we may say that "a field exists when a set of analytic elements are aligned in such way that it is parsimonious to describe their current state in terms of position vis-á-vis one another" (Martin 2003, p. 42). When organizational fields connect and align organizations, several scholars have shown how this can induce a shared "culture" between the organizations (see Meyer & Rowan 1977; Meyer 1987; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez 1997).

Strategic action fields

Going forward with the understanding of field as an arena (field) of contestation and with a focus on inter-organizational relations, a specific analytic framework will be turned to. As a starting point for the analysis, I take a sociological field approach using Fligstein and McAdam's work on strategic action fields (SAFs). They see SAFs as the fundamental units of collective action in society, defined as.

> …a meso-level social order where actors (who can be individuals or collective) interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purpose of the field (including who has power and why), and the field´s rules (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011 p. 3).

The meso-level social order, and the insight that this is a level where action takes place, has been recognized in several versions of institutional theory. These levels, or orders, have been variously called organizational fields (DiMaggio & Powell 1983), sectors (Scott & Meyer 1983), fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), and within social movement theory as social movement industries (McCarthy & Zald 1973, 1977). With SAFs, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) are able to combine the social constructionist aspects of

institutional theory with the view that field processes at the core are about who gets what, i.e., more of an actor-hood and strategy perspective than traditional institutional theory. The added value of using this approach in this study lies very much in this focus on agency, and in its ambition to bring power, conflict, and hierarchy back into the understanding and theorizing on what goes on at the meso-level in society. Using the SAF approach on the idea of fields makes it possible to combine insights from institutional theory about the importance of institutional forces and structures, together with a careful attention to strategic agency, interests, power, and cooperation among the players in the field. In this way SAFs become socially constructed arenas (through the definition of borders, agreement of the rules of the field etc.) where actors with various degrees of resources and power interact and compete for some kind of advantage (see also e.g. Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992).

Scholars from different disciplines have applied the SAF theoretical framework in different ways. Some has used it as an analytical framework to understand field stability and change as well as evolution and development more broadly (e.g. Fligstein 2013; Domaradzka & Wijkström 2016; Vierimaa 2017). Others have deployed it to unpack field-level dynamics in relation to specific processes (e.g. Özen & Özen 2011; Laamanen & Skålén 2015; Moulton & Sandfort 2017; Chen 2018; Barinaga 2018).

Shared understanding

One important aspect of the socially constructed character of SAFs is that they build on a set of shared understandings between members. This shared understanding, how it is constructed, and transformed will be in foci in this thesis. Fligstein and McAdam's (2011, 2012) notion of shared understandings is closely connected to what we, in other theory frames, know as "institutional logics" (e.g. Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury 2012; Scott 2013). These institutional logics are the overarching set of principles that prescribe according to one common definition of "how to interpret organizational reality, what constitutes appropriate behavior, and how to succeed" (Thornton 2004, see also e.g. Friedland & Alford 1991). These logics provide guidelines for how to interpret and function in social situations, and organizations comply both in order to gain

endorsement from important actors they relate to, as well as because it provides a means of understanding the social world so they can act confidently within it (Greenwood et al., 2011).

Greenwood et al. (2014, p. 1215) emphasize that it is on the field-level that institutional logics have greater specificity, both in material and symbolic manifestations. Thus, it is therefore important to understand that different field-level mechanisms play a key role when it comes to filtering, framing, and enforcing different logics (Greenwood et al. 2011, p 322). Fligstein and McAdam (2011; 2012) propose, in a similar line of reasoning, that an institutional logic as a general concept is too broad to capture and understand how fields actually operate. They therefore further qualify this dimension of field theory by distinguishing between four aspects of shared understandings. First, there is a shared general understanding between the actors about what is going on, and what is at stake. In a settled SAF they expect that there is a consensus about what is occurring even if this does not imply that everyone views that the division of spoils are legitimate. Second, in the field there is a set of actors that possess more or less power, knowing who their friends, enemies, and competitors are. Third, there is a shared understanding among the actors about the "rules" in the field, i.e. what tactics are possible, legitimate, and interpretable for other actors. Fourth and finally, there is a broad interpretive frame that actors use to analyze and make sense of what others within the SAF are doing. This frame is not a consensual frame that holds for all actors but rather different frames reflecting the relative position of actors within the field.

Together I understand these four parts as a sort of "catalogue of aspects" of the content of the shared understanding in a field. Altogether, this approach offers a more detailed view on how fields are structured than institutional logics alone, which Fligstein and McAdam (2012) argue 'lump' all aspects of shared understanding together. They mean that the use of the term "institutional logic" tends to imply a too large degree on consensus within the field about what is going on. It also gives little attention to different actors' positions as: the creation of rules that favor the more powerful actors and power in the field in general. Fligstein and McAdam emphasize in this way also the room for agency within SAF to a larger de-

gree than most versions of institutional theory would suggest, meaning there is a:

> …constant jockeying going on in fields as a result of their contentious nature. Actors make moves and other actors have to interpret them, consider their options, and act. (…) This leaves great latitude for the possibility of piecemeal change in the position the actors occupy (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011 p.5).

Relationship to other fields

Further, I have as an empirical aim for this thesis to explore how on-going transformations in the relationship with government affect fields where civil society actors are active. In the framework of SAF two specific areas will be of special interest for this aim. The first is how Fligsten and McAdam theorize around the relationship to other fields outlined in this section, and then also their take on organizations and states in the section following.

The specific field in focus should not be seen as an isolated island that stands free from influence from other fields. All fields are embedded in complex webs of others, according to Fligstein and MacAdam (2012), which may be closely connected to the field in focus or more loosely. These authors argue that it is of great importance to take into account the relationships to other fields to be able to understand what is going on in a meso-level order. Constraints and opportunities imposed by the many ties that a specific field has to other fields influence to a large extend the stability and way of working for that specific field.

The authors, in their recent book (Fligstein & MacAdam 2012) present three sets of distinctions that characterize the nature of these field relationships. Other SAFs with recurring ties to, and whose actions often impact the field in question, are called proximate fields. This is compared to distant fields that lack ties and have almost no capacity to influence the given SAF. Another distinction between fields in the environment is between those vertical and horizontal. Vertically connected fields describe a relationship where one SAF has a possibility to exercise formal authority over another field. A horizontal field relationship describes on the other hand, a relationship without formal authority between the fields but rather that the two

SAFs mutually depend upon each other. The third and final set of distinctions that the authors present is the one between state and non-state fields. Here, their main point is that state actors (or fields) alone have the formal power and authority to set rules for, intervene in, and give legitimacy for most non-state fields. This gives states a special role and considerable power to impact on the stability of most SAFs.

These three sets of distinctions, distant – proximate, vertical – horizontal, and state – non-state, can serve as a help to organize and analyze the complex field environment of a studied field. In different layers, and with more or less in common, their main point is that fields can, to a greater or lesser extent, overlap with each other.

The fact that fields are overlapping with each other and are in relationships means that significant changes in any given SAF have the possibility of affecting other connected fields. Fligstein and McAdam (2011, p. 9) argue that a change in one field is "like a stone thrown in a still pond, sending ripples outward to all proximate fields." They also assign a special importance to the possibility of state fields influencing the stability of all others.

A key analytical problem in the definition of a field is that both organizations and individuals participate in multiple fields simultaneously. It therefore becomes messy to separate out players and fields, as actors are active in multiple fields. Using the analytical concept of strategic action field is then one way to simplify an opaque empirical reality to be able to do research (Fligstein & Vanderbroeck 2014).

Organizations and states

Formal organizations are by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) seen as "objective" entities in the world with clear boundaries and legal designations. In this way, formal organizations can be seen as a special kind of field because of, for example, their rigid, formalized structures and rules that define the relationships between different subunits and how they can behave within the field. At the same time, formal organizations are often central players in a wider strategic action field.

One important feature of the SAF approach is particularly relevant to this study of the relationship between government and two fields dominat-

ed by civil society actors. This feature is the particular and central role that the state is given in the theory as the main rule-maker and "enabler" of organizing in the first place (Fligstein & Vanderbroeck 2014). In the theory of SAFs, states are seen as a dense set of strategic action fields. In comparison to other fields the state has a unique claim to exercise sovereignty within a specific geographic territory. This gives the state a possibility to influence change and stability of other fields as the fields, to some degree, depend either directly or indirectly on its linkages to the state. In creations of non-state strategic action fields, government can have input into the very structure and rules of the field e.g. through law or other regulation sanction, or by certifying certain organizations to have a special responsibility for specific aspects of the field. The field as a whole, and especially its incumbents, may also depend critically on regular state support such as grants or subsidies.

The, sometimes, myriads of links and the nature of these, binding the specific non-state field to state fields may blur the conventional distinction between the state and other fields. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) try to make a clear distinction between strategic action fields that clearly operate within the boundaries of the state, and government sanctioned strategic action fields. On government sanction fields, different governmental bodies participate as actors on the field even if they do not compete for the resources. The crucial point is to take into account pivotal relationships that the specific field has to the state, and not ignore this relationship even if state actors for any reasons not are defined as a part of the SAF in focus. This is why Fligstein and McAdam (2012) give significant importance to external field relations.

States may have the possibility to influence other fields. However, this does not mean that the state can influence without conflict. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) mean that the relationship between state and non-state strategic action fields is marked by a fair amount of mutual distrust and hostility. It is also possible to separate between two arenas of influence or action from the state. These arenas are the relation between the state and the strategic action fields of society, and actions within the state strategic action fields themselves. State fields have their own interest that routinely affect non-state fields. Notwithstanding, established fields of organizations

can also try to control the agenda of the state. This results in "an iterative stimulus-response 'dance' involving state and non-state actors" (Fligstein & McAdam 2012 p. 173).

In both of the two fields that are in focus for this thesis, the state can be seen as a player of the specific field but also as a proximate field in its own right that the fields of "popular education" and "sport" constantly relate to. State actors can have their own interests and institutional missions that affect non-state fields. However, established fields can also take their issues to the state in an attempt to control the agenda that will regulate their field. By this being possible, it is likely that there is also feedback between state and non-state fields. In the corporatist model, the common policy formulation process is of core importance, and this argument from Fligstein and McAdam could be seen as a bridge between the theory of SAFs and corporatism. Considering the field of sports and the field of popular education as an important part of the Swedish corporatism, it would even be possible to see them as a part of the set of strategic action fields that compose the state.

Players in the fields

The fields are comprised of actors that have the role as incumbents, challengers, and very often also internal governance units (Fligsten & McAdam 2011, 2012). Incumbents are those actors that have a disproportional influence within a field and whose interests are heavily reflected in the dominant organizations of the SAF. The purpose, structure, and rules of the field are shaped to serve and favor their interests, and the positions of the field are defined by their claim on the 'lion´s share' of material and status reward. Shared meanings in the field also tend to legitimate the incumbents position. The challenger occupies a less privileged role in the SAF and has normally little influence over its operation. They recognize the nature and the different positions within the field and the incumbent actors' dominant logic, but can at the same time articulate an alternative vision of the field and their position within it. This does not mean that they are in open conflict with the field and the other actors; most of the time they conform with the prevailing order, although highlight their distain and receive what the

present system can give them. At the same time they are always waiting and looking for opportunities to challenge the structure and logic of the field.

Furthermore, in most fields there are also internal governance units (IGUs) that are "charged with overseeing compliance with field rules and, in general, facilitating the overall smooth functioning and reproduction of the system"(Fligstein & McAdam 2012, pp. 13-14). These internal governance units are almost always influenced by the most powerful incumbents in the field and the logics that work to uphold and justify the incumbent's position. They are consequently not neutral, even if the legitimating rhetoric says differently, in the conflict between incumbents and challengers and can be expected to serve as a defender of the status quo in the field. Besides their field internal function, IGUs often serve as a liaison between the strategic action field and important external fields, such as state fields. One of their most important functions may even be to work and maintain external field relations, to have "one foot in the field and the other outside of it" (ibid. p. 77).

Social skill and framing

Strategic action is within this framework understood as attempts by actors "to create and maintain stable social worlds by securing the cooperation of others" (Fligstein & McAdam 2011, see also Fligstein 2001). It is about gaining and maintaining control in a given context by create coalitions and common identities that serve an actors interest and control vis-a`-vis others. For this, it is necessary for strategic actors to possess social skills to be able to imagine and understand others and therefore, the possibilities to find some collective definition of interest (Jaspers 2004; 2006). Social skill can then be defined as "how individuals or collective actors possess a highly developed cognitive capacity for reading people and environments, framing lines of action, and mobilizing people in the service of these action frames" (Fligstein & McAdam 2011, p. 7). It captures the idea that actors want to produce collective action by engaging others. Social skill is the ability to discover, articulate, and propagate frames that others can relate to.

In this constant jockeying that is going on in fields, the different actors' own interests will be in the forefront. Socially skilled actors will use the rules of the field and any ambiguity in the interactions to protect and re-

produce their privilege (Fligstein 2008). Incumbent actors within a field will use their social skills to produce and reproduce the status quo that generally favors them. Even if the field is stable and highly institutionalized, with a strong shared understanding, where meanings are taken for granted and actions already framed in line with this, it will be easier for the incumbents to reproduce that order, but it still will require their social skill to uphold it.

When a field is in an episode of contention it is even more common that socially skilled actors use framing to propose and seek to mobilize support around a particular conception of the field (Fligstein 1996; Snow & Benford 1988; Fligstein & McAdam 2011). Incumbents may persist in trying to take the field back to its old order, often with the help of state actors that they make alliances with. State actors might try to interfere and resolve the conflicts in the field by imposing a settlement that may or may not be stable (Fligstein & McAdam 2011). However, it might also be the case that the challengers in the field can successfully sustain mobilization and are slowly able to institutionalize new practices and rules (DiMaggio 1991; McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2003).

Fligstein and McAdam here clearly relate to theoretical developments within social movement framing. Drawing on earlier work of Goffman (1974), Benford and Snow define frames as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (2000, p. 614). The framing process describes the process of assigning meaning to events and is a way for social movement organizations to create and describe their beliefs and ideas, to be able to mobilize adherents, and thereby also resources (Snow & Benford 1988). The process works through three core framing tasks: the diagnostic framing that identifies problems that need to be solved; the prognostic framing that suggests solutions to the problems and also identifies possible strategies of how to come to these solutions; and, the last step, the motivational framing which encourage actors to support and work for the proposed solution (Snow & Benford 1988). This process can be strategic when as Benford and Snow (2000) describe it: "Frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose – to recruit new members, to mobilize adherents, to acquire resources, and so forth." Organizations then frame their ideology and activities to gain support. This is done through different

frame alignment processes: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation (Snow, et al. 1986). The theory also highlights that there might be risks connected to the frame alignment process. One of these risks is that the frames lead to a potential mission drift when the organization, in its striving to acquire support and recourses, drifts away from its original mission, whereby current members and supporters feel left behind (Benford & Snow 2000).

The existence and borders of a field

A central empirical issue is how to tell if a strategic action field exists, and in this undertaking, also to establish the borders of the field; i.e., deciding who is and who is not a member of the field. Here, different scholars have made different choices, but in general, most seem to agree that it is an empirical question as to whom is in the field and where the boundaries are or, as expressed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983): "The structure of an organizational field cannot be determined a priori but must be defined on the basis of empirical investigation" (ibid, p. 148).

Some views of fields have been rather expansive in defining membership. The terms "organizational sectors" (Scott & Meyer 1983) and "organizational field" (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) imply that the field does not merely consist of the participants who are striving for what is at stake, but also all other participants that might be relevant to the field. Others, such as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), have taken a narrower view of field membership when they describe the fields as places where there is something at stake, and that the actors who are orienting their actions to one another are members of the field.

Fligstein and McAdam using this more defined view means that "field membership consists of those groups who routinely take each other into account in their actions" (2012, p. 167). With this definition of the field, they exclude membership from other actors or groups that may be important to the functioning of the strategic action field. According to them, this simplifies the field analysis by making it clear who the players are and what their relationship is, as well as the fact that it will be possible to focus the attention on the players who are jockeying for position for particular purposes. In this, they stand close to Bourdieu and Wacquant, and share

the more general view that it is an empirical question which actors that should be considered in the field and where the boundaries stand (Fligstein & Vanderbroeck 2014). The downside of this is that there might be players at the edge of the field who are important to take into consideration to be able to fully understand what is happening in the field. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) mean that if a field is highly resource dependent on another field, the very nature of it will be shaped by this dependence. It is therefore important to understand the field's relationships to other fields and to understand how different dependencies affect the players in the field, as well as how incumbents and challengers deal with this dependence.

Within a strategic action field it should also be possible to identify internal governance units (IGUs) that are formed when the field becomes institutionalized. The duties of IGUs can vary depending on the field. They can, as some examples facilitate the field governance, certify membership and lobby the state on the behalf of the entire field. In their theorizing of "meta-organizations", Ahrne and Brunsson (2005) have argued that formal membership in certain meta-organizations (e.g. an IGU) gives organizations a certain status in the fields. However the meta-organizations, like all organizations, include and exclude. The rules for this are often set up in a way that safeguards and confers the status of the current members (ibid.). Fligstein and McAdam (2012) state that identifying these internal governance units and understanding their role in field reproduction is an important part of the overall analysis.

Complex institutional environment

Within the theory of SAF, the concept of shared understandings is of central importance for the field constructions. This concept, which will be in focus of my analysis, has already been dealt with earlier in the chapter. There, the close connection has been shown between the concept of shared understandings and institutional logics. Both these concepts highlight that there are this certain set of principles prescribing interpretations of reality and how to behave. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) mainly focus on how actors jockey around within the framework of the shared understanding, but also how these understandings could be changed. By broadening the theoretical base with insights from research on institutional logics it is also

possible to understand how different logics interact and how organizations can manage this.

Organizations are typically exposed to multiple institutional logics that may be in conflict or incompatible with each other (Selznick 1949; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Friedland & Alford 1991; Kraatz & Block 2008). When the institutional logics are incompatible, or at least appear to be so, they generate challenges and tensions for the organizations that are exposed to them. The issue of how organizations handle this tension, their responses to conflicting institutional demands or complex institutional environments, has been dealt with by scholars (e.g. Oliver, 1991; Pache & Santos 2010; Greenwood et al. 2011).

Pressures on organizations that arise from institutional complexity do not affect all organizations equally. Drawing on Greenwood et al. (2011, p. 322) who argue that both the field structure and attributes of the organizations within the field affect how the organizational responds to the given institutional complexity, whereby:

> Institutional logics pass through organizational fields and are then filtered by various attributes of the organization itself – in particular, the organization`s position within a field, its structure, ownership and governance, and its identity. These attributes frame how organizations experience institutional complexity and how they perceive and construct the repertoire of responses available to them (Greenwood et al. 2011, p. 339).

Whether an organization is positioned in the center or the periphery of a field influences how motivated it is to follow established practices. Organizations in the periphery of the field are less likely to experience the same intensity of institutional complexity simply because they are less caught by institutionalized relationships and expectations. They are also often disadvantaged by the existing arrangements of the field (c.f. the challenger position in the SAF framework) and by that have less reason to uphold them (Leblebici, Salancik, Copay, & King 1991; Kraatz & Zajac 1996; Greenwood et al. 2011). Organizations in a peripheral position have therefore, a greater flexibility in responding to institutional complexity and are more likely to abandon an institutionalized template when they face an adverse situation such as an unfavorable regulatory regime or resource scarcity

(D`Aunno, Succi, & Alexander 2000). The more centrally positioned organizations tend to be embedded in the existing institutional arrangements, benefitting from them, would therefore resist institutional complexity to a larger degree (Greenwood et al., 2011).

In a similar way, ownership and governance can be understood as an organizational filter. Some groups or organizations within a field will be more powerful than others and organizational responses to multiple institutional logics will most likely be a reflection of the most influential group, whereby: "those with power, in other words, are likely to determine organizational responses to multiple institutional logics – and in a way that reflects their interests" (Greenwood et al. 2011, p. 344). Lounsbury (2001) has shown how ownership and funding can affect responses. He demonstrated how publicly funded universities aligned their responses to the preferences of the government funding them. An organization's response to institutional complexity will hence be affected by its dependence upon important institutional actors.

Scholars have also made efforts to categorize deliberate or strategic responses to institutional complexity. Oliver (1991) identifies five different available response strategies that organizations can use to meet external institutional demands. In increasing order of resistance to the demand they are:

- **Acquiescence** – where organizations unconsciously by habit, imitation, or by voluntary compliance, adopt the demand.

- **Compromise** – where organizations through negotiation try to balance, pacify, or bargain with the ambition to at least partly accommodate all institutional demands.

- **Avoidance** – where organizations attempt to preclude their necessity to conform to institutional demands by symbolic compliance, buffering institutional processes by decoupling, or escape by exiting the domain where the demands are exerted.

- **Defiance** – where organizations more explicitly try to remove one of the contradicting institutional demands through dismissing or ignoring it, challenging the norms imposing it, or directly attacking it.

- **Manipulation** – where organizations actively try to change, or transform, the content of the institutional demand through co-optation of the source of the institutional pressure, influencing the definitions of norms or by taking control over the source of pressure.

Pache and Santos (2010) build on Oliver´s (1991) classification but propose that in order to give the model predictive power it is necessary both to consider the nature of the institutional conflict and the intra-organizational dynamics. For the nature of the conflict, they mean that it matters if the conflict is about the goals of the organization, or simply about the means used to achieve them. When it comes to the intra-organizational dynamics, they mean that it is necessary to understand to what degree the different institutional demands are represented within the organization. They can be completely conveyed by actors outside the organization such as professional organizations, funding bodies, or regulatory bodies. However, they can also be represented inside the organization through e.g. professional staff or board members that adhere to various normative institutional templates. When two or more institutional demands are represented inside the organization it is also necessary to take into account the relative power balance between the groups advocating them.

Pache and Santos (2010) expect that the organization will use more resistant strategies (such as defiance or manipulation) when they face institutional demands related to goals, than they would if the demands related to means. They also predict that organizations will respond differently to the same type of conflict depending on the intra-organizational dynamics.

Governance

Within this framework of fields and the complex institutional environment they are a part of, this thesis is interested in how and through which mechanism the shared understanding of two fields is transformed when the state-civil society relationship is transformed. Governance theory will now be turned to. The theories used here aim to better understand and analyze the relationship between the state and CSOs, and how different governance tools are used in field governance in relationship to different organizations.

The governance concept has been used in a multi-faceted way by different scholars studying civil-society organizations, often with several approaches taken at the same time. In this stream of research two main strands dealing with the concept of governance can be traced: namely an "external" and "internal" governance perspective (Steen-Johnsen, Eynaud & Wijkström 2011; Renz & Andersson 2014). The external governance perspective is concerned with the process and mechanisms through which society is governed. Here, the increased room for institutional mechanisms, such as civil society and market sector (Rhodes 1997; Bozzini & Enjolras 2011), in the process of governance have raised scholarly interest, mainly from political scientists, in how different CSOs are involved in governance. The internal governance perspective on the other hand, with organizational governance i.e. is how the organization is governed. This perspective, dominated by scholars with a background in management studies, law, or economics, has typically been dealing with questions about particular modes of governance and their efficiency, with a particular focus on the role of the board (Ostrower & Stone 2006).

Sten-Johnsen, Eynaud and Wijkström (2011) argue that these two perspectives of governance are closely intertwined within the sphere of civil society and mean that "the internal governance game shapes the condition for the organization`s position and actions in the external governance environment, and vice versa" (ibid. 2011, p. 556). Therefore, the two perspectives need to, if not analyzed together, at least have the other perspective in mind while conceptualizing governance when studying CSOs. In a similar way Stone and Ostrower (2007) have argued that the scope of civil society (or nonprofit) research should broaden in order to address the interaction

between nonprofit governance and the wider society. Kumar and Roberts (2010) propose that it is necessary to further explore the organizational environments' impact on organizational governance. When CSOs interact with state and market they come in contact with external governance systems that may constrain or affect their internal organizational governance. They argue that the environment could be viewed as an "arena of multiple systems of governance to which civil society organizations may be exposed. External governance systems may potentially constrain the autonomy of internal organizational systems, or imply particular demands to which organizational governance must respond" (Kumar & Roberts 2010, p. 795).

An external governance perspective

Among political scientist scholars we can find a wide variety of definitions of governance (see Torfing et al., 2003 for an overview of definitions). It seems to be relatively well agreed upon that governance concerns the coordination, managing, guiding, and controlling of collective action in society. The main position within the governance literature is also that the dominating role for government to authoritatively steer public policy is eroding. Instead, new modes of public governance that are focused much more on network governance arise where multiple actors, such as interest groups, the media, transnational organizations, corporations, and states, are involved. In these networks, CSOs plays an important role (Stoker 1998).

Taking an external governance perspective could be valuable as it takes into account the complexity of governing public issues when a wide range of actors are involved. As a starting point for an external governance perspective for the thesis, Stoker (1998) is used. Stoker suggests that governance is concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government, it is rather a matter of difference in process. A baseline argument is that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between, and within, public and private sectors have become blurred. The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms that do not rest on resources to the authority and sanctions of government. Stoker views governance as a valuable theoretical perspective, functioning as an organizing framework, rather than a causal

analysis, or a normative theory. It can be used as a reference point that challenges many of the assumptions of traditional public administration and gives us new questions to deal with.

In the article, Stoker presents five propositions, or aspects, of governance that could be used and further analyzed within the framework of SAFs. Firstly, he refers to governance as a complex set of institutions and actors that are drawn from, but also beyond, government. Secondly, governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues. To be able to do this will be of importance when analyzing the relationship between the state and CSOs in a corporative setting (i.e. government letter of regulation to CSOs). Thirdly, Stoker highlights that governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationship between institutions involved in collective actions, a proposition well in line with Fligstein and McAdams (2012) view on field dynamics. Also aligned, is the forth proposition that governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors. On this point, SAF can provide us with a framework to analyze how these networks are governed (with e.g. IGUs) and also what role different actors has in the governance process. Fifthly, and last, Stoker means that governance recognizes the capacity to get things done, which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. Governance sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide. The role of government with its unique possibility to have influence over other SAFs is also highlighted by Fligstein and McAdam (2012).

New public management

Rhodes (1996) shows how the term governance has been used to signify a change in the meaning of government, referring to: a new process of governing; a changed condition of ordered rule; or a new method by which society is governed. When specifying, this new process of governance has however been used with different meanings. One central use of governance has concerned the evolvement of the "new public management" (NPM) (ibid.). Diefenbach (2009) captures well the normative standpoint of NPM when he describes it as:

> …a set of assumptions and value statements about how public sector organizations should be designed, organized, managed and how, in a quasi-business manner, they should function. The basic idea of NPM is to make public sector organizations – and the people working in them! – much more ´business-like´ and ´market-oriented´, that is, performance-, cost, efficiency- and audit oriented (Diefenbach 2009, p.893).

As an idea (and ideal) NPM has spread around the globe since the late 70s and early 80s and has been introduced in a wide range of publicly owned and controlled areas (e.g. Hood 1991; Pollitt 2002). Starting in the Anglo-Saxon world, with the Thatcher (UK) and Reagan (US) administrations, a debate spread around the efficiency of the public sector and its production of welfare services (see e.g. Hood 1995). Overlapping this debate, another discourse arose that described how the problems could be solved. With inspiration from the understanding of how markets and corporations worked, managerial techniques developed in the private business sector were imported into public administration (Osborne 2010). Advocates of these "new" managerial techniques claimed that they were superior over the "old" public administration tools and an implementation of them "would automatically lead to improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness" (ibid, p. 3) of public service delivery (Diefenbach 2009).

NPM is relevant and connects to governance in the sense that steering (as a synonym for governance) is a central element in the analysis of public management (Rhodes 1996, p. 655). Initially NPM had two different, but interconnected, meanings: managerialism and the new institutional economics (Hood 1991). The new institutional economics refers to the introduction of market competition (or other incentive structures) into public service provision. In this way, NPM stresses the disaggregation of bureaucracies and greater competition through contracting-out and the creation of quasi-markets with consumer choice. According to Hood (1995) one doctrinal component of the new policy tools is a greater disaggregation of public organizations into "separately manage corporatized units for each public sector product" (p.95). This makes it possible to separate the policymaking made by government (elected politicians) from the implementation of that policy, leaving the latter as a more technical issue for the administration.

Managerialism[1] on the other hand concerns according to Rhodes (1996) the introduction of private sector management tools and methods to the public sector. Central elements of managerialism are e.g. hands-on professional management; explicit standards and tools to measure performance; managing by results; value for money; and closeness to the customer. Following the line of separation between policymaking and implementation is a move towards more "explicit and measurable (or at least checkable) standards of performance" (Hood 1995, p 97). With this comes a pressure on different administrative units to be able to show results, measure quality through evaluations, audit, as well as different systems of indicators.

Scholars have shown how these reforms within the public sector also have had an impact on organizations within the civil society. One example of this is studies that show how governmental grants to CSOs have moved from being rater open-ended ("free") to a situation with an increased focus on what the organizations "deliver", and where the same CSOs, to a larger extent, are being contracted as producers of different welfare services (e.g. Bergmark 1994; Wijkström et al. 2004; Johansson 2005; See also Smith & Lipsky 1993). In a recent study, Fyrberg Yngfalk and Hvenmark (2014) show how NPM reforms in Swedish public administration have led to different administrative authorities not seeing any distinctiveness in CSOs. They starts to treat CSOs as private companies and apply legal frameworks developed for the market sector on them. Grix (2009) has studied how NPM has impacted on sports organizations. He shows that when sports organizations receive governmental funding and engage in different partnerships with government they "modernized" their ideas, values, strategies, and techniques along business lines. This has led to a shift in the national governing body accountability, away from its original grassroots stakeholders, up to the national sport agency.

Governance tools

One way to concretize the external governance perspective that suits the reasearch designe and question of this thesis is to draw upon Lester Salamon's concept of public policy tools (2002). Instead of looking at the gov-

[1] For a wider discussion of definitions and the use of managerialism, see Hvenmark (2016).

ernment as a centralized hierarchical agency that delivers standardized services as much of the literature and political rhetoric does, Salamon highlights that what really exists in most spheres is a "dense mosaic of policy tools", and public agencies are in this view in complex, interdependent relationships, with many different actors and partners. This is a view that can be partly compared to Fligstein and McAdams (2012) definition of a state as a dense collection of different SAFs. A public policy tool is defined as "a tool of public action as an identifiable method through which collective action is structured to address a public problem" (Salamon 2002, p. 19). He emphasizes that even if the concept of public policy tool is quite straight forward, in reality the tools are often rather complex. The tool is really a '"package' that contains a number of different elements" (ibid. p. 20) that includes (a) a type of good or activity (e.g. a cash payment, a restriction, provision of information), (b) a delivery vehicle for this good or activity (e.g. a loan, grant, voucher, tax system), (c) a delivery system with a set of organizations that are engage in providing the good, service or activity (e.g. non-profit organization), (d) a set of rules, whether formal or informal, defining the relationships among the actors in the delivery system.

This approach to governance means a shift in the primary unit of analysis away from the public agency to the distinctive tools through which public purpose are pursued. Salamon (2002) distinguish this "New governance" approach from the "Classical Public Administration" as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Salamon's Classical Administration versus New Governance

Classical Public Administration	*New Governance*
Program/Agency	Tool
Hierarchy	Network
Public vs. private	Public + private
Command and control	Negotiation/persuasion
Management skills	Enablement skills

Source: Salamon 2002

Salamon then identifies a number of common tools used. Each tool is thoroughly described with basic mechanisms of tool operation, management challenges are identified, and they are assessed from different perspectives. In this study I will focus on one of them, namely grants. Beam and Conlan (2002) grants as a public policy tool consist of both general formula grants and project grants. Grants are defined as:

> Payments from a donor government to a recipient organization (typically public or non-profit) or an individual. More specifically, they are a gift that has the aim of either "stimulating" or "supporting" some sort of service or activity by the recipient (ibid. p. 341).

Compared to other tools grant are described as indirect in the sense that they leave a considerable amount of freedom to act and decide over the operations to the receiving organization. Beam and Conlan (2002) then see these as non-coercive as they rather encourage a recipient to act in a specific way rather than restricting them to do so.

An internal governance perspective

The main focus of the academic interest in organizational governance has been on corporate governance of commercial firms. In this research stream, at least two different approaches to corporate governance can be distinguished – the stakeholder and the shareholder perspective. In the shareholder perspective, that is strong in the Anglo-Saxon research community, the sole focus of the company is maximizing economic return to the owner. The organization in this perspective can therefore be seen primarily as an instrument of its owners. Within this perspective agency theory (e.g. Jensen & Meckling 1976), with its principal-agent problem, is the main analytical model that is used to analyze governance issues. Owners that are represented by its board become superior as the principal over the subordinate management; the agent and problem in focus become how the principal should control the agent when there is potential conflict of interest between the two.

The other main approach - the stakeholder perspective (e.g. Freeman 2010) - is stronger in the European context as it gives a more prominent role to other stakeholders of the company. This can be employers, custom-

ers, suppliers, creditors, and owners. The organization in this view becomes a system in equilibrium whereby management's role is to balance different stakeholders' interest so that they get the right level of incentives to match their contribution to the organization. In this perspective, the owner is just one of many stakeholders, with their specific way of participating in the governance of the company.

The research relevant to the internal governance of CSOs is, to a large extent, influenced by the strong classical corporate governance approach with its agency theory (Berle & Means 1991; Kumar & Roberts 2010). Even if the main academic interest has been on corporate governance, it is now possible to see an engagement for governance within civil society organizations. In their overview of governance research on CSOs, Kumar and Roberts (2010) argue that governance within them is more complex and that it is therefore necessary to challenge the dominating agency theory on a number of points. As some example on the right to control are contestable as there is no clear answer to the question of who should have decision-making power. In agency theory it is clear that it is the owners. It is also complicated to judge if the governance is effective or not as organizational effectiveness is often contestable and the "goods produced" unmeasurable. They also mean that the absence of a clear market structure and competition that can reduce inefficiency place more emphasis on the internal governance of CSOs. Furthermore, the civil society is populated by a great diversity of organizations and many authors emphasize that governance structures must be differentiated accordingly; there can be no "one size fits all" approach.

In the rising literature on internal CSO governance, rather, the general definition has been used. Anheier (2004) describes organizational governance as a steering function while Cornforth (2003 p. 17) defines it as "a system by which organizations are directed, controlled and accountable." Usually a distinction is made between governance and management, where governance is viewed as a higher-level strategic process of direction, and management as something that is undertaken by staff that enacts this direction on a daily basis. Kumar and Roberts (2010) suggest that "such a clear distinction is an ideal-type: in real-world settings, and particularly in small

civil society organizations, the boundaries between governance and management are likely to be fluid and ambiguous."

As in corporate governance research, there has often been a narrow focus on the activity and behavior of the governing board and managerial compliance within an agency theory discourse, even if many studies have suggested that the real-world dynamics of governance are more complex and nuanced (Ostrower & Stone 2006).

As an alternative approach to, and a critique against, agency-theory, stewardship theory is highlighted for the study of CSOs (e.g. Muth & Donaldsson 1998). The basic difference is the assumption on the human nature where agency theory views managers as self-interested agents that will exploit every opportunity in their own interest. Stewardship theory assumes that the managers could be trustworthy and that they have a more complex set of motives, such as duty, identification with the organization, or intrinsic satisfaction in achievements, that drives them.

Institutional complexity and governance – the role of the IGU

One aspect of governance that is of particularly interest for this analysis is how different ideas and concepts "travel" into the fields together with state grants. This will then also be a process in which institutional complexity becomes manifested, and responses to such complexity could be found. Such travel of ideas has been in foci of 'translation theory' (e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges & Sevón 1996) from which some insights can be borrowed for my theoretical framework.

Translation theory describes how ideas can travel between organizations. In the Scandinavian tradition of new institutional theory, attention has been given to how ideas change as they "travel" between different organizational and institutional settings (Brunsson & Ahrne 2013). One central point is the observation that ideas are not static in one unchangeable form. Czarniawska-Joerges and Sevón (1996) argue that the translation process works through a materialization of ideas into objects (e.g. texts and pictures) that are dis-embedded from their institutional logics of specific

institutional context. These objects can then "travel" and be "translated" to another place and there be re-embedded as ideas (that once again can be translated into objects). While traveling between organizations, ideas and models are being infused with new and different meanings. They are continuously reshaped when different actors "translate" and "edit" them to be able to fit their own institutional environment and specific needs (e.g. Sahlin & Wedlin 2008). Translation can be rational and strategic in the meaning that an organization deliberately makes changes in ideas or concepts, and tries to identify and use certain aspects that are believed to gain the organization (Powell 1991). However, it could also be unintended due to limited knowledge, resources, or prerequisites as a totally different context (e.g. Sahlin-Andersson 1996).

Organizational fields are the primary arena where ideas are translated. This connects, at least partly, to the theory of SAF. Many of the scholars using translation theory fall back on Bourdieu´s field (1977) definition. What is highlighted in this understanding of fields, is that the field acts as systems of relations between actors where power is executed and identities are shaped as the actors compare themselves, and become compared, with each other. Central actors in the field gain a position of authoritative power and become a reference point for others. The translation of ideas that these central actors make becomes some form of standard, where the central actors have both a function to strengthen certain aspects of the idea and filter out others completely. At the same time, peripheral actors will try to challenge, modify, and displace dominant understandings within the field, while central actors will try to defend status quo.

The role of IGUs

Within new institutional organization theory, a number of scholars have given attention to organizations that are not the primary "producers" of the main outcome or core products in the field. Instead, these organizations have an intermediary role within the field. In this role, these organizations participate in the governing of the field mainly through the use of "soft" power, using tools like discussion, interpretations, advice, suggestions, and codifying, instead of "hard" power (Meyer 1996).

In the translation process these different intermediary organizations often have the role of mediating between the original idea (those being imitated) and the receiver of the idea (those imitating) (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). Sometimes the identity of these mediating organizations, often termed carriers, has been reduced to a passive entity that only report what is going on, not as an actor with influence. Notwithstanding, it has also been shown how carriers more actively promote and circulate different management ideas. Sahlin and Wedlin (2008) show how these actors have been used in studies to convey a mix of passivity and activity, where carriers both support, transport, and transform the ideas they have.

In a similar line of understanding, Meyer (1994, 1996) uses the term others to describe and distinguish these carriers from the usual actors in a field. Actors are expected to pursue their own policy and interest, and are held accountable for their actions. Even if others tend to present themselves as neutral mediators, Meyer means that their engagement is of crucial importance for the circulation and translation of different ideas within the field. These others do not only mediate the ideas they are circulating, but also influence activities that occur as they "discuss, interpret, advise, suggest, codify, and sometimes pronounce and legislate. They develop, promulgate, and certify some ideas as proper reforms, and ignore and stigmatize other ideas" (Meyer 1996, p. 244).

In using the term editors for these organizations it has been shown how they not only circulate and certify ideas, but also how these organizations frame and reshape the process by taking an active part in the formulation and reformulation of ideas. Moreover, by using other words they translate – or edit – the ideas as they circulate them (Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin & Wedlin 2008). In this editing process, ideas are being de-emphasized from their original local, space and time-bound features; de- and re-constructing their logic of developments or events (Sahlin & Wedlin 2008). Finnemore (1996) shows how these others also have the function to teach other organizations within their field how to act and behave to be seen as legitimate.
Within Fligstein and McAdams work (2012) regarding SAF, the Internal Governance Units (IGUs) are seen as a central intermediary organization as they serve as communication platforms for other players within the field, and are given a standard-setting role to enforce and guard certain values,

norms, and rules within the field (Fligstein & McAdam 2011; 2012). With this conceptualization of IGU they clearly overlap with the understanding of the role that both "others" and "carriers" have. IGUs are being more formally defined with a main focus on "hard" power-using rules. Using the analytical tools and understandings from translation theory could enrich this role and open up more for the use of "soft" power tools. Viewing the IGUs in this way, one would expect them to have a crucial role in the "editing" and "translation" of ideas that enter the field.

Chapter 3

Methodological considerations

As stated in the first chapter, the aim of this thesis is twofold. An empirical aim is to explore how ongoing transformations in this relationship affect fields where civil society actors are active. My theoretical aim is to take part in the development of the Strategic Action Field (SAF) framework, and then more precisely by providing two of its key concepts – internal governance units and shared understanding – in more detail.

In order to meet the aims of this dissertation, I have in the research process applied an interpretative abductive logic of inquiry (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994; Haverland & Yanow 2012). My work is thus firmly based in a field-theory framework, primarily as it has been developed by Fligstein and McAdam (SAF). Dealing with methodological concerns connected to the study of SAFs, Fligstein and McAdam take a somewhat eclectic standpoint. They claim that SAFs can be researched from both a positivist and a realistic philosophy of science even if field analysis has a complex relationship to epistemological issues such as the degree to which the theory of fields can be tested or is, in fact, a set of orientating concepts that can prove useful to scholars. (Fligstein & McAdam 2012, p. 198). Furthermore, they "reject the idea that field theory favors any particular type of techniques or a small subset of quantitative techniques" (ibid. p. 187). Instead, they emphasize that many different research techniques (both quantitative and qualitative) can be used when applying the SAF framework in order to get at the underlying structures of fields.

In this thesis, I will, in line with my abductive logic, take a qualitative approach, which can provide a dense account of how individual fields evolve. A qualitative study has the potential to provide grounds for, among other aspects, directly observing the role of the state, the use and distribution of resources and position, and has the ability to identify critical actors and their role in a SAF (ibid. p. 199).

Research design

Taking an abductive approach implies that, throughout the research process, I have moved back and forth between empirical observations and existing theoretical insights, letting them be informed by one another and, by this, continuously refined my analysis (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994; Haverland & Yanow 2012). This has been made possible through a flexible research design, where I have been open to making changes to both the design and the chosen theoretical framework throughout the process. This approach further means that I primarily use theoretical concepts as well as grounded tools that can help me to explain my particular cases and the phenomena of interest (c.f. Fligstein & McAdam 2012) that, in my case, evolve around the relationship between state and civil society.

In line with this approach, I have chosen to conduct a multiple, abductive, qualitative case study (see e.g. Yin 1984; Eisenhardt 1989). The main reason for choosing a case study as a primary method is that in the exploratory approach I seek to develop new knowledge rather than test hypotheses from earlier studies (Pratt 2009). In his frequently cited definition of a case study Yin states that "A case study is an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin 1984, p. 23). It should, however, be noted that underlying Yin's definition are highly realist ontological and epistemological presuppositions (Haverland & Yanow 2012) that, to some extent, must be seen as incompatible with the more interpretative logics of inquiry that this study rests upon. This implies that when I chose the cases for this thesis I cannot previously be completely certain of what will be a case of even if I use an information-oriented selection. In-

stead, part of the study's goal is to find out what the studied processes are a case of. The cases could from this view rather be seen as a (semi-)bounded 'setting' or 'site' that is considered to have the potential to illustrate the focus of my research interest and in which my research is carried out (Ragin 1992; Haverland & Yanow 2012)

Even if case studies have been around for a considerable period of time and are widely used (and published) in social science they are generally held in low regard, or simply ignored within some parts of the academic field (George & Bennett 2005). Gerring (2004) means that the paradox of the case study´s wide use and low regard is due to that the method is poorly understood. By identifying and correcting five misunderstandings about the case study Flyvbjerg (2006) ends with the insight of Thomas Kuhn that a scientific "discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and that a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one" (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 238). One of the main strengths of choosing the case study approach instead of statistical methods is that it allows for depth in the understanding of, for example, what cases a phenomenon and the role of context and processes. In contrast, its key weaknesses are that selection bias may overstate or understate relationships and that it is of limited benefit in helping you to understand how widespread the phenomenon is across a population (Flyvbjerg 2011).

Selection of two fields

As already mentioned and argued for in the first chapter, I will in this thesis study transformations in state-civil society relationships and how this affects the fields of sports and popular education. By choosing these two fields with their confederations I gain access to two of the largest governmental grants distribution systems for CSOs in Sweden. They also serve as two of the best examples of the Swedish corporativistic model where CSOs work in close cooperation with the government.

One important feature for both fields, relevant to the design of this study, is that in both fields we can find a national confederative/umbrella organization that plays a core role in the relationship between government

and CSOs in their field. In the sports field we find *Riksidrottsförbundet* (The Swedish Sports Confederation) and, in the popular education field, we find *Folkbildningsrådet* (The Swedish National Council of Adult Education). These types of organization are common in different civil society subsectors in Sweden, and, more generally, they have the role to coordinate organizations in the field, set rules and standards, and uphold borders of the fields by including and excluding members and advocating for the field in relation to, for example, different government bodies.

Within the fields of sports and popular education these confederative organizations, *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet*, also have certain authoritative tasks delegated to them by the government. One such main task is to distribute governmental grants to organizations within their sector. *Riksidrottsförbundet* distributes grants between different national sports federations and *Folkbildningsrådet* distributes grants between study associations and folk-high schools. This delegated authoritative power includes, for example, to decide which organizations should be entitled to government grants, how the grants should be allocated (e.g. which parameters that should be the basis for allocation), and setting rules and regulations for the use and follow-up of the grants.

Besides the two fields' close relationship to the state, the special role of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* has the possibility to inform me regarding two issues of central importance for how coordination is achieved both within organizations and on the meso level of a SAF. These are the issues of boundary and resource allocation in a field (e.g. Diani 2013). The selection of these two fields in my initial selection can thus be described as planned opportunism where the "selection of research sites is shaped by the choice of research topics and questions being posed" (Pettigrew 1990, p. 274). To some extent, it could also be described as an informed theoretical choice "in order to exploit opportunities to explore a significant phenomenon under rare or extreme circumstances"(Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). The main ambition of choosing two different fields is not necessarily that they should be suitable for direct comparison. Instead, they are thought to complement each other in order to be able to provide a deeper understanding of the studied phenomena.

A more comprehensive account of the fields, its actors, main resources, and its historic and current relationship to the government will be given in Chapter 4.

Selection of cases – initial data gathering

In my second-order selection for my primary cases, I continued this line of thought with planned opportunism and informed theoretical choice. The study was designed in such a fashion that I started my primary data collection through gathering material from the two confederations within the fields – *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet*. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) state that, when studying SAFs from a more exploratory, abductive perspective, it implies that elements of the theory provide us with deeper and well-grounded concepts, but in order to use these concepts in our analysis we need to gain an in-depth understanding and take into account both the general structure of the situation we are studying and its unique cultural and historical context. It has therefore been important to me to obtain as close a relationship and knowledge about the field as possible in order to be able to identify suitable cases.

Within the popular education field, this was initially achieved through a series of research-based evaluations in which I was involved between the years 2011-2014. The task was to evaluate the government grant distribution system. This was performed by following the process where a new distribution model was developed, and then by further following the implementation of that model. The evaluation assignment was given by *Folkbildningsrådet* to myself and a few colleagues and resulted in three published reports (Sandahl, Sjöstrand, Wiberg & Eriksson 2012; Sjöstrand, Sandahl & Einarsson 2013; Sandahl & Sjöstrand 2014). I principally collected the material for the cases on governmental grants to study associations within the scope of this evaluation assignment. This work gave me unique access to both internal processes within *Folkbildningsrådet* and core actors such as multiple interview opportunities with all the rectors of the ten study associations. Through spending many hours in the field, in the office of *Folkbildningsrådet*, in meetings and at internal conferences I gained knowledge on core processes, actors and their internal relations and central

issues on the field[2]. Based on this knowledge and the gained contacts within the field I then searched for other interesting cases within the popular education field that could inform me of processes connected to the boundaries of the field and/or the internal organization of the field. This process identified the case in this thesis called "a trade organization and a public administrative authority" which deals with organizational changes of *Folkbildningsrådet* as the main IGU in the field.

In the sports field, I did not have the same opportunity that I had with the evaluation assignment in the popular education field. In order to obtain knowledge and become acquainted with *Riksidrottsförbundet* and the wider sports field I was able to borrow a desk at the office of *Riksidrottsförbundet* from where I worked a couple days a week in the spring and fall of 2013. During this time I had the opportunity to talk to employees, conduct initial interviews and gain access to documents. Through this, it was possible to identify what have become cases of how the new government effort entitled Handslaget was handled and the case on SISU, *Riksidrottsförbundet* and governmental grants. In so doing, it was also possible to secure access to written documents and interview respondents.

As, early on, I identified the umbrella organizations responsible for distributing governmental grants as a potential area where both the resource allocation and the boundary definition could be central mechanisms for the coordination and thereby also issues for governance of the fields, the data search starts with material around the handling of grants. Through both archival data (primarily written documents), semi-structured interviews and observation and participation in meetings, the first round of data collection aimed at giving me a basic understanding of the structure, processes and actors within the two fields in order to be able to select a number of cases that could form the main empirical part of the thesis (see more on the cases below). The fact that I was being visible and "embedded" within the fields gave me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and to test ideas and hypotheses. This can be seen as an initial phase of member checks (Lincoln & Guba 1985) where I, as a researcher, can test if my emergent interpretations make sense to the actors themselves. This has been performed multi-

[2] After finishing the evaluation assignment I was also elected as board member of Sensus, one of the ten different study associations.

ple times during the research process, even if it was most intense during the periods where I was physically present within the organizations.

Collecting different empirical material

With a qualitative case study method, it is possible to use multiple data sources. It also allows me as a researcher to return to the empirical context with new questions and angles of approach while the work is progressing. This works well with the abductive approach where you repeatedly switch between an inductively based description of events and theoretically drawn explanations (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994). Through the different types of collected data, it is possible to combine these in order to gain a deeper understanding of what is taking place (Jick 1979). The main empirical materials for this thesis are written documents and interviews.

Documents

The documents that have been collected are of different types and from different sources. From the government and parliament archive governmental commissions reports (SOU), parliament debates and decisions, government decisions and memos have been collected. The main document source has, however, been *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet*. From them minutes and other documents from their board and general annual meetings, different working group documents, strategic plans, annual reports and other publications have been collected. Moreover, letters and other documentation concerning the grant distribution have been collected.

In order to be able to identify relevant texts, I drew on both information gathered in interviews and references found in main documents dealing with issues connected to the selected cases. The collected documents are, in line with the purposes of this study, used as a collection of sources from which I am able to build an understanding of how the processes in the cases evolved, which actors took part in the processes, and which arguments and standpoints different actors raised in different stages of the process.

Interviews

The other main empirical source for this thesis is interview material. In total, 30 interviews have been conducted for this thesis. Respondents have been selected using a purposive sampling approach (Patton 2015). This implies that respondents in the initial phase were identified on the assumption that they could provide a rich and informed insight on the research topics of interest. This meant that key employees of *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet* with responsibility for grant distribution were interviewed along with their elected leaders (board level) in senior positions as well as the employed executives from the organizations. Besides this, it was possible through the collected documents to identify individuals who seemed to have played an important role in the selected cases and interview them. Finally, in order to identify further relevant respondents beyond the processes described above, I also applied a type of "snowballing" technique (e.g. Patton 2015) in that I asked every interviewed respondent who else he or she thought I should interview in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved. I stopped these iterative processes when I noticed a certain level of empirical saturation (Mason 2010; Glaser & Strauss 2017), meaning that the collection of new data did not shed any further light on the studied process.

The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I had a general interview guide that outlined the topics and the special questions that I wanted to ask. The order of the topics and specific questions within each theme could vary from time to time. Depending on the role the respondents had in the studied processes, not all topics and questions were relevant for all respondents.

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. They varied in length from 1-2 hours. All of the respondents were aware of the tape recorder and were given assurance that they would be able to approve possible quotes from them before they were published. A well-known problem with tape recording is the possibility that the respondent is hesitant to talk freely. This should be weighed against the drawback of that the researcher otherwise has to take extensive notes and would thus not be able to fully focus on the respondent. The assurance to be able to approve quotations was one way to try to overcome this problem.

Constructing my four cases

The first round of data collection aimed at identifying processes or events where there have been significant discussions or even disagreements about who in the field should obtain different governmental grants as well on according to which basic principles grants should be allocated between organizations within the field. Both interviews and documents were collected in this phase. From this material I then followed the "paper trail" to identify and develop my four cases for the thesis. The purpose of these cases relates to my research questions. My intention is that they should shed light on how the relationship with the government field is understood and constructed in the specific process, how transformations in this relationship affect the processes, and what implications this has for the fields or actors in the field. This constituted my main empirical part and a starting point for my analysis. An alternative would have been to conduct a longitudinal study of the two fields' relation to government and how this has evolved since, for instance, the period post-World War II. My decision for going along with the idea of cases was based upon my choice of research questions, in which I was interested in how a general transformation of the relationship plays out in more micro-level processes in the fields.

These cases are specific events or processes that expose how the fields relate and respond to changes in the relation to the government field. Through them, I can identify the relevant processes, mechanisms, as well as which actors are involved and their position and role in the field. The selection of cases is an information-oriented selection and not a random one. This means that the cases are primarily selected on the basis of their expected information content in order to be able to maximize the utility of information from my small sample (Flyvbjerg 2011). The ambition is also to find processes and events that are of formative (or critical) importance for the field. As an example of a case the process within *Folkbildningsrådet* to construct a new governmental grant allocation model or the process within *Riksidrottsförbundet* when they receive a new funding stream from the government (called *Handslaget*) could be given, and how they decide how the money should be handled and divided between different organizations.

These cases are then constructed and given detail by document studies and interviews. Early on a general timeline for each case was established that identified important milestones such as meetings and decisions. By merging and comparing fragments from different documents and interviews into a unified picture for each case, a case narrative is created. This was performed by repeatedly reading documents and transcripts from the interviews and identifying and marking pieces of the text and connecting each part to the timeline. Further interviews and document collection are carried out during the processes to fill in gaps or to clear up contradictions or misunderstandings. Through this method, I have also been able to identify where different interpretations between actors seem to exist. Primarily due to the two different phases of data collection, but also the possibility to complement with further interviews and documents during the writing of the cases, I achieve the overlap of data analysis with data collection recommended by, for instance, Glaser and Strauss (2017). During the process, my understanding of the processes and the general narratives of the cases has been checked with a few key respondents in each field. The final version of the written cases has, in the same manner, been member-checked (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Chapter 4

Setting the stage

The shared understandings among key actors are of pivotal importance in a strategic action field. For both the sports field and the popular education field, I here argue that key components of the popular movement tradition and the corporatist model are central in the tacit shared understandings that define and keep the two fields together. I further argue that this tradition is also key to understanding the governance of these fields. Thus, a part of my analysis is to present and uncover this shared understanding, as well as explain and analyze its consequences. Although, as Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) highlight, it is also essential to recognize the role state or government actors play within the respective fields, and how the other actors relate to them. As such, the relationship to the government field constitutes a core element in the analysis.

The purpose of this chapter is to first give an overview of the empirical fields of sports and popular education; the foci of this thesis. The chapter consists of three parts. First, to be able to understand processes within the fields, I first give a general account of the Swedish context as these fields are embedded in the Swedish popular movement tradition. Further, as an aim of this thesis is to explore issues around state and civil society relations, I then go into the corporatist model that has characterized this relationship in the fields of sports and popular education. Second, I describe some general characteristics of the two fields. Particular emphasis in this presentation is placed upon the core actors and resources within the fields, along with the development of the fields' relationship with the state. As a third and

final part I describe the on-going transformation of the relationship between state and civil society in general, and how this plays out in the fields studied here.

This chapter is empirical and aims to set the scene on which the following cases (see Chapter 5) take place. Here, I draw mainly on previous research and internal documents from the fields.

Swedish background

The Swedish popular movement tradition

Both studied fields are firmly embedded and a part of the Swedish popular movement tradition (*folkrörelsetraditionen*). Tracing back to the 19th century, with its real expansion in the early 20th century, Swedish civil society saw a number of new organizations being formed, which sprung out of different social movements. The three classical examples usually described as the first wave of popular movements in Sweden are the so-called "free churches" (protestant denominations independent from the state church), the temperance movement, and the labor movement (see e.g. Micheletti 1995; Amnå 2007). In a second wave, the sports movement and popular education were established as formal organizations. The historical importance of this tradition for the character and structure of Swedish – and Nordic – civil society cannot be overstated. The popular movement idea has been described as the "archetypical way in which to address issues, problems, and organizational phenomena in relation to Swedish civil society" (Hvenmark 2008 p. 23) and as a "holy conceptual cow" (Wijkström & Einarsson 2006 p. 26).

For the purposes of this thesis I am mainly interested in the popular movement as a defining tradition for how Swedish civil society organizations (CSOs) are organized and governed, and further how it has formed the movement's relationship to government. Particularly, Hvenmark (2008 p. 35) notes that:

> It may be argued that the idea of *folkrörelse*, deliberately or not, has become synonymous with a limited range of organizational practices within Swedish civil society. Accordingly, *folkrörelse* constitutes perhaps the most significant

> way in which the contemporary associational life in Sweden is referred to and made sense of. In this respect, it is almost as if a vague idea and a complex praxis have merged into a normative whole dictating how civil society related issues and phenomena ought to be organized.

Several suggestions and attempts to define a popular movement have been made in previous research (e.g., Thörnberg 1943; Johansson 1980; Heckscher 2010[1951]). Still, the character and meaning of a popular movement remain ambiguous, and a generally accepted definition cannot be found. Even if it is impossible to find consensus on what defines a popular movement as an ideal type for how a CSO in Sweden ought to be organized, some common and important aspects can be teased out. For example, Jonsson (1995) summarizes some general criteria regarding what a popular movement is (c.f. Wijkström & Lundström 2002; Hvenmark 2008). He points out that a popular movement is an organization that has its roots in a social movement and is based partly on societal and partly on organizational ideologies. Thus, it is a creator of public opinion, both internally in the organization and externally in society. To be considered a 'true' popular movement, it should also be democratic and have a formal representative structure which is regulated in statutes. Another important characteristic is that the organization also has a relatively large membership and a wide geographic spread. In both its activities and its standpoint, a popular movement should be independent from both local and state government. Essentially, Jonsson proposes that these characteristics can be derived from three main features important to the organization, namely: ideology, democracy, and voluntary membership.

One of the defining aspects of the popular movement tradition is membership. In the early days, open and inclusive membership, different from the membership constructs in previous-era associations, made it possible to mobilize large segments of the population into new organizations. At the beginning of the 20th century, around one out of ten Swedes was involved in the associational life as a formal member. A century later, that figure – one out of ten – applies to those who are NOT members of any association (Lundström & Wijkström 1997; Amnå 2007).

Traditionally, the formal members have been those who have populated, defined, operated, and governed the popular movements. As members,

they both supplied the unpaid work and also contributed with a large part of the financial funding for the organization. During the 20th century, however, the role of the members changed, and the expansion of the popular movement during this time was led by employed professionals, made possible through funding from the state which the organization could apply for (Wijkström 2011). This funding arrangement promoted the advocacy function of the organization as well as the functions of social integration and democratic training for the citizens (Wijkström et al. 2004), and was usually tightly coupled to the number or share of members.

The structures of both the modern Swedish democratic welfare state and the popular movement developed in parallel throughout the same period. This played an important role in determining the way in which Swedish civil society is today structured (Wijkström 2011). It could also be argued, in line with Skocpol's (2003) studies of the development in the US, that this parallel development is the reason why popular movements have come to adopt a similar kind of representative democracy as the one chosen by the state. In Sweden, this has meant that local, separate legal entities (local associations) have been hierarchically interconnected in a federative structure. Similar to the administrative division into municipalities, counties, and national states, the normal federation has had local, regional, and national levels, often geographically organized within the same borders as the state and with a representative democratic structure connecting the levels (Wijkström 2011).

Popular movements were very much at the center of Swedish state and civil society relationships during the last century. Within the Swedish corporativist system, the movements and the state developed mutual dependence. For decades, the consecutive social-democratic governments had a formal popular movement policy (*folkrörelsepolitik*). Here, the title of one of the Swedish government's official reports of 1987 (SOU 1987:35) serves as a prime example of the relationship. It was named 'The More We Are Together' (*Ju mer vi är tillsammans*) and its cover shows three people representing the municipality, the county, and the state department, opening a gate for a large number of people carrying movement flags and presenting a huge gift from the government to these popular movements.

Wijkström (2011) points out that due to the very close relationship between popular movements and the state, we need to consider the movements as heavily hybridized. They can be understood as a "half movement, half government" solution that has been core pillars in the "Swedish model" (Trägårdh 2007); or, in other words, of the Swedish social contract on the 1900s (Wijkström 2012a; 2015).

Based on this both the sports and popular education movements, the foci of this thesis, need to be understood as strongly defined by this popular movement tradition.

Relationship to the state: a matter of corporatism

Thus far, I have argued that the Swedish popular movement tradition is closely connected to the Swedish corporatist model. Corporatism is difficult to avoid in an analysis of the relationship between CSOs and the state in Sweden. The crucial question in a corporatist governance system is its relationship to the state. This relationship is characterized by closeness and interdependence between the state and civil society. The state provides benefits such as grants, and in return obedient and disciplined organizations follow.

This relationship is now addressed in a number of steps. First, state and civil society relationships in the Swedish context are dealt with more generally. Thereafter, the main ideas of the corporatist model are presented. Later, the two fields of sports and popular education are detailed, before returning to the corporatist model and the fields' relationship to the state.

State – civil society relations

The concept of civil society as it was introduced in the dominant stream of academic as well as political discourse in the early 1990s, was deeply embedded in the narrative structure of Anglo–American citizenship theory (e.g., Somers 1995a; 1995b). One important aspect in understanding civil society according to this approach is that it was (or even 'should be') a sphere sharply demarcated from that of the state. Along a classical liberal view of society, civil society was described in positive terms as the sphere in society where the 'free' and 'natural' interplay between individuals occurs. Meanwhile, the state and government must be viewed with suspicion and

carefully monitored so as not to interfere too much or inappropriately with the citizens' liberty (see also Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007, [for a Swedish account of the debate]).

Much of these early writings assumed fundamental opposition and antagonism in state–civil society relations. In the case of Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia, however, several scholars have argued for and shown a less confrontational and more collaborative relationship characterized by closeness and dependency between the state and the voluntary sector (Kuhnle & Selle 1992). In contrast to the classical Anglo-American model, that assumes and often emphasizes an autonomous civil society clearly separated from the state, Jepperson (2002) portrays Sweden instead as a case where state and civil society are "highly interpenetrated." He describes a state in Sweden that, rather than acting in its own interest, serves more as a number of institutional spaces where representatives from different parts of society (civil society among them) meet to work together on different policies in a spirit of consensus and compromise. This leads him to describe Sweden as a "social-corporate system" compared to, for example, the German system which he describes as a "state–corporate" system; for the latter, the state by tradition has had a more dominant role over civil society.

Corporatism

Corporatism generally refers to "a system for policy making" (Molina & Rhodes 2002 p. 308) or "a distinct way of making and implementing policy" (Blom-Hansen 2001 p. 393). It may be found in many different policy areas, with varying degrees of intensity, and both in policy formulation and policy implementation (Molina & Rhodes 2002, p. 322; Christiansen et al. 2010, p. 27). Within political science corporatism is most often analyzed from the governments perspective, and treated as a system among other system for government policy making. In this thesis I will however treat corporatism as an essential relational phenomena. I will understand and analyze corporatism as a special type of configuration of relationship between the state and civil society organizations.

Connected to this essentially relational perspective on corporatism is the understanding of corporatism as an exchange system where each actor controls resources that the others desire (Öberg et al. 2011). The state con-

trols, for example, public expenditure, legislation, and the possibility of granting organizations status as group representatives in the policy-making process. Nevertheless, CSOs may possess resources desired by the state, such as 'control' over their members and the infrastructure to reach citizens with reforms. To be a trustworthy actor in such an exchange system, both the state and the organizations need to have a strong mandate to engage in exchanges, a high degree of unity, the ability to mobilize relevant assets, and a sincere intent to engage in the exchange relationship (ibid. p. 368).

This type of exchange relationship between the state and different interest organizations is something that characterizes the policy process in Sweden and is in line with the political scientist Gunnar Heckscher who was one of the first to describe Sweden as "corporatist" (Heckscher 2010[1951]). It is, however, important to note that he, in his influential book *Staten och organisationerna* (The state and the organizations) which was first published in 1946, used the term 'free' to distinguish the Swedish version of 'free corporatism' from more fascist versions. With the notation of free, Heckscher wanted to describe equality between different parts of the society by writing: "the state, the organizations, and the individuals are all equal rather than there existing an unambiguous relation of subordination with the state at the top" (Heckscher 2010[1951], p. 227).

Swedish corporatism emerged during the development of the Swedish welfare state in the late 1800s and well into the 1900s. This was a time when the Swedish state's relationship to civil society and its organizations was formed. What later became known as "the strong society" (Micheletti 1995 p. 60-) consequently made the clear distinction between the state and the strong independent civil society that had emerged disappear from the citizens' mentality (ibid.). State and civil society became more and more intertwined, and the boundaries between them became so blurred that it was difficult to tell them apart (Micheletti 1995; Rothstein & Trägårdh 2007; Lundåsen 2010). As such, the approach between the various players soon came to be institutionalized (Micheletti 1995, p. 72):

> Dialogue between opposing political actors became a Swedish institutional tradition in the period of the strong society and was further developed in the present one. It became general Swedish practice for government and collective action organizations to meet to solve political problems in a pragmatic, quiet

> way. Another name for this dialogue between the state and interest organizations is corporatism. It is institutionalization and legitimization of the role of collective action organizations in the political process. This is the Swedish model of politics.

The notion and understanding of corporatism, coupled with the discussion of the relationship between the state and civil society, have evolved in Swedish academic debate since Heckscher's writings. While there have been real differences in the analysis of the relationship, there is still a relatively strong consensus around the friendly atmosphere and sense of proximity in cooperation between the Swedish state and CSOs (Trägårdh 2007). The understanding that Swedish society is of a highly corporativist nature has been demonstrated in several in-depth analyses of different organizations and policy areas (e.g. Lewin 1992; Rothstein 1992; Micheletti 1994).

In a recent study, Lundberg (2014 p. 35) writes that "[o]ne of the best-known features of Swedish public administration is its tradition of the close and high degree of formal influence of civil society." Further, Rothstein and Trägårdh (2007 p. 236) summarize much of the earlier academic debate, arguing that what characterizes Swedish corporatism is "the institutionalized relationship that enables the state and the associations of civil society to confront new challenges and work out compromise solutions in a peaceful and cooperative manner." A concrete expression of the Swedish cooperative model is, for example, the organizations' participation in government commissions, referral systems, and official boards (see also Lundberg's 2012 analysis of the role of civil society in the Swedish referral system). All these examples can be understood as corporatism in the policy preparation process (Christiansen et al. 2010, p 27). Moreover, Rothstein (1992 p. 102) points to an example where corporatism is also visible in the policy implementation phase:

> Another example of the selective separation of powers is the devolution of public responsibilities to the citizens' associations (*medborgasammanslutningar*). Organizations have been authorized to implement a public political line and received financial compensation from the state for that. Often, they have had the opportunity to perform the work with a considerable degree of discretion (*handlingsfrihet*).

More examples of corporatism in policy implementation can be found in cases where the government has delegated public authority tasks to CSOs. Government support to the free-churches and temperance movements are two examples of this, where governmental cooperation committees (*samarbetsnämnder*) have been given the task of distributing government grants to CSOs. The members of these committees are then picked from the organizations concerned. Micheletti (1994 p. 206) also highlights the popular education field and *Folbildningsrådet* as a prime example of such a body.

Popular education and sports in the Swedish corporatism

The creation of *Folkbildningsrådet* and the delegation of public authority to *Riksidrottsförbundet* (the Swedish Sports Confederation), can be seen and understood as a highly integrated part of the Swedish corporatist model as these organizations have been assigned the responsibility for distributing government grants destined to their respective fields. Here, the government, by delegating both public responsibility and authority in a specific and clearly defined field to the organizations of civil society themselves, which were formally outside of government, could be argued to have taken the corporatist model all the way (Wijkström et al. 2004).

When Wijkström et al. (ibid.), in an analysis of the relations between government and Swedish civil society, describe the four different traditions identified in the system of governmental grants to civil society, they still notice clear and strong traces of this corporatist model. The authors argue that governmental grants to both popular education and sport are part of a tradition of ideas where organizations are almost considered as 'integrated popular movements (*folkrörelser*)' inside of the state. Through very close cooperation, which the organizations within both the fields of popular education and sports have developed with the government's machinery, these organizations are seen as integrated – but not completely dissolved – in the state apparatus (c.f. Jepperson 2002). The organizations receive grants because their tasks and activities are considered part of the commitment of Swedish government. The popular education and sport are almost seen as integrated parts of the Swedish welfare state.

The government giving grounds for the corporatist model, where the organizations themselves should administer the grant, can be found in dif-

ferent reports and bills. A motive for this within the popular education field is provided in a Swedish Government Official Report of 2004 (SOU 2003: 125 p. 14):

> To give non-profit organizations (*ideella föreningar*) authoritative duties, or more correctly expressed, public administrative tasks (*förvaltningsuppgifter*), concerning government grant allocation occurs in different contexts. [...] One reason for submitting public administrative functions to private agencies (*enskilda organ*) has been to create greater independence in relation to what the traditional administrative authority form provides space for.

Another motive was specifically highlighted by both government and the Swedish Parliament when *Folkbildningsrådet* was given the task to distribute grants within the field of popular education. Here it was argued that this would facilitate the reception process of decisions as the organizations themselves were familiar with the issues and could see the bigger picture (Prop. 1990/91:82 p. 36). In this corporatist tradition, *Folkbildningsrådet* was commissioned to determine which study associations and folk high-schools would qualify for government grants, and how the available funds should be distributed among them.

Summary of the Swedish context

I have now given a short background into the Swedish context. Focus has been given to the popular movement tradition and the Swedish corporatist model. In this thesis, two fields characterized by this tradition and model are in focus. The main actors within the sports field are CSOs derived from the Swedish sports movement, which was one of the social movements formed and institutionalized in popular movement tradition. The study associations and folk high-schools within the popular education field were, to a large degree, founded as organizers of educational activities for the popular movements. It could almost be said that 'having' a study association (*studieförbund*) and one or more folk high-schools were characteristic for a popular movement. Further, I have argued for the close connection between popular movements and the corporatist model. The relationship between the state and the movements was organized through corporatism. In this sense, the popular movement tradition could be seen as embedded in

the Swedish corporatism model. The formal delegation of public authority, concerning the administration of government grants, enhances the integration of both the popular education and sports fields in the Swedish corporatist model.

Two fields - sports and popular education in Sweden

After giving a short overview of some of the key elements in the Swedish context, I now go deeper into the fields from which the empirical material is gathered. Two fields, along with their main actors, and the relations and positions of those actors, are analyzed in this thesis in a Swedish context, namely: the fields of sports and popular education. As already mentioned in the first chapter these two fields are similar in several aspects. Both are, in the Swedish context, heavily dominated by actors from civil society – voluntary and nonprofit bodies – closely connected to the strong popular movement tradition and the Swedish corporatist model previously discussed. The Swedish government – through subsidies and different forms of 'soft' regulation – plays a significant role in both of these fields, and the relationship between the state and civil society is organized in a similar way. Furthermore, these fields are among the most heavily subsidized in Sweden. At the same time, we can observe differences in how the central actors operate and the fields are internally organized.

The Strategic Action Field (SAF) approach is used as the primary theoretical framework. Therefore, a number of key dimensions are important to highlight. Identifying the players in the field, and trying to establish their position is one such dimension. The focus on governance within the field makes it especially important to identify and analyze the so-called internal governance units (IGU). The resources within the fields and – from a governance perspective – the distribution and use of these resources by different actors are also of interest. Furthermore, the relationship between the fields and government are stressed in order to provide background to the

present situation and how sports and popular education have been integrated into the Swedish corporatist model.

The Swedish field of Sports

In Sweden, sports activities are generally organized through local voluntary associations. The first local sports club emerged in the second half of the 19th century. Soon, different national federations followed that came to gather local associations within their specific sport. *Riksidrottsförbundet* (The Swedish Sports Confederation) was founded in 1903. At the beginning, it gathered a humble 35 local sports associations. In 2016, *Riksidrottsförbundet* gathered some 20 000 local associations organized within 71 national sports federations. The total number of individual members is currently estimated to be around three million (RF 2016). Moreover, the movement has its own study association called SISU (presented below) that carries out educational activities in cooperation with the other organizations in the field.

A core feature of the Swedish sport model is that elite and grassroots sports (*breddidrott*) are held together within the same organizations. Nevertheless, when the Swedish sports movement is described and presented internally, elite sport is not in focus. Instead, it is the grassroots aspects that are accentuated such as democratic governance, extensive voluntary work with youth activities at local levels, and the general aims of public health, democracy, education, and fostering the youth (Norberg 2012, p 184). This is also clearly stated in the by-laws of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. In the first chapter of the by-laws, under the headline 'A unified sports movement,' we read that the movement (RF 2015c):

> Acts for the same vision and values, which permeate all federations and associations, the grassroots as well as the elite. We care about the Swedish sports movement's tradition of elite and grassroots activity taking place in close collaboration, providing inspiration, development, and prosperity. Within the sports, all federations and associations, elite as well as grassroots, respect each other's roles and activity conditions.

The sports movement has been described as emerging, and establishing as a formal organization in the second wave of Swedish popular movements. It is a mass membership movement based on the members' voluntary work

which is organized democratically in a federative structure. It has also developed a close relationship to the government as it has both been able to influence public policy concerning sports and receive funding. Through the delegation of the administrative authority, *Riksidrottsförbundet* has the task of administering government grants which include both deciding how grants should be divided between different actors in the field as well as controlling and following up the grants' use. Through this close relationship with the government, sports is seen as one of the fields which is part of the Swedish corporatism model.

Core actors in the sports field

The sports field is broad and consists of different types of actors. Below, some of the main actors are presented. This is not a complete list of all organizations of the field, but rather a description of organizations relevant for the two cases that are later presented in the thesis. For example, actors such as Sweden's Olympic Committee are not presented and analyzed as they are not active in the cases.

Riksidrottsförbundet (The Swedish Sports Confederation)

Riksidrottsförbundet was created in 1903 under the name *Svenska gymnastik- och idrottsföreningarnas riksförbund* [3] (the Swedish Gymnastics and Sports Associations' Federation). At the time, competing national organizations were trying to organize the growing number of local associations, and *Riksidrottsförbundet* was formed with the ambition of creating one strong national confederation (Blom & Lindroth 1995).

Riksidrottsförbundet was formed within the popular movement framework. It had a democratic system for decision-making, and an organizational structure with members in local associations connected to the national federation both through regional chapters and different sport disciplines. This way of organizing stood in contrast to other sports organizations in Sweden, which were mainly formed as societies. *Sveriges centralförening för idrottens främjande* (Swedish Central Association for the Advancement of Sports - *Centralföreningen*) was perhaps the most prominent of those, focus-

[3] The name was changed to Sveriges riksidrottsförbund (RF) in 1947.

ing, among other things, on larger competitions. *Centralföreningen* was economical successful and attracted both individual donations and government funding, giving out grants to local associations, sports grounds, athlete representation abroad, propaganda, and domestic competitions.

Until 1930, *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Centralföreningen* were the two primary national organizations in the field. Both claimed influence over the sports movement and were chaired by Crown Prince Gustav Adolf during 1933-1947. Further, they were also ideologically similar regarding their view on sports. The organizations differed mainly regarding their organizing logic; *Riksidrottsförbundet* was organized according to a popular movement logic and *Centralföreningen* according to an aristocratic logic of societies (Blom & Lindroth 1995). In 1931, however, the parliament decided that *Riksidrottsförbundet* alone should represent the sports movement and handed it the responsibility for government grants. This can be seen as a victory for the popular movement tradition over the tradition of societies.

Managing government grants has since been an important task for *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Besides that, the confederation also engages in representing the sports movement in contacts with public authorities and politicians. It also tries to stimulate the development of the sports movement and coordinate its work with its basic values. In the by-laws of *Riksidrottsförbundet* (RF 2015c, Ch2 1§), its mission is stated as follows:

> *Sveriges Riksidrottsförbund* (RF) is the Swedish sports movement's collective organization, with the RF General Meeting as its highest governing body. RF is responsible for dealing with the sports movement common concerns, both nationally and internationally.

Today, as already mentioned *Riksidrottsförbundet* has 71 different discipline-specific national associations as members. The largest discipline-specific associations in terms of active members are those in the fields of football, athletics, gymnastics, and equestrian sports (RF 2015b). The highest decision-making body of *Riksidrottsförbundet* is the bi-annual general meeting. It is composed of 200 delegates from the national federations based on their numbers of local associations. The general meeting appoints the board of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Further, the confederation has a joint office with SISU; the study association for sport that is led by a common secretary general.

National Sports Federations (Specialidrottsförbund)

The members of *Riksidrottsförbundet* constitute 71 different so-called *Specialidrottsförbund* (SF). Early on, national discipline-specific associations were formed within *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Some had already been previously formed, entering *Riksidrottsförbundet* when it was founded, and local associations within the confederation formed others. Most of the *Specialidrottsförbund* organize one specific sport and are seen as its 'owner.' Examples of this are the Swedish Football Association and Tennis Association. Moreover, some organize sports closely related to each other, such as the Swedish Ski association that organizes many disciplines, for example, cross-country, alpine, snowboarding, and snow-cross. There are also some associations that organize sporting activities for certain groups of people within different sports, rather than one sport itself. Examples of these are the Swedish Parasports Federation that organizes sports for the disabled and the Swedish School Sport Federation that organizes sporting activities in connection with the school day.

A wide range of sports can be found within the different national sports federations. There are both individual and team sports. Classical sports such as football, ice-hockey, gymnastics, and canoeing are represented, as well as newer sports such as climbing and floor ball. The federations also differ when it comes to size. The largest national sports federation in terms of local association number is the Football Federation, with 3 202 local associations, and the smallest is the Swedish Hockey Association (field-hockey) with 25 associations. The size difference also implies that the federations have different economic situations which are typically affected both by size and the possibility of generating external incomes such as TV remunerations.

The differences between the national sports federations imply that these organizations have different positions in the sports field. Larger and historically strong federations generally have stronger positions, while smaller and younger associations have weaker ones. The grant system also plays a role in this context as has often been accused of favoring team sports and disfavoring individual sports.

To be recognized as a discipline-specific association and a member of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, a sports organization needs to be a voluntary association

that does sports in line with the ideology of the sports movement. It cannot run activities within, or close to, a sport that is represented by an existing *Specialidrottsförbund*. There are also some size criteria. The federation needs to have at least 25 local associations as members, which together gather at least 1 500 individual members. To some degree, the *Specialidrottsförbund* are bound by the common by-laws of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, and their competition rules cannot go against the by-laws of the confederation and the principles that those by-laws are based on (RF 2015c, Ch11 §2). *Specialidrottsförbund* should also "conduct their sporting activities in accordance with the mission statement formulated by the General Assembly of *Riksidrottsförbundet*" (RF 2015c, Ch11 §4), as well as follow other rules such as having both women and men on their boards, having a plan for anti-doping work, and producing annual reports.

The national sports federations are generally organized in local, regional (district), and national levels. The individual members are normally entitled to vote in their local associations, electing representatives to vote at the annual district meetings. The districts then send their representatives to the annual meeting of the national federation; the highest decision-making body for the federation. It is then at the national level that the sport is represented in relation to *Riksidrottsförbundet* and elects representatives to the general meeting of the confederation. This three-level organization, with a representative democracy as a way of organizing a federation, is in line with the popular movement tradition and can be found in most of the national sports federations, even if there is some variation between them. Some have, for example, no district level. Therefore, the local associations relate directly to the national level and elect representatives to the annual meeting of the national federation. The district organization of a national sports federation (*specialidrottsdistriktsförbund*) represents the sport in relation to the district organization of *Riksidrottsförbundet*.

District sports associations (Distriktsidrottsförbund)

District sports associations (*Distriktsidrottsförbund* - DF) are the district organizations of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Their task is to "handle shared concerns for the sports movement" (RF 2015c, Ch9 §3) within their regional area, and should work according to decisions taken by the general meeting of

Riksidrottsförbundet and by its board. This means that they give practical support to local associations within their district. They also do advocacy work within sports policy and represent the common sports movement in relation to local and regional government. Further, they have a role in the distribution of some forms of government grants.

As of 2016, the Swedish field of sports has been divided into 20 different districts. In general, these follow the general public subdivision of Sweden into counties. Each district association is governed by a general meeting that also elects a regional board. A district sports manager leads the office, varying in size between the districts. In 2011, a process started to merge the district offices of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU with a joint manager for both organizations.

Until 2011, the districts also had the mandate to send one voting member to the general meeting. This meant that the annual meeting of *Riksidrottsförbundet* was composed of both representatives from the different national sports federations and representatives from the regional organizations. The national sports federation had, however, always the majority vote. Following a motion from the 2009 general meeting, work began to clarify how the districts, both organizationally and activity-wise, could become more closely connected to *Riksidrottsförbundet*, functioning as its regional support organization. It also became a task to see how the regional organization of SISU could become more closely related to the districts of the confederation. This led to a proposal to clarify the roles and regional organization of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. As such, the confederation board would be given the mandate to define which basic activities and services that each district should offer. Another proposal was to clarify that both *Riksidrottsförbundet* and its districts are support organizations for the different member federations, and that the voting rights for the districts at the general meeting of *Riksidrottsförbundet* should be removed. The board of *Riksidrottsförbundet* wrote in its proposal to the general annual meeting that:

> In order to both strengthen the support function and show clearly that it is the member federations that are principals to the work that the support organizations carry out, the board suggests that the voting right of the district associations at the General Meeting of *Riksidrottsförbundet* are removed. (RF 2011, p. 14)

This also became the decision of the general meeting in 2011, meaning that the formal possibility of the districts to take part in the governance of *Riksidrottsförbundet* declined. In the same proposal, there was also the issue of a merger between the regional offices of the district associations of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and the districts of the study association for sports, SISU, and that a joint manager should lead the work in each district.

SISU – Study Association for Sports (SISU Idrottsutbildarna)

SISU is the sports movement's own study association. It was founded in 1985 by the national sports federations that were members of *Riksidrottsförbundet* at the time. In 1986, SISU was given government grants as a study association for the first time. It also became a member in the joint organization for study associations (*Folkbildningsförbundet*) and, through this, joined the established study associations in Sweden. Today, the members of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, as well as three other organizations[4], are also the members of SISU.

At the outset, the main focus of SISU was on educational activities for leaders within the sports movement, but soon, the organization also started to direct its activities more generally toward members and teams within the movement. SISU only works with educational activities for its members, making it different from most other study associations which cater not only to their members, but also to other organizations and the general public. In its basic-principles, SISU states that:

> We refrain from assignments outside sport. SISU Idrottsutbildarna's primary task is to be a resource in the learning and development of SFs/MOs [national sports federations/member organizations]. The secondary task is to be a resource for the sport outside of our MOs [member organizations]. (SISU 2013, p. 5)

The highest decision-making body of SISU is the general meeting that is held every second year. It has generally occurred at the same place and time as the general meeting of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Further, the national sports

[4] These are: *Sveriges Bridgeförbund*, *Svenska Livräddningssällskapet/Simfrämjandet*, and *Svenska Pistolsskytteförbundet*.

federations are given the same number of mandates at the general meeting of SISU as they have at the general meeting of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. The general meeting elects a national board that governs the organizations between the meetings. Since 2015, the boards of SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet* have been composed of the same people and led by the same chairman. Moreover, the offices of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU have been integrated since 2005 and are led by the same secretary general. The process of this integration is further described and analyzed in the case section (Chapter 5).

Resources in the sports field

After presenting some of the main actors in the Swedish sports field, I now elaborate on the field's resources. Different actors in a field are jockeying for position and resources are something highlighted by Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012). As such, it is of interest to say something about which resources can be found in the field and how they are distributed since it is a core process in all fields how resources are distributed among actors.

One of the main resources for the sports movement is the voluntary work done in the local associations. In a study from 2005, it was estimated that half of the Swedish adult population do voluntary work, whereof 20 percent do this within a sports organization (Olsson 2007). This would imply that around 650 000 people do unpaid work in the sports clubs such as being activity leaders and local board members, as well as doing administrative tasks. The value of this work was then estimated to around 3 billion euros (approximately 30 billion SEK, SOU 2008:59 p. 151).

Funding for the sports movement comes from a range of different sources. Membership fees and other participation fees for training are estimated to generate on average around 35 percent of the total income in the local clubs. Income from arrangements, sponsoring, and sales of, for example, lotteries, account for around 30 percent. For the local clubs, around 25 percent of their total income comes from public funding, both from the national and local government (RF 2014). Among the different national sports federations, the share of public funding in relation to total turnover varies significantly. There are federations in which public grants almost account for the whole turnover, and there are federations in which public

funding accounts for less than 20 percent. This difference is mainly due to other possibilities for the federations to generate income via, for example, sponsoring and revenue for broadcasting rights. *Riksidrottsförbundet* – i.e., the confederation in itself – is almost entirely funded by public grants.

It is, however, rather difficult to assess the total amount generated from public support for the sports movement. This is mainly due to the municipal self-determination which has led to great local variation both in the extent, forms, and structure of local sports funding. An approximation is that municipalities stand for the largest share, approximately 450 million euros (4 500 million SEK). This is, however, not just cash payments. Around 100 million euros of this is from different forms of cash funding for the local clubs. The main part, estimated to at least 350 million euros (3 500 million SEK), is instead the value of the free, or highly subsided, use of publicly-owned and maintained sports facilities.

From the national government, the sports movement received 1 762 million SEK in 2015 (approximately 176 million euros). The money was formally given to *Kammarkollegiet* (the Legal, Financial, and Administrative Services Agency) followed by a formal letter, or regulation, from government. In this letter, the total grant was specified in different grants. In 2015, 32 million SEK was given especially for work with immigrants. Another 84 million SEK was in grants for anti-doping work, sports research, and secondary schools with special sports programs. For the special effort on sports, called *Idrottslyftet* (the Sports Heft), 500 million SEK was given. The remaining money, a 1 120 million SEK grant, was given for "operations of collective nature within the Sports Movement and grants to local youth activities" (Regeringen 2014). All of the grant money is, however, transferred from *Kammarkollegiet* to *Riksidrottsförbundet* which, in turn, transfers the funding to the recipients of the different grants. In total, *Riksidrottsförbundet* transmitted grants to a value of 1 594 million SEK in 2015.

Besides this, the study association for the sports movement, SISU, received a government grant. This grant is also channeled through *Kammarkollegiet* (the Legal, Financial, and Administrative Services Agency), but comes from a different government department than the other grants, and from another part of the government budget. In the same manner as the money to *Riksidrottsförbundet*, it is also tied to a letter of regulation from the

government that stipulates *Kammarkollegiet* should forward the money to SISU. This is because the by-law states that *Kammarkollegiet* has the responsibility of handling government grants for popular education within the sports movement. In 2015, the sports movement received 164 million SEK for SISU to handle.

The more general grant by *Riksidrottsförbundet* is divided into several different forms and given to the national sports federations, districts, and local associations. The main part goes directly to the local associations in what is called a Local Activity Support (*LOK-stöd*) based on the volume of activities for young people in the age range of 7-25. A basic grant is given to the national sports federations and the districts of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Money for elite sport is also given both to the national sports federations and the Swedish Olympic Committee. The different models for how the grant should be divided both within the *LOK-stöd* and the grant to the national sports federation has been an almost constantly debated issue within the movement.

In 2015, the money was divided between different organizations within the sports field as follows (Table 2):

Table 2. Money for the different organizations in 2015

Organization/ type of support	*Million SEK (approx. million Euro)*
Local activity support to local clubs (LOK)	585 (59)
Basic support to national sports federations (SF-stöd)	300 (30)
Elite support to national sports federations	45 (4,5)
District support	29 (2,9)
The Swedish Olympic Committee	35 (3,5)

Source: RF 2015b

Organizations in the sports field have had a close relationship to the state for a long time, receiving increased funding from national, regional, and local governments which have made it possible for the field to grow in parallel – or together with – the welfare state. The subsidies, which constitute a

significant part of the total income for the sports movement, have been motivated by the assumption that the operations of the organizations benefit society as a whole; e.g., through fostering youth involvement, leading to better public health, and training citizens in democratic skills through their participation in the governance of organizations. *Riksidrottsförbundet* is, by law, given a delegation who have the responsibility of administering government grants to sports organizations. This can, as I previously stated, be seen and understood as a part of the Swedish corporatist model. Here, the state, by delegating both public responsibility and authority in a defined area to the organizations of civil society formally outside the government sector, has taken the model to completion (Wijkström et al., 2004).

Regulation on state subsidies for sports

The corporatist model does not, however, imply that sports organizations get government grants without regulations. The grant is surrounded by a general regulation and the grant's aims are clearly stated. *Riksidrottsförbundet* receives by law 1995:361, on 'the transfer of administrative tasks to the Swedish Sports Confederation', the explicit right to administer the distribution of governmental grants in Sweden for sporting activities in accordance with the government's decisions. The more detailed provisions are found in Regulation 1997: 1177 on 'state subsidies for sporting activities.' Under this Regulation, *Riksidrottsförbundet* should decide which organizations are eligible to benefit from the government grants and also how public funds should be distributed more specifically among the different eligible organizations (7§).

Funds can be made available to organizations (primarily associations) at the local, regional, or national levels, or to the Swedish Olympic Committee (which is a separate body) and the principals of a number of national sports high-schools. *Riksidrottsförbundet*, according to the provisions, subsequently submits an annual report to the government with a comprehensive account of the grant recipients, the specific amounts, and for what purposes the grants have been distributed. The organization itself must also submit a summary of how the grant is used, and an assessment of the subsidy's effects in relation to the stated purpose of the grant. In the administration of

the state grant, *Riksidrottsförbundet* is also imposed to apply some specified parts of the Administrative Procedure Act (13§).

In the formal grant regulation, the purposes for the government support of the sporting activities are spelled out. It is stated that the state grant should support activities that:

- Help develop children and young people's interest and propensity for exercise and sports;
- Are conducted from a children's rights perspective, including increasing children and young people's influence over and responsibility for sport;
- Make it possible for all people to practice sport and exercise;
- Help awaken a lifelong interest in exercise, thereby promoting the good health of all people;
- Aim to give girls and boys, women and men, equal opportunities to participate in sporting activities;
- Promote integration and good ethics; and
- Actively combat doping in sport.

Beyond these more general purposes, contributions can be submitted for activities that strengthen the athlete's international competitiveness in so-called elite support.

In the government regulation, a number of additional conditions for grant fulfilment are also listed. These can be seen as a sort of 'concretization' of government aims for the support of the sports movement. In 5§, it states that grants can be awarded to:

- Develop interest in sport among children, young people, and people with disabilities, and to promote opportunities for all-round training according to each person's physical and mental conditions;

- Develop the quality of sports movement activities for children and youth from a children's rights perspective, and in other sporting activities so that high ethical standards, increased participation, volunteering, equality, and inclusion are encouraged;

- Enable the preparation of and participation in international competitions;

- Create better opportunities for elite-aspirating youth to combine their sport with education at national sports high-schools; or

- Actively combat doping in sport.

The regulation also defines (2§) sporting activity as "performance-oriented competitive sports and health-oriented width and recreational sport including a central element of physical activity."

With the support of this legal framework, the responsible ministry (at the moment the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs) formally provides *Kammarkollegiet* (the Legal, Financial, and Administrative Services Agency) the funds that are subsequently forwarded to *Riksidrottsförbundet*. A letter of regulation follows the money where the government stipulates the specific purposes for which the money is granted. Here, the government can specify, for example, special efforts which have been decided upon. The reason for the construct with *Kammarkollegiet* is that it has not been legally possible for the Swedish government to directly issue a letter of regulation to an organization that is formally outside of the state.

This system of regulations, with the law on transferring administrative tasks and a letter of regulation to *Kammarkollegiet*, is also used for the grants to popular education.

The development of the state–sports relationship

After describing the formal government sports regulation today, I now tack a step back and describe the development of the state–sports relationship. This serves as a background to the current arrangement, and the different actors' understanding of the relationship within the field. Norberg (2004) has studied the Swedish government's sports policy between 1913 and 1970. The interaction between government and key sport stakeholders are analyzed, in addition to the resulting policies emerging from this interaction. Norberg shows the development of the discussion concerning the scope and focus of government's financial contribution from 1913, when Swedish Parliament first approved a permanent annual grant, until 1970 when Sport for All – the new sports policy bill – was presented by government. This bill came to establish the regime, which basically remains the same today, regarding how to manage the overall allocation of responsibilities between the parties.

The tension between the freedom of associations on the one hand, and government control on the other, is ever present in the close interaction between government and sport in Sweden. This tension is also, as I earlier suggested, a central theme in the popular movement tradition. Essentially, it leads to the key question: Has the government tried to control sport, or has it rather encouraged the freedom and independence of sport? During the studied period, Norberg asserts that the question of control versus freedom in practice has been solved through sports policies; a negotiation resulting from the interaction between government and sport's key stakeholders.

Norberg argues in his thesis that the state can basically take three ideal-typical positions in its relationship with the sports field. He posits that the public sports policy can be described as a position of active neutrality. This position assumes that the state needs to be active if it is to maintain different ideas or perceptions of a good, or a good life, within society. But, at the same time, the state should be neutral in its relation to the content of these ideas or perceptions (c.f. Rothstein 1994). It is thus required that the state is active to successfully achieve or maintain real freedom for citizens. The active neutrality approach is basically positive to the concept of individual freedom, but for this to be achieved, individuals must understand and realize their own goals which require access to resources (Plant 1995; Norberg

2011). The role of the state therefore is to ensure that both the necessary resources and real alternatives for people to choose from are available. While doing this, the state should not take a position favoring one choice over another, but rather support the real pluralism of opportunities. Norberg (2004; 2011) argues that assuming such a position means that the state must act in the service of sport by actively facilitating the real choices of sporting activity for as many people as possible, without simultaneously pointing out one alternative as better than the other. On this basis, the state can therefore intervene by offering government grants as a resource for the citizens to have the opportunity to engage in the sporting activity of their choice. Thus, active neutrality becomes a way of managing the tension between freedom and control.

Norberg (2004: 2011) contrasts the position of active neutrality against two other ideal-typical approaches, defined as passive neutrality and the perfectionist. The passive-neutrality approach is based on a strict liberal position on the individuals' freedom to decide over their lives as long as this does not harm others. Therefore, the state should not intervene in what citizens' choose to engage in during their spare time. As such, the state should not interfere in or support organizations within the sports movement as this would violate individuals' freedom. In bright contrast to this passive neutrality is the perfectionist or communitarian approach. From this position, the state takes the position that for citizens certain activities and certain ways to go about their lives are better than others. Even if the government does not have to interfere in every aspect of citizens´ lives, it is allowed to take action based on a view of promoting a specific ´good.´ This position means that the state would govern the sports movement in greater detail. Here, sport would be a government service and grants would be directed directly to sports considered more 'socially useful' than others, while those considered 'useless' would be starved out.

Government funding to sports

When the Swedish Parliament, at a historical point of time and by a narrow majority, took the decision to provide annual support to Swedish sports organizations (the 'sports movement'), funding for other organizations in Swedish civil society barely existed. Other types of contributions to CSOs

were generally something that emerged during the post-World War II period. Norberg (2004) shows that the arguments for special support for the sports movement were especially motivated on the basis that it was socially useful because it increased the population's physical well-being and fostered activity involvement. The sports movement and its many different organizations were not considered to by themselves have enough resources to be able to realize the full potential of this, therefore the government got involved. Developments after that decision can broadly be described as a success story for the Swedish sports movement due to the sheer fact that state funding to sports grew. Norberg (2011) contends that a distinctive feature of the government's support for the sports movement in Sweden is the extent of state funding. The increase that followed was largely due to the fact that government allowed the movement to have access to a large extent of the surplus from the state gambling company (*Tipsjänst*) which was established in the early 1930s. This resulted in the organizations having access to a lot more money. Another reason for the increase of grants to sports organizations was the new youth policy that emerged in the postwar period. Sport was given a central role in getting the slatternly youth back on track (e.g. SOU 1944:30; SOU 1944:31; see also Wijk 2001 for a comprehensive summary of the discussion).

Gradually, the criticism that had been raised against a specific economic support designated to sport organizations came to fade and largely disappeared. A unified discourse among the political establishment instead grew and all sang a unison praise of sport. The direct and indirect positive effects of sports were emphasized by almost all. Public health, meaningful recreation, a stronger and more productive population, and sport as a shield against youthful moral shortcomings were all highlighted as examples of sport excellence, and became part of the overarching motivation for sports as an activity that the state had to support. Sport could contribute with solutions to most social problems. Norberg (2004) notes, however, that this came to mean that the state had also created "a machine of requirements".

Norberg (2004) also describes the power struggle between *Riksidrottsförbundet* and the *Centralföreningen,* both of which had claims to unite and head the Swedish sports movement. The state was not interested in having to deal with two organizations in the governance of the movement. This led

to the situation that *Centralföreningen*, with its rather antiquated ways to organize, had to withdraw and *Riksidrottsförbundet* instead was given priority by government. As the Swedish state clearly wanted one single organization to deal with, Norberg indicates that *Riksidrottsförbundet*, with the help of the Swedish government, managed to carve out a dominant position in the sports sector (Norberg 2004).

The parliamentary decision concerning the 1969 bill Sports for All (*Idrott för alla*) (Prop 1970:79) came to constitute the special structure that still exists for regulating the relations between the state and the sports movement, and has generally been applied since. *Riksidrottsförbundet* then received 'authority-like' (*myndighetsliknande*) delegation tasks, receiving something like a 'monopoly' to receive, manage, and distribute state subsidies among Swedish sports organizations. Not only was it to distribute the money among the different sports and their organizations, it was also assigned the formal power of deciding what should be considered a sport, and thus eligible for financial support.

In return for the powers vested in it, the Swedish government was given the right to appoint members of the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board. In this way, the state was highly involved in building up the centralized and hierarchical sports movement in Sweden. By giving the responsibility for grant management to *Riksidrottsförbundet*, a structure was established that could handle the conflict between freedom of association and state control. Therefore, an active neutral relationship between the state and the sports movement had emerged and became institutionalized.

The Swedish field of Popular education

Folkbildning, or 'popular education,' the English translation used in this thesis[5], has a historical connection to the development of Swedish popular movements that grew strong during the 19th century. These movements sought change in society, and regarded education as a crucial element need-

[5] Indeed, the translation of the Swedish word *folkbildning* into English can be debated, and several suggestions are available. Popular education is only one possibility that is often used when describing *folkbildning,* and it relates to other forms of adult education (e.g., Carlsen 1998; Gustavsson 2003). Another possibility is 'liberal adult education.' The usage of popular education in this thesis is no more than a pragmatic choice as it is the notion most commonly used.

ed to further such change. The movements required more educated people to increase their strength and influence. Knowledge and education in a wide range of areas, such as forms of democratic work as well as personal and moral development, needed to be provided to those who were conceptualized as powerless (see e.g. Micheletti 1994; Sundgren 2003; Gougoulakis 2006; Åberg 2008). The educational work that started within the popular movements would soon be organized into separate organizational entities.

Besides this close connection to the popular movements, popular education in Sweden can be said to hold a number of other characteristics. Drawing on previous research, Åberg (2008 p.78-) concludes that some of the characteristics of popular education are:

- **Free, voluntary, and inclusive**: anyone who wants to should be able to participate. Popular education should be available to any individual, especially those from marginalized groups.

- **Equality and participant-oriented education**: every man and woman should be seen as equals and have equal opportunities. Participants should be able to influence both the education content and forms of learning (see also below).

- **Social function and personal development**: popular education is seen as filling an important social function, where people with different backgrounds can meet.

- **Democracy**: promoting and strengthening democratic ideals and participation, improving democracy and encouraging active democratic citizenship among the participants.

- **Form vs content**: stresses the importance of the form of the educational activities, especially the study circle. This specific form is argued to potentially result in outcomes such as active citizenship, respect for others, and other civic virtues that go beyond the specific content of the study circle or course.

- **Pedagogics and methods**: the methods of popular education, and especially the study circle, have been developed to embody and support the above mentioned characteristics.

Nevertheless, the degree to which these characteristics are really present in the day-to-day activities within popular education, or if they are merely ideas or an ideology, connected to the popular education field, is debated both in academia and within the state apparatus.

The notion of popular education, *Folkbildning*, is today used to denote the ideas and ideology comprised of the above-mentioned characteristics. But, it is also used to denote the field of popular education organizations, especially those entitled to government grants and their activities. Today, the popular education field in Sweden is mainly comprised of two types of organizations and their educational activities, namely: folk high-schools and study associations.

The principal form of activities for the ten study associations eligible for government grants is the study circle. In 2015, around 272 500 such study circles were organized, with roughly 630 000 participating individuals. Further, some 280 000 individuals participated in the category 'other popular education activity,' meaning that the study association in these forms engaged over 900 000 individuals, or around 12 percent of the adult population in Sweden. Furthermore, the study associations arranged over 370 000 cultural programs that had almost 20 million visits (FBR 2016a). The general trend is that the number of people participating in study circle activities is decreasing, while the number of cultural activities and visits is increasing.

Folk high-schools

In the selected case for the thesis, study associations are in focus. Therefore, I here merely provide the reader with some basic facts of folk high-school activities. The activities of folk high-schools are divided into long and short courses, cultural programs, and open public education. Long courses are divided into general courses (*allmänna kurser*) targeting primarily those who lack basic qualifications for higher education, and special courses (*särskilda kurser*) for those who do not meet the criteria for general courses.

Post-secondary vocational education is an example of the latter category. Courses that do not exceed 14 course days are classified as short. For each term in 2015 (FBR 2016a), about 12 000 people studied the general courses and 16 500 the special courses. Almost 80 000 people participated in short courses of various types the same year.

The folk high-schools are also engaged in various forms of commissioned education funded in other ways than through the ordinary grant for popular education. Often, this is education for specific groups, funded by other public actors. This phenomenon has increased in recent years, and in 2015 constituted 16 percent of the total operation of the folk high-schools measured in weeks of participation (FBR 2016a). As I primarily focus on study associations in my analysis, I therefore do not go into further detail on the operations and organization of the folk high-schools.

Core actors of the popular education field

I focus on study associations in the popular education field because the cases I have chosen mainly concern these. Further, it delimits the scope of the thesis. As such, this section provides more information on these core actors.

The ten study associations

Today, there are ten study associations approved as recipients of government grants from *Folkbildningsrådet* (the Swedish National Council of Adult Education). These ten are members of *Folkbildningsförbundet* (the National Federation of Study Associations), which – to some degree – coordinate their action in the field. But, they also – to a large extent – function as actors in their own right in the popular education field. All study associations (except *Folkuniversitetet*, see below) are organized as federations, and have thus other CSOs as members.

Originally, the founding members of each association typically shared a similar ideology. When more organizations joined, ideological coherency was weakened for at least some of the study associations. The majority of the study associations emanate from and are closely connected to Swedish popular movements. In many cases, they continued the educational work conducted by their founders. However, two of the associations (*Ibn Rushd*

and *Kulturens bildningsverksamhet*) were formed in later years (Sundgren 2003; von Essen & Åberg 2009).

The study associations have in reality become large, complex, and hybridized clusters of organizations that embrace a significant share of the organizations in Swedish civil society and concern a large part of the Swedish population (von Essen 2012, p. 69).

Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF)

Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (Workers' Educational Association, ABF) is a study association founded by the labor movement in 1912. Among its funding members are the Social Democratic Party, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), and the Swedish Cooperative Union (KF). After the Second World War, membership base was broadened to reach outside the labor movement. Further, some patient organizations, DHR (a national federation for people with impaired mobility), the Swedish National Pensioners' Organization (PRO), and some migrant organizations later became members. Today, ABF has 59 members and 54 other organizations that it cooperates with. It is the largest study association in terms of study hours.

Bilda

Founded as Frikyrkliga studieförbundet (the Study Association of the Free Churches) in 1947 by the Methodist, Baptist, and Mission Covenant youth organizations, it changed its name to Bilda in 2003. During the 1970s, Sweden's Orthodox Churches joined Bilda, and in 2010 the Catholic diocese of Stockholm became a member organization. Today, Bilda has 48 member organizations from three different church families.

Folkuniversitetet

Folkuniversitetet was founded in 1947. It has its roots in associations formed at universities in Sweden with the aim of providing lectures and courses to the public. Four such associations, connected to universities in Stockholm, Uppsala, Lund, and Göteborg jointly formed a national cooperation organization. During the 1960s, these four associations transformed into foundations, with board members representing the universities and student associations. During the 1970s, a foundation connected to Umeå University was added. The organizational model with foundations instead of associations is unique for Folkuniversitetet compared to the other study associations.

Ibn Rushd

Ibn Rushd was formed as a study association in 2001 by Islamiska förbundet (the Islamic Association in Sweden) with the aim of becoming a study association for Muslim organizations in Sweden. After a period of 'incubation' in close cooperation with Sensus, it was granted government grants and its own rights in 2008. Today, it has ten member organizations and is the smallest study association in terms of study hours.

Kulturens Bildningsverksamhet (KBV)

Kulturens Bildningsverksamhet (KBV) is the most recently founded study association that receives government grants. Similar to Ibn Rushd, it started by cooperating with Sensus, and received government grants and its own rights in 2010. KBV gathers 16 different cultural organizations as members and was founded as an act of opposition toward the other study associations which were considered to offer too little support for the educational work within cultural organizations.

Medborgarskolan

Medborgarskolan was formed by the conservative movement in 1940, partly inspired by ABF and Vuxenskolan, but also to balance these associations politically and access the government grant. Its membership base has been fairly constant and consists mainly of the Moderate party (Moderaterna) and organizations connected to it. Medborgarskolan also runs some schools in the ordinary school system.

Nykterhetsrörelsens bildningsverksamhet (NBV)

Nykterhetsrörelsens bildningsverksamhet (NBV) was created through a merger between three different study associations connected to the temperance movement in Sweden. The member organizations of these, which were all part of the same movement, became members of NBV. Later on, the membership base broadened, mainly with a number of immigrant organizations, but also some organizations active in the area of drug use prevention and health issues.

Sensus

Sensus is the result of a number of mergers between different study associations. Its roots can mainly be found in Sveriges Kyrkliga Studieförbund

(SKS, the Swedish religious study association[6]) that was founded in 1930 by church-related organizations that were conducting study work. Early on, the Swedish Scout Association became a member, and the number of members continued to grow, coming to include, for example, the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defense Organization as well as some ecumenical organizations. In 2002, SKS changed its name to Sensus and merged with KFUK-KFUM's study association (the study association of the Swedish branch of the YMCA movement). In 2004, Sensus merged with TBV (a study association for a number of 'white collar' workers trade unions). Through the latter merger, Sensus came to be in close cooperation with a number of trade unions. Today, Sensus has 34 member organizations and around ten other organizations that it cooperates with on a loose basis

Studiefrämjandet (Sfr)

Studiefrämjandet (Sfr) was founded in 1958 and had members such as Friluftsfrämjandet (the Outdoor Association), 4H ('Rural Youth' an outdoors youth association), and Sveriges fältbiologiska ungdomsförening (Nature and Youth Sweden), which were all somehow connected to the non-party political farmers' movement, from its early days. The political parts of that movement were instead organized in the study association Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan presented below. Organizations within the areas of nature, animals, and environmental issues then later joined, as well as some other organizations without this connection.

Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan (SV)

Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan (SV) is the result of a merger in 1967 between the two study associations Svenska landsbygdens studieförbund (Serving the Farmers Movement) and Liberala studieförbundet (the Liberal Study Association). Founding members of SV were Centerpartiet (the Center Party), Folkpartiet (Liberal People's Party), and Lantbrukarnas riksförbund (the Federation of Swedish Farmers). Most of the members of SV have connections to either the farmers or liberal movement, while they have a wide range of cooperation agreements with organizations without this connection such as certain patient organizations.

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[6] Its original name was *Svenska kyrkliga bildningsförbundet* (SKB).

Folkbildningsförbundet[7] *(The National Federation of Study Associations)*

Folkbildningsförbundet describes itself as an interest organization for the ten study associations that receive government grants via *Folkbildningsrådet*. When founded in 1903, however, it conducted its own popular education activities such as organizing lectures and spreading literature through mobile boxes of books.

The aim of *Folkbildningsförbundet* is to "be the interest- and industry organization of the study associations and to promote popular education in society." (FBF 2006) It wants to be a neutral place where the study associations can share knowledge and experience. Besides the work with spreading information on popular education, the federation functions as a common negotiating partner for the study associations, and signs collective contracts such as general wage and employment contracts for study circle leaders, and contracts for copying and music usage. It also works with issues and guidelines connected to ethics and quality in the work of the study associations and administrates a common IT-based activity system for nine of the study associations.

Folkbildningsförbundet has approximately 15 employees and is led by a secretary general. It is governed by its biannual general meeting, which consists of 40 delegates. Each study association can send two delegates to the meeting, and the rest of the delegates are distributed between the members in proportion to the government grant received the year before the meeting. Each study association also names a board member. This has, in most but not all cases, been the rector (the chief executives) of the association. The general meeting elects chairs and vice-chairs among the named members of the board. This composition has led to the board becoming an important meeting platform for the rectors of the study associations.

[7] *Folkbildningsförbundet* was the name of the organization when the empirical material for the thesis was collected. In 2016, the organization changed its name to *Studieförbunden* (the Swedish National Federation of Study Associations).

Rörelsefolkhögskolornas intresseorganisation – RIO (The Interest Organization for Popular Movement Folk High-schools)

Rörelsefolkhögskolornas intresseorganisation (RIO) is the umbrella organization for the 107 Swedish folk high-schools that are owned by civil society actors such as associations and foundations. It was founded in 1963 with the aim of promoting interest in the folk high-schools. The idea of creating a joint organization for all folk high-schools, including the publicly-owned ones, was then discussed for more than a decade. In the end, a joint information office was initiated, together with the publicly-owned schools in 1981. The office was initially placed within RIO, but was handed over to *Folkbildningsrådet* when formed in 1993.

The mission of RIO is formulated in its by-laws (1§): "The mission of RIO is to promote and monitor the interests of the civil society folk high-schools, and through their activities contribute to strengthening and developing democracy." RIO is governed by its biannual congress to which all member schools can send delegates. The congress elects a board with representatives from the schools. RIO shares office space with *Folkbildningsrådet*, and has three employees, including a secretary general, who lead the work.

Folkbildningsrådet (The Swedish National Council of Adult Education)

Folkbildningsrådet was formed in 1991 by three organizations representing the study associations and folk high-schools: *Folkbildningsförbundet*, *Rörelsefolkhögskolornas intresseorganisation* (RIO), and SKL (*Sveriges kommuner och Landsting*). The council was established as a direct response to the need for a body to manage the government's financial support to popular education. The need had become pressing when the government decided to reorganize the public agency dealing with schools and education, and the National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*). *Folkbildningsrådet* was then founded as a non-profit association. The secretariat of *Folkbildningsrådet* today consists of around 25 employees and is led by a secretary general. Its mission paragraph states that the council:

> …has the task to, on behalf of the members, fulfill what Government and Parliament demands for government grants to be paid to the activities conducted

> by study associations and folk high-schools. *Folkbildningsrådet* can further account for other tasks that the members commission the council to handle.[8]

Managing government grants means that *Folkbildningsrådet* has certain public authority tasks delegated by the government and the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament). It is not seen as a public administrative agency, but has been entrusted with grant management 'in place of public authority' (*i myndighets ställe*). This means that *Folkbildningsrådet* receives a grant for popular education from the government, and then, via an established principle, splits it between study associations and folk high-schools. Through the two distribution models which the council decided on, one for the study associations and one for the folk high-schools, the grant is further divided between the different recipients. In this context, *Folkbildningsrådet* also has the task of deciding which folk high-schools and study associations are eligible for government grants in the first place. Moreover, among its other tasks is preparing follow-ups and general evaluations, as well as submitting budgetary documentation and annual reports to the government.

Folkbildningsrådet is governed by its meeting of representatives held twice a year. Each of the member organizations is entitled to send representatives to these meetings. *Folkbildningsförbundet*, representing the study associations, can send ten representatives, and RIO and SKL, representing the folk high-schools, can send five representatives each. In this way, the two branches of popular education, folk high-schools and study associations, are equally represented in decision-making within *Folkbildningsrådet*. At the point in time when this study began, and up to the changes in 2015 that are described in the case council renewal, the by-laws of *Folkbildningsrådet* also stipulated that the members should be consulted on general and principal matters. When different working groups were formed, members were supposed to be able to nominate people for these. In sum, this meant that members of *Folkbildningsrådet* had several opportunities to influence the work of the council. The board was then composed of mainly representa-

[8] The quotation is from the by-laws for *Folkbildningsrådet* before changes in 2015. The mission statement was then expanded to also include a so-called sector responsibility for popular education regarding monitoring and disseminating knowledge on popular education in relation to national and local government.

tives from the members, and today, after the changes, it consists mainly of members with political or state administration backgrounds.

Resources in the popular education field

Similar to the sports field, a major resource in the popular education field is unpaid work. Here, it is mainly in the form of volunteer leaders for study circles. It is estimated that up to 87 percent of the approximate 90 000 study circle leaders do their work on a voluntary basis (Berström, Bernerstedt, Edström, & Krigh 2014, p. 6). Often this is a person who is a member of one of the member organizations of the different study associations.

A major resource in the field is the grants from local and national government. For 2015, the total general state appropriations that *Folkbildningsrådet* had at disposal to allocate to study associations and folk high schools was about 3.6 billion SEK (360 million euro). A portion of this (30 million SEK, 3 million euro, in 2015) was used for the Adult Education Council's own administrative costs and expenses for the Popular Education Network. The rest was divided between the study associations and folk high-schools. Just under half of the grant was given to the 150 folk high-schools and just over half was divided between the ten study associations.

The government grant for popular education is a significant part of both the study associations and folk high-schools' revenues. These grants are given to the study associations for educational activities in mainly study circles, but also two other defined forms for activities. For the study associations, national government grants in 2015 constituted, on average, 34 percent of the associations' total revenues. For folk high-schools, national government grants constituted about 48 percent of total revenue in the same year. Although, the state subsidy percentage varies significantly between the various study associations and folk high-schools. Both the study associations and folk high-schools also receive funding from local and regional government. However, the general development is that these grants are decreasing, while the size of the grant from national government is increasing.

Essentially, the main income for study organizations in the field is from local and national government grants. Another important source of income

is from participations fees and other sales connected to the activities that, in 2014, stood for around 21 percent of the total revenue for the popular education activities.

In 2015, the study associations' total revenue was around 5.3 billion SEK (530 million euro). Moreover, 3.8 billion (72 percent, 380 million euro) of this could be derived from the popular education activities entitled to government grants. Most of the study associations are also engaged in activities that are not funded by government grants. These activities can, for example, entail running independent schools, engaging in the publicly funded program Swedish for immigrants, or various forms of contract education. Revenues for these types of activities are reported separately by *Folkbildningsrådet* (FBR 2016b), and can be seen as a measure of the proportion of the study associations' activities consisting of anything other than the public education that are eligible for government grants. In 2015, revenues of 1.5 billion SEK (28 %, 150 million euro) came from other operations that not could be reported as popular education activities entitled to government funding. However, the figures in the council's summary only cover the legal entity of the study association. Activities of other legal entities controlled by the study association (e.g., owned companies) are not included in the summary. Therefore, it can be assumed that what are designated as 'other activities' (the activities not entitled to state grants for adult education) are more extensive than the summary shows. Since 2005, there have been a significant growth of the revenue for these other activities, from a share of around 18 percent of total revenue in 2005, to 28 percent in 2015. There are, however, significant differences between the different study associations. The study association with the lowest share of income from other activities reports around one percent of its revenue from other activities. The one with the highest share has over 64 percent of its revenue from these (Sjöstrand et al. 2013).

Besides the ordinary government grants, the government has also designated additional grants directed to specific areas. These have, for example, included extra funds for general courses at folk high-schools as a part of the labor market policy, or money for teaching Swedish to immigrants as a part of integration policy. In 2015, an additional 140 million SEK (14 mil-

lion euro) was given to these areas. In 2016, that sum was 360 million SEK (36 million euro).

The development of the state–popular education relationship

I now provide a short overview of the development of the state–popular education relationship with a focus on how the government has supported the field through grants. Popular education and its related organizations in Sweden have received national governmental funding since the 19th century in different forms. In 1872, the Swedish parliament took a decision that folk high-schools (*folkhögskolor*) should receive regular funding; a decision that was followed by funding for organizing public lectures in 1884, and establishing and running public libraries in 1905. In 1912, it further became possible to receive government funding for small libraries bound to study circles (*studiecirklar*). However, this economic support was tied to the condition that the support could only be given to larger associations with at least 20 000 members, well spread throughout the country (Edquist 2015). To be eligible for this type of funding, those organizing study circles, within the many existing but smaller local associations of the popular movements that emerged at the time, needed to connect to a national umbrella organization or federation. In this way, government regulation was a driver in 1912, and the basis for establishing much of the later, and very influential, Swedish study associations (von Essen 2012; Edquist 2015).

The Swedish temperance movement, and especially the Good Templars with its pioneering study leader Oscar Olsson, had already a large network of study circles at that time and could rather easily meet the requirements set by the government. Further, within the workers movement, its study work had grown continuously, and the decision by the Swedish parliament in 1912 opened the possibility of obtaining additional – public – funding for that work. An entirely new study organization – *Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund* (ABF) – was formed for uniting the different branches of the workers movement in November the same year (Vestlund 2010). This new organization soon became the largest Swedish study association; and still is today with around 180 000 individuals participating annually. Following this successful development, more study organizations from other parts of society were also formed, especially after 1920 when it became possible to receive

funding from the government to cover organizational and administrative costs (Vestlund 2010). Edquist (2015 p. 79) argues that the Swedish state, by the way the funding was regulated and organized, to a large extent also shaped the organizational structure of the field of popular education and its many different organizations: "Thereby, the state had formed large bureaucratic organizations that gradually started to take part in the distribution of state subsidies to single libraries and study circles."(ibid.)

The overall motives provided by the Swedish government as to why popular education should be funded with public money have been rather consistent over time, even if the emphasis has changed somewhat. During the 1960s, the connection to the different popular movements – the labor movement, the temperance movement, and the farmers' movement – was highlighted, and, in 1998, the advancement of cultural interest was mentioned as an explicit goal, just to mention two salient examples (Lindgren 1999). One basic motive for government funding has, from the 1920s, been the advancement and development of democracy at large.

The democratic perspective is still at the core. Political scientist Lindgren (1996; 2001) has studied the Swedish system and the organizations for popular education extensively. She argues that democracy in this context should be understood as a society-oriented view where the prerequisite for democracy matters as much as the ways in which decisions are made. Matters connected to this view on democracy – such as parity (jämlikhet), gender equality, overcoming gaps in educational levels, and wider participation in cultural life – are explicitly mentioned in the legal preparatory work, but also in the academic literature on popular education and its organizations. If such prerequisites are not present, the argument goes that people with greater economic, social, and cultural resources will have greater possibilities to exercise power than those with fewer resources in these aspects. According to the basic argument, the possibilities for deciding on one's own life also depend on this. This view is, for example, clearly spelled out in the aims for the government grants decided in parliament in 1991 which stated that:

> The purpose of government grants to popular education is to support activity that allows people to influence their life situation and to create commitment to participate in society by example political, trade union, or cultural work.
>
> Activities designed to equalize educational disparities and raise the level of education in society are the priority. (Prop 1990/91:82, p. 1-2)

This approach to democracy was later confirmed in the popular education bill from 1998 which stated that a purpose of the grant is to "strengthen and develop the democracy" (Prop. 1997/98:115, p. 18).

In a recent government report, political consensus on the high value of popular education is clearly stated. This is partly because support to popular education has been seen as support to democracy. The report even states "conversely, one may roughly say that those who question Swedish popular education, can in turn be posed as questioning the history, functioning, and main representative of Swedish democracy" (SOU 2012:72, p. 26).

'Fritt och frivilligt' (Free and Voluntary)

Beside the role of popular education in relationship to democracy, the somewhat elusive idea of '*fritt och frivilligt'* also plays a significant role in understanding the relationship between the state and actors in the field of popular education in Sweden. The Swedish notion of '*fritt och frivilligt*' can roughly be translated as 'free and voluntary.' The notion can be traced back to the beginning of the last century, and seen as one of the core pillars of Swedish popular education (Gustavsson 1991). A basic understanding of this concept, according to Gustavsson (ibid.) is that people should engage in popular education via their free will, where the longing for learning should come from within people themselves. People should also have the freedom to decide both over the forms and content of the studies. Pressure from outside threatens the possibility of personal development – the goal of learning – and therefore it is also important that education is voluntary and free from outside pressure.

The catchphrase '*fritt och frivilligt'* has also become a notion that describes how popular education should ideally be organized, especially in relationship to the Swedish state. The independence of popular education

and its organizations from the state has been, and still is, an ideal also when government describes the motives for its support. A basic condition for the substantial annual governmental grant to popular education actors has, in line with this notion, been that the study associations and folk-high-schools are, and should be, independent from the state; that they should stand free to develop their own identities and ideological profiles.

Essentially, this means that both the notion of '*fritt och frivilligt*' and a very particular take on the idea of 'democracy' are central aspects in understanding why the Swedish government provides substantial annual grants to popular education organizations. Lindgren (1999 p. 233) sums up the motives of the government as follows: "The motives boils down to that popular education through its free and voluntary nature, helps to strengthen the conditions for a more egalitarian democratic participation in society."

Up until 1991, the National Board of Schools (*Skolöverstyrelsen*) had the responsibility for the distribution of funds. It was its task to interpret decisions from the parliament into detailed rules and administrative decisions. However, this took place in cooperation with the larger popular education organizations through consultations on, for example, the principles for the distribution of grants to study circles. Partly as a result of this situation, many politicians who were active in popular education matters and officials from the National Board of Schools – with their own backgrounds in the field of popular education or one of the other social movements – were active in a kind of 'seamless web' between state (government, parliament, and the National Board of Schools) and actors in civil society (non-public popular education) (Edquist 2015, p. 77).

In 1991, however, the government decided to shut down the National Board of Schools. At the same time, the transition from traditional bureaucratic regulation to a rationalistic governance model with management by objectives (*målstyrning*) was implemented in popular education (Prop 1990/91:82; Prop 1990/91:18). This meant that the government formulated more general goals for the grant, which the recipients in their turn had to relate to. Lindgren (1999) shows how government during the 1990s, with the implementation of this goal-steering and other similar new public management (NPM) initiatives, has increased its governance over popular education. The grant has been transformed from a general subsidy to a more

defined compensation for different tasks that the government wants popular education to fulfill. The government has also imposed additional demands on *Folkbildningsrådet* to develop evaluation systems that can measure results and are able to report on the extent or degree that the government's goals are met by the organizations in the field. Over time, bit-by-bit this has come to challenges the ideal of '*fritt och frivilligt'* (Lindgren 1999).

Analyzing sports and popular education as SAFs

Before moving on let me first just briefly clarify on the matter of how sports and popular education in Sweden can be analyzed as SAFs. As earlier noted, Fligstein and McAdam define a Strategic Action Field as:

> …a meso-level social order where actors (who can be individuals or collective) interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purpose of the field (including who has power and why), and the field´s rules (Fligstein & McAdam 2011 p. 3).

Through using this definition it is possible to identify both a Swedish sports field, and a Swedish popular education field. In these fields we find actors that relate to each other and describe themselves as connected. This is particularly obvious in what we can describe as the core of the fields. In the sports field, *Riksidrottsförbundet* and the national sports federations that are members of the confederation talk about themselves as the Sports Movement (*Idrottsrörelsen*). In the same sense, the study associations, folk high schools, RIO and *Folkbildningsförbundet*, and *Folkbildningsrådet* talk about themselves as 'the popular education' (*Folkbilningen*). In the sports field, the definition of this inner core seems to be closely connected to formal membership in *Riksidrottsförbundet*. It is primarily when your federation first becomes a member of the confederation that you can call yourself a real part of the Sports Movement. In the popular education field the situation is similar, but here it is not formal membership that seems to be the defining factor, but rather that you, as a folk high school or study association, are recognized by *Folkbildningsrådet* as entitled to government grants. In this core of the fields there is a common understanding of the purpose of the field and the rules of it.

The core, described as the Sports Movement (*Idrottsrörelsen*) and popular education (*Folkbildningen*), would be what the actors themselves would describe as the field. However, when using SAFs as an analytical tool, it is important not to just accept this empirical definition of the field. In a theoretical understanding, the field is broader, also including collective and individual actors outside of the core. In the sports field it is, for example, possible to include the state-owned gambling company *Svenska Spel* as an important actor as funder of sports. It is also possible to include companies offering sports activities for children and privately owned gyms to which the Sports Movement needs to relate. Here, it is important to once again highlight that organizations are commonly actors on multiple SAFs (Fligstein & McAdam 2012). It also seems as if actors further from the core grasp the shared understanding of the field but are more likely to disagree with it, and thereby more likely to challenge it. In this thesis, I have principally chosen to study processes that concern actors close to the core of the field. Nonetheless, actors in the periphery of the fields will also be active in the processes.

Summary: two fields

Thus far, some of the basic characteristics of the two fields have been presented. This has been achieved by focusing on the main actors and resources, as well as how the relationship between the state and the main actors have evolved in the respective fields of sports and popular education in Sweden.

Both fields are firmly rooted in the civil society sector, and CSOs hold almost a monopoly situation. The main actors are all CSOs, and it is only non-profit associations that can receive government grants for activities. Both fields are organized in a similar way, even if there are differences. One major element of the framework of Strategic Action Fields is the introduction of internal governance units (IGU) as a specific type of actor. It is possible in both these fields to identify a central organization – *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet* - that functions as such an IGU. In the popular education field, the scope for *Folkbildningsrådet* seems to be a bit narrower that it is for *Riksidrottsförbundet* in the sports field. Here, one major difference is that popular education is divided into two different branches;

the folk high-schools and study associations, which both have their own umbrella organizations that take care of some of the coordination between the actors, as well as handle some of the external relations and lobbying work.

I have also pointed to the historical development of the fields' relationship to the state, and here we can find similarities. Both fields have had long relationships with the government field, and have also received different forms of government funding since the late 19th or early 20th century. The relationship has, in both cases, been characterized by corporatism, both in the sense that the organizations have been able to take part in policy formulation, and – to a large extent – have been responsible for the policy implementation. One central part of this corporative setting is that the actors themselves in both fields, through a membership-owned organization, have the responsibility of administering the government grant. However, a main difference is that the sports field through *Riksidrottsförbundet* has handled the grant for much longer than the popular education field. It was first in the 1990s that the popular education field was delegated this task from the government. Before, the grant administration was handled by the government agency that had responsibility for all school-related issues.

Government funding to the fields is also regulated in a similar way. *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* have, by law, been delegated to perform authoritative tasks within their fields. The by-laws that regulate the grant are formulated in a similar way. In both cases, funding regulations since the 1990s have been transformed into goal-steering models, where government sets goals for the grants and evaluates the outcome in relation to those goals.

A on-going renegotiation

In their theory of Strategic Action Fields, Fligstein and McAdam (2011; 2012) emphasize the special roles of the state in influencing different fields. It is possible to find single actions from the state, such as new regulations or special efforts, which have an immediate impact on the two fields in this thesis. As a conclusion to this chapter, I however point to the ongoing

changes both within the state and in the relationship between the state and civil society that affect both the popular education and sports fields.

Wijkström (2012a) has argued that the 'old' or previous Swedish social contract – where the construct of the popular movement was crucial for understanding the state–civil society relationship – is now being renegotiated. In the old contract, popular movements had an important function on the input side into the policy process. They gave a voice for their large cadres of members, and took part in setting the agenda for the development of society. In the renegotiated contract, they instead started to find themselves in the output side of the policy process, meeting expectations to deliver public goods as some sort of sub-contractor to the public sector (Wijkström 2012a, p. 12-15). At the same time, the popular movement model is subject to pressure from two overlapping processes. First, there is a trend toward commercialization and managerialism where organizations feel obliged to adopt languages and models from the business and management sphere. Second, there is a tendency toward an increased focus on charity and philanthropy in society, challenging the previous on movement and members which characterize the popular movement model (Wijkström 2016, p. 299).

Other types of CSOs have started to compete with traditional popular movements regarding access to the national public policy-making process (Lundberg 2014). The Anglo-Saxon 'compact' model has started to find its way into the state-civil society relationship, and has – at least within some policy areas – changed the forms and arenas for the relationship (Reuter 2012). Some scholars even talk about a process of de-corporativisation in Sweden (e.g. Naurin 2000; Öberg & Svensson 2012). Instead of having a 'popular movement policy,' the Swedish government proposed a new 'policy for the civil society,' summarized by parliament in 2010 (Riksdagen 2010):

> The Parliament approved the aims and orientation for the policy of the civil society, thereby replacing the current popular movement policy and its aims. Civil society is used in the sense of an arena, separate from the state, the market, and the individual household, in which people, groups, and organizations act together for common interests. The aim of the policy shall be to improve the conditions of civil society as a key component of democracy. Furthermore,

> the conditions should be strengthened for civil society to contribute to social development and welfare.

One major issue in this 'renegotiation' is a shift in the view of role of CSOs in relation to the public sector. Traditionally, Sweden (as well the other Nordic countries) has sported a clear division of labor between civil society and the public sector (Lundström & Wijkström 1997); the latter providing traditional welfare services and the former (in the form of popular movements) fulfilling an advocacy or voice function for different groups and issues, as well as organizing leisure activities such as culture and sports for the organizations' own members. In the currently ongoing renegotiation, the emphasis is increasingly on the CSOs as providers of welfare services, not only as channels for advocacy and providers of leisure activities. This paves the way for new types of organizations and motivates the old ones to change (c.f. Amnå 2008).

For organizations within the fields of popular education and sports strongly defined by the old popular movement contract or paradigm, a slow shift in government expectations can be seen. The government formulates clearer aims as to why they give grants in the first place. It expects the organizations report on how and to which degree they fulfill these aims. Besides the regular grants, organizations are also increasingly given 'targeted' grants to fulfill a specific task or deliver a service such as courses or activities for newly arrived immigrants. These transformations are, in turn, related to the more general changes within the Swedish public sector itself. During the 1980s, NPM models were gradually implemented in public administration.

Sundström (2003) shows how these, what he calls rationalistic governance models, found their way into the state administration with the Finance Ministry and the Swedish National Audit Office (*Riksrevisionen*, back then called *Riksrevisionsverket*) as two of the driving forces. Starting with the administrative agencies, these models soon also spread to the parliament and government. As Sundström notes (2003 p. 10):

> The management model I describe […] has been intended to be used in various relationships within the state sector. It has been seen as an instrument for the authorities' internal management. It has also been designed to include rela-

> tions between the government and authorities. During the last few years, it has also come to include the relationship between parliament and government.

Hence, when NPM models were implemented in the state administration, they were primarily designed for the internal management of the state apparatus. Notwithstanding, the new models eventually also came to govern the parliament and state. Because of how different government grants are designed, these rationalistic governance models then began to increasingly govern the relationships between the state and CSOs (Wijkström et al. 2004).

In 1988, the government commission report titled 'Objectives and results – new principles for [national] government support to the associations' was presented (SOU 1988:39). It suggested that future grant distributions should align to a larger extent with the reigning governance model of the state administration; the so called 'management-by-objectives-and-results' model. The report stipulated that goals and objectives should be defined for each grant, and that the existing system for control should be partly replaced by a new system where goal alignment and expected results would be evaluated and reported. The notion that the parliament or government should set objectives for different grants was subsequently repeated in a report from the Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret 1991:6). The objectives were supposed to clearly state the effects that a grant was expected to lead to. Therefore, they needed to be formulated in a way that would make it possible to evaluate the degree to which the intended effects were reached. In this respect, every state agency was to suggest concrete effect measurements.

The government took this development one step further in its 1995 budget bill. The bill (Prop 1994/95:100) stipulated that the government intended to increase the result control of grants to CSOs. At the Ministry of Interior, an internal working group concluded in its report 'Result control of the subsidies to associations' (DS 1997:36) that the existing grant regulations were anachronistic and not adapted to the new results control system. The effects of the grants were described here as being unclear as they were not subject to follow-up or evaluation. The group suggested that

government grants should be formed in a way that rewards the renewal and development of the organizations' activities that receive them.

In line with this harsher rhetoric, and following a government review of its policy on associations and popular movements in the 1990s, a number of public reports were published. Titles such as 'what do we get for the money?' (SOU 1998:38) and 'government subsidies to associations – a mapping' (Statskontoret 1991:6) are typical of that era, and can been seen as part of a wider national development originating with the introduction of NPM reforms into the Swedish public sector.

Movements along this line can later be traced in the guidelines for 1998 and 1999 on how the Government Offices should write their letters of regulation. It is said that more general basic grants (*grundbidrag*) should be carefully used as the results cannot be properly controlled for. If used, they should be for a limited time such as for organizations in a startup phase. Even if there is a joint understanding that the government should not govern or control CSOs as such, the result-oriented governance model has continued to develop since the millennium. For example, the guidelines for the letters of regulation of 2004 (Regeringskansliet 2004) stipulate that the government should not attempt to govern CSOs. However, these also say that public grants to these organizations should be treated in exactly the same way as financing for any ordinary public administrative authority when it comes to the expected effects and results. The guidelines suggest that each public agency should make a contractual agreement with the grant-receiving organization. Such an agreement should, for example, regulate the terms of grant usage and the means for reporting results.

Management by results, and the two fields of popular education and sports

The fields of popular education and sports were both explicitly mentioned in most reports from different state agencies. Some reports dealt, however, specifically with the organizations within these fields. In the 1993 report from the Expert Group on Public Economics (ESO) called 'Sports for all? – Mapping and analysis of the support for sports,' government grants from both local, regional, and national government were analyzed (Ds 1993:58). The report concluded that the effects of government support were unclear,

and that clearer specification of the aims for the support were necessary if more profound effects are to be achieved. The report also touched upon the role of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, which is considered to distribute grants in a inflexible and static way that favors well-established sports. Its role as grant distributor is questioned and the report states:

> In this context, we would also point to the remarkable in-between position that *Riksidrottsförbundet* [the Swedish Sports Confederation] is in - a 'trade association' [branschorganisation] for non-profit organizations which, in practice, often acts as a funding authority. This introduces conflicting objectives into the work of the Confederation (Ds 1993:58, pp. 12-13).

This development can be seen as a silent shift of language (Wijkström et.al. 2004) in how civil-society and government relations are described in the public discourse, with a clearer economic and accounting practice for how the grants are evaluated. Another stream of the development is increased interest from the government in CSOs as potential providers of welfare services. The organizations also seem to be treated as tools for government in the implementation of public policy, instead of their traditional role as mediators between the state and the citizens' values and interests.

A central role in this development is played by 'evaluation' and 'follow-up.' Organizations within sports and popular education are expected to report back on how they meet the objectives of the received grants. That is, *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* are expected to report to the government concerning the ways in which – and the extent to which – grants are meeting the aims. Regarding both fields, the government has also decided that the work of public grant-receiving organizations must be evaluated externally.

Connected to evaluations and follow-up, the concept of quality becomes important. Within the NPM tradition and its focus on achieving 'excellence' in public services, there is a major concern with the quality of the produced services and activities (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew 1996). Different forms of quality management systems have thus been imported from the corporate sector and implemented in the public sector (Sahlin-Andersson 2000; Bejerot & Hasselbladh 2002) as well as increasingly within civil society (e.g. Linde 2010; Hvenmark 2013). In the popular education

field, the notion of quality has become important as the government has repeatedly stated that the organizations in this field should engage in "systematic quality work" (Sandahl et al. 2012). The government has also clearly expressed that qualitative measurements should be a basis for how much government grants each organization should receive (ibid.). A more detailed account of this is presented in case number two later in the thesis. Yet, ultimately, the above-mentioned developments can be understood as the consequence of, or at least as being in line with, this novel approach that now has permeated the Swedish public sphere since the 1980s.

Chapter 5

Four Cases

In this chapter, I now present the main empirics of the thesis. In Chapter 4, I gave an introduction to the fields of sports and popular education, relating them to the Swedish context and government field. I ended that chapter with highlighting that we now can identify ongoing transformations both within the state and in the relationship between the state and civil society that affect both the popular education and sports fields. Four cases now follow: two mainly deriving from the popular education field, and two from the sports field. The first two revolve primarily around the issue of resources, and the last two focus more on the field's borders and the relation between its core actors. In all the cases, the relationship to the government field is important and they take place in a time of a general renegotiation of the relationship.

Case 1. Handling of a handshake

In this case, I follow a process where the government has decided to introduce a new funding stream to organizations in the sports field. The case first focuses on the new type of financial regulation, then it looks at how actors in the field take part in the policy-making processes, and finally how they play internal games regarding how the money should be handled.

The year 2002 was an election year in Sweden. Gunnar Larsson was president of *Riksidrottsförbundet* but also an active member (local government commissioner and chairman of the city council of Gothenburg) of the

ruling social democratic party. At some point, he said to the Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson that it would be wise to do something for the sports movement before the upcoming election. The election manifest for that year read, under the heading 'children and youth – our future':

> A handshake with the sports movement. The Swedish sports movement is good both at the top and breadthways [*på bredden*]. Thousands of sports coaches make great efforts. But, even sports require assistance beyond voluntary work. A Social Democratic government will therefore invite the sports movement and municipalities to a handshake for Swedish children and young people. A major part of *Svenska Spel* surplus must be credited to the sports movement. During the coming term of office, we are prepared to add a total of one billion SEK to the sports movement if it commits itself to opening up the doors for more, holding back the charges, investing more in girls' sports, participating in the fight against drugs, and intensifying cooperation with the schools. (Socialdemokraterna, 2002)

Shortly after the manifest presentation, leaders from *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU met with Sports Minister Ulrica Messing to discuss the proposal. It then became clear for *Riksidrottsförbundet* that the money would be distributed over the four year period starting with 100 million SEK in 2003, increasing by 100 million SEK every year up until 400 million SEK in 2006 (in total 1 billion SEK, approx. 100 million €). The government also said that the forms for the new money would be discussed with the sports movement. In September the same year, the social democrats won the election and Göran Persson continued as prime minister. In the government's budget proposition that year, the government was given the mandate that *Svenska Spel* (the national state owned gambling company) would provide a 100 million SEK grant to the sports movement (Prop 2002/03:1, p.131). In December 2002, the government decided to give *Riksidrottsförbundet* the assignment of reporting the planned efforts to open up the doors for more, hold back the charges, invest more in girls' sports, participate in the fight against drugs, and intensify cooperation with the schools. This new stream of funding came to be called 'the handshake' (*handslaget*).

Reactions on clearer expectations

The sports movement had been used to getting a rather free and unregulated grant from the government. In this sense, the handshake was something new in terms of more outspoken expectations from the government. To some extent, it can be seen as a continuation of prior efforts. Between 1999 and 2002, the government decided to designate 60 million SEK from *Allmänna arvsfonden* (the Swedish Inheritance Fund) to promote development and innovation of primarily the local level of the sports movement. The grant came with the condition that it should target children, youth, or people with disabilities. Even if *Allmänna arvsfonden* had the formal responsibility for that program, *Riksidrottsförbundet* took an active part in the work, with its own employees working with the program as well as providing representation in the working group that was formed to assist *Allmänna arvsfonden* in its work. The distribution of funds was designed in line with other areas that *Allmänna arvsfonden* was working with. This meant that it was a project based support where local sports could apply for funding for a specified project that they would like to run. But, this effort had been rather limited in scope. The handshake was tremendously bigger. Even if the top management of *Riksidrottsförbundet* had been involved in the discussions, it came as a surprise for large parts of the sports movement, including staff at the *Riksidrottsförbundet* office:

> The handshake got here, I will not say it came as a big surprise, but at least as a surprise. The phenomenon was completely new, that the government pushed forward new resources, and also considerable resources, and overtime in addition. And also sent to a number, we can call it development areas or areas of intervention, you know, a number of fields. (Interview, top management, RF)

Some skepticism could be noticed that state expectations were so outspoken, and there was the risk that the state now wanted to govern the sports movement more directly. Early on, the national sports federation also expressed disappointment that this would not strengthen its ordinary work. Voices within the sports movement could be heard expressing thoughts that it should not let itself be governed by the money. At a meet-

ing with top management from all national sports federations, one of the chairs of a federation commented:

> The fact is that this money, this billion, it is money that we have lost, and we now get back to the children and youth sport, without any requirement that there should be some type of project investments. It may say anything, what is written is what we are already doing. (Quote recalled in interview, top management, RF)

On the *Riksidrottsförbundet* level, this was however not seen as a huge problem and it was rather easy to convince critical individuals that Handslaget would be a great opportunity:

> But it is also easier to get one of those activities to be positive when it basically is a financial supplement. Then there were some who were disappointed that it was not possible to tap out more to the federations. But, when we began to describe it as the cost of the development work you do, it actually fits within the framework of the handshake, which should be able to ease the pressure here. And when you got the clear picture, I'd say it was pretty easy. (Interview, top management, RF)

During the time following the government's decision, *Riksidrottsförbundet* had several meeting with staff of the Justice Department who were responsible for sports issues in order to discuss Handslaget. The important thing for the social democratic party was to show that they did something good for the sports movement. For this to be clear, it was important that this was not just some extra money in the ordinary grant to the sports movement, but a new effort. The effort needed to have a clear vision and it was important that the money really would find its way out to the local sports clubs. To mark that it was a new effort, it was also important that it was time limited. From the beginning, the sports movement had perceived that the main goal for the effort was that more young people should start doing sports. This was a goal well in line with the current work and view of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. As one senior staff at *Riksidrottsförbundet* explain: "And it is clear that the fields were not new to the sport. They are mentioned in the Sport Wants [Idrotten vill, a general ideological document] as areas to be addressed in the daily sports activities."

Other parts of the initiative, such as the issue of participating in the fight against drugs, were perceived as less important. They had more or less 'been hung on to' in the initiative to satisfy other interests within government. The sports movement perceived that this view was also confirmed in conversations with the Justice Department and responsible minister that were held in February 2003. Even if this was a new turn in governmental funding and the governance of the sports movement, the leadership of *Riksidrottsförbundet* could understand that the government felt the need to state clear goals for Handslaget as the following quotes from various interviews illustrate:

> The state has fallen into a role where you cannot say that we are giving away 100 SEK, it will probably be fine. It cannot be done. That is so against the whole accountant society [*räknenissesamhället*]. If the government gives you 100 SEK then it's, if coming from the sky, then it's obviously reasonable that they say, 'and with this, we want you to do this and that,' and I will choose if I receive the money, or not. But [it is] even better is if they say this, 'you get 100 SEK and do good for the sport, report in three years.' (Interview, top management, RF)

Recognizing this, leading people within *Riksidrottsförbundet* at the same time did not see Handslaget as a "real directive. [But rather]… more of a deal between the sports movement and the ministry." And as *Riksidrottsförbundet* was given a prominent role in formulating the texts that were supposed to govern Handslaget, "it [became] one of those public secrets," which had the task of building a system for how the money should be managed, and the feeling of being governed faded away. But, the situation of handling grants of this kind was new, and soon turned out to be challenging for a movement to deal with it: "It became hard for the sports movement to handle this. Because many, both national sports federations and the *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU districts, realized that here are free resources to carry through new things." Yet, the process started in the board of *Riksidrottsförbundet*.

Forming a plan for Handslaget

In October 2002, before the government's formal decision, *Riksidrottsförbundet*'s board decided to put together a working group. The general task for the group was to come up with a "proposal to a strategy and operational content [*verksamhetsinnehåll*] to handle the increased resources to *Riksidrottsförbundet* from the government."(RF 2002 a, §161) To lead the group the vice president of *Riksidrottsförbundet* was appointed. In November, the question returned to the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board table for a decision on the commission for the working group. In a memo to the board, the *Riksidrottsförbundet*'s secretary general pointed out that even if the money was to be formally decided upon in the spring of 2003, "it is important that *Riksidrottsförbundet* take an offensive approach on the question, and compiles materials and positions for a sports opinion about how the new resources should be handled."(RF 2002b) It was also with this purpose that the board decided to put together the working group. In the memo, the task for the group was specified: to put together material with an idea concerning how the extra funding from the government should be handled. This was a first step in forming a proposal that could be put forward to the general assembly of *Riksidrottsförbundet* that would take place in March the following year. The material should include suggestions of measures that could be taken on all levels within the sports movement, but especially within seven areas which, to some extent, overlap. Here, the areas presented in priority follow:

- The recruitment of more girls to sport, as well as physically inactive children and youth
- The costs and fees of sports
- Local interaction with schools, especially in light of the proposal of 30 minutes organized physical activity each school day
- Leadership development
- Integration
- The struggle, in the form of prevention against drugs: alcohol, drugs, and tobacco
- Anti-doping

The group was also given the task of suggesting how the resources should be allocated. The board decided in accordance with the memo and also discussed that the working group should have a broad composition from all levels of the sports movement including national sports federations (SF), district sports associations (DF) of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, larger sports clubs, and SISU. It should also represent both larger and smaller sports federations and both team and individual sports. After the meeting, the group was formed and started its work.

In March 2003, a preliminary report from the working group was discussed in the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board. In the report, the group first concludes that "the development areas the government states are by no means strange, but fit well with the sport's own aspirations."(RF 2003i, p. 2) And, they continue, "[it] is therefore positive that we are now given substantial extra resources for this work."(ibid. p.10) Therefore, the group felt that the starting point must be the goals of the sports movements, and the current activities and how these can be developed.

In the same document, the group goes through the five different areas that the government has pointed out. They briefly analyze the situation, identifying questions to be solved, and connect the areas to what the sports movement already does in relation to them. But, the group emphasizes that all these aspects are associated with each other. For that reason, it would be wrong to limit the resources to support isolated initiatives around the specific themes. Instead, the working group suggests that what should be supported is a "general development toward renewed and socially-responsible activities, whether it concerns new efforts or a continuation of an existing positive direction."(ibid. p. 10)

The document also emphasizes that the sports movement is a "democratic popular movement [*folkrörelse*]" and even if it is the different national sports associations that have the responsibility for the development of their own sport, it is the local sports clubs that take the final decisions about the form and content of their activities. It is in the local club that the 'public good' (*samhällsnyttan*) becomes concrete, and it is on the local level that the areas in focus of Handslaget need to have an impact to be successful. The working group therefore suggests that the model for achieving this could be in the form of 'local handshakes' or 'contracts' with sports clubs that

commit to work in 'the spirit' of Handslaget. To be able to get financial support, the clubs need to present working plans (*verksamhetsplan*) in line with one or more of Handslaget's priority areas. This could be both plans for the development of new activities, but also activities that exist and are deemed to be in line with the criteria of Handslaget. The national sports associations and district organisations of *Riksidrottsförbundet* must, however, be engaged in the process and support the local level as well as work to eliminate barriers to innovations that could be found in structures and regulations. To be able to mobilize these, organizations would be eligible to receive financial support from Handslaget as long as they are able to present plans on what they want to archive in the spirit of Handslaget and how this work should be conducted.

A preliminary plan as to how the grant should be distributed stated that in the first year, 60 million SEK would be given to the support organizations (the national sports associations and district sports associations of *Riksidrottsförbundet*) and 40 million SEK to local associations. The 60 million SEK to the support organizations would then be fixed during the four years, while all added support during that time would go to the local level (RF 2003a). The board of *Riksidrottsförbundet* approved the main principles of the report and after further handling within the *Riksidrottsförbundet* office, it was sent to the government as an account of the task given to *Riksidrottsförbundet* (RF 2003b).

A working party from the *Riksidrottsförbundet* office continued to work on principles for how the resources should be divided between local associations and the support organizations. Over time, this meant that 80 percent of the resources should go to local associations and 20 percent to the support organizations. The party also came to the conclusion that the allocation of resources to the local 'handshakes' should be done in an manageable and unbureaucratic way, as well as both to clubs that would like to further develop existing operations and those with a desire to develop new activities. At the same time, it was important that the model for resource allocation was based on "achieving the biggest result for investments."(Interview, staff, RF) Early on, there was also the need to find a model that had an integrated "dimension of justice that everyone would get something in some way."(Interview, top management, RF) It was important

for the staff in the *Riksidrottsförbundet* office that this did not just become "new money for what is already happening. Not more of the same. It must become resources for investments where form, content, and to who we reach out to, is new."(Interview, staff, RF) With that as a starting point, the staff asked themselves which organizational part of the sports movement would be best suited to identifying the local associations that had the greatest potential of making a difference with the money. The conclusion was to give the *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU districts key roles in administrating the local handshakes and, together with the national sports associations, identifying local associations that would receive the new money. At the beginning, the group took the areas mentioned by the government very seriously. One of the members of the working group who had the task of handling the issue, stated that the group:

> … was inspired, I would say, out of the thought that there were five areas for the handshake clearly stated, and we read them as if it is here you want to do specific actions. Here, you want results, see how to open the doors to more and more girls. So, we were in the project thinking, but realized that this could not be handled by *Riksidrottsförbundet*, but our solution was that those closest to the local associations were the districts. They would have a decisive role in the distributions of the funds.(Interview, staff, RF)

In April 2003, the board of *Riksidrottsförbundet* discussed the issue again and decided that the national sports federations and the district sports associations needed to take part in this proposal and be able to leave comments on it before the general assembly of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. It was therefore sent out on submission for comments and a hearing was held. By the available documentation, it appears that the different national sports associations argued that their role and influence in the process needed to be extended, and that it is with them that the local associations should make agreements on the local handshakes, not the *Riksidrottsförbundet* district organizations. Some of them also commented that the division of money between the supporting organizations should support the national sports associations as the main recipient. As the Swedish Handball Federation states: "In the allocation of funds at central level, SF [national sports federations] must be highly prioritized before DF [district sports associations]."(RF 2003c)

The government disapprove right before the general assembly

The plan presented to the government was, however, not approved. In a decision from May 2003, the government writes that: "The preliminary plan for the work which the confederation submitted in March 2003 should be further developed and presented to the Government Offices (Ministry of Justice) by 1 November 2003." In the decision, the government approved 100 million SEK for the first year, but stated that the proposal gives too much money to the support organization. Instead of the 60 million SEK to the organizations suggested by *Riksidrottsförbundet*, the government decided that no more than 15 million SEK could be used for this purpose. This changed the conditions in relation to what was stated in the report that the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board had put forward to the general assembly.

On the general assembly that year (2003), Handslaget was one of the questions in focus at the meeting. In his opening address to the assembly, Gunnar Larsson, the chairman of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, used a lot of his time to talk about Handslaget. He emphasized that the five areas of Handslaget are also high on the agenda of *Riksidrottsförbundet*:

> The very fact that the stated objectives feel right for ourselves and that they are areas that we ourselves stressed is extremely important. If it would not be for our high priority areas, there would not be any good results for the simple reason that a movement like ours is based on volunteers who do things and want to do things that you yourself feel. In short, the sports movement can never be something that politicians and authorities order things from. Our independence is what gives power, whether it is at club level or in our central organizations. We decide ourselves. With our own democratic decisions, we determine how we want to run our work.
>
> At the same time, it is good if we still have an understanding that government can have input on the use of, in recent years, the increased resources. This is a balance that is important for both parties. To give sport resources based on having confidence in the sports, but that both parties are prepared on a continuous dialog to reach common goals of public support for sport.(RF 2003d)

The Minister for Sports Mona Sahlin also addressed the assembly. She came back to the balancing act when she said:

> There is tremendous trust and confidence in all political parties to sports. Sports are a way to organize, sports are a way to manage and operate the, of my joy, increased grants in recent years. We must continue to have a free and independent sports movement, but it is also a balance in terms of the additional resources that Handslaget is an expression of where the political system should not micromanage, but has expectations of the common focus of these resources. I hope we stay on the line. (RF 2003e)

She then underlined that the purpose of the funding was to give the local sports clubs both incentives and resources to come in contact with new groups of kids. As examples, she mentions children and young people in Sweden such as refugees, immigrant girls, children with disabilities, and teenagers who have not started sports.

The delegates in the assembly discussed the issue thoroughly and raised a lot of opinions and questions. A basic critique was that the proposal was too bureaucratic and they asked for its easier management. A number of national sports federations also emphasized their role and responsibility for their own sports, indicating that they should have the main responsibility for the resources therein. The Basketball Federation suggested that instead of using a project-based system for grant applications, money should be added to the local activity support system. Here, extra money could go to specified groups and this way, would be given for achievements, not only plans for what should be done. The chairman of the Fencing Federation commented that the report should be recommitted to the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board which should then conduct a hearing with the national sports associations, and after that, take decisions on how Handslaget should be developed. After postponing the matter, the assembly decided to recommit it.

Involving the sports federations

When the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board met again after the summer, the board had worked on a new proposal. This time, they proposed to initially focus on two of Handslaget's areas; girls within sports and cooperation with schools. The first area was to be handled in accordance with the proposal from the Basketball Federation; to increase ordinary support to girls in the age range of 13-20 years old via the local activity support (*LOK-stöd*). The possibilities of administrating this support, called *RAK-stöd* (targeted activity

support -*riktat aktivitetsstöd*) was to be further analyzed. The resources for cooperation with the schools should instead be divided via a project application system. The proposal was that *Riksidrottsförbundet* would handle this through the organization they already had built up for project support within a former development project. In total, it was proposed that these two areas should be given 75 out of the 100 million SEK in the first year. Ten million SEK would be given to *Riksidrottsförbundet* for special efforts and 15 million SEK to national sports associations and district sports associations to develop plans for their work within the areas of Handslaget (RF 2003f). This proposal was sent out to the national sports federations.

The day before the board meeting, a hearing was arranged at the Sheraton Hotel in Stockholm. At the general assembly, *Riksidrottsförbundet* had got a new secretary general and appointed a project manager for the work with Handslaget. After the debate at the general assembly, the board of *Riksidrottsförbundets* came to the conclusion that they needed to listen more to what the national sports federations think. Therefore, they chose to organize the meeting in a different manner with a focus on letting the national sports federations come up with their own ideas for how Handslaget should be organized. This resulted in a heavy critique of the new proposal. Especially, the *RAK-support* and limited role of the national sports federations were criticized.

After this hearing, the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board felt forced to once again develop a new plan. A draft was worked on the night between the hearing and the board meeting. After a discussion in the board, the secretary general and two people from the board were given the task of finalizing a proposition and sent it out for referral. This time, the plan was changed to meet the critique from the national sports federation. They suggested handing 35 million SEK of the support to the local associations. This was to be given to "local associations based on each of the federations own development strategy within the Handslaget target areas."(RF 2003g) The plan also specified the areas in focus when it states that:

> … priority should be given to efforts which open the doors to new groups regardless of economic ability, which supports girls to enable them to practice sport in the way they wish or to counteract the use of drugs. Training of lead-

> ers for children and young people should also be given high priority. (RF 2003g, p.2)

The national sports federations were given the responsibility of deciding which associations should be given support, but the money transfer goes directly from *Riksidrottsförbundet* to the local association. In the proposal, the money was divided between the federations on the basis of how much ordinary support they are given by *Riksidrottsförbundet* and how many activities they currently have with children and youth. The earlier suggestion of *RAK-support* targeting girls was completely taken away and the role of the *Riksidrottsförbundet* district organization was scaled down to only concern cooperation between schools and the local sports associations. For this purpose, 30 million SEK was designated. Besides this support, 15 million SEK was designated to national sports federations and district sports associations to cover their administration costs in Handslaget. The national federations also received financial support to produce plans for development of its sports. For this, the districts were given 2.3 million SEK and SF 12.7 million SEK. The rest of the money (20 million SEK) was handled by *Riksidrottsförbundet* directly both to support special efforts in line with Handslaget's areas but also for investments in sport grounds.

When this proposal was sent out for referral, the majority of the national sports federations were positive. Some of the smaller federations felt that the decision to divide the support based on the current level of activities was wrong and would rather have seen a model where small sports could receive more resources to attract new participants. *Riksidrottsförbundet* districts were, however, very critical that their role had been minimized compared to the initial plans that were discussed. They felt that this had now become "rather a national handshake, from an above perspective, than a local handshake," (RF 2003h) which was their intention, and that it would now be complicated for the local sports clubs, especially those containing multiple sports and therefore relating to several federations, as their needs related to several counterparts. Everyone was, however, eager to get started as the process had taken such a long time and that it was now the time to start work. Some also felt that the proposal needed to be seen as the "only possible sports political compromise"(RF 2003h). In December 2003, more

than a year after the start of the process, the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board decided to approve the plan for the implementation of Handslaget. The plan approved was the one sent out for hearing without any changes.

To secure the involvement of the national sports federations and the district sports associations in the decision processes around Handslaget for the coming years, a process plan was developed and decided upon by the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board. A special committee for Handslaget was also formed to steer the work. In the coming years, SISU became involved in Handslaget with the responsibility for leadership development, and support handled by the national sports federations increased in relation to the other streams of support (see Table 3). The reason as to why more support was being channeled through the national sports federations and that the support via the district sports associations did not increase at the same pace was that the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board felt that cooperation with the schools was highly prioritized compared to other areas during the first year, and that this should not be the case for the rest of the period.

Table 3. Support in the respective years from 2004

Million SEK	*Year 1 (2004)*	*Year 2 (2005)*	*Year 3 (2006)*	*Year 4 (2005)*	*Total*	*% of total*
Admin support SF	12.7	16.3	24.5	32.6	86.1	8.6
Admin support DF	2.3	3.7	5.5	7.4	18.9	1.9
Local support handled by SF	35	100	150	200	485	48.5
Local support handled by DF	30	40	60	80	210	21.0
Leadership SISU	0	10	15	20	45	4.5
Special efforts handled by RF	10	15	22.5	30	77.5	7.8
Sports ground support handled by RF	8.5	12	18	24	62.5	6.3
Evaluation	1.5	3	4.5	6	15	1.5
Total	100	200	300	400	1000	100

Source: RF 2008 (SF-national sports federations, DF-district sports associations)

The national sports federations had been given a central role in the management of Handslaget. Compared to the first ideas and plans from *Riksidrottsförbundet*, where the districts were the main player, the focus had shifted. When *Riksidrottsförbundet* summarized Handslaget it wrote:

> We knew that the federations and local clubs conditions and problems were and are very different. Therefore, the starting point became to let a thousand flowers bloom. The central control is minimized. Each of the federations had to work out their strategy based on their circumstances, to be able to achieve the goals, intentions, and directions of Handslaget. They were given great freedom in the work. (RF 2008, p.7)

Handslaget becomes Idrottslyftet

When Handslaget was underway, discussions started within *Riksidrottsförbundet* on how it could work to secure the continuation of funding. Aiming at the general election in 2006, *Riksidrottsförbundet* began developing strategies and plans for how to communicate Handslaget, and what it had meant both for the sports movement and wider society. Early in 2005, a working group was formed with the purpose of leading this work (RF 2005a). The goal was to "secure long-term funding with the focus on keeping the level of resources for Handslaget at 400 million SEK."(RF 2005b, p.4) Further, the basic argument was that money given to the sports movement is an investment, not a cost for society and the individual. Therefore, it is important to talk about and focus on the 'public good' (*samhällsnyttan*) of sports, and link what has been done within Handslaget to this:

> We should, in line with this, communicate that society earns on investing in sports. Sports are not a cost. It does not cost +400 million to get the X-commodity delivered. The public good is always going on within sports, it does not takes anything special but the operations themselves are public goods. Then, we can dress it in different suits depending on the context to communicate it, public health, democracy, nurturing [fostran], integration, and so on. (RF 2005c, p.4)

The goal is to get all the political parties to commit that their intention is to continue with the extra support of 400 million SEK annually. The chairman

and secretary general of *Riksidrottsförbundet* then began to meet all the political parties:

> We were welcomed to everyone except Folkpartiet that did not have the time. But the rest received us. Reinfeldt[9] and God and everyone. Then he [Reinfeldt] says that this is something we have to respond to. (…) He said that they would agree to the same sum during the next period, so one billion, and it was a copycat he thought of. (Interview, top management, RF)

In Almedalen[10] during the summer of 2006, a couple of months before the election, the discussions with the conservative party continued. In talks with the party secretary, *Riksidrottsförbundet* clarified that it would see the party's commitment of one billion SEK as a reduction to 250 million SEK a year, instead of the 400 million SEK that Handslaget received the previous year. *Riksidrottsförbundet* threatened to go public with this. "He [the party secretary] couldn't get it together and says: What? Is it 400 million SEK? Well then, we say 500 million SEK per year during these four years. That was how it [Idrottslyftet] became two billion."(Interview, top management, RF)

When the conservative party was then given the task of forming a government after the election, it kept its promises and decided on an extra 500 million SEK grant to the sports movement (Prop 2006/07:1, utg. Omr. 17). *Riksidrottsförbundet* was given the task of writing a memo to the government about the new effort. It chose to take Handslaget as a starting point but wanted, instead of the five clearly-stated areas, to have one overarching purpose. *Riksidrottsförbundet* suggested that this would be to "open the doors to sport for more children and youth, and develop the sports clubs' activities so that they [the children and youth] want to stay within sports longer."(RF 2006a) The area of opening the doors for more was the area of Handslaget that the national sports federations had prioritized, and more than half of Handslaget's money had gone to projects with this purpose

[9] Leader of the conservative party (moderaterna) that would become prime minister after the election

[10] Also known as Politician's Week in Almedalen. An important annual forum where the party leaders from all parties in parliament hold political speeches and hordes of journalists, lobbyists, local and national politicians and representatives of CSOs all coming to Visby to meet, discuss politics and socialize.

(RF 2008, p. 47). Besides this, *Riksidrottsförbundet* mentioned four subareas for the new effort. Its suggestions in the memo were that two of these subareas would be the availability of sports grounds and cooperation between schools and sports. Both these had clearly been part of Handslaget. Then, it added two more areas. One was the leadership development, which had been a part of Handslaget before but not mentioned explicitly by the government. This had been SISUs' responsibility within Handslaget. The other subarea was the development of federations and local sports clubs. The clubs had been the main focus for Handslaget, but now *Riksidrottsförbundet* strongly argued that there was a need of more financial support to the federations for them to be more involved in the process and develop their own sports and organizations.

The new government did agree with the sports movement on all these issues. In May 2007, it decided that the sports movement can use a total of 500 million SEK, using almost the exact wording as *Riksidrottsförbundet* did to describe the general purpose and the subareas of the effort (Regeringen 2007). Giving more money to the national federations was not seen as problem. In the decision, 122 million SEK was approved for the use of work for the federations and districts. That was more than triple the amount available for the support organizations in the final year of Handslaget. The problematic issue for the government was instead the name of the effort. What should it be called? *Riksidrottsförbundet* wanted to keep the name Handslaget as this was now well known within the sports movement. However, the government felt that the name Handslaget was too connected to the social democrats and therefore could not approve its use. In a letter to the undersecretary of the responsible minister, the *Riksidrottsförbundet* secretary general wrote:

> [On] the issue of the name of the effort, we have understood that the question is important to the government and that Handslaget should not been used. Certainly, we would have liked to see a continuation with the well-known name, but of cause we respect your wishes. Therefore, we have auspicated a small name contest within the sports movement. (RF 2007)

A competition to find a new name was held at the *Riksidrottsförbundet* office. One staff member came up with the name 'Idrottslyftet' (The Sports heft).

This became the piece in the puzzle needed to obtain the final approval for a new period of extra money.

Summary and preliminary analysis

In this case, I have described a process where a new type of finance enters the sports field and how the actors in the strategic action field of sports in Sweden act to form a plan for how the money should be handled.

In the case, we can see how this new money, or maybe rather a new type of regulation of money, enters the sports field. We see a shift of language, indicating some sort of new 'money regime' for how to channel resources between the government and the sports field. This new money regime includes clearer expectations on what the money should be used for (i.e., more ear-marked money), more control, and a language that focuses more on what the sports movement delivers in terms of societal or public goods. To some extent, this can be understood as part of a more general shift in the government's way to deal with the money going to civil society; thus, the sports field is being influenced by a wider game that goes on in the government field on how to distribute and control resources. This is, in turn, then part of a larger shift, or reframing, of government and civil society relations, influenced by the introduction of NPM tools in the government field, which will be further developed and analyzed later in the thesis.

Multiple connections between the sports and government fields also become visible through the case. *Riksidrottsförbundet* plays a significant role in the process as the main internal governance unit within the field. In the initial phases, there were contacts and lobbying which tried to influence the government to give more money to the sports movement. When the government announced the new effort, *Riksidrottsförbundet* had close contact with the government, the minister of sports, and the responsible ministry. In a dialog with different proposals sent back and forth between government and *Riksidrottsförbundet*, the policy on Handslaget was formed. And, throughout the case, we have seen how *Riksidrottsförbundet* plays a very active role in trying to secure funds to the field, which it seems to consider one of its core tasks. It is also worth noting that it seems to work hard in order to maintain a large degree of freedom in how the funds should be used, even if it at the same time understand that it needs to play according

to the new money regime that implies a larger degree of government governance.

In the intermediary landscape between civil society (and in this case the sports field) and government fields, we find both the state-owned gambling company *Svenska Spel* and *Allmänna arvsfonden* (the Swedish Inheritance Fund). They seem to have a role as government tools to stretch out into civil society (to do 'soft politics'), and as a way for civil society to tap into both government resources and policies. In this role, these organizations can - from a field approach - be considered as intermediary players in the overlapping fields of government and civil society in a similar way but a more general scale than *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* have in their respective fields.

Finally, I want to draw attention to the internal processes and games that evolve in the sports field when this new money enters. Here, we can see how it becomes a game over which organizational part of the sports field that should have control over the money, where the national sports federations are the winners over the district organizations of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. We can also see how the historically larger and, in the sports field, stronger federations do not accept that the grants should be targeted in a way that would result in them not getting their 'fair-share' of the money.

Case 2. Governmental grants to study associations – the distribution model

This case is about a process to develop and decide on a new distribution model for government grants to study associations. In the popular education field, *Folkbildningsrådet* holds the position as the main internal governance unit (IGU) and has, by government, been given the authoritative task of handling government grants to the field. In this case, we see in greater detail how the field closely relates to the government field, as well as how this relationship affects the game of resource allocation. By following this process, we are also able to explore some of the inner dynamics between the incumbents, challengers, and IGU in the field.

Introduction

Folkbildningsrådet has to decide how the governmental grant should be divided between its ten approved study associations. To do this, it uses a distribution model based on a number of parameters which calculates the share that every study association should get. Since *Folkbildningsrådet* was founded, major revisions have been made to the model every fifth or sixth year. The grant is given to the national organization of each study association which then has the responsibility of allocating the money between its local chapters.

In 2009, a model review process once again began. The model in use at that time was a result of a review process that started in 2004 that had been in use since 2007. It consisted of two major parts: what was called a basic grant (*basanslag*) and an activity grant (*aktivitetsstöd*). Sixty percent of the total grant was channeled as a basic grant. This was divided between each of the ten study associations according to each association's average share of the total governmental grant two years previously, with a delay of one year. This meant that the basic grant that was given for 2009 was based on the grants that were given 2006 and 2007. The remainder of the money (40 %), was transferred in the form of activity grants and was based on the volume of different forms of activities that the study associations reported each year to *Folkbildningsrådet*. In Chapter 4, I gave a brief account of the three

different forms of activities eligible to government grants. These are: the classical study circles, where a group meets several times and studies a chosen topic together; cultural-programs such as open concerts and public lectures; and, other popular education group activities that are less regulated forms in terms of minimum study hours and group size. The activity grant was divided into three different sub-parts. Eighteen percent was defined as an activity-related grant (*aktivitetsstöd*), divided between the study associations based on their relative share of total study circle hours and other group activities the associations had. Ten percent was divided as a cultural-program grant (*kulturprogramsbidrag*) based on the number of events the associations had had during the year. Both of these grants were recalculated every year based on the latest available statistics reported from the study associations to *Folkbildningsrådet*. The remaining 12 percent of the money was then distributed as a reinforcement grant (*förstärkningsbidrag*) based on the different associations' activities for people with disabilities and immigrants in need of Swedish language support. The rules for this grant had, however, turned out to be difficult to administer. As a consequence, the grant was divided based on older statistics and fixed during the period of 2007-2011.

The rules and regulations of the governmental grant are, together with the distribution model, provided in a joint document (FBR 2011). This document includes, among other things, the intended use of the grant described, as well as the principles for how the operations of study associations should be delimited, documented, followed up, evaluated, internally controlled, and quality checked. Further, the three types of activities also defined as entitled to government support through the grants to the popular educations associations are included. As stated, these are:

1. **Study circles** where a small group of participants meet around a subject to study together based on a study plan and led by a study-circle leader. The study circle is the classic, central tool of the study association and should constitute the core of the associations' work.
2. **Other popular adult education activities** are 'freer' and more 'flexible' forms than the study circles as they do not need to last over several meetings and the groups can be larger.

3. **Cultural programs** include, for example, concerts, theater, and other performances. The distribution system is built up around these three forms of activities and the study associations are requested to continuously report to *Folkbildningsrådet* on their activity numbers and how many participants they have etcetera.

Dissatisfaction with the previous distribution model

In January 2009, the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* instructed their secretariat to prepare the appointment of a working group to review and conduct an overhaul of the system of government grants to the study associations. The instruction from *Folkbildningsrådet* also included that the working group should consult with representatives of *Folkbildningsförbundet* (the Swedish National Federation of Study Associations), which is formally one of the members of *Folkbildningsrådet*. The background to this was that several study associations were critical for the distribution model that was used at the time (FBR 2009a). Several individual associations had then written to the board of *Folkbildningsrådet*, presenting their opinions about why there was a need to change the model. In many cases, these study associations felt that the present distribution model favored high activity volumes. They were especially critical on the parameter of the distribution system that accounted for the number of cultural events which study associations arranged. The study associations that highlighted this felt that this parameter was a particularly important factor in, what they described as, "volume-driven development."(FBR 2008a) Further, *Folkbildningsförbundet* sent a letter to express its concern that the number of cultural events as a basis for grant allocation led to a 'volume hunt' as noted:

> We also see that the system can be undermined by the fact that it encourages economically large cultural events at the expense of study circles and other enlightenment activities [*folkbildningsverksamhet*]. This can lead to the proportion of cultural events increasing rapidly at the expense of, for example, study circles. (FBR 2008b)

Folkbildningsförbundet considered that this 'volume-driven development' or 'volume hunt' forced the study associations into a constant quest of pro-

ducing more activities simply to maintain their own share of the governmental grant. The grant system was namely designed so that a fixed amount of money is designated by the state each year to *Folkbildningsrådet* for distribution to the folk high-schools and study associations. The grant is first divided in two parts, one to the folk high-schools and one to the study associations (roughly 50/50). Among the study associations, it is then distributed largely based on the volume of their activities. The total sum to be distributed is therefore the same even if all study associations increase their activity numbers.

The increase in activity itself was not seen as a problem. Rather, the actors within the sphere agreed that it is valuable to jointly show a comprehensive operation that reaches many people. The argumentation for why it is a problem instead regards the difficulty in maintaining high quality operations as study associations which would constantly feel the pressure to grow their operations. Cultural programs were considered to drive this volume hunt as they were considered 'easier' to set up than other forms of activities such as study circles. A member of the working group from one study association described the perceived volume hunt as follows:

> But above all, it was that the effects [of the distribution model] that we did not like. The effect is a tremendous volume hunt. Effects that with administrative measures you could increase your government grant, this with the number of activities for example. They divided study circles; instead of having one long one, they had three smaller ones, and got three times the money... And, then we were critical of the cultural programs; they increased like this [points hand up]. So, generally we felt it was a huge volume hunt, an awful rush all the time towards volume, volume, volume. That was what we were critical of in the government grant system which now applies. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

In their letter to *Folkbildningsrådet*, *Folkbildningsförbundet* highlighted the problems that it felt the study associations jointly saw when it came to the part of the governmental grant that targeted people with disabilities and those in need of Swedish language support:

> The study associations have devoted considerable time trying to understand the new reinforcement grant [*förstärkningsbidrag*] and its application. We also

> participated in the discussions for the design of the new reinforcement grant. Ambiguities and vagueness have been discussed with *Folkbildningsrådet*, initially at the beginning of 2007 and as late as November 2007. Despite this, ambiguities remain […]. The new reinforcement grant today provides room for arbitrary interpretations of an excessive degree. This leads to uncertainty in planning, allocation, monitoring, and internal control. This was hardly the intent when the reinforcement grant was introduced and we believe that it is unacceptable. (FBR 2008b)

Besides the critique from the study associations, there was also another reason why the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* decided to review the grant distribution model. Earlier on, the board had decided to try incorporating what it called 'qualitative elements' into the distribution models. This decision was based on the criticism of the distribution models that *Folkbildningsrådet* used, expressed in a report (RiR 2004:15) from the National Audit Office (*Riksrevisonen*). The same criticism was also later expressed in the parliamentary and government directives concerning governmental grants to popular adult education. Following the comprehensive official report (SOU 2004:30) from a government appointed committee where the popular adult education was evaluated, the government presented a bill to the parliament concerning popular adult education. The evaluation noted that the distribution systems were only based on quantitative measures that only took account of the study associations' activity volumes. Despite the difficulties in finding useful measures of quality, it would be necessary, according to the evaluation, to "... examine the possibility of developing a broader base of grant distribution. The dimensional measurements now used have, in our view, significant disadvantages." (SOU 2004:30, p. 99 f.)

Further, the government wrote in the popular adult education bill of 2006:

> Within popular adult education, as in every other activity, the daily work with and awareness of quality issues at the local level make up the foundation for quality assurance of the operations. It is desirable that more systematic quality work, targeting both administration and forms for activities and content, are developed at all levels of popular adult education. This work should, of course, be based on the own objectives of popular adult education and the quality criteria that they themselves are developing, but at the same time, it should com-

> prise a broad view of the concept of quality. Quality work should not be carried out by *Folkbildningsrådet*, but by study associations and folk high-schools themselves. It must, however, be a priority task for the Council to contribute to that the work is done. (Prop. 2005/06:192, p. 49)

Furthermore, the government stated (author's own emphases):

> In addition to distributing government grants to folk high-schools and adult education, the Council [*Folkbildningsrådet*] has the task of following up and evaluating activities. This includes that qualitative and quantitative terms follow, describe, and analyze the operations funded by government grants. This material forms the basis for the Council's feedback to the government and parliament. It also forms the basis for the Council's own distribution of state subsidies and other exercise of public authority. It is eagerly that the Council draws operational conclusions from the information gathered. It is a matter which considers both [väga samman] qualitative assessments and quantitative data. It is reasonable that the Council's models for the distribution of government grants are not exclusively based on quantitative data, but that valued, qualitative elements are also added to the models. [...] A long-term approach and stability in the allocation of grants is of course important to the individual folk high-schools and study associations, but this does not contradict a long-term re-prioritization of a qualitative basis. (Prop. 2005/06:192, p. 49)

The conclusion was, therefore, that 'qualitative elements' needed to be added to the models for the distribution of governmental grants. This conclusion was repeated in additional places in the bill. As it is the responsibility of *Folkbildningsrådet* to handle the models, it was thus up to it to react to the government's recommendation.

Popular Education Council's decision on the review

In February 2009, the issue the distribution model's revision was back on the table of *Folkbildningsrådet*'s board. It was then decided to appoint a working group to review the distribution model. The group's mission was not clearly stated, but it is said that the group was to "review the distribution model and propose adjustments to the same within the framework of the current system."(FBR 2009a) As background material, the board's earlier decision to initiate efforts to introduce additional qualitative elements in the model was mentioned, and it was expected that the working group

would handle this issue. As an input for the working group, the board also mentioned the letters from different study associations, as well as a previous evaluation concerning the implementation of the distribution model. In this way, the board passed forward the problems or issues that the study associations had raised to the working group, with the expectation that they would be treated.

There were several actors who expected that *Folkbildningsrådet* would review its distribution models. This pressure was partly external with, for example, the criticism from the National Audit Office and the government bill, and the expectation to include 'qualitative elements' in the models. Moreover, there was a pressure that rather came from within; the study associations that wanted *Folkbildningsrådet* to correct aspects of the distribution model which were considered not to work satisfactorily. With the decision in *Folkbildningsrådet*'s board to review the model, it had handled both the internal and external critique.

When the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* decided to start a revision process, it needed a group that could be given the task. According to the by-laws of *Folkbildningsrådet*, the members should be invited to take part in working groups that prepared issues of importance. *Folkbildningsförbundet* was therefore asked to suggest three members of the working group. Two of the members of the new group were appointed among the board members. However, when *Folkbildningsförbundet* receives a task such as this, everyone wants to guard his or her own interest:

> It was always a hullabaloo [kattrakande] around who should be in those groups. At least for one period, there was always voting about that. And we, from our wing – SISU, Bilda, and Sensus – we were never let in into those groups. The other study associations chose to not elect us since there were always others that were more loyal lackeys to the larger study associations. (Interview, former rector study association)

This time, representatives from three of the largest study associations, namely ABF, Folkuniversitetet, and Studiefrämjandet, were selected to be in the working group. The two members from the board had their backgrounds in Bilda (a fairly small association) and Vuxenskolan (one of the

larger associations). Staff from the secretariat of *Folkbildningsrådet* was assigned the function of group secretary.

The working group starts to work

In total, the group came to have 11 meetings between March 2009 and April 2010. At the beginning, it discussed its mission and mandate on the basis of the board's decision and the available documentation. The members of the group started out by summarizing the critique from the study associations. Some of the problems highlighted were that the system promoted shorter study circles over longer ones, it encouraged the associations to produce higher volumes, and it was difficult to explain to people. The working group also thought that the system made it difficult for the study associations to renew their operations as they were afraid that they would lose governmental grants if new efforts did not succeed. At the same time, the working group emphasized that some study associations felt that the system worked relatively well and it gave opportunities for business development.

After identifying the problems with the system, the group formulated its goals for a new system. The main goal was to create a long-term and predictable grant system for study associations that would make it possible for them to plan their work and renew operations and activities. The group also believed that long-term economic stability would make it easier for student unions to renew their activities. While the system could be long-term, there must be space for study associations to grow.

"The war for resources"

The members of the group also shared another strong understanding on why the distribution model needed to be changed. This was a reason that went beyond both the systemic problems that the study associations had put forward and the government's expectation of adding qualitative elements. The members all felt that one important reason for their work was to try to solve the disagreement between the study associations on how the distribution system should be designed. One of the members of the group stated:

> We did not like… do not like the current government grant system. [...] I think it is a shortcoming that there was such a conflict around it. Now, I think that we will never get a government grant system that everyone likes and everyone thinks is ok. It's a bit like a pendulum [swinging] back and forth and I believe that one must accept. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

The main conflict between the study associations was about the share of the governmental grants that should be distributed as a basic grant (grundbidrag). The basic grant had been distributed between the study associations based on their relative share of the total governmental grant for the two previous years. For the system in operation when this process started, the share of the basic grant was 60 percent of the total grant. This way of calculation for the basic grant had the effect that even if a study association grew in terms of activities produced, the grant system would not automatically follow because a large part of the money in the grant distribution system was not directly connected to activity volume. This calculation had generally favored the larger and older study associations that no longer grew or even experienced a decline, while it disfavored the younger or growing study associations. Representatives from these latter study associations thought that the rate of redistribution was too slow and that the share of the basic grant should be lowered.

This design of the grant system had led to a critique from several study associations. The main issue was that the system had the effect that the study associations got different amounts of governmental grants in relation to their activity volume. As a result, each study association got a different amount of governmental grant per study hour (which is the unit that the volume of activities was measured by), even if the production cost or quality of the circles produced were similar. As a salient example, ABF and Vuxenskolan got around 130 SEK per study hour in 2008 while Studiefrämjandet got 85 SEK per study hour the same year (RiR 2011:12, p. 34). This was only due to the fact that the distribution model, to a large extent, was based on how much of the grant the associations had earlier received, and only a smaller part on recent activity volume. Several study associations that found themselves disfavored by the system felt that this highlighted the distribution model was 'unfair' as it favored some study associations and disfavored others. One study association rector commented:

"The hard currency that we can discuss is money per study hour. There, we do not get the same today; that is extremely difficult to explain." Other rectors described in a similar way that they saw an inherent unfairness in the distribution system. This appeared because the system did not fully take into account the present level of activities, but rather functioned as what could be described as a 'bonus system for historical achievements.'

This critique of the distribution model was not new. It had been raised earlier in a Swedish governmental official report from 2004. The governmental committee then made its own calculations, concluding that the associations which increased their activity level most during the last ten years were those that on average got least governmental grants per study hour. And, the associations which had declined activity levels instead had virtually unaltered, high levels of governmental grants per study hour. The conclusion in the report was:

> Regarding the study associations, our review demonstrates that the grant distribution cannot be said to have followed the development of activities. The grant model has a built-in 'toughness' that makes 'study associations with vigor and with operations that are well in line with the objectives of the state grant' (prop. 1990/91:82) have to stand back in favor of activities leveled off or declined. We are aware of the need for basic security in the system so that a short-term fall for an association should not lead to a significant reduction in the state subsidy, but the backlog which our analysis shows cannot be considered satisfactory. (SOU 2004:30, p. 100)

The critique from the official report was also highlighted by the National Swedish Audit Office in its special audit report on the governmental governance of popular education and sports in 2004:

> According to the National Audit Office's assessment, the way that *Folkbildningsrådet* calculates the grant to study associations disfavors associations that have increased their scope of activities rapidly. Therefore, the National Audit Office find that *Folkbildningsrådet* in, its exercise of authority, is not living up to the State intention to particularly benefit popular education activities with vigor.

> The National Audit Office suggests that the Government take the necessary measures to ensure that the state intentions of this government grant for popular adult education are met. If such measures are not deemed possible within the existing system with respect to *Folkbildningsrådet´*s free role in relation to the state, the National Audit Office hold that the Government should consider whether to propose to Parliament that the delegation of management tasks to *Folkbildningsrådet* is reconsidered. (RiR 2004:15, p. 54)

Folkbildningsrådet, however, strongly opposed this conclusion. It felt that the National Audit Office had based its conclusions on insufficient knowledge and therefore had come to the wrong conclusion. Instead, it felt that the government had earlier rejected a system based on quantitative measures and the problem was that rapid growth would lower the average governmental grant per hour, thereby threatening the quality of the popular education activities (FBR 2005).

The criticism that the system was unfair had also reach the local level of the study associations. At the level where the actual activities occur, it was difficult for the managers to understand why one study association received more governmental grants than another for the same activities. In a survey among the managers of the local chapters of study associations, several spontaneously mentioned that they perceived the distribution model based on 'history' as giving the associations different conditions for running their businesses. Thereby, the distribution models were considered to be unfair (Sjöstrand et al. 2013). One local manager wrote:

> The distribution of governmental grants has a great impact on us. Some study associations like ABF and Vuxenskolan get more [of the] governmental grant per study circle than other study associations. The distribution is adapted to the large study associations so that they have an average grant per hour that is much higher that it is for others. (Quote in Sjöstrand et al. 2013).

Another wrote:

> The construction of the governmental grant system implies an embedded unfairness, which stills reward activities that have taken place long before today. Combined with such a high basic grant as 75 percent [this] implies an inhibito-

> ry factor for the development on a number of areas. (Quote in Sjöstrand et al. 2013).

From the study associations that benefited from the distribution model, voices could be heard that criticized the whole discussion of fairness. They felt that it would be impossible to find a completely fair model. One of these benefitting study associations' rectors expressed during a meeting: "What is fair for someone is not fair for another. What I consider to be fair, you won't consider fair. Fairness in this context is usually that my study association gets more [money] and that another gets less". The logic was that these associations benefited because they had been good to adjust to previous systems and could not see why they should be punished for that today.

The process of reviewing the system as a site for conflict between the study associations, where all associations wanted a system that favored themselves, was clear to everyone. A member in the working group described the process as 'the war for resources,' commenting:

> Last time, it was a very rancorous discussion about the system. Earlier, it was a lot of discussion about the one that would reach new groups and change the activities, and that this was best under a whip with rapid redistribution [of the grant]. But, you may have a different theory about the need to have some stability, to dare to do other things, because one knows that you have little time and that it will not hurt you directly if you fail. About that, you can have different theories and there's no absolute answer. In a process like this, we know for sure which opinion everyone has on how large the basic grant should be and so on.

> When the present system was designed, it became very much so that there were some who won and there were others who lost. *Folkbildningsrådet* ran down six study associations, and went on the opinion of three study associations: Bilda, Sensus, and SISU. That was the impression, that there was a rift between the study associations. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

This conflict between the study associations was described as one reason for what many described as a widespread culture of suspicion in the relationships among the different study associations. This suspicion also

'fueled' disagreement on whether the grant distribution system was good or poorly designed:

> We are suspicious in adult education, especially within the family. What makes those others end up on the green branch? Why should not we do this when everyone else is doing it? The vast majority have the ambition to both make activities you are passionate about and not make mistakes. Then the neighbors do something that you yourself perceive as prohibited. [This] often builds on myths about what the neighbors do instead of talking with the neighbor. (Interview, rector, study association)

The members of the working group felt that the disagreement and conflicts between the study associations were a problem for *Folkbildningsrådet* and popular adult education in its entirety. They argued that it was important not to appear as fragmented because they would be stronger if they appeared together as one voice toward the government. If they all 'stuck to the family' and showed outward unity it would be easier to protect the governmental resources allocated to popular education. In its first meeting, the working group had already concluded that it wanted to find "a system that everyone can live with."(Sandahl et al 2012) The group's goal was to solve the disagreement between the study associations; to find a solution that could ease the 'war of resources.' In fact, the members all seemed to see that this was perhaps the strongest reason to revise the distribution system.

The work of the group

At the beginning, the working group had a clear ambition to start with a clean slate, that it should be a fresh start, and not let the design of earlier grant distribution systems influence its work. During its first meetings, the group started from scratch and talked about the aims with the system and what it wanted it to achieve. It was emphasized that it was important that the system "protects and develops popular education, [and] … should encourage both the government's aims and the study associations' own profiles." Moreover, it needed to support innovation, be flexible, and encourage working toward new participant groups. According to members of the group, the discussions were also very open at the beginning of the process. But, they then rather quickly discovered that it was still difficult to

think outside of the box and design something completely new. The work within this group would be completed within a year, and the time pressure made it difficult for the group to draw up a completely new distribution system. As stated by members of the working group:

> It would probably have been very bold to design a completely new model, but many have tried that before us. Had there been that perfect system then someone would have come up with it by now. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

> We had a yearning to find something new, but were not able do it. We have returned a bit to what it was before. What we have today is still pretty good but some things could have been done differently. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

During the meetings that followed, the group started to discuss more specific issues and the different parts of the distribution systems. The discussions revolved around the parameters that had been part of the previous grant distribution system.

In line with its mandate from the board of *Folkbildningsrådet*, the group also discussed the issue of qualitative elements mentioned in the government bill. Several of the members of the working group felt, however, that it was difficult to find qualitative elements that could be quantified in such a manner that they could be used in a distribution system. Besides the already existing parameters, they however came up with a new one that they argued could be seen as qualitative. This parameter was called 'unique participants' and would affect the distribution of the grants based on how many 'unique' individuals the different study associations had enrolled in their activities. The previous model had only taken into account how many participant-hours each study association had, and an individual could participate in multiple study circles and activities. One member of the working group described the problems with qualitative elements:

> The problem with qualitative elements is that it is either a matter of a valuation, or you must quantify qualitative elements. To quantify is really hard. For example, take the share of leaders in study circles that are trained. Then all study associations would have 100 percent trained leaders within two years, and you

> would not get any redistribution [of grants]. Then you have to find a qualitative element that is some kind of yardstick for what the mission is. And then unique participant is such a combination. It is very difficult to find others. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

A matter of whom gets what

When the group had given up on finding a completely new way to design the system and had come to the conclusion that it was difficult to find any 'qualitative elements,' it instead started to work with what weights the different parameters in the system should be given. This was the question that had been in the locus of the previous conflict between the study associations on how the system should be designed.

As the state grant is a central part of the study associations' economies, even small changes in the system could give tangible effects. Even if the group, in its meetings, did not have access to exact calculations, everyone knew which of the associations would benefit and lose from the different changes discussed in the weight of different parameters. This was one area where the participants jealously guarded their turf, as representatives of different interests. One of the members of the working group described the need of calculations as follows:

> I'll be honest, I went home and I had people in my staff count on this. We looked at what the effects would be. And this is important, if you decide on five or ten percent of unique participants, how it actually will hit [the different associations]. One must know this to know where to end, and we got no numbers [from the secretariat of *Folkbildningsrådet*] until the final two meetings. (Interview, member of working group, FBR)

During meetings where the top executives and chairs of the study associations met, the issue of how large the basic grant should be was further discussed. This was the one issue that everyone agreed had caused the most discussions and controversy the last time a new distribution system was designed and introduced. A member in the working group noted that: "The basic grant is like the election of a new pope. You may have to lock everyone into a room and then not let them out until they all agree."

The study associations were, on this question, divided into two fairly distinct parties. One group preferred a relatively high basic grant and the other preferred a relatively low one. A high share of basic grants was considered to benefit the study associations that had historically had large volumes of activities but were not growing or even had falling activity levels. A lower share of basic grants would, on the other hand, benefit associations which had increased activity volume in recent years. Two different lines of reasoning about the balance between basic grants and grants related to the actual activity volume were present during the meeting.

The associations that argued for a higher basic grant felt that it was important for a stable system. They thought that only when feeling secure the associations would dare to try new things; i.e., without the risk of losing governmental grants if the activities failed. They also felt that continual pressure to increase the volume of activities would threaten quality. A higher level of the basic grant would, according to them, hinder the 'volumes hunt' that they felt negatively influenced the study associations and the quality of their work. The study associations that argued for lower basic grants on the other hand felt that it was necessary to receive more grants when growing. They also felt that this would support development because the associations would dare to try new things as it would pay off with increased grants if successful. Thus, everyone agreed on the need of a system that promoted development, but they had different theories on how such a system could be designed. And, the associations which would benefit from a higher or lower basic grant therefore argued for that respectively.

The issue of quality

The issue on how much of the grant each study association would receive was considered very important. But, the group was also given the task on the issue of how qualitative elements could be integrated into the model. The conclusion that the study associations (and folk high-schools) needed to focus more on quality reappeared in several places in the then latest government bill:

> A systematic quality work, with a focus both on administration, forms of activities, and content needs to be developed at all levels within popular adult edu-

> cation. Qualitative criteria need to be added to the models used at different levels within popular adult education for distribution of governmental grants. (Prop. 2005/06:192, p. 47p)

Such quality work should start from the goals of popular adult education and should be carried out by study associations and folk high-schools themselves. *Folkbildningsrådet* would only play a supporting role in this. It did not, however, prevent the government from giving its view on what quality could mean in popular adult education. According to the government, a starting point for assessing quality within popular adult education was how the associations had achieved the objectives for the government grant. Other possible qualitative criteria mentioned were the degree of ideological profile and if the study associations had activities all over the country. Even if the activities were different, the government felt that there must be some "fundamental values and elements" and methods that make it possible to compare the quality of different activities (Prop. 2005/06:192, p. 47p).

Early on in the working group, the focus had become finding a grant distribution system that all study associations could unite around. In an interview, the chairman of the group expressed that its members really wanted to "find a system that all could live with." The reason for this focus was that there had previously been major conflicts over how the distribution system would be designed. This was perceived to damage the credibility of the study associations themselves, though *Folkbildningsrådet* could handle government grant allocation. The group would have liked to resolve the disagreement between the study associations, and this was seen as a strong reason to review the distribution system.

In contrast, the group put less emphasis on the government's desire to add qualitative elements into the distribution system. This issue that the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* had put into the mission was toned down when the working group described its interpretation of its task. The members of the working group expressed that one reason for this was that it was difficult to find 'qualitative elements' that could be quantified in such a way to be used in a grant distribution model.

Besides the representation from *Folkbildningsförbundet* in the working group, all study associations were invited to consultations to discuss a new distribution model. During these consultations, the issue of qualitative elements was also discussed. The working group presented its view on quality and emphasized that quality criteria need to be developed within each study association and cannot be defined by *Folkbildningsrådet*. The group wrote:

> The activities may be different in design, and objectives are achieved in several ways. Qualitative criteria for popular education activities make it possible to observe how the operations develop and in which direction, and provide study associations instruments […] to develop their quality work. This work should be based on overall goals for popular education and be shaped by the quality criteria that the study association themselves develop within its organization. (FBR 2009b)

After the governmental bill had been adopted by the parliament in 2007, a process began within *Folkbildningsrådet* with the aim of supporting, following up, and reporting on the quality work of popular education. It was, however, emphasized that the actual quality work should be done by the study associations and folk high-schools themselves. This meant that the study associations, from the beginning, had the responsibility of forming their own quality criteria and quality had to be operationalized within each study association.

In 2007/2008, however, a common reference group for quality work was formed. With the support of *Folkbildningsrådet*, it would work with quality issues. It consisted of representatives from folk high-schools and study associations, and a researcher from the School of Public Administration in Gothenburg. The group organized a variety of conferences, and meetings were held to discuss quality issues and develop proposals. It decided early on to limit the discussion of quality to the purposes of the government grant and then seven especially important activity areas that the popular education bill had pointed out.

In a memo for a conference of folk high-schools in 2008, the reference group wrote:

> The aim is that the indicator system […] developed will be used to regularly review the existence and condition of the quality in the activities of the study associations and folk high-schools. Information that the system produces will be used as a basis for *Folkbildningsrådet´*s grant distribution, but also to demonstrate before parliament, the government, and citizens that the activities [which] popular education conducts are of [the] intended quality. That, in turn, means that the system should have a structured format with common quality standards for popular education. The indicators could be the same or different between study associations and folk high-schools. Quality characteristics and indicators enable the organizations to be compared to each other and with themselves over time. (FBR 2008c)

The group gave suggestions on the indicators with regard to conditions such as teacher training, processes such as internal democracy, achievements such as participants' age, sex, and number of gatherings, and participator effects such as new knowledge, well-being, and community. The reference group's work, however, did not result in any common indicators. Instead, it was determined that all folk high-schools and study associations would provide a quality report to *Folkbildningsrådet*. This did not need to conform to any particular template. One of the reasons that there were no common indicators is said to be due to the fact that the board of RIO was negative to this. In a letter to *Folkbildningsrådet*, it stated that: "RIO's representative have not … endorsed the existence of common indicators." (FBR 2008d)

Folkbildningsförbundet was also negative to the common indicators. When the work with quality was to start in 2007 it clearly stated:

> The basis for *Folkbildningsrådet*'s work should be to conduct a dialog with study associations and familiarize themselves with their different management systems and management processes for quality work. *Folkbildningsrådet* should not, however, develop its own quality system like, for example, the National Agency for School Improvement and National Agency for Higher Education. (FBF 2007a)

Folkbildningsförbundet also wrote:

> Quality development is linked to each study association's idea, profile, and focus and differs therefore in the different federations. An important quality cri-

> terion is the degree of consistency between the study association's activities and its identity. (FBF 2007a)

The study associations have strongly emphasized that every association itself defines quality criteria and then carries out the work. However, they have agreed to present one common indicator; that is, the share of the study circle leaders that have been educated in study circle pedagogy.

The final proposal from the working group

After a final round of deliberations with the top executives of the study associations, the working group presented its proposal for a new grant distribution system. The basic structure of the new distribution system is similar to earlier systems, especially the one that was in use at the time.

The main issue had, as shown, been how large the share of the basic grant should be. Here, the group had agreed on a significantly higher basic grant. The share of this grant was raised to 75 percent compared to the 60 percent that had been the level of the previous system. The share of the grant more directly related to the activity level was lowered from 40 to 25 percent.

The group also suggested that the activity-related grant should include a new basis for allocation. This was called unique participants, and the grant would be allocated due to the number of individuals that each study association enrolled in its activities. Former models had only taken into account how many study hours the associations had produced. The motivation for this new part of the system was that the state wanted to reach many people in popular education activities.

Referral round

In May 2010, the group gave its proposal to the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* and its mission was thus considered complete. The board then sent the proposal on referral to the ten government grant-eligible study associations and by the end of September every association had submitted its reply.

The comments that came in are recognizable from the earlier deliberations between study associations and the working group. The associations were divided into two fairly distinct groups and the main conflict still

seemed to apply to how quickly the relative changes in the volume of activities would affect the allocation of the grant (the basic grant issue). Bilda, Ibn Rushd, KBV, and Sensus wanted to keep the current level of 60 percent basic grant or lower it. ABF, FU, NBV, Medborgarskolan, Studiefrämjandet, and Vuxenskolan were either satisfied with the proposal of 75 percent or advocated an even higher level. Even in the disagreement between the study associations was one of the working groups prime reasons for revising the system, it seemed to remain; and as strong as ever. The four associations that advocated a lower basic grant then decided to write a joint letter to the board of *Folkbildningsrådet*. In the letter they suggested that the current distribution system remained.

The presidium of *Folkbildningsrådet* meets the study associations

In late November 2010, after the referral period had expired, the chairman and the vice-chairman of *Folkbildningsrådet* invited representatives from the study associations to a final deliberation. The reason was that some of the associations had asked to meet the chairman prior to the decision. The chair then decided to instead meet with all the study associations so that they would all have the opportunity to give additional comments.

The study associations that had criticized the proposal in their referral responses expressed criticisms about the revision process during the meeting. A large part of the criticism focused on the issue that they had not experienced the process as open and transparent, and felt that they could not therefore fully participate. Even if *Folkbildningsförbundet* had appointed a majority of the members of the working group, the associations nevertheless felt that their opinions and experiences had not been represented. And although they had been summoned to meetings during the work and left comments and questions, they felt that these had not been taken into account in, and been answered by, the proposal. As noted: "Four or five study associations think it is a bad proposal. How will you handle that? The major slogan of the deliberation in Nacka [meeting early on in the process] was a system that everyone can live with." (Quote by rector of study association, noted by observation) These study associations did not consider the proposal as acceptable and wanted the process to continue with the ambition that the study associations would agree on the design. In this way, it

would also be possible to wait for the report from the Swedish National Audit Office on the government grant to the study associations that would soon be finished. They felt that this report would have implications for how government funding would be allocated.

The proposal to work on the issue was, however, opposed by others who thought that the local units of study associations were waiting for information on how the funds would be distributed. They also doubted that the study associations could agree on how the system should be designed. Moreover, those who opposed argued that the Swedish National Audit Office's report did not have the ambition of suggesting changes in the system, but focused on whether there are ambiguities that needed to be corrected in the state regulations that ruled the government's support for popular education. It was also expressed that several of the associations which were in favor of the new proposal had had strong objections to the former system and suggested that the board must also be able to make an independent decision on the distribution system.

The chair and vice-chair of *Folkbildningsrådet* emphasized toward the end of the deliberation that the upcoming decision was not a rush job and that after this and the referral documents, they were well aware of the differences in opinion between the study associations. They had also realized that the decision would not be able to make everyone happy, but wanted instead to see which proposals that a majority could support.

The board makes it decision

In December 2010, the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* made its decision on how the distribution model should be designed. This would be applied from 2012 onward. Before this, the secretariat had been asked to further elaborate on some of the issues that came up in the referral process. One such issue was the difference in government grants per study hour. However, the differences concluded with the new model (between 89 and 132 SEK per study hour) led to no concrete proposals for changes.

After the final deliberation with the study associations, the chair and vice-chair of the board proposed some changes to the working group's proposal. Doing this, they tried to form a compromise that, at least to some extent, would meet the criticism from the study associations that opposed

the new proposal. For example, they suggested a basic grant of 70 percent instead of the working group's proposal of 75 percent.

However, the board decided on only some minor changes in accordance with the working group's proposal. The basic grant became 75 percent and the system remained more in favor of the historically large and dominant study associations.

Summary and preliminary analysis

In this case, I have followed how the main internal governance unit in the field (IGU) works to develop a new distribution model for government grants to study association. As seen, this is done through the high involvement of other actors in the field, and the especially the grant revivers themselves – the study associations. Through participation in the working group, in deliberations and in referral rounds the study associations have the possibility to influence how the distribution model should be formed. This whole process is characterized as a "war about the resources" which in the analytical framework of Strategic Action Field (Fligstein & McAdam 2012) could be understood as if the actors engage in a constant jockeying for resources and position within the field.

In line with the more general renegotiation of the state-civil society relationship that I have described at the end of Chapter 4, we can here see how the government field pressure for the implantation of NPM-inspired mechanisms in the governance of the field. Here it is several actors in the government field (e.g. the National Audit Office, government official reports and government through bill) that emphasize the need for "a more systematic quality work" both within the administration and for the form and content of the work carried out by the organizations in the field. They also meant that "qualitative elements" needed to be added to the model for the distribution of grants. This pressure is mention as one main reason why a new model is needed. But at the same time, the actors find it hard to implement and tries to neutralize the demands from government mainly by arguing against that it should be implemented in the distribution model between the study association and instead state that every study association has the responsibility to form a quality management model by them self.

The result of this process is therefore a clear separation between the quality systems and the distribution model for the grant.

Within the SAF framework, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) argue that formal organizations, like *Folkbildningsrådet*, can in themselves be seen and analyzed as a special kind of "miniature" strategic action fields. In this case, it might be hard to make the distinction if the 'battle' over the new distribution model mainly take place on the popular education field where *Folkbildningsrådet* is an actor (main IGU). Or, if it mainly takes place inside the "miniature" strategic action field which *Folkbildningsrådet* constitute as an organization. It is through the by-laws of *Folkbildningsrådet* and it's governance structure that the study associations 'battle' over the model. One possible conclusion is that *Folkbildningsrådet* in this cases mainly functions as an arena for this battle rather than an actor in its own right.

Case 3. A trade association and a public administrative authority

In this case, I follow a process within the field of popular education in Sweden where the role of *Folkbildningsrådet* and its relationship to it members are being questioned and subsequently also altered. It deals with the issue of how the legitimacy of the corporative arrangement is questioned and how this leads to organizational changes within the main internal governance unit of the field. In this particular story, *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Folkbildningsförbundet* (the Swedish National Federation of Study Associations) and the study associations are the main foci rather than the folk high-schools and their members, who also are members of the national council.

Introduction – the process starts

At the beginning of 2011, the rector of ABF, one of the major and most influential study associations in the field, took the initiative of a consultation between the members of the board in *Folkbildningsförbundet*. The board was, with some exceptions, composed of the top executives from each of the ten study associations. The board headed out to Bommersvik, the educational institute of the Social-Democratic Youth Alliance of Sweden. On the table for discussion was a concern that had started to spread among the executives that things did not work smoothly within and between *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Folkbildningsförbundet*. There was considered to be 'a mish-mash' regarding what tasks *Folkbildningsförbundet* should focus on and what *Folkbildningsrådet* should do. Further, there was also the issue of what the single study associations should be responsible for, and what the associations should do together and cooperate around. This consultation was initiated shortly after the model review process within *Folkbildningsrådet* had been completed. In that process, described in detail in the previous case, the study associations had very different opinions about the design of the model. Even the study associations that were pleased with the final model felt that the process had not been satisfying. One of the members of the working group who had represented *Folkbildningsrådet* in the work described it as follows:

> This review process of the government grant system, where you are appointed like some kind of hostage in a working group, is completely unreasonable. I would never put myself in that situation again, never ever. You end up in a really strange situation. One should be loyal both to your own organization and loyal to others who think quite differently. In a situation where the government grant is not playing the role that it has done anymore, then what can *Folkbildningsrådet* require of us? And then they have to be very precise in their public authority duties. (Interview, rector, study association)

On this top-level consultation meeting at Bommersvik, the participants did try to find a new distribution model for the government grant that they all could unite on. They decided to give it a serious try when representatives from all associations were present, however noting, that they were unable to common ground:

> But we could not do it. As soon as that question came up, it became obvious [that] too many of the competitors sat and tried to guard their own interests. Now we have built up trust and an atmosphere in *Folkbildningsförbundet* based on reliance and openness. But, if we went on and discussed the grant distribution model, that atmosphere would be gone. (Interview, rector, study association)

Everyone realized that they could not agree on how the government grant system should be designed. The fact that *Folkbildningsförbundet* was trying to take over the responsibility for grant distribution from *Folkbildningsrådet*, which some of them earlier had argued for, was therefore not a possible way forward. But the representatives of the study associations agreed that something needed to be done about how *Folkbildningsrådet* would work and how it should perform the tasks vested in the organization as a government authority. As one of the rectors commented:

> I think it is a completely obsolete system. I think you have to start all over. And I think that the conditions are in place now. There is a great awareness among the study associations that we cannot own the system ourselves. *Folkbildningsrådet* must do that and they must take responsibility. But there is also a very big skepticism about whether *Folkbildningsrådet* has the expertise to do it. So, there is a desire to clarify the public-authority role (*myndighetsrollen*) of *Folkbildningsrådet*, for us to take a step back. We have even discussed whether we

> should refuse to sit in working groups in the future and say that we are not taking part anymore. But then the statutes must be changed; we just cannot do it overnight. (Interview, rector, study association)

Instead of trying to solve how the grant system should be (re)designed, the members started to lay what they described as a 'puzzle' where they tried to sketch what they should do together, and what they say the role of *Folkbildningsförbundet* should be in relation to *Folkbildningsrådet*. A starting point for the discussion was that something needed to be done to strengthen the legitimacy of organized popular education as a whole and the structure where they themselves, through *Folkbildningsrådet*, had the formal task of handling the grant. That this structure was the best for popular education as a whole they all agreed on. No one wanted to return to the time and situation when the earlier government agency, the National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*), had that role. But at the same time, they realized that it was not good that the associations themselves both set the rules and administer the rules, and finally also control that the rules are being followed. As noted by one of the rectors: "That situation creates bad trust and a bad credibility."

In the following fall, the group members decided to travel together to Istanbul to continue to work on the 'puzzle.' During this trip, they started to discuss how the relationship between the study associations, and between the associations and the state with its different agencies, should be set up and work. Further, they also discussed who should be responsible for the necessary advocacy work toward the government and local municipalities where they had seen a rapid decrease in grant levels for popular education. The conclusion of the Istanbul meeting was that the representatives active in *Folkbildningsförbundet* needed to consider themselves as bering more of a 'trade or industry association.' One of the rectors present described the meeting as follows:

> In Istanbul, we turned *Folkbildningsförbundet´s* task and role upside down. […] And we talked about what the mission or task for *Folkbildningsförbundet* should be. One part of the mission was to be a joint body for the study associations that could communicate the public good [*samhällsnytta*] of the study associations in society. Another part concerned issues around ethics and quality work

> and that we, in some cases, could have common contractual arrangements and do things together administratively as we do with Gustav [an administrative system].
>
> So, we started to discuss that we should become a trade association [*branschorganisation*], and we agreed upon this at that very point. And, as I remember it, there were a couple of us then, like the rector of NBV and myself and others, who brought that model [with a trade association] with us from other contexts. (Interview, rector, study association)

The idea with this new label and identity of a trade or industry association was to acknowledge that they were competitors but that they, at the same time, had common interests. In that case, the study associations were in the very same situation as corporations within the same industry. They were dependent on each other in the sense that if one of the study associations got into trouble, it would spread to the others. And, if one reach out successfully, everyone would benefit. If *Folkbildningsförbundet* could function as a 'trade association' this would also be the natural place for the associations to coordinate themselves and find common rules for how to act and relate to each other. *Folkbildningsförbundet* would then also be the natural platform for joint advocacy. This would mean that it would be possible to speak with one and the same voice and thereby use *Folkbildningsförbundet's* formal membership in *Folkbildningsrådet* more effectively.

Pressure from the Swedish National Audit Office

Later the same year, the Swedish National Audit Office released an audit report concerning the government grant to popular education. The report further strengthened the impression in the board of *Folkbildningsförbundet* that something needed to be done. Otherwise, the legitimacy and credibility of popular education and the associations would eventually be harmed. The board's conclusion was that the relationship between the tasks of *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Folkbildningsförbundet* needed to be more clearly defined. As they had started to talk about *Folkbildningsförbundet* as a 'trade association', where the associations could coordinate and work together with advocacy, this should therefore not be the role of *Folkbildningsrådet*. As the criticism had been strong from the Swedish National Audit Office that the council

was too involved in how the grant was distributed, it was felt that *Folkbildningsrådet* needed to become more autonomous in that process. The board's conclusion was therefore that *Folkbildningsrådet* needed to be stronger in its exercise of the public authority vested in them; that is, the council needed to act and appear more as a state agency. In this way, *Folkbildningsförbundet* would be able to be more independent and act in the interest of its members. "The Swedish National Audit Office really was a catalyst for us. We realized that we have a real credibility problem. It is about trust, and then we have to back off." (Interview, rector, study association)

When *Folkbildningsförbundet* had decided that it needed to clarify the distinction in roles between *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Folkbildningsförbundet*, it had to sort out the more practical details as to how that should be done. It needed some kind of material to present to the other two members of *Folkbildningsrådet*. Therefore, they asked a consultant with a background as undersecretary in the Ministry of Education to produce a report.

The report

The consultant started his work in the fall of 2012. He perceived that the background for his work was to suggest measures that would safeguard the legitimacy for the model where *Folkbildningsrådet* have the authoritative tasks to distribute and follow up the popular education grant. The independence aspect was central, that an organization owned by the actors themselves had this task and not a government agency which had previously been the case.

The common understanding among the study associations was that there was no immediate threat against this model. There was no majority in Swedish parliament advocating a change, and no such suggestions had been put on paper. However, a feeling had started to spread that the way the model currently worked could pose a long-term threat as the consultant commented:

> But, something is dawning among policy makers, local politicians, officials, both nationally and locally, and also among civil society organizations outside popular education. Thus, the state contributes 3.5 billion SEK [approximately € 350 million] in a bag and then they [the study associations and folk high-schools] can do whatever they want with the money. And besides that, they

> decide for themselves how they allocate the money. And no one really cares about it. (Interview, consultant)

With this background, the hired consultant began to interview actors within the sector. He also reviewed the different reports and evaluations that previously had dealt with the role of *Folkbildningsrådet*. One problem, according to these interviews and the review had been that it could be suspected that the representatives from the three members in the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* took up their seats on the board just to guard the interest of their organizations. The suspicion that *Folkbildningsförbundet* only was guarding the interest of the study associations as their members, RIO the narrow interest of the civil society folk high schools, while SKL took part to protect special interest of their own folk high schools. Whatever the case and the situation in reality, the mere possibility that this suspicion was on the table was considered highly problematic.

Another issue was the composition of the different working groups assigned with the task of preparing different types of proposals to the board of *Folkbildningsrådet*. Especially the groups reviewing the grant distribution models to suggest changes were a hot topic. Such an overhaul had recently been concluded (see the previous case for a description of that particular process) and it was being questioned both from the members of the group and from external evaluators.

Representatives from *Folkbildningsförbundet* felt that it was an impossible task to sit in the council and be able to speak for all study associations as they had such different views of how the model should be designed. This was difficult partly because the individual representative would run the obvious risk of being accused of only caring about and guarding the interests of their own study association. The mix in the group of member representatives (that was, representatives from the different types of grant recipients), board members and office staff from *Folkbildningsrådet* was also considered to make it almost impossible for the board to oppose the proposal from the group. Instead, it turned into more of a formality that the board should just pass the decision.

When the consultant presented his report to *Folkbildningsförbundet*, he began by presenting a number of fundamental starting points for his work.

The first point of departure concerned the principle that *Folkbildningsrådet* should be responsible for the grant distribution. He wrote:

> Protect and preserve the principle of self-management where popular education itself, through its organization *Folkbildningsrådet*, decides on the allocation of the government grant based on state objectives. The popular education [field] should be free and independent, and be governed by the interests of its members and participants. That is a principle that has as broad support within popular education as it does in the parliament and government. (FBF 2012, p.1)

He then clarified that an important reason for the suggested changes was that the legitimacy of the model needed to be strengthened:

> Strengthening the legitimacy of the model with *Folkbildningsrådet* both internally toward the popular education organizations and [externally] toward the surrounding society and decision makers [is needed]. *Folkbildningsrådet* should stand strong and free in its exercise of public authority and needs to be given prerequisites to impartially handle its authoritative tasks in relation to the member organizations. Forms for decision and processing public authority when it comes to distributing government grants should be done autonomously and independently, and with a high degree of openness and transparency. (ibid.)

Besides these two starting points, he also stated that he experienced that *Folkbildningsrådet´*s follow-up and control functions should be strengthened, and that the evaluation on behalf of government should be conducted by some other body than *Folkbildningsrådet*. Through a clarification of the different roles of the members, the secretariat, and the board of the council, and also increased clarity regarding which tasks besides the distribution of grants that *Folkbildningsrådet* should conduct, the ambition was to strengthen the possibilities for the organizations of popular education to influence and govern *Folkbildningsrådet*.

With this as a backdrop, the consultant continued to present a number of proposals. The report contained proposals regarding how the by-laws of *Folkbildningsrådet* could be changed, which processes that were better al-

tered, and a number of other issues that the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* needed to address.

One of the major changes suggested concerned way in which the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* was being elected. Since the founding of *Folkbildningsrådet*, each of its three members had named their own representatives to serve on the board. The study associations have, through *Folkbildningsförbundet*, had the right to four seats. Two representatives, appointed by RIO and SKL, had represented the folk high schools. Together with a chairman elected at the general assembly of the council, these representatives had constituted the board. The consultant now proposed that the board needed to be more independent in relation to the members and thereby also more independent from the receivers of the grant. Instead of letting the three member organizations appoint their own representatives, it was suggested that the entire board should be elected by the general assembly. This implied that the "members of the board will have complete responsibility for the entirety and not just represent particular interests." (ibid. p. 4) This new arrangement was to be achieved through the election of a nomination committee that could prepare the election. Instead of suggesting representatives for the members of *Folkbildningsrådet* to the board, the nomination committee was to be guided in their preparatory work by a number of explicit competencies.

Another major change suggested was that the system with working groups should be abolished. This way of working had also been used for a very long time and functioned in a similar way. The three members of *Folkbildningsrådet* were given the opportunity to name representatives for different working groups with the task to prepare proposals to the board. This had been the case, for instance, when new grant distribution models were designed. The consultant wrote:

> In processing decisions related to the government grant and other [decisions] with a public authority character [*myndighetskaraktär*], a clear distinction and refining between the roles of *Folkbildningsrådet* and its member organizations should be made. The secretariat´s role in processing these matters should be more independent [from the member organizations]. Against this background, it is proposed that the current 'working groups' are abolished and replaced by 'advisory groups' in order to separate the tasks. The advisory groups should be

> a support for the processing of the secretariat and the groups should not submit proposals of their own. It is the secretariat's task to submit proposals and [it is] the board that needs to make independent decisions. (ibid. p. 3)

With this proposal, the long tradition of the study associations having great impact on how government grants were distributed would end. Through this proposal, their influence over this central process in the distribution of resources in the field would be significantly lower.

Besides these two major changes in the way in which *Folkbildningsrådet* would be governed and function, the consultant also suggested that a number of guidelines and policy documents had to be developed. He suggested, for example, that the evaluation that Folkbildningsrådet conducted should be given another role. Instead of evaluations focused on the government's objectives with the grant, *Folkbildningsrådet* should, according to him, focus on follow-up reports based on the facts that the council themselves collect. The more objective-entered evaluations should instead be externally conducted by other bodies in the state administration.

Evaluations made by *Folkbildningsrådet* should always be based on the knowledge that the popular education associations need and have the study associations and folk high schools as recipients. They should be "promoting [*främjande*] and not controlling." (ibid. p. 5) *Folkbildningsrådet* should also voluntarily, in its by-laws, impose that it would follow the administrative decree (*förvaltningslagen*) when handling the government grant in the same way that state agencies did. In general, *Folkbildningsrådet* should act according to the same type of requirements that government had on its own agencies. The clear ambition was that "working methods and processing of authority tasks, as far as possible, should be similar to other agencies with the task of distributing state funds." (ibid. p. 2)

Taking the process further

When the consultant concluded his report to *Folkbildningsförbundet*, it consequently had a more solid platform from which to continue. To be able to change *Folkbildningsrådet*, they needed to have also the two other members – RIO and SKL – on their side. RIO with member schools belonging to civil society in a similar way as the study associations, would be the natural or-

ganization to start the discussions with. However, within *Folkbildningsförbundet* it was perceived that RIO itself had had a different agenda when it suggested that the folk high schools should be given a larger share of the total governmental grant going to popular education. Even if *Folkbildningsförbundet* and RIO disagreed when it came to money issues, however, they could probably agree about how *Folkbildningsrådet* should be governed and which tasks the council should handle. SKL also agreed with the conclusions of report and it was sent to *Folkbildningsrådet*.

At the general assembly of *Folkbildningsrådet* in the spring of 2013, suggestions came from the members as to how *Folkbildningsrådet* should work in the future. The final proposals were, however, not yet in place. The secretary general of ABF therefore proposed that the meeting should be adjourned and continued again after the summer. When the general assembly met again in September, a proposal had been distributed to the delegates. The secretary general of ABF took the lead in the meeting and presented the proposal that the members had. The proposal they agreed upon was almost identical with the proposals found in the report that *Folkbildningsförbundet* had ordered. The delegates of the general assembly are all representatives from the three member organizations, and the proposal was approved by the assembly.

The new by-laws, immediately decided by the assembly and confirmed in a document called 'A renewed *Folkbildningsråd*,' were handed over to the board as the guidelines aimed at guiding the upcoming overhaul work within the council. The board was also given the task by the assembly to return to them with a proposal of measures that needed to be, and had been, taken as a result of the new guidelines.

The nomination committee, led by the secretary-general of ABF, had already worked and prepared nominations according to the new by-laws and instructions in the report. The committee had agreed that if *Folkbildningsrådet* should be able to have a new start, and really be able to remain more independent vis-à-vis its members, the proposal for the board needed to signal this. Guided by the competencies mentioned in the proposal, the committee therefore also put forth an almost entirely new board. Only one member, a social-democratic Member of Parliament and former minister of education, was suggested for re-election. The new chairman of the board

was brought in from the cabinet office where she had worked as a government mediator.

With these decisions, the members had made it clear that *Folkbildningsrådet´*s only role was to handle tasks related to the public-authority dimension of the government grant. To promote popular education in general and conducting different types of development projects for the study associations and folk high schools were instead tasks suitable for the three member organizations.

Folkbildningsförbundet changes its name – and identity

The same spring as the general assembly of *Folkbildningsrådet* was held, also *Folkbildningsförbundet* held a general assembly. The discussions that had been simmering around the mission and task for *Folkbildningsförbundet* had come to a conclusion, and a new mission statement and overall goals for the work of *Folkbildningsförbundet* were formulated and decided by the assembly, clearly in line with the proposals from the board. The new mission statement that was to guide the work of the organization in the following years clearly identified *Folkbildningsförbundet* as a trade association and put the focus on its advocacy role: "*Folkbildningsförbundet* is an interest and trade association that shall strengthen the idea of popular education and the study associations' position in society."[11]

Within the overall ambitions for the overhaul, the three areas identified early on in the process were the same areas mentioned before, namely: to work with issues around quality, ethics, and joint contracts when favorable. When it came to the advocacy role, the organization wrote:

> *Folkbildningsförbundet*'s communication shall contribute to the strengthening of popular education and highlighting its importance to people and society. Popular education is a positively loaded term that, to a large extent, should be associated with the activities of the study associations. Study associations should be perceived as important actors in society and in the public debate. (FBF 2013a)

[11] In Swedish: Folkbildningsförbundet är en intresse- och branschorganisation som ska stärka folkbildningens idé och studieförbundens ställning i samhället.

Two years later, the trade association (*branschorganisation*) term is also incorporated in the statutes as a description of what *Folkbildningsförbundet* is. To clarify that it shall be the joint organization for study associations, it was also decided that it should change its name. *Folkbildningsförbundet* now became *Studieförbunden i Samverkan* (literally, Study Associations in Cooperation).

Trying the new model

Only one week after the general assembly was held in *Folkbildningsförbundet*, the board of *Folkbildningsförbundet*sent a formal letter to *Folkbildningsrådet* without any motive: "The board of *Folkbildningsförbundet* has decided to submit a request to *Folkbildningsrådet* to undertake a review of the government grant rules for the study associations." (FBF 2013b) This was the year after the new trade association model was being introduced. The board of *Folkbildningsrådet*, however, immediately gave the secretariat the task of developing a plan for how this review could be carried out. With this, *Folkbildningsrådet*, for the first time, tried to work with the government grant model under the new by-laws and with recommendations from the members. This meant that the organization treated the individual study associations as grant receivers only and did not grant them any influence on how the new model was being processed. Nevertheless, the study associations were called upon to give their views on the current system. The secretary general of *Folkbildningsrådet*, described the new situation as follows:

> But then we separate, and then they don't have any influence on how we develop the system. And when we present it, they [the study associations] can write their statement of opinion and tell us everything they think about it […] but it is we ourselves that handle it, and it is our board that takes the decision. So, it is a difference from before when they [the individual study associations] themselves as interest organizations were involved to a much higher degree and both did the analysis of what needed to be changed and were involved in designing the new system. And, that was one of the things that they themselves did not think worked; that the interest organizations cannot speak for every association. […] This becomes more transparent and it will be more of the same conditions for everyone to be able to influence. And, I think that this is good also for the legitimacy of the system. (Interview, top management, FBR)

Hence, instead of forming a working group among the members, the secretariat of *Folkbildningsrådet* itself started to work with the issue. The work begun by a survey conducted among the study associations to find out what they considered as the main strengths and weaknesses in the present system, and what they wanted the new one to accomplish. Thereafter, a group of staff members was formed with a project manager in charge who had to come up with a new proposal. Three times during this work, the study associations were formally invited to meetings for information and discussions.

In January 2015, a proposal was sent out for hearing to the study associations. In the material, *Folkbildningsrådet* clearly stated that the objectives with the grant from government had been the starting point for its overhaul and that the regulations and distribution model proposed were chosen to meet the intentions of government's goals and objectives (FBR 2015a).

The proposed distribution model from the secretariat differed in many ways from the models which *Folkbildningsrådet* had before. The basic grant, which was calculated on the basis of earlier grant levels, was completely abandoned and more than 80 percent of the money was instead distributed as related to the study associations' activity levels for no more than three years previously. This would, to a much higher extent, mean that the study associations would receive governmental grants on the basis of what they actually did today, not based on historical facts as before. Thus, the redistribution of resources from declining to growing study associations would be much faster than earlier. This was also the main issue discussed intensely during the process when the present system was designed. *Folkbildningsrådet* also made reference to the critique from the Swedish National Audit Office which related to the huge difference in the amount per study hour ("*kronor per studietimme*") between the study associations for their work. The new system would also be an answer to that critique with the ambition to minimize those differences.

New graphic profile

To finally mark that *Folkbildningsrådet* had received a new and clarified mission, it was also decided that the organization's graphic profile would be updated. A design studio was hired which was given the task of mapping

the graphic expression of "other state agencies" in order to find a way in which also *Folkbildningsrådet* could appear more agency-like. In February 2015, the web address was changed from the more general and generic www.folkbildning.se (literally: "popular education") to instead include only its formal name www.folkbildningsradet.se. At the same time the logo was being changed. The new logo is, according to the design studio, hyphened and highlighted to indicate that *Folkbildningsrådet* is one actor in a flow between the state and the grant receivers. In the press release that was submitted the new profile was being described as:

> More distinct and more authority-like. That's what *Folkbildningsrådet* wants to signal with its new graphic profile.
>
> Last year, *Folkbildningsrådet* was instructed by its members to clarify its mission and become more authority-like. Accordingly, *Folkbildningsrådet* has now updated its visual identity.
>
> With the updated profile, we want to signal a clearer image of the renewed *Folkbildningsrådet* and emphasize its government authority task, says Anna-Carin Bylund, unit responsible for communication and follow-up at *Folkbildningsrådet*. (FBR 2015b)

Summary and preliminary analysis

In this particular case, I have followed a process where the members of *Folkbildningsrådet* came to clarify the mission of the council and make it more government authority-like. In the case, we can see how actors began to form a new common understanding that it has become 'messy' to understand the role of *Folkbildningsrådet* – the main IGU in the field – in relation to the umbrella organization of the study associations – *Folkbildningsförbundet*. This new understanding was primarily concerned with the distribution of responsibility between the different actors, including the fact that it was unclear who had the responsibility for advocating and promoting the broader concept of "popular education" in relation to government. Further, there was a growing awareness among the actors within the field that the model with *Folkbildningsrådet* as a classical membership-based organization from the corporatist era with high involvement and participation of the

grant recipients themselves in the administration of the substantial grant from government was losing legitimacy with important actors in the government field.

This process can serve as a salient example of how de-corporatization initiates internal processes in a field simply because a number of key actors have a 'feeling' that something needs to be done. I interpret this as a form of social skill (Fligsten & McAdam 2012; Kluttz & Fligstein 2016) were actors in the field try to navigate what they perceive as a new reality in order to safeguard both the field and their position within it. On paper, in the rules and formal regulations concerning *Folkbildningsrådet*, nothing has changed that would have triggered the process. The driving force was instead that a number of actors were starting to behave differently.

This feeling was then enforced when an actor from the state field, the Swedish National Audit Office, in a report criticized the high involvement of the study associations themselves in the administration of the grant. My interpretation is that the National Audit Office is one of the stronger advocates of the introduction of NPM-inspired models within Swedish government and that their critique in this particular case should also be understood in line with this. After this critique was launched, the actors in the field came to the conclusion that they had "a real credibility problem. It is about trust, and then we have to back off" (Interview, rector study association). This led to a number of organizational changes of the IGU *Folkbildningsrådet* to more clearly highlight and emphasize its independence and also make it look more like an ordinary government agency.

In this discussion, some vital parts of the tacit shared understanding in the popular education field are revealed. Popular education should be free from the state, and the very establishment and existence of *Folkbildningsrådet* is based on this understanding. With a membership-owned organization instead of a government agency – tasked with the responsibility for the administration of the government grant, independence should be safeguarded. Organizations in the popular education field should instead of mainly being governed by government policy, form their operations based on the idea and ideal of 'popular education' and the respective ideologies and democratic structures of the organizations themselves.

This part of the tacit shared understanding had, up until this point, instead been mirrored primarily in the internal governance system of the council, *Folkbildningsrådet*. Representatives of the study associations and folk high-schools have themselves taken an active part in the board and working groups of *Folkbildningsrådet*, and they have therefore been able to form the administration of the grant based on their knowledge of the field. At the same time, it becomes obvious that an important part of the tacit shared understanding concerns the relationship between the state and the organizations. In this respect, maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of government constitutes the main reason for the changes made. And, all the actors in the field are aware of the considerable size of the grant and its huge importance.

Case 4. SISU, *Riksidrottsförbundet*, and the battle over governmental grants

This is a case where transformations in the governmental funding system for SISU, the study association of the sports movement, are followed and analyzed. Further, we will see how *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU implement changes that bring these two organizations closer together. This case can tell us a great deal about how transformations of the relationship to the government field alter the borders of a field, but it also illustrates the allocations of resources in a field from a different perspective. The case is in this thesis approached mainly from the perspective of the actors in the sports field, but it is apparent that it also takes place within the popular education field and the case serves, in this way, as a connection between the two different fields that are the focus of this thesis.

A study associations for sports

Educational activities have for a long time been a part of the sports movement. Part of that work had been done in the form of study circles, organized within different national study organizations, primarily ABF. In the late 1970s, the sports movement started discussions around if the movement should have its own national study organizations. Then, it was recognized that the volume of the study circles within the sports movement, but formally organized within other national study organizations, had grown. This volume had reached a critical mass which could therefore constitute a study organization in its own right. At this time, education issues for the movement were handled as an integrated part of *Riksidrottsförbundet* (more on how this was done later). But, with this volume of study circles, it would be possible to form a separate, but closely related, organization. Nevertheless, it was not a given that the movement should form its own associations. Critical voices were raised that argued that there was no need as there were other study associations around.

Many leaders within the sports movement were anchored within these other study associations. A main positive argument was that a separate organization could strengthen the educational issues and methods with local

study circles that would be suitable to use as the need for more educated leaders increased. Besides this argument, there was also the fact that with its own study organization, the sports movement could collect and control the governmental grants that were available both on national and local levels.

At the general assembly for *Riksidrottsförbundet* in 1983, a decision was taken to go ahead and form its own study organization. In September 1985, representatives from the national sports associations that were members of *Riksidrottsförbundet* then finally gathered to form SISU. The year after, SISU became entitled to governmental support for the first time. At that time, the governmental support for adult education was handled by the state agency Skolöverstyrelsen.

SISU representatives had the impression that the other study organizations found it reasonable that the sports movement had its own study organization. That was the case for other popular movements such as the temperance movement, the labor movement, and the free churches. And, in the beginning, ABF, the study association of the labor movement, helped SISU as noted by a former chair of SISU:

> And throughout the beginning, ABF was actually assisting, it thought that it was okay that the sport movement got its own study association. Popular adult education in Sweden and the popular movements belong together, of course, they should have an educational association. Other popular movements had that. And so it started.(Interview, former chair, SISU)

In its first year with governmental grants (1986), SISU had the goal of organizing 150 000 study hours. It managed to achieve half of this. During the years that followed, SISU however experienced a rapid growth compared to the other national study organizations. In 2007, it reported 1.3 million study hours. This growth soon became problematic in relationship to the other study associations. Especially, this was problematic in relation to the governmental grant because this grant was a fixed sum of money that was to be divided between the organizations. A rapid growth of SISU would therefore lead to a diminishing governmental grant for the other organizations as long as the system for dividing the grant was based on activity volume.

Taking part in the 'war on resources'

With the establishment of *Folkbildningsrådet* in 1991, the national study organizations themselves obtained greater influence over how the grants should be divided. SISU had understood the formation of *Folkbildningsrådet* as a parallel to what already was the case for the sports movement; that the movement itself had the responsibility of handling the governmental grants to the organizations within its sphere. At the beginning, there were no major differences from how the grants had been divided earlier on when Skolöverstyrelsen had had the responsibility. But in 1998, *Folkbildningsrådet* started a process of renewing the principles for how the governmental grants should be divided. The discussion was focused around the opinion that the existing system had rewarded growth in volumes even when the grant remained the same or was hollowed by inflation. As top management of SISU noted:

> And what then happened, it obviously took some years, was that the work of study associations did not increase in volume. It stopped. It was basically the same volumes year after year, with one exception. That was us. And that in turn meant that you [SISU] must find a method that would stop us from getting more and more of the cake and that the others would lose. For the cake was basically the same. The state made no changes. It had its funding for popular adult education. And it was there. (Interview, top management, SISU)

When *Folkbildningsrådet* put together a working group with the task of suggesting a new system for how the grant should be divided, *Folkbildningsförbundet* was asked to name five members of the groups. These members were selected from the study associations ABF, Vuxenskolan, Medborgarskolan, Studiefrämjandet, and Frikyrkliga studieförbundet. SISU was not given a seat in the working group. In its report to the board of *Folkbildningsrådet*, the group stated that:

> Despite the good intentions of the popular adult education's own distribution model, it proves to reward quantitative expansion so strongly that even the associations which increase their activities can get their share of the state grant reduced if other associations have run faster in what more and more educational association representatives calls the volume hunt.

> Each study circle and each cultural event get less and less in government grants. There is no doubt that the relationship between the purpose of the governmental grants and the actual completed activities thus are eventually being undermined. (FBR 1999)

With these views as a basis, the working group suggested that the main part of the grant should be fixed for a period of three years. The level of the fixed grant should be based on the volume of the activities between 1995 and 1998. If the study associations reported at least 90 percent of that volume between 2000 and 2003, they would keep their level of governmental grant until 2006. In the spring of 2000, the board of *Folkbildningsrådet* decided to use this system. For SISU, which had been the fastest growing study association, this meant that it would get a lower grant per activity than the other associations. Within the sports movement, this decision felt very frustrating and the interpretation was that the decision was pointing directly at SISU with the aim of stopping its growth:

> And then they arrived at a completely unique decision, namely to freeze the funds. Things should remain as they are. And all hell broke loose. The purpose of the fund-freezing decision was of course that the only association [SISU] that is growing should not be able to take money from the others – read ABF. That's what it was really about. (Interview, top management, SISU)

Within the sports movement, the decision was described as "the freezing decision of the grant to SISU." Shortly after the decision, SISU started to form a strategy for how it should handle the question. Over several years, it argued within the structure for an increased grant because it was still growing.

Joint office between *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU

During this time, a parallel process had started between SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet*. SISU had emerged out of the *Riksidrottsförbundet* organization. Staff on all levels had been picked out of and transferred to SISU. A double or dual administration had been built up with two CFOs, two HR-managers, two general secretaries etc. A senior manager of *Riksidrottsförbundet* at the time state:

> So, it was a hell of a lot that was doubled, maybe it did not do very much [in the beginning] but there was more and more tension growing. As long as the balance of force is very unequal then it is not a problem. But it was becoming something else when SISU started getting big, really big. (Interview, top management, SISU)

The rector of SISU and a group around him started to discuss that even if *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU were two separate organizations with separate missions, they had the same main principal. The members of the two organizations were the same national sports associations, with the exception of a few smaller organizations that were members of SISU but not *Riksidrottsförbundet*. Therefore, they questioned: Why wouldn't it be possible to keep the separate organizations but have a joint secretariat with one secretary general? Besides, the separate missions of the organizations was one important argument to keep the two organizations as they were dependent on two different funding streams. The money from *Riksidrottsförbundet* came directly from the government's sports grant, while SISU's grants came via *Folkbildningsrådet* and the popular adult education grant. The rector of SISU had come to SISU from the publishing business and did not think that a joint national office with around 150 employees would be large or impossible to manage. To have separate organizations but one secretariat with staff working for more than one organization was rather the general way to organize within the business sphere. Thus, even if there were criticisms and questions regarding if one secretary general could report to two different boards, the issue had been raised and the discussions continued.

In the summer of 2003, it was decided that the secretary general of *Riksidrottsförbundet* should leave his position. The president and vice president of *Riksidrottsförbundet* turned to the rector of SISU to ask if he would like to be the new secretary general of *Riksidrottsförbundet*. The rector, an educated teacher, however, was not that interested in sports politics, which is what the position at *Riksidrottsförbundet* focuses on, and enjoyed his work at SISU. Nevertheless, he could not drop the idea of a joint secretariat and when *Riksidrottsförbundet*'s secretary general left, he saw the opportunity to realize his idea. Therefore, he told the president of *Riksidrottsförbundet* that he was interested in the job if he could also, at the same time, merge the two secretariats. In August 2003, the *Riksidrottsförbundet* board decided that

the rector of SISU should be the new secretary general of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and that the secretariats could be merged.

The task for the working group was to unconditionally exam all possibilities for cooperation within the areas of, for example, economics, administration, staff, and political contacts (RF 2003j). In its report, the working group suggested that the two different secretariats should be joined together with one chief. Among both employees and members of SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet*'s boards, critique was raised against the report. Some thought that the group had only taken an economic efficiency perspective and had not cared about the ideological perspectives. Others felt that this was only a way for *Riksidrottsförbundet* to completely take over SISU. The boards, however, decided that the secretariats should be merged and that one secretary general should lead both organizations. In January 2005, the reform was implemented and 19 middle managers became seven. Later, the process also started to merge all district offices of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU and appoint one district sport manager. At the general assembly of *Riksidrottsförbundet* in 2011, a decision was taken that this should be implemented all over the country.

The issue of the money is solved

In 2005, *Folkbildningsrådet* conducted a large survey among study circle participants. Among the conclusions was that 11 percent of the participants did not even know that they participated in a study circle. For SISU, the result was worse, almost 30 percent of the participants said no to the question regarding whether they really had participated. This became a central issue for SISU and it continued to make investigations into why this was the case. Its analysis was that a lot of SISU study circles took place in conjunction with regular sporting activities. After training, the participants sat down and received lectures and talked about, for example, 'fair play.' The participants were not aware that these were seen as two separate activities but thought them to be the same. This, however, made it more difficult for SISU to argue its case within *Folkbildningsrådet* because the argument from the others was that SISU was cheating and had low quality operations.

In November 2005, *Folkbildningsrådet*'s board decided to run on new principles for the grant distribution. The majority of study associations, in-

cluding the two largest associations ABF and Vuxenskolan, had heavily criticized this decision. The decision was that the model with fixed grant levels, which had been the case since 2000, was to be abandoned. Even if 60 percent of the grant would be more or less fixed, there would be 40 percent divided according to activity size. This would have the effect that the fastest growing associations, among them SISU, would get more money, and the associations that were diminishing or not growing fast enough, among them ABF, would receive less. In its annual report in 2005, ABF wrote that the grant system in practice now "can be described more as an activity support system for the sports movement than a grant that works in favor of the quality of popular adult education and discourages volume-hunt." (ABF 2005, p. 46)

Since SISU had begun to realize that its work within *Folkbildningsrådet* could lead anywhere, it started to intensify political contacts for the wider sports movement. Therefore, when leaders of *Riksidrottsförbundet* met with the government, they were also raising the situation for SISU. And, as the secretary general was now leading both organizations, it was also natural to talk for both *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU. In the fall of 2005 and spring 2006, the issue was raised through informal contacts with ministers in the social democratic government. The situation was becoming more and more acute for SISU. *Riksidrottsförbundet* was arguing that it was now time for the government to intervene, and if that would not happen, it would have to take up a public fight with ABF, the adult educational association connected with the social democratic party. For ABF, on the other hand, the situation with SISU had also become more acute due to *Folkbildningsrådet*'s new grant system. Thus, while SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet* were lobbying the government, ABF used its close relationship with the social democratic party to try to find a solution to the matter.

In the spring of 2006, *Riksidrottsförbundet* booked a meeting with the then Prime Minister Göran Persson to discuss other issues. *Riksidrottsförbundet* was disappointed at the government and the new minister for sports because they opposed an application for hosting the Olympic winter games and had prioritized the Swedish Olympic Committee over *Riksidrottsförbundet* regarding how state support to elite sports should be channeled. Göran Persson opened the meeting by stating that this SISU question needed be

solved once and for all. His proposal was that the sport movement would be given the grant directly from the state and not via *Folkbildningsrådet* and that the grant would be handed over to *Riksidrottsförbundet* that could then give it to SISU.

The issue was then dealt with in the government's bill on popular adult education the same spring. In the bill, the government suggested that: "It should be considered whether state support to studies, cultural-, and educational training activities within sports can be channeled directly to the sport movement."(Prop 2005/06:192, p. 58) Further, the government acknowledged the existing struggles:

> Two of the most important tasks for *Folkbildningsrådet* are to distribute government grants between folk high-schools and popular adult education associations, and to safeguard quality of operations. In a situation where the state grant, in real terms, has been largely unchanged for a long time, these issues receive considerable explosive force. This affects the accommodators' view of each other in popular adult education, but also affects the assessment of the acceptability of new educational associations or folk high-schools. The problem is accentuated by the small number of actors at the central level in adult education. Every stance that favors one provider or group of providers disadvantages the other(s). To determine what is best for adult education as a whole [therefore] becomes difficult."(ibid)

With this background, the government's motive for the suggested change was that it was difficult to distinguish between what popular education and more traditional leadership and training activities within sports were. Further, that the then current system for grant distribution, which *Folkbildningsrådet* used, was not adapted to meet the special conditions that characterize sports. The responsible cabinet member, Lena Hallengren, confirmed that the bad results for SISU in the participant survey should have be seen as one reason for the suggested change: "That is one of the reasons that we want to change the way the grant is distributed."(DN 2006, p. 58)

Moreover, the parliament later decided according to the bill from the government, and discussions began with government on how this transformation should be done and what the level of the funding should be. One concern raised by the sports movement was that the first idea of the government, expressed in meetings with Göran Persson, was to send

SISU's grant to *Riksidrottsförbundet* and then let them distribute it to SISU. This created anxieties within SISU and other parts of the sports movement. Concerns were raised that this would be the end of SISU as a separate organization. Walter Rönnmark, president of the Swedish Table Tennis Federation described in an interview why it was important to keep SISU as a separate organization: "SISU cherishes the idea that sport is about building a better society, and if the popular education idea disappears, there is a great risk that the sports movement becomes an even poorer ideological popular movement than it is now."(SvD 2006a)

Other critical voices within the sports movement felt that agreeing to this, and thereby leaving the adult popular educational field, would surely be an economic win in the short run. But, in the long run, it would mean that the sports movement became more isolated and, as the largest popular movement in Sweden, it had both a duty and something to gain by being a part of the popular adult education family. The president of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, stated in a public comment to the governmental bill that the only responsible way to act in this situation was to try to find another way for SISU to get governmental grants, even if this would potentially affect SISU's position as a popular education association: "Sports has, for many years, been abused in the grant system, it is hair-raisingly unfair and it is not responsible that we, at all costs, try to stick to what we have, but we need to explore options." (SvD 2006b)

The chairman of SISU also commented on the government bill, feeling that the government had listened to the needs of the sports movement. Nevertheless, he also emphasized that SISU in the coming process needed to have a say in how the administration of the grant was formed:

> We are open to dialog, but of course with some important reservations. It must mean zero risk for us, which means that it has to be brand new money. The level of subsidy is crucial […]. It is also that the educational issues must have a special status and that we [SISU] ourselves decide how resources should be allocated internally. And, most importantly, that it is we ourselves, at our annual meeting – the SISU general assembly - who ultimately decide whether this is a road we want to go. No one can force the sports movement to leave popular adult education. (SISU 2006a)

Representatives of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU then continued the dialog with the government. Their general perception was that this step would be a good one because it could give the sports movement a higher grant for its educational activities than what had been possible through *Folkbildningsrådet*. Although, they emphasized that it was a matter of principle that the grant was given directly to SISU and not *Riksidrottsförbundet*. If that was not the case, it could in the long run be tempting for the sports movement to use the grant for other purposes than education. Therefore, it was important to keep the two funding streams separate.

Like the secretary general of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, Göran Persson had his roots in popular adult education and quite soon understood that it was important to hold the funding streams separately. As such, it was decided that the grant should be directed to SISU. Before the social democratic government lost the election in the fall of 2006, it had also reached agreement on the grant level. Starting at around 50 million SEK, the final proposal was 140 million SEK. This was considerably more than the 68 million SEK it received from *Folkbildningsrådet* the year before. When the right-wing government later came in to power, it accepted this level. For SISU, however, it was important to state that this was its decision to go this way. To mark this, SISU holds an extra annual meeting (per capsulam – by circulation) where all the members approved that SISU can accept this new order for governmental grants (SISU 2006b).

The formal solution became that the government issued a letter of regulation to the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) with the task of transferring the money to SISU (Regeringen 2006). Further, the government had decided on a separate guideline document that regulated the money to SISU.

Besides getting a more than duplicated level of the grant, SISU had, via this decision, achieved its own grant regulation. Even if it voluntarily decided to stick with some of the regulation that *Folkbildningsrådet* and Folkbldningsförbundet had issued for the rest of the adult education organizations, it considered the new situation much more flexible as illustrated:

> The government's guideline to SISU gives us greater flexibility to shape our work. As SISU no longer exists under the regulations of *Folkbildningsrådet*, we

> will be better able to meet the federations and local associations' needs. We have a great opportunity to increase our attractiveness in sports.(SISU 2007)

SISU becomes excluded from *Folkbildningsförbundet*

When SISU was created and entered into *Folkbildningsförbundet*, it sometimes felt out of place. Compared to the other organizations, SISU only worked with its member organizations' educational needs and did not arrange any publicly-open study circles as the others did. Its participants were also, on average, much younger than those from the other organizations, and SISU experienced a cultural difference on how an organization should be led. The tradition within *Folkbildningsförbundet* was that the chief executives of every study association formed the board. For the sports movement, however, this felt strange. SISU was not used to paid staff representing the movement in boards; that was a task for elected representatives who could be held responsible for their actions on general assemblies. After a couple of years in *Folkbildningsförbundet*, SISU therefore decided that its rector should not be on the board. Instead, SISU put its president there.

After the decision that SISU was not to receive grants via *Folkbildningsrådet*, but through a separate solution, the discussions about how to handle SISU started within *Folkbildningsförbundet*. A clear majority, led by ABF, started to argue that because SISU no longer received grants on the same premises as the other organizations, it should no longer be part of *Folkbildningsförbundet*. The basic argument was that SISU, via the government's decisions, had received a new mission from the state. The grant that was given to SISU was not a popular adult education grant but rather a general organizational support grant. Thus, SISU should not be seen as a popular adult education organization in the same light as the others, and thereby SISU should not belong to 'our' organization, that is, *Folkbildningsförbundet*. Moreover, because the grant level had become so high, the majority of the associations also argued that this should be seen as compensation for the local and regional governmental grants that SISU would lose; that is, as the natural consequence of the decision, SISU would not be entitled to such local and regional money (Interview, top management, SISU).

SISU saw the risk of losing local and regional grants (at this time around 60 million SEK) if it were to be expelled from *Folkbildningsförbundet*.

Soon after the decision, SISU therefore started to organize the local and regional level of the sports movement to lobby local governments in order for SISU to still be considered a study association and thereby entitled to governmental grants. The issue with the grants from *Folkbildningsrådet* had, from SISU's point of view, been just an issue around grants. SISI understood its identity as being a popular adult education association and that had been its self-understanding from the beginning. Therefore, even if the economic risk was one argument to stay within *Folkbildningsförbundet*, there was also an ideological and identity dimension to the issue.

SISU did have some allies within *Folkbildningsförbundet*. Most explicit in its support for SISU was the study association Sensus. Together with Bilda, these three organizations had formed a group of study associations that had together, for many years, criticized the grant distribution system used by *Folkbildningsrådet*. Sensus argued that SISU should be allowed to continue as a member of *Folkbildningsförbundet*. The main argument for this was the clear expressed will of the sports movement that, through a study organization, runs cultural and educational activities which would, in the long run, create legitimacy for the rest of the popular adult education organizations too. Sensus also raised the issue that a harsh handling of SISU would risk creating bad-will effects for *Folkbildningsförbundet* and its members.

In this argumentation, however, Sensus was alone. For the majority, it was seen as an important issue to quickly exclude SISU. The aim of *Folkbildningsförbundet* is established in its by-laws, which at the time stated: "*Folkbildningsförbundet* is the interest organization for popular adult education organizations and has the task of strengthening these organizations' positions in society."(FBF 2006, §1) In September 2006, *Folkbildningsförbundet*'s board established that the intention with the by-laws was that only organizations entitled to government grants according to the popular adult education constitution should be members of *Folkbildningsförbundet*. As SISU did not itself decide to leave and the by-laws did not have a paragraph that made it possible to exclude a member, the board of *Folkbildningsförbundet* decided that the by-laws needed to be changed. In the next assembly, it therefore suggested changes.

The first suggested change was the aim of the organization. Here, it added that it was an organization for popular adult education organizations

entitled to the governmental grant. And, to make it completely clear, it added a sentence in the aim paragraph that said: "Entitlement to governmental grants in these by-laws means popular adult education organizations that receive grants through the popular adult education constitution."(FBF 2007b) Beside this change, the board suggested to include a new paragraph in the by-laws that made it possible for the assembly to exclude a member that did not meet the new membership criteria. A similar change was also made in the recommended by-laws for the regional level of the organization. This was important because the regional level in many cases played an active part in the dialogs with local and regional governments in grant issues.

After a debate, the general assembly decided to change the by-laws according to the proposal from the board. The representatives from SISU and Sensus reserved themselves against the decision. Before the meeting, the board of SISU had discussed if it should leave *Folkbildningsförbundet* voluntarily (SISU 2007). It, however, decided not to do so which was important, not at least for the situation on the regional level, as SISU marked it wanted to remain a member of *Folkbildningsförbundet*. However, after the by-law change, the president of SISU was called to a meeting with the chairman and secretary general of *Folkbildningsförbundet* who expressed that SISU should indeed voluntarily leave to spare the organization the extra cost of having an extra ordinary assembly (SISU 2007). When SISU once again refused to do so, an extra ordinary assembly was announced with only one issue on the agenda, to exclude SISU. That assembly was held in September 2007 and SISU was then excluded.

Two organizations – one board

When the decision came to start the process of merging the district offices of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU in 2011, the issue of it being a good idea that the same people composed the two district boards was also raised. It was felt that this would make it easier to coordinate the governance of the support organizations. In 2015, this was the case for 19 out of the 21 districts. Further, in 2015, it was also decided at the general assemblies of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU that the members of the boards should be the same people. This suggestion came from the boards, and the argument was

that this would lead to "joint strategic management" that would be able to "create a holistic support system" for the sports movement.

Very few opposed these changes at the assemblies. Two motions were sent that suggested it was the time to fully merge *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU into one organization. One of the motions argued for this from an efficiency perspective. The other one stated that the decision to have the same people in the boards was the last step confirming that SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet* in reality were already the one organization. In their answer to these bills, the *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU boards highlighted the governmental grants as one of the reasons not to merge:

> [The boards] for their part believe that it is important to wider society to show that there are two separate organizations with different purposes and objectives. If the organizations merged, this would in the formal sense end this important distinction, which in turn contributes to making the boundaries unclear and creating huge requirements to ensure that the conditions for state support, which today are based on the different operations, stays the same. (RF 2015a)

The driving forces for the close integration between SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet* were discussed. Although, the main argument for keeping them as separate legal entities was the different governmental funding streams. Nevertheless, some claimed that the governmental grants had been a driving force:

> The change started when we [SISU] left popular adult education, I mean that it was then SISU lost its identity. And, then it is very hard to motivate why you should have a separate legal entity, your own board, your own assemblies, and your own district organization. The motive for that was that you also belonged to another societal context; another political policy field. With the decision you left that. So, what has happened during the last years is just a continuation of that, and a fairly natural development. And nowadays the case is that the 70 national sports associations would not care if SISU were legally dissolved to become an educational committee within *Riksidrottsförbundet*. (Interview, former employee, RF)

Summary and preliminary analysis

The case with SISU can tell us something about how the boundaries of a field are being drawn and enforced. It is however also a case that illuminates further on resource allocation in a field, but now from a slightly different perspective. In this case, we can also see how the two different fields in foci for this thesis – the sports field and the popular education field – partly overlap each other.

Once again the government field plays an important role as the partly overlapping proximate field that has the potential to influence the game on the field. In this case, it is primarily important for the resources available to the actors in the field and in the rules and principle for the resource allocation.

I interpret some of the episodes in the case as if other actors perceive that SISU violates some of the rules in the field. This can be minor violation such as its executive level was replaced by the elected chair at the board of *Folkbildningsförbundet* which was not the case among the other associations. Or it could be more severe violations of the rules such as growing to fast by using what other actors perceive as unjust methods or too loudly criticize the way in which the government grant is distributed. In the end, this conflict with other study association, holding a stronger incumbent position in the field due to their size, age, and contact with government, leads to a stop in the increases of government grant to the fast-growing SISU. Furthermore, it triggers a process where government actors in the end intervene and stop the conflict by establishing a separate grant system for SISU.

In relation to government, we can particularly observe how different actors play different strategies by trying to influence government in different ways. Here I like to argue that that *Riksidrottsförbundet*, as we have seen earlier in the case on Handslaget, have learned to skillfully play the NPM-game with the government. They know how to frame sports in order to get public funding. Here they see another possibility to increase the total level of government funding of the sports field. Meanwhile, different central actors within the sports field play a game between themselves concerning control over the resources, but also the identity and character of SISU as a study association. This can be understood as a partly symbolic game revolv-

ing around the matter of which field to be part of where SISU, in the end, becomes more strongly integrated into the sports field through e.g. joint office and board with *Riksidrottsförbundet*. In the process concerning membership rules in *Folkbildningsförbundet*, the border of the popular education field is being redrawn and SISU is kicked out of the field.

Chapter 6

Analysis

In the beginning of the thesis, a background to my research interest was provided. The purpose of this thesis is twofold and can be divided into an empirical and a theoretical aim. I have an empirical interest in the current transformation of the relationship between state and civil society in Sweden and my empirical aim with this dissertation is to explore how on-going transformations in this particular relationship affect fields where civil society actors are active.

My theoretical interest lies in the field-level dynamics, more specifically departing from the work of Fligstein and McAdam on Strategic Action Fields. Also my theoretical aim is two-fold and I strive to deepen our knowledge about the nature of Internal governance units, as well as explore the role of the relationship with the government field in relation to the shared understandings in a Strategic Action Field.

In my final chapter I will return to the theoretical research questions, but in this chapter I will focus on the first three questions that are empirically orientated and have been formulated as follows:

1. How is shared understanding constructed among the actors in the studied fields?

2. Through what type of mechanisms is the shared understanding in the fields transformed and reconstructed?

3. What types of field-level implications does a transformation of the shared understanding have in the studied fields?

In short I will conclude that the relationship to the government field, through the embeddedness of both the studied fields within the popular movement tradition and the Swedish corporative model, has a core role in shaping the shared understandings in the fields. The on-going transformation of the relationship will transform the shared understanding in the fields through two specific mechanisms – the dual or double role of the IGUs and a regulative character of the grant package. I will also show how this situation has field-level implications regarding the processes and principles for securing and dividing resources, for how boundaries are being drawn, and for the role and nature of the IGU.

In this chapter I explicitly apply the theoretical framework developed in chapter 2 on the empirical material presented earlier in chapter 4 and 5. In chapter 4, I provided a first general overview of the fields of sports and popular education, where some of the core aspects of a Strategic Action Field more generally were highlighted. In that chapter, I also presented the main actors of the field. A short summary of important resources in the field, with a deeper description of public grants, was also provided. In addition, the development and character of the relationship to the proximate government field were described. In chapter 5, I present my four selected in-depth case studies from the fields, where the focus has been laid on the processes relevant for governance both within and of the field.

The analysis will be organized along the three empirically oriented research questions. Based on the conclusions drawn in this chapter, I will in the final chapter move on to the two theoretical oriented questions to present and elaborate on the theoretical contributions of this thesis.

The Construction of shared understandings

From Fligstein and McAdam's definition of SAFs, it can easily be concluded that the common understanding shared among the actors in the field of, for instance, the purpose, rules, and power relations in the field is a key component of the same field. This shared understanding is one of the most

important parts of the theory, where a field is described as a "meso-level social order where actors":

> [...] interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purpose of the field (including who has power and why), and the field´s rules (Fligstein & McAdam 2011 p. 3).

Consequently, a core aspect of analyzing sports and popular education as fields is to unfold the shared understanding among the actors in the fields. As Greenwood et al. (2014) emphasize, it is on the field-level that institutional logics have greater specificity and that it is therefore important to understand that different field-level mechanisms play a crucial role when it comes to filtering, framing and enforcing different logics.

Fligstein and McAdam (2011; 2012) concur, but also suggest that we need to further qualify the logics in order to understand how a field operates. They achieve this by separating four aspects of the kind of meaning that underlies each strategic action field. First, there is a shared general understanding between the actors about what is going on, and what is at stake. Second, in the field there is a set of actors who possess more or less power, through knowing who their friends, enemies, and competitors are. Third, there is a shared understanding among the actors about the "rules" in the field, i.e. what tactics are possible, legitimate, and interpretable for other actors. Fourth, there is a broad interpretive frame that actors use to analyze and make sense of what others within the SAF are doing. This frame is not a consensual frame that holds for all actors, but rather different frames reflecting the relative position of actors within the field.

The popular movement tradition and the shared understanding in the fields

How is this central shared understanding constructed within the two fields which I have studied? In my first empirical chapter, chapter 4, I described the popular movement tradition that has been strong in the Swedish civil society, not least during the 20th century. It has worked as a "marinade" (Hvenmark & Wijkström 2004) influencing how organizations in the civil society are prescribed to or 'should' be organized and function. In a parallel

metaphor, Amnå (2008; 2016) has described the same situation as embedded, where the close and friendly relations between the popular movements and the Swedish state or government field play an important role.

In this thesis, I am interested in the importance of the relationship between state and civil society, and in in particular the current transformation of this relationship. As already noted in chapter 4, there is a close connection between the popular movement tradition and the corporative model. Together, they can be considered to have functioned as a kind of template in Sweden for how organizations in civil society relate to government, and vice versa. In this more normative function, the popular movement tradition and the corporative model are well in line with how the role of the 'shared understandings' is thought to function in the SAF framework and also in other definitions of institutional logics. Related to "the catalogue" with four aspects of the shared understanding presented by Fligstein and McAdam, the strong and persistent embeddedness of the popular movement tradition, guides the content in these aspects. Two specific aspects – the idea of democratic organization and the membership – of the popular movement tradition could be highlighted.

Democratic organization

Of core importance is the strong idea of democracy. A basic idea in the popular movement tradition is that the associations should be organized and governed by people from the group in focus for the organization's mission and activities. This should be secured by the internal governance structures, where issues of importance need to be decided in democratic processes involving members of the organization. However, democracy is also important in the sense that there is a perception that equality and fairness are paramount. That all members have the right to have their share of resources and arguments of fairness is often used as, and seen as, a valid argument. As an example, we can, for the case of Handslaget see how the democratic organization influences in which ways it is possible to handle the new money from the government. This connects both to the aspect of the shared understanding concerning the rules of the field, but also to the type of actors that are present in and legitimate to be a part of the field.

Membership

Closely connected to the democratic dimension is the issue of membership (Hvenmark 2008; Einarsson 2012). Through memberships, different groups of individuals in focus for the Movement's mission and activities are also expected to govern the organization. The other main resource for the organizations is the unpaid work provided by members. In the cases presented here this part of the shared understanding is not so visible. It might sometimes be underlying the discussions of how much local associations could and should be governed due to the fact that considerations need to be taken to assess individual members' willingness to do the voluntary work necessary.

Members, and especially the number of members, are an important factor for the shared understanding in two ways. In relation to government they are an important factor for a solid democratic organization that can guarantee that a large proportion of the Swedish citizens, as members, can control, influence and benefit from the large grants. However, they are also an important measurement of size of different federations that in rather direct terms guides the allocation of grants.

As seen in these two examples, core aspects of the popular movement tradition connect directly to aspects of the shared understanding in the field. It is, however, outside of the scope of this thesis to further analyze these particular aspects of the shared understanding and how transformations of the popular movement tradition also affect the shared understanding in the government field. Instead, I will move on to analyze the relationship between state and civil society, and see how this could be incorporated in the shared understanding in a field.

The corporative model and the shared understanding

The relationship to government is of crucial importance to organizations in both of the fields studied, not the least in economic terms, since a substantial amount of the revenues in both fields come from government grants.

From the perspective of Fligstein and McAdam, the government field is of special importance since it has considerable power to impact the stability and dynamics of most SAFs. This power is connected both to the regulation possibility available to the state, and the fact that the field as a whole,

and especially its incumbents, may critically depend on government funding. This is true for both the sports field and the popular education field. I have in chapter 4 identified *Riksidrottsförbundet* as the main IGU in the sports field and *Folkbildningsrådet* in a similar position in the field of popular education. Through regulation in the state field, these two IGUs have been granted substantial authoritative power. In addition, both fields, especially popular education, depend on government funding coming – as I will later elaborate in a later section in this chapter – in the form of a regulative package in which the money are embedded.

In chapter 4, I have further described how these two SAFs are firmly rooted in the corporatist model. The close relationship between government and civil society and its organizations has been formed within and by the Swedish corporatist tradition. Clear differences between the fields have been blurred and state and civil society have become increasingly intertwined (Micheletti 1994 p. 79 f). With the corporatist model, this approach has also been institutionalized and can be considered as a part of the shared understandings in the fields in the same way as the popular movement tradition.

Even if the corporatist model and the popular movement tradition both are institutionalized and work as a defining template or backbone for how the organizations in the two fields function and relate to government they are, however, very much of a taken-for-granted character. This is true for Swedish civil society as such, and for the two fields in focus of this thesis. This means that it is so strongly embedded in the organizations' and their representatives' understanding of reality that it is sometimes hard to chisel out in a straightforward manner. Based on the secondary empirical material, and the processes followed in the cases, it is, however, possible to identify some important components of the tacit shared understanding stemming from the corporative model and the popular movement tradition active in the cases. This concerns both the independent – but still close – relationship to the state and the high-trust character of the relationship in the shared understanding and could summarized as follows:

Proximity (close to the state…)

In the popular movement tradition, the mutual dependence between the state and the Movements is recognized, and manifested clearly in the Swedish corporatist system. For both these fields, the state perceives sports and popular education as almost being a part of the welfare state. These are activities that the state should support, and the state should also have public policies for them. At the same time, government clearly recognizes that this has been, and also should be, organized by organizations connected to the different popular movements. The state needs the organizations in this area and the development of the welfare state has gone hand in hand with the parallel development and growth of the popular movements (Lundström & Wijkström 1997). The organizations, in turn, benefit from a close relationship to government in multiple ways. They have the opportunity to influence public policy and gain access to resources both in terms of legitimacy, money and favorable tax exemptions. The government should work as an "enabler" that provides the organizations with good conditions for conducting their work. Frequently, the shared understanding in many fields is that it is almost a "civil right" to be entitled government grants for your organization and its activities.

Trust (… but still independent)

Within the shared understanding stemming from the popular movement tradition there exists, at the same time, a focus on being independent from the state. In order to be able to be close or proximate to the state, an important side condition is that they are allowed to protect their independence, at least in the meaning that it is the organizations themselves and their ideology that should govern both what the organizations do and how they do it. The Swedish government should not govern this, and should instead trust the popular movement organizations, as being the experts within their field (and with their democratic process), to be able to both see societal problems and find ways to address them by themselves. To be "independent" is something that is cherished (see also SOU 1987:33), not at least within the popular education field, where the words '*fritt och frivilligt*' are also used as badges of honor when the relationship to the state is being described.

Incorporating the relationship to the state in the shared understanding

In my analysis of the two Swedish fields of popular education and sports I can conclude that both fields, over time and in long processes, have been heavily embedded in the popular movement tradition and the strong corporative tradition.

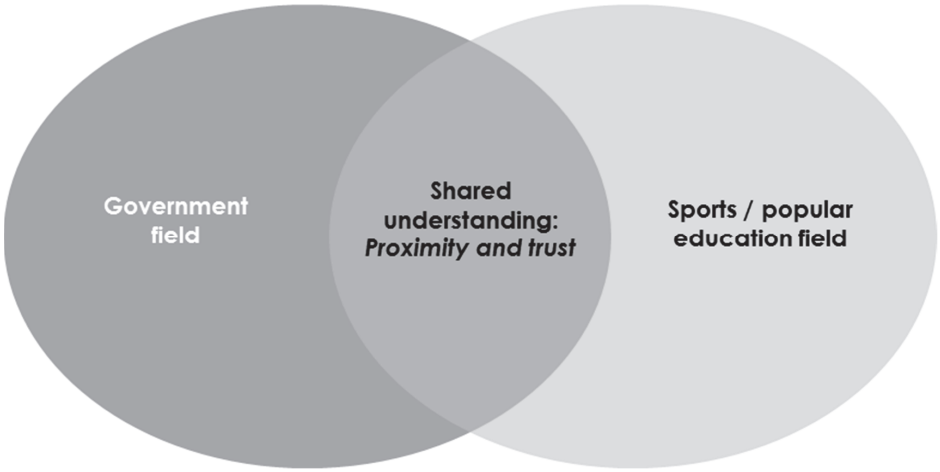
My conclusion is that large parts of the shared understanding of the fields have been formed and institutionalized through this embeddedness; Swedish corporatism and the popular movement tradition taken together need to be understood as the combined backbone of the shared understanding in these two fields. The popular movement tradition has, for instance, left strong imprints in the rules of the fields, including recognition of the proximity between state and civil society, characterized by a mutual trust that safeguards civil society's independence. A democratic structure, built on the idea of mass membership, is an important prerequisite for the proximity and trust since it guarantees citizens' influence and control of the organizations and, through this, also the public money.

The relationship between state and civil society further holds a central position in the shared understandings of the two fields. Put simply, this relational aspect of the shared understanding seems to include recognition of the proximity between state and civil society, which should be characterized by a mutual trust that safeguards civil society's independence.

I argue that, in empirical settings such as the ones I have studied, it is necessary to also include the relationship to the government field in the shared understanding among the actors of the field to fully grasp and make sense of how the shared understanding guides the behavior of the actors. Both the field of popular education and the field of sports can be considered to be partly overlapping with the government field. Not least, this is due to the earlier strong Swedish corporative model where organizations in both these fields in close relationship with the state have taken part in both the formulation and implementation of public policy in their fields. At the core of this configuration has been a common shared understanding of the relationship between the fields, shared by both key actors in the government field and in the sports and popular education field. The characteristics of the relationship, and the roles and responsibilities assigned to the actors

in the overlapping fields have, through this, been shared. This could be summarized in the schematic figure below.

Figure 1: Overlapping shared understanding of the relationship



In this context, the relationship to the state plays a defining and demarcating role for the fields, which I mean is well in line with the role that Fligstein and McAdam assign to their concept of shared understanding.

The fact that we can see such strong imprints in the shared understanding from the popular movement tradition and the corporative model alike implies that fundamental parts of the shared understanding in these fields have been formed over decades and in close relationship with government and other actors outside of the field. This also implies that the on-going transformation of the relationship with the government field that I have pointed to both in chapter 1 and chapter 4 has the potential to transform the shared understanding in both of the fields. I will therefore turn to my second empirically oriented research question which concerns how this can happen.

Mechanisms transforming the shared understandings

I have highlighted the specific understanding of state-civil society relations in the two Swedish fields, and argued that this needs to be considered as a part of the shared understanding in both of the fields. I will now address the question of the types of mechanisms through which the shared understanding in these fields is being transformed and also reconstructed. Even if the shared understanding of the relationship to government is heavily embedded over a long time, it is however not unchallenged. In my theoretical framework, I have explored and discussed how organizations are typically exposed to multiple institutional logics that might be conflicting or incompatible with each other (Selznick 1949; Friedland & Alford 1991; Kraatz & Block 2008; Meyer & Rowan 1977). I have earlier shown how Fligstein and McAdam's (2011; 2012) concept of shared understandings is closely connected to the concept of institutional logics, even if they themselves argue that their concept offers a more detailed understanding of the field dynamics.

Taking the government grants to the civil society organizations in the fields as the main example, I will now move on to analyze how the prevailing shared understanding is challenged and what types of mechanism that is active in this process.

Changes in the money regime

The government grants to organizations in these fields have, in general, previously been regulated in line with the popular movement tradition and the corporatist model (Amnå 2008; Carlsson et al. 2011). This implies that the Swedish government has had some general purposes with the grant but organizations in the sports and popular education fields were nevertheless rather free in how to use the money. It was primarily seen as a form of general support to the organizations within the field and to the kind of activities they carried out. Fully in line with the shared understanding described earlier, this implies an understanding of the relationship to government as proximate, characterized by trust. Using the SAF terminology, it can be ar-

gued that the shared understanding of the relationship between state and civil society in these two fields also spanned into the government field. Moreover, the main actors in the government field have embraced the shared understanding of the organizations and have trusted the actors in the fields to be able to identify how the money should best be used without any further government interference.

In the two cases dealing with Handslaget and the new distribution model for grants to popular education we can, however, see how this shared understanding is being challenged. Here, elements that originate from a different view on how the relationship between state and civil society should be understood are linked to and embedded with the grants. Rather than emphasizing proximity and trust, these new elements signal an increased and more detailed governance of the money – and the organizations – from the government's side.

First, Handslaget came with a new type of language from Swedish government, heralding a new type of relationship. The money was not supposed to be merely an add-on to the general support to the Sports Movement, which, based on the prevailing shared understanding of the relationship, had been more "free" for *Riksidrottsförbundet* and the rest of the organizations within the field to use and decide upon. Instead, this new money stream was more specified around certain issue areas that the government pointed out after a dialogue with *Riksidrottsförbundet* in which "real" change should follow and improvement should be made. I understand this change from the government's side as a part of a larger shift in the way government funds civil society. This shift has been described as a transition from general grants to remuneration for services provided (see e.g. Bergmark 1994; Johansson 2005), a changing practice that I argue could be connected to the establishment and implementation of NPM models in Swedish public sector administration (cf. Wijkström et al. 2004). In the new framework which I have earlier described in chapter 4, the government cannot simply allocate money to civil society organizations based on the trust that they do something good for the money alone. Instead, there is a need for the government to document what the grants are supposed to achieve and ensure that there are systems in place to follow up and possible also impact the results of the efforts.

Second, in the case where I analyze the work with a new distribution model for the grant to the study associations, the issue of quality is introduced. Here, we can see how different actors in the government field (e.g. the National Audit Office, government official reports and government through bills) emphasize the need for "more systematic quality work" both within the administration and for the form and content of the work carried out by the organizations in the field. They also mean that "qualitative elements" need to be added to the model for the distribution of grants. Moreover, this development could be analyzed as a change in how the government relates to the field, partly connected to the NPM development in Swedish public administration. In this regard, it is not new areas that should be addressed, but rather new demands on evaluations and follow-up of the operations that are imposed which are emphasized in the NPM framework. In addition, the measurement of quality should ideally also affect the amount of government grants that are apportioned to different associations.

All of this is well in line with the previous development of the relationship between government and the popular education field described in chapter 4, where it was revealed how, since the 1990s, the government has implemented different NPM initiatives such as management-by-result, follow-ups, and evaluation in relation to government goals for the grant to popular education (Lindgren 1999). This has led to the government having increased its level of governance over popular education, and has, over time, challenged the often-used catchphrase "*fritt och frivilligt*" (free and voluntary) within popular education.

First mechanism – the role of the IGUs.

I have already argued that the close relationship between state and civil society in Sweden could be analyzed as a part of the shared understandings in the studied field, due to its importance for the field and the deeply embedded arrangements of the relationship. A first mechanism through which the shared understandings in the fields can be transformed can be found in these corporative arrangements. This mechanism is the special role assigned to *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet respectively*, the two main IGUs in the fields. They have, as I have shown, by law been entrusted authoritative

power over government grants 'in place of public authority' *(i myndighets ställe*). But they are at the same time also CSOs firmly rooted in their fields. As a result of this arrangement they have been assigned a double role, being both actors in the government field and within the sports and popular education fields at the same time. Through a close and partly overlapping relationship, where state actors are also a part of the sports and popular education fields, changes in the shared understanding that so to say holds the state field together can "spill over" into another field and challenge the present shared understanding in that particular field.

How can we understand what takes place in the two examples drawn from my empirical material? Continuing to treat the relationship as a part of the shared understanding in the fields, I understand both changes as changes whereby actors in the government field challenge the prevailing shared understanding concerning their relationship with the actors in the fields of sports and popular education. This is most likely unconscious, influenced by a new shared understanding growing in the government field which is at least partly driven by the introduction of NPM reforms within Swedish public administration.

As shown by Diefenbach (2009) there is a clear normative standpoint of NPM which can be described as "a set of assumptions and value statements about how public sector organizations should be designed, organized, managed and how, in a quasi-business manner, they should function" (ibid. p. 893). This normative definition and view of the new reforms has similarities with the concept of shared understanding defined by Fligstein and McAdam (2012), since it concerns the relationship between actors and the rules for how actors should behave in the fields. I mean that it could be argued that the rise of NPM reforms in the government field could be conceptualized as a force in the new shared understanding of the government field on how it should relate to civil society in general, and to actors in the fields of sports and popular education more specifically.

As actors on both fields, *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* are affected by, and need to relate to this new shared understanding in the government field. What we can see in these two cases is that the shared understandings in the sports and popular education fields that have earlier been shared with the main actors in the government field, are now chal-

lenged by more general changes occurring in the shared understanding. NPM is oriented towards performance, efficiency, cost, and auditing (Diefenbach 2009). This is well in line with the government's ambition in the two cases analyzed in this thesis, with a focus on performance in certain areas and quality as an indicator for how funds should be distributed. This is something different to the focus on proximity and trust that the popular movement tradition influencing shared understanding contains. In the wider de-corporatization discussion we have seen other accounts in line with this, for example when Rothstein and Bergström (1999) argue that changes in state administration policy and the introduction of new governance models are a driving force of de-corporatization.

I have, earlier in the thesis, shown how there is ample evidence for a decline in the corporatist arrangement in Sweden. By applying SAF as a theoretical tool, my interpretation of the de-corporatization in these two fields is that we earlier have seen how the shared understanding, with the Swedish corporatism and popular movement tradition as a backbone, has been spanning into the government field. From this perspective, a part of the de-corporatization could be described as if this shared understanding is now weaker in the state field or not spanning as far into the government field. Instead, a new shared understanding, influenced by the governmental reforms and a business logic, has gained ground in the government field, leaving less room for alternative shared understandings. Through this first mechanism – the double or dual role of the IGUs – this (government) shared understanding now starts to span further into the fields of sports and popular education, challenging the (popular movement) shared understanding still dominating the fields.

Second mechanism – a regulative money package

Besides this mechanism of the dual role of the IGU it is possible to identify a second mechanism through which the transformation of the shared understanding in the government field will "spill over" also into the fields studied here. In the theory chapter I have pointed to the possibility of perceiving grants as a policy tool, which could be understood and analyzed as a "package" (Salamon 2002). In particular, I will, in this concluding chapter, highlight the governance implications of the conceptual dress or frame in

which the money is wrapped or embedded. This will be achieved through addressing the regulative capacity of this package as a core working mechanism in the transformation. In both the fields the government provides grants to organizations active within the field. I argue that it is possible to identify a 'regulative package' around these grants that includes, among other things, a set of rules, both informal and formal.

The money in itself is, of course, of importance for the receiving organizations and affects them in different ways. In this thesis I am, however, more interested in the discourse embedded in the talk, policies and rules that are attached to the money. I argue that, in the cases of interest to this thesis, I am able to qualify the package idea by deploying the concept of a regulative package. With a 'regulative package', I mean the formal and informal rules and norms; expressed in both text and talk – more or less tightly connected to the grant – delivering expectations on the receiving organization.

A first part of this regulative package is the formal rules concerning the use of the grant and that the evaluation and reporting of its use are present. In the sports case we also see it clearly in the new areas that are defined as the focus of the Handslaget effort. As a grant-giver, the Swedish government is regulating the grant-receiving sports associations by setting goals that are intended to be delivered in relation to the grant. We can also find more informal parts of the regulative package in the cases in the form of talk and texts about the grants. In texts submitted from bodies within the state field (e.g. Riksrevisionen and different SOU), expectations and recommendations on how the actors in the two fields should handle the grants are also expressed. In addition, in different conversations, deliberations and speeches, informal expectations of government representatives are articulated and added to the interpretation of the package. All these smaller regulating elements: different NPM mechanisms, expectations, rules, and texts in the package are, to various degrees, formed and products of the greater shared understanding on the government field from where they originate.

Taken individually, each piece by itself might not seem as a major change, challenge or transformation of the relationship. However, the regulative grant package is, by this, bit by bit, and over time, filled with more and more elements connected to the new NPM-influenced shared under-

standing used to govern the public sector (cf. Wijkström et.al. 2004). The grant and the affiliated regulative package is, in this sense, a way in which a new and different shared understanding can enter a field and to which the actors in the field have to respond to in one way or another. Returning to my second research question, the regulative package surrounding the grants is another type of mechanism that also can be packed with new elements that can challenge – and eventually even have the potential to change – the shared understanding in a field.

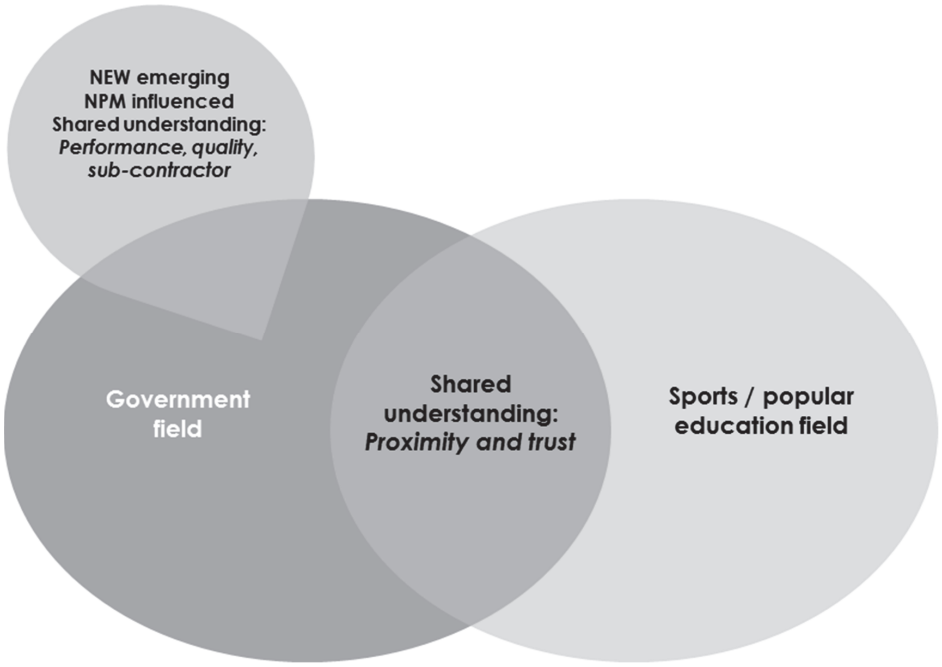
Summary

My second research question is dealing with through what type of mechanisms the shared understanding in the fields are transformed and reconstructed. As a part of a more general development in the Swedish government field of both de-corporatization (e.g. Hermansson et al. 1999; Rothstein & Bergström 1999; Lindvall & Sebring 2005) and an ongoing renegotiation of the civil society contract (Wijkström 2012a), changes in the understanding of civil society, its organizations and their role in society from the government field as well as of government's relationship to civil society can be traced. I have argued that one working mechanism of this development is the dual role of the IGUs, being both at the government field and the fields of sports and popular education at the same time. The introduction of different NPM reforms in the Swedish public administration has transformed the shared understanding in the government field and its relationship to CSOs. Many of these reforms were, from the outset, only intended to regulate the relationship between government and its agencies (cf. Sundström 2003). However, trough the double role of the IGUs it will also "spill over" to the sports field and the popular education field. I have, in this section, shown that these changes will eventually go beyond the immediate consequences for the public sector and influence also the relationship to actors outside of the immediate government field.

My interpretation of the development portrayed is that when a new shared understanding emerges on how governance within the government field should be conducted (the NPM model), the earlier common shared understanding of the relationship is challenged. The shared understanding of the relationship between the fields has been formed through the corpo-

ratist tradition and consequently been based on a high degree of proximity and trust that has made it possible for Swedish government to provide a large degree of freedom for both actors in the sports field and in the popular education field to handle, for instance, government grants according to their own prioritizations and with their own systems for distribution and evaluation. The new NPM-influenced shared understanding in the government field challenges this in that it implies that government takes a more active role in both defining goals and evaluation of the use of the government funding of the fields.

Figure 2: A growing NPM-influenced shared understanding in the Government field will challenge the prevailing overlapping shared understanding.



The importance of regulative packages

In the thematic analysis in this chapter I have shown how these changes in the government field have affected the governance tools used in relation to civil society organizations. In this thesis, I have primarily concentrated my analysis of governance tools in the form of different government grants given to Swedish popular education organizations and sports organizations. I have argued that these grants could be understood as carrying a kind of regulative package, which, besides the economic value that the money represents also consists of norms, regulations and underlying expectations, both formal and informal, expressed in both texts and talk. With the money follows a regulating set of language items brought together into a regulative package. This regulative package has traditionally been packed in line with one strong shared understanding of the relationship between the government field and the field of sports and popular education. This earlier set-up implied that the grants were regulated along the popular movement tradition in a corporatist model.

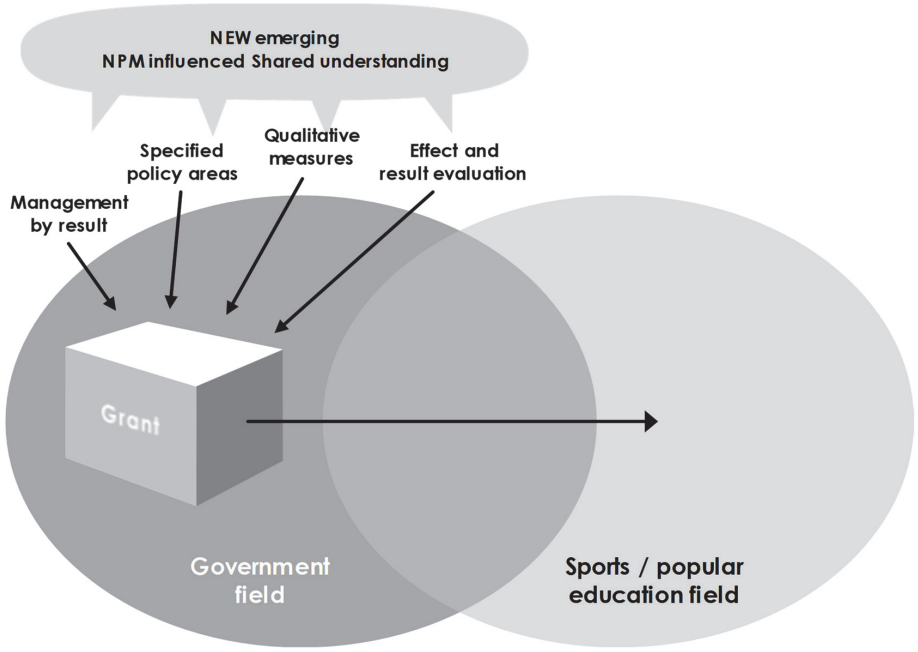
In the current study, we can, however, see how changes in the government field also influence the governance tools used in relation to civil society. Elements from the new shared understanding in the government field, partly originating from NPM reforms, are infused into the regulative package which has consequences for the entire configuration of the fields studied. Rather than focus on proximity and trust in the relationship, these new elements signal more direct governance, with a greater focus on which social issues that should be addressed and how the grant should be divided.

Directly connected to the government grants we can find concrete and clear evidence of this development in two of the cases. In the case of Handslaget we can see how the developments within the government field are translated into a new type of language – a regulative package – in which the grant itself was embedded. The organizations of the Swedish sports movement were seen as suppliers of public goods within defined areas compared to the previous situation with, in general, an ordinary grant where the organizations in the field could themselves prioritize how the money should be used. In the case of a new distribution model for grants to study associations we can instead see how changes in the government field are translated into the grant package in the form of expectations on

which basis the money should be distributed. Quality and qualitative measures are emphasized, and the previous distribution model is questioned.

We now can see that elements from the new shared understanding from the government field are being packed into the grant package. Different NPM approaches and techniques start to be infused by the government into the relationship that, bit by bit, and over time, also challenge the shared understanding of the relationship.

Figure 3: The regulative grant package is influenced by the new NPM-influenced shared understanding in the government field before it is sent into the fields of sports and popular education



It has earlier been highlighted that regulation and professionalization (e.g. Skocpol 2003, Maier & Meyer 2016) is an important driver in the ongoing rehybridization of civil society (Wijkström 2011) where CSOs become

more business-like. What I have shown is that changes of the governmental grant package also work in this direction. When government implements new reforms – stemming from ideas and techniques used in the corporate world – and starts to load them into their grant packages intended to civil society organizations, this behavior will function as an additional pressure on the organizations in civil society to adapt to a more business-like practice. Even if the introduction of NPM tools was principally only introduced as a new way to govern the state field internally, we can see how it "leaks" over in various relationship to actors in other fields where additional and potentially fundamental changes will occur, most probably unintentionally.

Based on this way of reasoning, my conclusion is that the grant package, as such, is an important mechanism in an ongoing transformation of the shared understanding of the relationship between the two studied fields and government. The grant package works as a mechanism in that it is an important carrier (c.f. Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002), where a new, or at least changed, understanding is conveyed to the sports field and the popular education field.

Field-level implications of – and responses to – transformation of shared understandings

So far, I have concluded that the shared understanding of the relationship between the fields and government has been formed by the embedded corporatist model and popular movement tradition. I have thus primarily focused on changes in the government field that challenge this shared understanding of the relationship. Finally, I have shown how the special role of the IGUs in these cases and the regulative grant package function as mechanisms in the transformation of the shared understanding. I now turn towards to my third research question and start to elaborate on what types of field-level implications and responses this transformation of the shared understanding have. In this section of the analysis, I go deeper into the processes within the fields in order to be able to analyze how the internal dynamics of the field and the IGUs shape their response to the institutional pressure that the changes cause, a focus often missing in an institutional

approach (Greenwood & Hinings 1996, p. 1023). Through a thematic analysis of my material, the ambition is to shed light on internal strategies and responses in the fields that have the potential to transform the shared understanding, but also to start to elaborate on the question of what types of field-level implications a transformation might entail.

Focusing on governance implications, three different major themes have been identified in the empirical material. The first theme centers on resources for the field and resource distribution within the field. The second theme deals with the matter of borders of the field, where I will discuss the connection between the role of the shared understanding in how borders are being drawn and redrawn. Both resource allocation and how boundaries are drawn and enforced are issues of central importance for coordination or governance in fields (e.g. Diani 2013) and have also guided the case selection for this thesis as described in Chapter 3. In the third and final theme, I will analyze the nature of the main IGUs in the fields. The introduction and emphasis of these types of actors in a field is one of the key elements that Fligstein and McAdam (2012, p. 14) note as being unique in their perspective on fields.

A baseline argument for the very existence of a strategic action field is that, among the actors, there exists a shared understanding in the field. I have previously argued and concluded that state-civil society relations are a part of the shared understanding of the field and that proximity and trust are core features of this understanding in my cases. I have shown how the government grant can be understood as a package and a way where (at least elements of) a different and potentially conflicting shared understanding can enter a field. Instead of a focus on proximity and trust in the corporative model, we can see a focus on performance in relation to government-defined goals in line with a NPM tradition, but also a wider discourse on which "public good" that the organizations in the field will "deliver". In this part of the chapter, I will analyze how actors in the field relate and respond to this complexity. Moreover, I will analyze how this tension affects issues of resource distribution on the fields and the boundaries of the field.

Shared understandings and the resources of the field

I will start this part of the analysis by elaborating on the role of the IGUs in the process of securing funds for the field and their involvement in the policy process around government grants, given that a core feature of the corporatist model is the involvement of the popular movement organziations in the policy-making process. Following this, I will deal with the issue of how grants are distributed among actors in the field.

Secure resources for the field

In the Swedish sports field, one of the core duties or roles of the primary IGU (*Riksidrottsförbundet*) seems to be to secure resources for the field and its actors. That *Riksidrottsförbundet* has the task to secure resources for the field seems taken for granted within the field. Some respondents in the study even claim that the main parameter against which the various national sports federations evaluate *Riksidrottsförbundet* against is how good they have been in securing public funding for them and the Swedish sports movement. In the popular education field, this situation seems to be slightly different. We can, in these cases, instead trace a shared sense of mistrust among the study associations that *Folkbildningsrådet* does not work sufficiently hard to secure funding, or at least that they are not as successful as expected in this task. This is also argued as being one of the driving forces behind the reforms of *Folkbildningsrådet*, where this task is, at least to some extent, taken away from the council and is instead given a more prominent position in the recently reformed "trade association" *Folkbildningsförbundet*.

In the theoretical framework of SAFs, the role of securing resources for the field is not specifically connected to the IGUs. Their main role in the framework is instead to oversee the compliance with the rules of the field and facilitate the overall smooth functioning and system reproduction.

With the special type of public-authority role that the IGUs in these two fields are given in relation to the grants to the fields, they also receive a formal tool with which to oversee compliance with the rules of the field. The monies, how they are divided, and how they could be used and reported, are connected to the rules of the field and are also a way to uphold them. In this context it is, however, clear that securing resources is a role that other actors anticipate that both *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildnings-*

rådet, as IGUs, should undertake. Public funding constitutes a relatively high degree of the total income for the actors in both fields and is, by this, an important resource on which the organizations are dependent.

The IGUs in the fields are membership-based organizations and, at the same time, are given a specific authoritative role by government in the administration of grants in their field. By this, they have a special relationship and responsibility for matters concerning the government funding of the fields, and are thus anticipated by their members to also constantly work for increased funding. The role of IGUs can, as my material shows, be considerably broader and include more tasks than the narrower scope of overseeing compliance with the rules of the fields that Fligstein and McAdam (2012) assign them. In this study, I can therefore conclude that the role of IGUs and how they govern a field is, to a high degree, dependent on context.

Use of social skill to secure resources

In the two fields, the IGUs seem to take on the role of securing funds in different ways. In the popular education field, we can see how *Folkbildningsrådet* and the study associations take part in a "normal" corporatist order. In the process of the government official report and the government bill that deals with the issue of quality, *Folkbildningsrådet* participates in the remiss procedure and has informal contacts and deliberations with the secretariat of the official report (SOU 2004:30, p. 25). They are, however, not a part of the expert committee for the official report with the argument that popular education is subject to the evaluation.

In the case with Handslaget, we can, in greater detail, see how the IGUs on the sports field act to secure increased government funding and how they then take part in the policy formulation process around the grant. The internal story among the actors of the Swedish sports movement is that Handslaget was at least partly the result of efforts of lobbying performed by the chairman of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, who at the time also held a position within the ruling Social Democratic Party. Even if it is hard to evaluate the veracity of this statement, it illustrates the close contacts between the sports field and government which are assumed and also the possibilities this gives *Riksidrottsförbundet* to lobby the state to secure resources.

I have earlier described how the grant packages that enter the fields are loaded with elements connected to a growing new shared understanding in the government field, connected to NPM reforms. In the case of Handslaget, we can see that the main IGU within the field (*Riksidrottsförbundet*) understands this. They see the development and know that the rules on the field concerning funding from the state are changing. The previously presented quote from a leading official at *Riksidrottsförbundet* is one example of this:

> "The state has fallen into a role where you cannot say that we are giving away 100 SEK, it will probably be fine. It cannot be done. That is so against the whole accountant society (Swedish quote: *räknenissesamhället*)."

Both quotes similar to this and the efforts by the staff of *Riksidrottsförbundet* to design a system for the grants that would ensure that the money really made a difference show that this is a known. The ideal model for governance in mind is that the government decides what should be accomplished within specific areas and provides the organizations within the Swedish sports movement with the resources necessary to achieve this. The results are then followed up and reported back to the government.

This is the logic for the new "money regime" that we, in the cases, also see is being criticized by actors in the sports field. It is criticized because it seems to go against a part of the previously shared understanding in the field that the government should not govern the "Sports Movement". These organizations should be independent from the state. The relationship with the state should, according to this popular movement logic, be characterized by proximity and a high degree of trust, where the government should provide for good conditions (e.g. financial, legally and with facilities) for sports and that the sports organizations themselves should make the prioritizations.

I interpret this as being that *Riksidrottsförbundet* understands that these are the new rules for government funding in general, and that the actors of the sports field need to play the game according to this new money regime. This is easier to accept since it is a substantial amount of extra funding coming to the field and its actors, and since they know that, at least to some

degree, they will be allowed to take part in the policy formulation process around the grant. They will be one of the actors in the "policy dance" (Fligstein & McAdam 2012) and the results of that dance are areas which are not alien to the sports organizations, or, as expressed in one interview, that the areas "were not new to the sport". Therefore, even if the decisions by the government seem to be a directive over what the organizations of the Swedish sports movement should accomplish with the new funding, at least the senior management within *Riksidrottsförbundet* does not see it as a real directive but more as a "deal between the Sports Movement and the Ministry". Since *Riksidrottsförbundet* has the task to administer grants to the Sports Movement, they also know that they will wield great influence over how the money then is divided among the sports organizations within the field, so the degree of freedom is still somewhat high.

That the IGU also has the role of securing resources for the field becomes even more obvious at the end of the first years, with Handslaget, where *Riksidrottsförbundet* works to secure further funding. Before the upcoming election they form a plan for how to secure funding and have discussions with high representatives from all the parties in the Parliament. They work with how to describe the public good with sports. In this manner, they provide motives for why it is important for the state to continue to allocate money to the movement. I understand this an example of what Fligstein and McAdam (2011; 2012) describe as social skills among actors in the field. Here, the social skill is carried by both individual actors (e.g. senior management of *Riksidrottsförbundet*) and by the confederation as such a collective actor.

I have, in my theory chapter, pointed to the close connection between social skill and the theoretical perspective of social movement framing (Snow et al. 1986; Snow & Benford 1988; Benford & Snow 2000). I understand the work by *Riksidrottsförbundet* in this process as a highly strategic form of social movement highlighting where frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose (Benford and Snow 2000), in this case to acquire resources. *Riksidrottsförbundet* understands that they need to "help" the politicians and different political parties with arguments to fund sports. They are sensitive to what social issues are in focus of the public debate and are able to create a line of reasoning where supporting sports

can be a solution to multiple such issues. In dialog with the government, *Riksidrottsförbundet* takes part in a diagnostic framing (Snow & Benford 1988) when they identify social challenges such as integration and public health. Following this, they use prognostic framing (ibid.) when they frame sports as a possible solution to the challenges. Finally, they work hard with motivational framing (ibid.) by actively lobbying politicians to support their proposed solutions. In this fashion, *Riksidrottsförbundet* works actively to frame sports in order to adhere and attract resources. In documents, *Riksidrottsförbundet* themselves describe that public good is always going on in the operations of the sport movement but the operations can be dressed up as different forms of "public good suits" depending on the context for communications. Here, it becomes obvious how collective actors can use framing processes as a part of their social skill and that this is also used by IGUs, not only by the incumbents and challengers in their jockeying for positions in the field.

Dancing with government

We have now seen how both framing and social skill have been used by *Riksidrottsförbundet* to secure resources. However, social skill and social movement framing also appear to be important in the relationship between government and the field when forming public policy on sports. When Handslaget is initiated, *Riksidrottsförbundet* takes a highly active role. As soon as it is known that new public funding will be available, the confederation puts together a working group to come up with proposals for a strategy for how the new money should be divided and administered. Early on, there are ideas for which areas are important to highlight for the increased funding. As representatives for the Sports Movement, *Riksidrottsförbundet* works in close cooperation with the government already by the early stages when the first decisions are made about areas for Handslaget. Several meetings with ministers and their staff are held, *Riksidrottsförbundet* comes up with proposals that they test with the government, and the government reacts and adds and removes areas. This close relationship and cooperation between government and the confederation in this processes is described as "one of those publicly known secrets" by a highly ranked official at *Riksidrottsförbundet*.

By using their social skill and engaging in a policy dance with the government I mean that the actors from the fields, and especially the IGUs, participate in an attempt to influence the packaging of the grant. In the SAFs' framework, this can be understood as a process where the IGUs tried to control the agenda of the proximate state field. This becomes most evident in my example from the sports field. As an established field closely connected to the state, it is possible for the sports field to play a part in creating public policy. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) suggest that there are two arenas for action: within the SAFs themselves and in the relation between the state and different SAFs of society. State actors can have their own interests and institutional missions that affect non-state fields. However, established fields can also take their issues to the state in an attempt to control the agenda that will regulate their field. By this being possible, it is likely that there is also feedback between state and non-state fields. In the corporatist model, the common policy formulation process is of core importance, and this argument from Fligstein and McAdam could be seen as a bridge between the theory of SAFs and corporatism. In this case, here we clearly see how government and *Riksidrottsförbundet* attempt to influence each other and give feedback on each other's position. They take part in an "iterative stimulus-response 'dance'" (Fligstein & McAdam 2012 p. 173) that ultimately creates public policy. Even if this process seems to primarily involve the public policy issues that should be connected to the new grant called Handslaget and not the regulative grant package per se, this policy dance becomes one response where the elements of the new shared understanding in the government field enter and meet the sports field.

The constant jockeying for position resources

As I now have demonstrated, the main IGUs in the fields have a central role in securing resources and taking part in forming policy. This is the case in both fields, but is most evident in the sports field. This is one process or response whereby the fields can be exposed for a conflicting shared understanding from the government field. Besides this, the IGUs, however, also play a core role in the process of deciding how resources should be handled and how they should be divided between different actors on the fields. As I will attempt to demonstrate, the dynamics of these internal processes in the

fields are of importance to how actors in the fields will respond to institutional complexity. In this sense, the internal processes of the grant is one area where we should search for strategies and responses that have the potential to transform the shared understanding.

Handslaget

In the beginning of this process, *Riksidrottsförbundet* takes a very active and offensive approach. The staff that work with the issue describe how they tried to find a model that could "get the biggest effect for investments". They wanted real change for the money, partly because this was what they perceived that the government wanted, and partly because they thought that the Sports Movement needed development. Their suggestion became that "local handshakes" should be conducted with sports clubs that could show a plan for how they should develop their work in the spirit of Handslaget. Moreover, it entailed that it was the *Riksidrottsförbundet* and SISU districts that should have the responsibility to identify the local clubs that had the capacity to do something good with the money. Following my previous reasoning, I interpret this approach as the staff trying to embrace the new shared understanding that is growing in the government field which has been guiding how the new type of funding has been set up.

However, this approach threatens the sports field´s present shared understanding of the rules for the field. To give this powerful role to the districts would give them a stronger role in the field of sports than they have previously had. The other main group of actors, the national sports federations, reacted heavily to this proposal when it was submitted for comment. They argued that they, as national sports federations, were the ones who needed to have the power over how the money was transferred to clubs that belonged to their sport. From a field theoretical approach, I understand this as a battle over the rules of the field, including both how resources (money) should be divided and the allocation of power between actors within the field. The national sports federations did not want to lose power to the districts and put up a fight over this. Following this, the discussion began within the movement. *Riksidrottsförbundet* felt the need to involve the actors in the process and the issue of how Handslaget should be

dealt with was debated both at the general meeting and in different deliberations, principally with the national sports federation.

What seems to be taking place in this process is that *Riksidrottsförbundet* backs off from its very active role in the process of forming how Handslaget should be handled and, to a larger degree, starts to function as an arena that facilitates the battle between other actors in the field over resources and power. The national sports federations, and especially the large and historically strong associations, hold the incumbent position. Drawing on theory we can, in a battle such as this, assume that the incumbent's role will be strong and that the division of resources and power will be in their favor (Fligstein & McAdam 2011; 2012). As shown, this is also the case in the sports field. The incumbents demand that their role in Handslaget should be highly prioritized before the districts and that the money should be divided in line with the ordinary support which they receive. *Riksidrottsförbundet* then comes up with a proposal in line with the position from the incumbents.

The internal process in the sports field when Handslaget arrives can also be analyzed with the shared understanding of the field as the theoretical tool. I have already shown how proximity and trust in relationship to the government field, stemming from the popular movement tradition and corporatist arrangement, are core parts of the shared understandings in the fields. Now we can see how another vital part of the tacit shared understanding of the field comes into play, namely democracy. This plays out in terms of a structural perspective on democracy, where independent federations, as members of *Riksidrottsförbundet*, in a democratic order, should take part in the decision-making process for how the new money should be divided. However, it also becomes visible as a principle of fairness and justice with an understanding that government grants should be divided so that everyone is given "their share". Handslaget, and the idea that resources should be divided based on where the effect of additional money would be highest, goes against the shared understanding within the field. The task for *Riksidrottsförbundet*, as IGU on the field, is to find a way to combine these two views. However, it then appears that the national federations need to have power over the lion's share of the resources. It is also necessary for them to emphasize that the areas that have been pointed out within

Handslaget are areas that the Sports Movement already works within, so this would not jeopardize the independence of the Movement. The result of the process is therefore a "sports political compromise" that makes it possible both to say that the effort meets the government's will, but which has, during the process of forming a plan, been adapted to the shared understandings within the sports field on what is possible to do and not.

Grant to popular education

In the popular education field and the process around a new distribution model for government grants it is not possible to identify that *Folkbildningsrådet*, as the main IGU in the field, takes an offensive approach as we saw in the sports field. Instead, *Folkbildningsrådet* soon starts to function more as the arena facilitating the process for other actors in the field. The study associations are invited by *Folkbildningsrådet* to take an active part in the process through the opportunity for their common organization *Folkbildningsförbundet* to name two representatives in the working group that should come up with a proposal for how the grant should be divided. The two representatives named are from the senior management in two of the study associations. The rest of the associations are also involved in the process through numerous meetings and deliberations. The process soon develops into a battle between different study associations about the resources in form of government grants within the field. Here, the conflict lines are clear and to a large degree revolve around the issue of how fast growth in volumes should affect the level of grant. This battle will be analyzed later in the thesis.

However, the interesting point now is that the issues connected to quality, packed by the government in the "grant package" soon fade away and end up on the periphery of the process. I have earlier described the new focus on quality in the "grant package" as a part of a changing shared understanding in the government field. This was one of the main reasons behind the process of reforming the grant distribution model in the first place. However, in the process within *Folkbildningsrådet* there is no actor that clearly represents this perspective – all of them are instead fully focused on finding a solution to the conflict between the study associations on how the grant should be divided. In so doing, they wish to find "a sys-

tem that everyone can live with" that would also preferably benefit their own study association. However, the issue of quality is on the agenda for the study associations. *Folkbildningsrådet* has, this time, already set up rules that stipulate that all study associations need to write reports on how they organize their own systematic quality work and what impact this has on the operation of the association. However, since the popular movement tradition, with its idea of independence, manifested in *'fritt och frivilligt'* (free and voluntary) as a part of the shared understanding in the field, it has been decided that each study association is free to organize the work as they want and no common indicators of quality have been imposed on the study associations. This implies that it is hard for the working group to come up with factors that could compare the study associations from a quality perspective. Subsequently, it is thereby also hard for them to see what a "qualitative element" in the distribution model for grants could be designed. This leads to a clear separation (de-coupling) between the quality systems and the distribution model for the grant.

Resistance to the new regulative package

Greenwood et al. (2011 p. 322) have argued that pressure that arises from institutional complexity does not affect all organizations equally. They state that when institutional logics pass through organizational fields they are filtered by both the field structure and different attributes of the organizations pressured by them. This will then affect how actors in the field respond to the institutional complexity. As already noted, the concept of institutional logics has its analogy in "shared understandings" within the SAF framework, even if Fligstein and McAdam argue that the latter is more precisely defined. I will therefore view the emerging change in the shared understanding of the relationship between state and civil society, emanating from the influx of NPM reforms in the government field, as a shared understanding that will be filtered the fields of sports and popular education. By this, I mean that, in these two processes, we can discover such a filter function.

One part of the filter function is that when the processes the grant packages should be repackaged into a model for distribution, the internal dynamics in the field are characterized by what Fligstein and McAdam

(2011; 2012) describe as the constant jockeying for position and resources among the actors in the field. In this jockeying, the main driving force seems to be to ensure as much resources as possible for their own association. It is not the case that the institutional demands stemming from the shared understanding in the government field that is in the package should automatically affect how the resources are distributed internally. In both cases we can see how some officials in the IGUs try to advocate for models in accordance to the new NPM-inspired shared understanding in the government field. However, among the other actors, this is not the case. Pache and Santos (2010) show that the response to institutional demands will be affected by the degree to which different institutional demands are represented within the organization. In these fields, the representation for the new institutional demands in the grant package is low. We can therefore expect that greater resistance strategies will be used in order to handle the institutional complexity.

In the cases we can also see how the regulative grant packages are further filtered. Before the money reaches its final recipients, they are "repackaged" in a process within the IGUs studied in this thesis. The repackaging process is a part of the response to institutional complexity. This will affect how the shared understanding packed into the grant will be perceived when it is transferred out in the fields. In the different cases, different strategies appear to be used. In the Handslaget case we can see how, through negotiation, the actors try to pacify or bargain with the ambition of the government. The demands of the new shared understanding are not simply embraced and sent forward, and some of the policy issues addressed within the effort are played down and the national federations are given great freedom to prioritize the use of the grant. All federations are also given their "fair share" of the grant without prioritization that some would be better to "deliver" in line with government's motives. At the same time, systems are built to be able to follow the money (in project-based funding) instead of just using them as an add-on to the normal grant. Using Oliver's (1991) insights on strategic responses to institutional complexity, I understand this as a compromise strategy where the actors in the field at least try to partly accommodate all institutional demands at the same time.

In the popular education case I have shown how the process leads to a clear separation (de-coupling) between the quality systems and the distribution model for the grant. Also here the internal dynamics of the field give a focus to the constant jockeying for position and resources among the actors instead of the institutional demands following the changed shared understanding within the government field. This is in line with the avoidance strategic response to institutional complexity (Oliver 1991) where the organizations attempt to prelude the necessity to conform by symbolic compliance when they argue that one of the new volume-driven parameters in the model is connected to quality. They also buffer institutional pressure by decoupling quality from government grant distribution by arguing that extensive quality work is being performed within the field, even if this does not affect the resource allocation.

I would argue that this is possible and enforced due to important aspects of the tacit shared understanding in the fields that are also reflected in the internal governance structures of the two IGUs. The first part of this is the understanding of the relationship to government that should be characterized by an independence even if there is a recognition of the importance of government as an enabler for the fields. Proximity and trust stemming from the popular movement tradition are emphasized. The second aspect is the democratic tradition that, through formal structures, gives the actors in the field both a role and power in the process, but also limits the possible outcomes since all recipients need to be treated in an equal and fair way. I would also argue that the shared understanding also contains a special understanding of what is considered fair and equal. This is to say, that the sports federations' and study associations' size, in terms of number of members and local clubs, volume of activities, etc. should be the basis for resource allocation. The expectation in the new shared understanding contained within the grants is rather an NPM-inspired one where output in terms of how different actors can deliver in relation to (government) established goals should be the basis for resource allocation.

Through the use of different strategies to handle institutional pressure and conflicts the grant is filtered (repackaged) before it reaches its final destination. This takes place inside the IGUs, but, in these cases, they seem to be due to the shared understandings of the rules on the field work more as

an arena for the other actors. Together with the part of the prevailing shared understanding of the relationship with the government that emphasizes proximity and trust, this is an important factor that governs which parts of the grant package are possible to accept and which parts need a more resistant strategic response.

It should, however, be highlighted that this study is not a longitudinal study of the effects of conflicting institutional demands following a decorporatization of the relationship between state and civil society organization. Such a study could come to the conclusion that over time, and little by little, major transformations in the two fields are taking place in the direction of complying with the institutional pressure from the government.

Shared understandings and the boundaries of the fields

A central issue of a strategic action field is how the boundaries of the field are drawn. Who is in the field and who is not? Dacin, Goodstein and Scott (2002, p. 51) show that boundaries of fields are shaped by an admixture of regulative and governance arrangements such as: cultural-cognitive conceptions of identity; normative and ethical frameworks that provide common rules and standards; and interdependencies borne of dependence on similar types of resources. They also propose that a disruption along any of these dimensions may result in boundaries that will alternate field structure and participant behavior.

In line with, for instance, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and others, I consider the question of how to draw the boundaries of a field to be an empirical one. In contrast to more expansive definitions (e.g. Scott & Meyer 1983; DiMaggio & Powell 1983), I follow Fligstein and McAdam's (2012) definition of a strategic action field, and apply the more narrow understanding that field membership consists of "those groups who routinely take each other into account in their actions" (ibid. p. 167). This makes it clearer who the players are and what their relationship is, as well as providing an opportunity to focus the attention on the players who are jockeying for position for particular purposes. This more narrow view is close to, for instance, that of Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), who define fields as places where there is something at stake, and that members of those fields are actors who orientate their actions to one another. The discussion of how to

draw borders of fields, however, appears to be primarily discussed as a methodological issue where the question is how the researcher should define the fields.

Ahrne and Brunsson (2005) have pointed to the fact that meta-organizations, like all organizations, include and exclude. This is also the case for *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet*. The presence of a meta-organization can disrupt other status systems in a field, such as the willingness of organizations to adhere to certain norms, rules or standards. Instead of accepting an existing status system, organizations can claim a certain status by membership a meta-organization (ibid., p. 448). This could be especially true when it comes to membership in an IGU in the field. Membership rules for these organizations can then be designed in a way so as to confer status on the members, and membership can be claimed to be an important factor in judging status. Lamont and Molnár (2002, p. 168) have argued that borders among people and groups will lead to "unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities" and can be seen as "tools by which individuals and groups struggle over" (ibid.). This is evident in the cases in this thesis, especially when it comes to the case around SISU, which will be further analyzed below. In this sense, the borders of the field also become important in the empirical reality, not only a methodological problem for the researcher to handle when using fields as an analytical concept.

An issue of membership and government funding

In the beginning of this chapter I started to address the issue of the difference between what the organizations themselves talk about as the "Sports Movement" (Swedish: *Idrottsrörelsen*) and "popular education" (Swedish: *Folkbildningen*) and the strategic actions fields of sports and popular education. However, with the understanding that the borders of fields are an empirical question, there is a connection between how membership in the movements is perceived by the organizations, and how the borders of the strategic action field are drawn. In the Sports Movement, formal membership in *Riksidrottsförbundet* seems to be an important factor for whether an organization is considered to be inside or outside the Movement. In the popular education field, entitlement or approval to receive government

grants distributed by *Folkbildningsrådet* seems to fulfill a similar function. Connected to this is membership in *Folkbildningsförbundet* for study associations, or RIO for the folk high schools. In both of these cases, the IGUs, and their decisions on membership and government funding, are of core importance to understand how borders of the field are drawn. That this is important could, in line with the argument by Ahrne and Brunsson, (2005) be understood as being that formal membership gives organizations a certain status in the fields.

The criteria for membership in *Riksidrottsförbundet* are constantly debated. So, for that matter, are *Folkbildningsrådet*'s criteria to become entitled to government grants as a study association or folk high school. In both cases, the rules are set up in a way that safeguards and confers the status of the current members (cf. Ahrne & Brunsson 2005). In the sports case, there are, for instance, rules on a certain size of the organization, the central organizational form, and rules that no new organizations are granted membership if they run activities within a sport that is already represented by another member. In the popular education field, *Folkbildningsrådet* makes an overall assessment of which existing activities and the economic space are considered. They also demand that any new study association needs to work closely together with an existing study association in a qualification period of a couple of years and reach a certain volume of activities in order to be entitled to government grants, a process that leads to isomorphic pressure and a strong gatekeeper function (e.g. Harding 2012).

Borders of the field and the connection to resources – Following the SISU case

The case with SISU can, in governance terms, tell us something about borders of a field, but also illustrates the resource allocations of a field from a different perspective. It also connects the two different fields that are in focus in this thesis – the sports field and the popular education field. Among the study associations, SISU is fairly young, and was formed by the Sports Movement to organize educational activities within the Movement. By SISU, the Movement took its part in the popular education family while simultaneously being given access to new resources to fund their work.

SISU was, however, already from the beginning, somewhat different to the other study associations. From the outset, they were known for doing things their own way. Many of the study associations work closely to their members and carry out activities through their members, but none of them do it to the degree of SISU. They almost exclusively work through their member organizations that are the different sports federations and their local sports clubs. Compared to the other study associations they are also growing rapidly in terms of the volume of activities. This is a challenge to other study associations which are not growing at the same pace as SISU. The main monetary resource in the field is the government grant, and this is a fixed sum each year that does not automatically increase with the total volume of the activities of all study associations. SISU's rapid growth would therefore affect the level of grant for the other study associations.

This starts a process whereby study associations that hold incumbent positions in the field use their power and try to make the IGU *Folkbildningsrådet* stop increases in the government grant to the fast-growing SISU. This is achieved by adopting a new distribution model in which SISU´s part of the government grant does not grow as rapidly as the volume of their activities. Within the sports field this was seen as an action directed directly against SISU. On SISU's side are, however, some other study associations (e.g. Bilda and Sensus) which also feel disadvantaged by the system and oppose the changes in the distribution model. All the central players on the field know the position of the other players in this game and the study associations are divided into two clear groups. This can be interpreted as a game, both in regard to the resource allocation on the field and one about the rules on the field. It was an incumbent's win over a challenger in the field, and it was also accepted by the IGU, which is in line with Fligsten and McAdam's (2012) claim that the IGUs in fields are rarely just neutral arbitrators, but rather tend to favor the incumbent's position.

The process also illustrates how proximate fields influence each other. The connection between the popular education field and the sports field here becomes obvious, manifested concretely by SISU as a player in both fields. In the sports field, the main IGU, *Riksidrottsförbundet*, has the same role in grant distribution as *Folkbildningsrådet* has in the popular education field. Even if there are great similarities between the shared understandings

in the fields, they seem to differ when it comes to the understandings of the rules for grant distribution. In the shared understanding of the sports field, the rules emphasize that grant distribution should be based on how big different associations are in terms of members, active participants, number of activities, etc. More importantly, it entails that changes in the relative size of the federations will affect the size of the grant. The main game of the sports field concerning the grant in the sports field has thus rather been of how size should be measured and the conflict line has been between individual sports and team sports, and the borders for which actors that should be granted access to the field and the grant. For actors in the sports field it is therefore perceived as a violation of the rules of the game to "punish" an actor for growing too fast by not giving them more grant money. This leads to actors from the sports field starting to intervene in the popular education field, thus crossing field borders. SISU uses the main IGU from the sports field. *Riksidrottsförbundet*, and their political contacts, try to influence the government and argue that the model for the government grant is unfair and that it only favors the large established study associations.

The incumbents of the field, principally the well-established and large study associations (e.g. ABF and Vuxenskolan) have begun to feel that SISU is violating the established rules of the field. One such perceived violation is that their way of integrating the study activities into their members' operations allows them to grow rapidly. Even more important is that they loudly criticize the government grant model and start to lobby the government to intervene. According to them overt criticism of the system could risk the legitimacy of the entire system and should thus be avoided by the study associations. This is a question that should be discussed internally among the associations and certainly not in public and is, in this way, a violation of the rules of the game for the popular education field. When *Folkbildningsrådet*, a couple of years later, decided to once again change the distribution model, the situation became more acute, since the new model opens up for growing study associations such as SISU to acquire more money at the expense of associations that were diminishing or not growing as fast. While SISU attempts to lobby the government with the help from other actors in the sports field, ABF, as one of the incumbents in the popular education field (and also a part of the Labor Movement), lobbies the

social democratic government from the other perspective to obtain a solution to the situation. The game on the field will now move from concerning resources available to the field and the allocation of those resources to concerning borders for the field.

So far in the process, my analysis is that it is primarily the parts in the shared understanding that relate to the internal rules of the field and how to properly behave that have been in play. At this point, the relationship with the government field, and the shared understanding of this relationship, becomes of obvious importance. The government has a close relationship to both the popular education field and the sports field to the extent to which they almost overlap. The obvious connection is, of course, through the government grants, the level of these, and the task that both *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet* have in the distribution of them, but also in the public policy present for both fields. Now the government has decided to take action that, in the long run, will affect the borders of the popular education field. Most likely it is the rising conflict between the main actors in the sports field and the Labor Movement's own study association, and the risk that their own association will lose significant amounts of resources, which have caused the Social Democratic government to take action. The solution that the government chose is to design a special grant for study activities in the sports field. In this way, the government does not have to interfere in the decisions of Folbildningsrådet and, by separating the grant streams, the conflict may also be solved on a more permanent basis. Using grants as a governance tool the government takes the first step to redrawing the borders for the popular education field in a way where SISU will ultimately be excluded. At the same time, the sports field is also more pronounced as a field of its own. This is an example of the large influence the state field can have on other fields, in this case different fields principally made up of actors from civil society.

After the decision from the government, a process started in one of the main IGUs of the field, Folkbildningsförbunde. Here, the incumbents of the field began a process of excluding SISU from the association. A possible motive for this is again resources, but this time at a local and regional government level, where it would be harder for SISU to compete for local grants if they were no any longer a part of *Folkbildningsförbundet*. The incum-

bents argue that associations which do not receive government grants connected to the specific popular education constitution have been given a new mission from the state. Therefore, they should not be viewed as a proper study association and could not be a part of the study association's common organization, *Folkbildningsförbundet*. Here, it becomes visible how important actions in the state field are for the state of the popular education field. In the field, the right to receive governmental grants is extremely closely connected to whether you are seen as a part of the field or not. By changing its by-laws in a somewhat complex process the incumbents of the field use *Folkbildningsförbundet* as a tool to change the shared understanding of the field by redrawing the borders of the field where SISU becomes excluded.

For SISU, this whole process leads to a discussion about their role in the sports field. Here, different actors within the field play a game between themselves concerning the level and control over government resources but also about the character of the organization, SISU. Opposition is raised early on against the first proposal from the government where the money to SISU should be channeled through *Riksidrottsförbundet*. A number of actors in the sports field, including SISU and its board, see this as threat to the more independent role that SISU has played as an organization in the sports field focusing on educational issues. Even if this ultimately fails to materialize, it seems as if being a part of the popular adult education field has strengthened SISU's position within the sports field. When they leave that field their identity as a separate actor within the sports field becomes undermined. A couple of years later the offices of SISU and *Riksidrottsförbundet* were merged and the two organizations' boards became composed of the same individuals. SISU has gone from being part of both the popular education field and the sports field to now only being a part of the latter.

Boundaries affect identity

This case shows how the boundaries of a field are drawn and enforced by a number of interacting processes and factors. The shared understandings of the field, with its rules for appropriate behavior, and violations against them, are one such factor. Another is the relationship to the proximate government field, and its possibility to interfere in other fields. Finally, the

dependence on the same resources by actors in the field is a third factor that seems to influence the drawing of boundaries of the field. By redefining their views of how SISU should secure government funding, the government also takes part in how borders are drawn in and between the fields. SISU becomes more or less excluded from the popular education field and loses its natural relationship to other study associations. Instead, they become tightly integrated in the *Riksidrottsförbundet* organization and their own identity as an independent study association fades away.

As noted initially, Dacin, Goodstein and Scott (2002, p. 51) have argued that boundaries of fields are shaped by an admixture of regulative and governance arrangements and that a disruption along any of these dimensions may result in boundaries that will alternate field structure and participant behavior. It would be fair to say that the changes in normative rules by the change of funding stream to SISU and being excluded from *Folkbildningsförbundet* also changed the cultural-cognitive conception of their identity. Their relationship with the other study associations has been almost completely cut off, and the sense of "sitting in the same boat" has disappeared. Instead, they are now even more closely incorporated into the formal organization of *Riksidrottsförbundet* and within the Swedish sports movement.

Shared understandings and the role and nature of the Internal Governance Units

As my third and final theme, I will now more specifically discuss implications for the role and nature of the IGUs. The introduction and emphasis of these types of actors in a field is one of the key elements suggested by Fligstein and McAdam (2012, p. 14) to be unique with their particular understanding of fields. Throughout my cases, the IGUs fill important functions in their fields, not least when it comes to the relationship to the government. I have identified their double role and dual position between the government field and the fields of sports and of popular education as a mechanism through which the shared understanding can be transformed. In relationship to the other identified mechanism – the regulative package – they are its first recipients and the main actor where the package is "opened up" and repackaged in order to be distributed among the other actors in the field. They are therefore in the very locus where the shared understand-

ing in the fields is being challenged by the growing NPM-influenced shared understanding in the government field.

I will here elaborate further on their internal and external character and argue that how the IGU changes its balance in this dimensions could empirically be understood as both a implication of – and a response to – the ongoing changes in the shared understanding of the relationship between government and civil society.

The internal – external dimension of the governance units

In the SAF framework the IGU is defined as an actor on the field. As previously stated, they are defined as actors that are "charged with overseeing compliance with field rules and, in general, facilitating the overall smooth functioning and reproduction of the system" (Fligstein & McAdam 2012, pp. 13-14). I would, however, argue that the IGUs of both the sports field and the popular education field could be seen as mirroring the fields. Inside the organization of the IGU, the entire field is represented. Besides this, I have, in the theme of resources further argued that, in the studied context, they also have a core role in securing resources to the fields. In their definition of an IGU, Fligstein and McAdam highlight that the internal aspect is of importance and something distinct from external state structures that hold jurisdiction over all, or at least some, aspects of the strategic action field. In their description of the framework organizations such as trade associations, rating agencies and various types of accrediting bodies are examples of internal governance units of the fields, while different government bodies such as government agencies are not. However, Fligstein and McAdam (2012, p. 14) highlight that, besides their internal function, IGUs often serve as a liaison between the strategic action field and important external fields, such as state fields. One of their most important functions may even be to work and maintain external field relations, to have "one foot in the field and the other outside of it" (ibid. p. 77). In a situation where we also see ongoing changes in, and renegotiations of, the shared understanding of the relationship between government and the field, the role and nature of the IGU comes into special focus.

This clear distinction between the internal and external becomes somewhat problematic in the application of the theoretical framework to the two

fields in this study. In both of the fields IGUs are found that clearly are a part of the field and also have the role of overseeing compliance with field rules. Both *Riksidrottsförbundet* in the sports field, and *Folkbildningsrådet* in the popular education field, are, in a legal sense, voluntary nonprofit associations (*ideell förening*), in which other actors in the field are allowed in as members. Among the actors in the fields there is no doubt that the IGUs are internal actors in the very sense that Fligstein and McAdam (2012) propose. Nonetheless, at the same time, they have authoritative tasks delegated to them by government. In these cases, it becomes somewhat complicated to draw the clear distinction between internal and external governance units in the manner of Fligstein and McAdam. In the corporative setting for the field, the borders between the fields dominated by civil society actors and the state field are not that clear.

By this, I mean that the lack of distinct borders could, in fact, instead be described as a solution and the very essence of the corporative model. When government delegates authoritative tasks to civil society organizations in the field, the borders will be blurred. The IGUs are clearly internal for the fields, but they, at the same time, have traits from what in relationship to the theoretical framework would be described as external, related to the government field. They are both behaving and being constitutionally arranged as if they were movement and state at the very same time (cf. Wijkström 2011). They are further functioning both as internal and external governance units within their respective fields (cf. Fligstein & McAdam 2012). Fligstein and McAdam mean that IGUs can also function as a liaison between the field in focus and the government field. In the two fields studied in this dissertation, where the IGUs have been granted some governmental authoritative power, this link is highly formalized and gives both *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* a special and rather strong position as IGUs in their fields. This is certainly a liaison function between their fields and the government field, but I would argue that their function also goes well beyond this. By the formal delegation of authoritative tasks by government, they can also be considered to be a government authority. That is to say, they are functioning as both internal and external governance units at the same time.

In the case of a renewed *Folkbildningsrådet*, the IGU's dual position as being both internal and external is in focus. Here, the study associations in the field of popular education initiate a process to clarify the task for *Folkbildningsrådet* and how this relates to their own co-operative organization *Folkbildningsförbundet*. *Folkbildningsrådet* is more independent from its members and more "authority" (government) like while *Folkbildningsförbundet* is reformed into what can be understood as more of a trade association. This process is also interesting since it can be seen as taking part in the very intersection between the organizational transformative restructuring of a field and the internal organizational transformation of an organization.

This game of the popular education field revolves around the role of the central IGU in the field. It is also a game where the internal governance of *Folkbildningsrådet* is in focus. Unlike the cases that deal with the formal distribution of the resources in the field we cannot, in this case, identify a distinct event or changed policy from the government as the starting point for what takes place. Instead, there is a growing "feeling" that the present system with high involvement of the study associations and folk high schools in the governance of the IGU (*Folkbildningsrådet*) is problematic. Based on the prevailing shared understanding in the field, the idea of proximity and trust has been institutionalized in the organizational construction of *Folkbildningsrådet*. However, now the "feeling" among the actors is that this internal focus and governance arrangement has become a problem in relation to other actors in the government field. It risks jeopardizing the legitimacy for the whole system, both the popular education as such, and the corporative administrative structure with a member-controlled body that administers the grant. One quote from the case clearly illustrates the feeling that the way the IGU functions could pose a long-term threat:

> But, something is dawning among policy makers, local politicians, officials, both nationally and locally, and also among civil society organizations outside popular education. Thus, the state contributes 3.5 billion SEK in a bag and then they [the study associations and folk high schools] can do whatever they want with the money. And besides that, they decide for themselves how they allocate the money. And no one really cares about it. (Interview)

Following my previous analysis, I interpret that the "feeling" the actors have relates to the ongoing changes in the shared understanding of the relationship with government. When proximity and trust is challenged by quality, efficiency and a language pointing towards a role as provider of public good, the role of the IGU becomes challenged.

In the process the members decide that the internal governance of the IGU needs to be changed so that the IGU can operate more independently from its members in order to uphold its legitimacy in relationship to government. The board is no longer composed of people from the member organizations and the by-laws are changed so that it is no longer stated that the members should take part in working groups in order to prepare important decisions. Instead, the council should function more as a government agency. This was how the changes were discussed in the field when actors tried to define the role of the IGU due to the changing shared understanding of the relationship to the government field. It seems to imply that the public authority tasks delegated to *Folkbildningsrådet* should be handled more independently by the *Folkbildningsrådet* without, or at least with a minimum of, involvement from the study associations and folk high schools. It should not be possible to accuse the grant receivers of having power and responsibility for how the grant is administrated. At the same time, it is highlighted that the self-governing model with a member-owned and controlled body (*Folkbildningsrådet*) should be "protected and preserved". This is understood as an important outcome as well as a sign of the independent nature of popular education in relation to the state.

In the process, we see how the actors try to rebalance the internal vs. external character of the governance unit. This process can be understood as a reaction to a complex institutional environment. In my theory chapter I have shown how Fligstein and McAdam's (2011; 2012) notion of shared understandings is closely connected to what we, in other theory frames, known as institutional logics (e.g. Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury 2012). For a long time, the popular education field has, as a part of the corporatist model including the delegation of formal authoritative tasks, tried to handle both the institutional logic emanating from their place in civil society, and an institutional logic connected to government and public administration.

One interpretation is that when *Folkbildningsrådet* was established it was possible to let the first logic dominate. The internal aspect of the governance unit was favored. However, with a changed shared understanding of the relationship and a general de-corporatization, and, thereby, slow changes within the public administration logic, the conflicts between the different logics increased. Following this reasoning, we can then understand this case as a tipping point where the actors in the field experience the pressure of adjust the structure of *Folkbildningsrådet* more in line with the public administration logic.

The external aspect of the governance unit is now given a more prominent role. In line with Oliver's (1991) typology of responses to institutional complexity this could be seen as a compromise response whereby the actors in the field try, through negotiation, to balance different competing institutional demands in order to be able to accommodate both of them. To follow Pache and Santos' (2010) line of reasoning, this is also possible since the nature of the institutional conflict is more about the means of how to achieve the goals for the organizations than about the goals as such. This makes it possible to use less resistant strategies to the institutional demands. What we end up with is, however, an increased blur or overlap of institutional logics. The initial shared understanding of the relationship and how this is manifested in organizational configurations is now mixed up with more elements from a new wave of public administration logic, leading to the conclusion that the organizational configurations needs to be changed.

An illustrative example of the fact that *Folkbildningsrådet* now see themselves as a government agency is when they prepare their new graphic profile. They then map other state agencies' graphic expression in order to find how *Folkbildningsrådet* could appear more agency-like. In fact, when launching it they clearly stated that "More distinct and more agency-like. That's what *Folkbildningsrådet* wants to signal with its new graphic profile" (FBR 2015b). Accordingly, here we can clearly see how the balancing with the internal and external character of the governance units in *Folkbildniningsrådet* takes place. It cannot be only internal or only external, but it needs to be both at the same time. The changes in the government field of the shared

understandings of the relationship to civil society lead to the need for a rebalance of the character of the IGU focusing more of the external aspect.

This rebalance is probably easier since we, in the popular education field, find other IGUs such as *Folkbildningsförbundet* and RIO. They are both much clearer internal actors, with the task somewhat equivalent to a trade association. This could be a reason as to why it is possible to let the external character of the main governance unit in the field expand.

I would further argue that this rebalance of the logics in the field, manifested in changes of the internal governance structure of *Folkbildningsrådet* (the main IGU in the field) also affects the rules in the field. It thereby has the potential to affect both how resources are allocated in the field and how boundaries are drawn. The most obvious instance of this is when it comes to how the resources are divided in the field. After the changes in the internal governance system it seems as if the council now takes more impressions from what different government reports have stated concerning the grant system, which have criticized the weak connection between the volume of activities of the study associations and the grant system. Now, the council has decided to completely take away the basic grant and almost entirely base the system on the volume of activities and the number of participants.

To summarize, I mean that a consequence of the ongoing transformations in the shared understanding of the relationship between state and civil society in this specific context is the organizational changes in the IGU. The organizational changes described above become one effect of the transformation. Given the new shared understanding, with, for instance, the introduction of NPM principles in the government administration, and the previous prerequisites embedded in the shared understanding of the rules in the field and in organizational structures, organizational changes such as the changed governance of *Folkbildningsrådet* will be a consequence that – in a subsequent step – will also impact upon the rules and games on the fields.

Summary

I have now argued that besides the two identified mechanisms in the previous part, different strategies and responses used by actors in the to the new

challenging shared understanding needs to be considered in order to understand what types of field-level implications the transformation of the shared understanding have in the studied fields.

In the process where the grant package is being 'repackaged' in the fields we find such strategies and responses. In all of the four different cases, I have identified examples of how actors in the fields use different types of strategies in response to the regulative package with its new NPM-influenced shared understanding of the relationship. Two of the cases, Handslaget and Grants to Popular Education, primarily deal with how the actors respond to changes related to resources in the field. The other two cases: SISU and a renewed *Folkbildningsrådet*; principally deal with responses related to borders of the field and how the field is organized. Besides identifying how actors in the field respond to changes in the relationship with government, they also tell us something about what kind of implications changes in the relationship can give. However, by no means are they a complete account of responses and implications that changes in the relationship between state and civil society will cause.

When the regulative package enters the field, different strategies are being used by actors in the fields in response to the changes in the relationship to the state field. Here, we find strategies through which the shared understanding can be transformed. However, we also find strategies used by actors in order to resist or minimize such transformations. Resistant strategies are used where the actors in the fields try to fight the changes having any effect on the field. Yet, in addition, more acceptance strategies are also in play where actors in the fields adjust to the changes in order to be able to play the game according to the new shared understanding of the relationship.

Triggering resistance

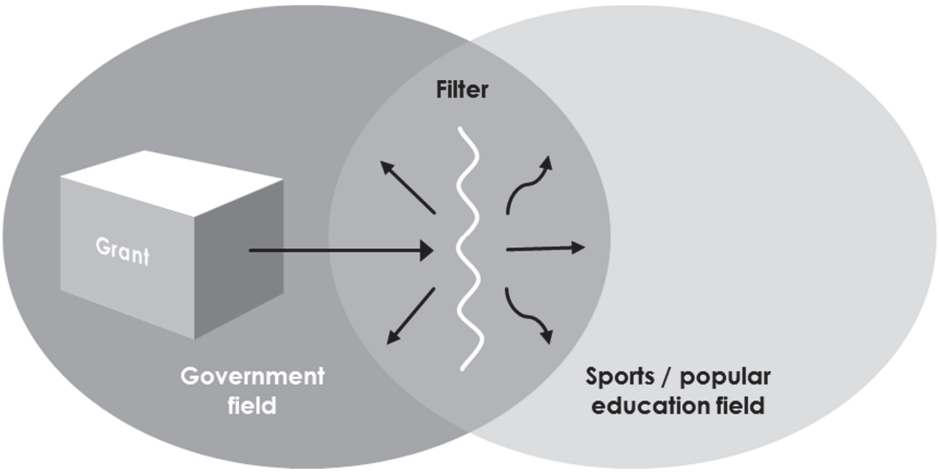
Starting with the strategies that are of a more resistant character there is a filtering function at the field-level (cf. Greenwood et al. 2011). This function is primarily found inside the IGUs of the field. When the regulative package is conveyed into the field it seems to be repackaged by the IGU before it continues out into the wider field. This repackaging process takes place within the IGU's own governance system, where other actors in the

field are involved. This implies that, in that process, the current shared understanding works as a framework for how this repackaging should take place. This shared understanding provides the actors with rules and roles for that process and also sets limitations for what is possible and what is not. I have earlier described how the shared understanding in both studied fields is shaped by the popular movement. As a working part in the filtering and the repackaging, the popular movement tradition can, in this way, be described and understood as a central and active component in the resistance to the pressure of changed relations stemming from the government field.

In the repackaging process new emphasis is put on what is of importance, rules are being interpreted and adjusted to fit the conditions on the field, and detailed models for allocation of resources among the organizations in the field are being constructed. In the repackaging we can also see de-coupling where the actors are able to handle the new expectations from government choose to separate demands from their main operations and/or distribution of grants.

In the field's own dynamic I have analyzed how the constant jockeying for position and resources also works as a resistance process. In this jockeying, the different actors' own interests are in the forefront. Socially skilled actors will use the rules of the field and any ambiguity in the interactions to protect and reproduce their privilege (Fligstein 2008). Possible effects that would weaken their position such as more direct governance that would interfere with their operational freedom are contested as effects that would decrease their level of resources. Since the new shared understanding from the government field connected to NPM reforms entails risk in applying this for at least some of the actors, the jockeying for positions will include resistance of this.

Figure 4: The regulative package is filtered when entering the fields.



The NPM game and organizational change

Besides the resistance strategies we can also find strategies that have a more accepting character (Oliver 1991) where we find changes in the fields in order to meet and embrace or at least accommodate for the new or altered shared understanding. In this way, we can find additional answers to my third research question concerning what types of field-level implications a transformation of the shared understanding may have.

One such implication is that the actors in the fields learn how to play the new game that comes with changed relationship to the government field. They learn to play the 'NPM game', but now in a civil society setting. One part of the new relation is a development towards a view of the organizations in the fields as suppliers of public goods in relation to government, or there is at least a need to frame the relationship in a language that signals this new type of exchange relationship. Through developing their social skills, actors in the field learn how they – through talking, reports and by example – can make explicit the public good that the government field receives in return for their economic support. In this process the actors of the field also realize that it is necessary to cope with some restraint in the independence and operational freedom in order to get an increased (or at least preserved) level of government funding.

Furthermore, I can conclude that we also can see implications of the transformation in the form of organizational change in the fields and in that field boundaries are being redrawn as a consequence. These are implications of strategies used in order to meet the changes. I have, in this analysis, described how actors in response to an NPM-inspired shared understanding of the relationship to the state try to rebalance the internal versus external character of the IGU. I have shown how organizational changes are made in order to keep and possibly increase the legitimacy for the field. *Folkbildningsrådet* is being remodeled to look and function more like a government agency due to this development. Its external character is put forward and emphasized more, while its internal character is downplayed. This, in turn, also changes the role of *Folkbildningsförbundet*, which becomes renamed and is given the task to function more as a trade or industry association. It is emphasized that the lobbying work towards decision-makers in the government field needs to be strengthened, and this should be a core competence of that organization.

In the intersection between the sports field and the popular education field we can see how the boundaries are being redrawn when SISU formally leaves the popular education field and is becoming even more tightly coupled to *Riksidrottsförbundet* which is firmly positioned at the core of the sports field. Within the older shared understanding where the popular movement tradition formed a solid backbone, it would have been obvious with more or less independent study associations responsible for educational activities within the field. However, when the actors of a field have started to play the game according to a new shared understanding, in this case the 'NPM game' with government, the borders can be redrawn in a new way. It is then an acceptable strategy for one of the actors to 'leave' the popular education field if that would increase the total level of resources. By detaching their educational activities from the popular education field and getting 'paid' from the government for these activities separately and directly and not as a part of the popular education field, both organizational change and a redrawing of the boundaries of the field can be understood as directly caused by a changed shared understanding among the actors in the field.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Theoretical contributions

In this final chapter I elaborate on the conclusions of the thesis. As a first step I summarize the conclusions drawn in previous chapter connected to the three empirically oriented research questions. With these insights as a foundation I will present my conclusions relating to the two theoretical research questions which form my theoretical contribution. The chapter will end with a general discussion of the results in a wider research context.

In quick summary: My fourth research question concerns how the character, role and nature of the IGU within a Strategic Action Field (SAF) can be further conceptualized and developed. I will here argue that the manner in which the IGUs in a field balance in an actor/arena dimension – being both the arenas for a battle between actors in a SAF and themselves being actors in the same battle – must be considered and better understood. Further, it is necessary to understand how the IGUs are balancing a complex role where they are both (field) internal actors and have external functions outside of the field in question. My fifth and final question concerns how the arrangement of the relationship between a SAF and neighboring (or overlapping) government fields can be further conceptualized and related to the shared understanding in a field. I argue that the arrangement of state-civil society relationships is of such demarcating and defining character that it is embedded in the shared understanding of the field and therefore needs to be considered as a fifth aspect of what I have defined as

a "catalogue of aspects" in the shared understanding part in their SAF theory developed by Fligstein and McAdam.

Further, this leads me to the important conclusion and suggestion that when the arrangements of state-civil society are under transformation, this will also imply a possible and more fundamental transformation of this part of the shared understandings in a field.

Empirically oriented conclusions

The three empirically oriented questions dealt with in Chapter 6 are all oriented towards the concept of shared understandings. Through them I show the central position of shared understanding in each of the field, and also contribute to the knowledge on how a shared understanding is being constructed in the two studied SAFs. I show in my analysis through what types of mechanisms this understanding is transformed, and also indicate what different types of field-level implications a transformation of the shared understanding will have.

My conclusion for the first research question is that large parts of the shared understanding in the two Swedish fields of popular education and sports have over decades been formed and institutionalized through their relationship to the government field and a number of actors central to the issues at the core of the field. The fields have both in this relationship over time been heavily embedded in the popular movement tradition as well as within the dominant corporative model. Taken together, these two frames or traditions must be understood as a kind of backbone of the shared understandings in both of the fields, leaving strong imprints in the rules and regulations of the fields. The shared understanding of the relationship to the government field includes recognition of the close proximity between state and civil society, which have traditionally been characterized by a mutual trust aimed at safeguarding civil society's independence. That the relation with government is such a strong backbone in the shared understandings implies that transformations of this relationship have the potential to transform also the shared understandings in the fields.

Related to the second research question, I have in my work been able to show that the shared understanding of the relationship with the govern-

ment field is challenged by a new, partly NPM-inspired shared understanding which in parallel has been emerging in the proximate government field. This new shared understanding in the public sector is orientated towards e.g. organizational performance, efficiency, and quality, which also seem to be spilling over into the two fields studied in this thesis, instead of the prevailing shared understanding of proximity and trust. Two main mechanisms are identified through which this new NPM-inspired shared understanding of the government field can challenge and transform also the earlier and prevailing shared understanding in the fields of sports and popular education. The first mechanism is the double role of the IGUs on the field, being active both in the government field and in the fields of sports and popular education at one and the same time. The second mechanism, I have been describing in the analysis as a regulative money package where norms, regulations and underlying expectations influenced by the NPM-inspired shared understanding is interwoven with the government grants aimed at the civil society organizations in the two fields.

Finally and answering the third research question in my thesis, I can conclude that a transformation of the shared understanding have had field-level implications within three different areas. The first of these areas concerns how (governmental) resources are secured for actors in the field, how these resources are distributed among the actors in the field, and how the IGUs are functioning as a filter to handle the regulative grant package. How the boundaries of a field are drawn and upheld, and the implications this have for an organizations identity is the second area. The third area identified in my cases where the transformation has had implications concerns the role and nature of the IGUs on the field. Here organizational changes and a rebalance of the internal versus the external character of the IGU are examples of such implications. Within all three areas I have also been able to show in my empirical cases how different strategies, both acceptant and resistant ones, are used by actors in the field to handle the institutional pressure and complexity that a transformation of the shared understanding implies.

Theoretical contributions

In this section of the final chapter I will move on to the two last research questions of my thesis which mainly relate to my theoretical interest and aim. Fligstein and McAdam (2011, p. 23) affirm that their theoretical framework is at a beginning and needs further elaboration and that the framework need to address that different types of fields have different dynamics. Following this invitation scholars from different disciplines have applied and contributed to the SAF theoretical framework mainly as an analytical framework to understand field stability and change as well as evolution and development more broadly (Fligstein 2013; Domaradzka & Wijkström 2016; Vierimaa 2017). Others have deployed it – in a similar way to how I have applied the theoretical framework in this thesis – to unpack field-level dynamics in relation to specific processes (e.g. Özen & Özen 2011; Laamanen & Skålén 2015; Moulton & Sandfort 2017; Chen 2018; Barinaga 2018).

Based on the insights made when responding to the three empirically oriented research questions my ambition is to contribute to the development of the SAF framework by providing two of its key concepts – 'shared understanding' and 'internal governance units' – with more detail and depth. More precisely my aim is to explore which role the field-level relationship with the government field has in relation to the shared understandings in a particular SAF and to deepen our knowledge about the nature of IGUs. I have formulated this ambition in the two earlier presented research questions:

4. How can the role and nature of the Internal Governance Units be further conceptualized and developed?

5. How can the arrangement of a Strategic Action Field's relationship to government fields be further conceptualized and related to the shared understanding in a field?

The actor – arena dimension of the governance units

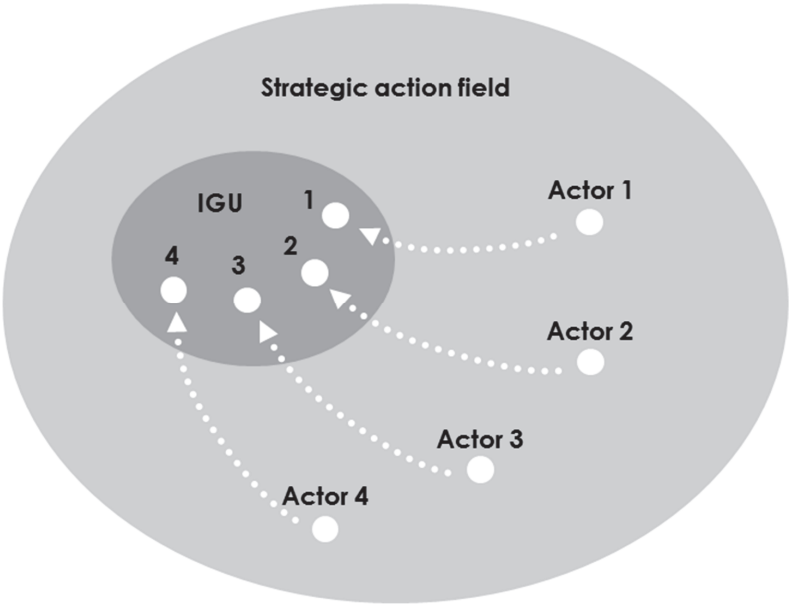
As noted earlier, one of Fligstein and McAdam's theoretical contributions to field theory is their introduction of IGUs as a specific type of actors in the field, parallel to other actors that have the role of incumbents or challengers. IGUs are defined as something else than these other actors, but still conceptualized as an actor among others in the field. Besides the internal/external dimension of the IGU that already have been elaborated, I claim that my empirical material actually also challenges the actorhood dimension of the governance units in the field, which is strong in the SAF approach (Fligstein & McAdam 2012).

In some of the processes studied in this thesis, the clear distinction between the IGUs and the other actors in the field is hard to draw. To some extent, Fligstein and McAdam also discuss this issue in their work. First of all, they argue that the IGUs are often influenced and bear a strong imprint of incumbent interest (Fligstein and McAdam 2012 p. 95) and a battle for control over a field's IGU is often a feature of episodes of contention within a strategic action field.

Secondly, and more important for my point, is that they claim that formal organizations, such as the IGUs in these fields, can, in themselves, be seen and analyzed as a special kind of "miniature" SAFs. They consider formal organizations as "objective" entities with clear boundaries and legal designations. The rigid, formalized structures and rules of such organizations define the relationship between different units within the organizations and also prescribe how they can behave within the field that is the organization. Nonetheless, at the same time, Fligstein and McAdam are clear about the fact that formal organizations are often central players as actors in a wider strategic action field. However, this opens up for the fact that IGUs are organizations with their own internal governance structure, which needs to be acknowledged in order to fully understand the actions of the IGU. Both *Riksidrottsförbundet* and *Folkbildningsrådet* appearing as central IGUs in my cases are member-based organizations and have themselves internal governance structures through which the members can govern the organization. In addition, the members of the IGUs are themselves other actors in the same field as the governance unit. To put it in the typology of SAFs, the incumbents and challengers of the field are also the incumbents

and challengers within the proximate strategic action field that constitutes the IGU on the field (see illustration).

Figure 5: Not just an actor or arena, but both at the same time.



This situation should not be unique for the empirical setting studied in this thesis. Trade or industry associations and different types of accrediting institutions are two examples of IGUs put forward by Fligstein and McAdam themselves (2012, p. 77). Both these examples are in most cases probably some sort of meta-organizations with other actors in the field as members that also are able and entitled to take part in the internal governance of the IGU.

This fact makes it hard to establish an exact line between what is taking place in the field where the IGU is an actor in its own capacity, and the games and processes taking place inside of the IGU itself. The IGU is both an actor in the field, and an arena in which the games of the field take place. In my study, this duality is not at least visible when focusing in on the special role which the IGUs have in relation to actors from the gov-

ernment field. With their authority-like status in the administration of government grants these actors are, from the government's perspective, the prime actor in the field that should administer the grant according to the established rules. However, in the same grant processes, we can see how the other actors in the field, through the democratic structure and processes of the IGU, also use the IGU as an arena to contest and negotiate the ways and principles according to which the resources should be divided among the actors in the field. The larger game on the fields of sports and popular education can, through this particular arrangement, be "mirrored" as a game inside the "IGU field".

This arena function of the IGU could also be related to Ahrne and Brunsson's (2005) discussion on the functioning of meta-organizations. Following March and Simon (1958), they argue that how organizations function is affected by the kind of members they have. Instead of having individual people as members, meta-organizations have organizations as members. They argue that meta-organizations primary should be understood as a way to handle an uncertain environment. Instead of a more uncertain, more unfriendly or less controllable environment, organizations can move parts of the environment from an environmental order so to say "inside" of an organizational order. They can, at least partly, dispense with some of the uncertainty associated with the outside environment by creating a meta-organization. In the organizational order of the meta-organization, the conditions for interaction among the members are different than that seen in, for example, networks or markets (Ahrne & Brunsson 2005 p. 447 f). In this sense, IGUs could also be seen exactly as a way for the other organizations in the field to organize their environment into organizations in which they can, under more controlled forms and clearer rules, interact and negotiate with one another.

The double duality – a comment on governance

I have argued for two different aspects of the nature of the IGUs in the field. They are both internal to the field, and external, primarily through their close formal connection to government. At the same time, they are both actors in the field, and a kind of arenas themselves where other actors in the field can play their game. I would argue that this 'double duality' can

be a core and defining characteristic of an IGU in a field. It is also a key component if we wish to understand better how they function, and what role(s) they play in the fields. IGUs on the field need to constantly balance both the internal/external and the actors/arenas dimension. Perhaps this becomes more obvious when studying SAFs in a corporative setting, as in this thesis.

Based on the findings in this study, I would argue that it is of importance to understand the nature of the IGU in a studied field. How the IGU balances these different aspects will help us explain and further understand their actions and their role in different field processes.

This can at least partly be seen as belonging to the more general discussion of the concept of governance, where an "external" and "internal" governance perspective can be traced, in particular, for the organizations in civil society (Steen-Johnsen, et al. 2011; Renz & Andersson 2014). From the perspective of political science scholars, governance has been treated as the process and mechanism through which society at large is governed, while management scholars and economists have focused on how organizations are governed (cf. corporate governance).

The IGUs in this study – *Folkbildningsrådet* and *Riksidrottsförbundet* – are salient examples of the fact that the two perspectives on governance are closely intertwined and co-exist within the civil society sphere. The internal governance game inside of the IGU as an arena, is tightly connected with and affects how the IGU behaves as an actor in the government field (c.f. Steen-Johnsen et al. 2011). However, we can also see how the external perspective affects the internal dynamics. Kumar and Roberts (2010) argue that it is necessary to further explore the organizational environments' impact on organizational governance. Here, we can see that the IGUs on the two studied fields, through their close interaction with government and the state, come into contact with external governance systems that affect their internal organizational governance. Changes in the shared understanding of the relationship in the (external) government field imply particular demands to which (internal) organizational governance in the IGU must respond (cf. Kumar & Roberts 2010).

Even if it might be a challenge for the IGU to balance this 'double duality', it does not need to be seen as a problem per se. Instead, I understand

it rather as a solution and a possibility for (most of) the actors in the field. Complex environments call for complex actors. The complex character of the IGUs, being both internal and external, and simultaneously as arenas and actors, provides strategic possibilities in processes such as the ones described in this thesis. The possibility to, over time, rebalance the emphasis in these dimensions and to simultaneously play both as field internal actors and as more external-agency-like external actors makes it possible for the IGU to navigate in the situation where the shared understanding of the relationship is undergoing change. For new actors to the field or for challengers to some of the key actors, however, this complex arrangement might prove very difficult to disentangle and navigate, as a couple of my cases illustrate well.

State-civil society relations as a part of the shared understanding

With the ambition to carry the analysis one step further, I follow Fligstein and McAdams invitation to take part in developing their theoretical framework of SAFs. I do this by arguing that it is necessary to also include the arrangement of government – civil society relationships in the shared understanding of the field to fully grasp and make sense of how the different parts of the shared understanding guides the behavior of actors in the fields.

As noted both in the theoretical framework and initially also in this chapter the concept of shared understanding has a core role both in the definition and the operations of a field. Fligstein and McAdam (2011; 2012) use institutional logics as a starting point for their definition of shared understandings. However, they consider that the institutional logics as a general concept and approach (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury 2012) is too broad to be used to capture and understand how fields actually operate and they have therefore, to better be able to operationalize this idea, decided to narrow it down to what could be understood as a "catalogue" of four main aspects (see page 22 in Chapter 2).

However, the analysis related to and conclusions derived from the three first of my research questions point towards the insight that the arrangement of government–civil society relationship should be considered and

analyzed as an additional important aspect of the shared understanding, thus another item in the catalogue.

Even if Fligstein and McAdam (2012) give significant importance to the relation to external fields, and also accept that governmental bodies can participate as actors on the field under study, even if they do not compete for resources, I have in the analysis shown that this is an insufficient understanding in empirical settings such as those studied in this thesis. It is not sufficient as theoretical tools to fully understand the role that the arrangement of government – civil society relationship plays for the dynamic in these SAFs. The first argument for this is that Fligstein and McAdam use shared understandings to define and demarcate fields. I have in this thesis shown how the arrangement of the relationship to the government field, based in the popular movement tradition and the corporative model, strongly function as a demarcating factor defining both the boundaries of – and resource distribution within – the two fields. The Swedish corporatism is, together with the popular movement tradition, a backbone of the shared understanding in both the fields studied.

A second argument is that Fligstein and McAdam further qualify their catalogue of aspects in the shared understanding with the argument that institutional logics are a too broad concept in order to capture and understand how fields actually operate. I would argue that without an understanding of the arrangement of government – civil society relations it is impossible to fully grasp how the fields studied here are configured and actually operates. Based on my empirical contributions in the previous chapter, I come to the conclusion that it would not be possible to understand core field-level processes such as why the resources are distributed in the way they are, how boundaries of the fields are being established and reinforced, and how the IGUs on the fields act.

The relationship is of such ample importance that the arrangements of the state-civil society relationship are themselves embedded in the shared understanding of the fields. How the relationship is understood among the actors in the field is guiding their actions for what tactics and actions that is possible or not even in situations where the government is not present as an actor. The role of government and the relationship between the spheres are embedded in the field even in the formal absence of government and

therefore needs to be analyzed as an integral part of the shared understanding of the field.

By applying SAF in a setting with elaborate corporative arrangements I expose the importance of the arrangements of the relationship as a part of the shared understandings. In a corporative society the special importance of the government field goes beyond the limited – but important – role of setting the rules for other fields than the government field have been based in its formal power and sovereignty over a given geographic territory.

Fligstein and McAdams further emphasize in their theory that the relationship between state and non-state SAFs is marked by a fair amount of mutual distrust and hostility. This characterization of the relationship might be marked by their primarily US or Anglo-Saxon based context. This is very much in line with how the relationship between state and civil society has been described in a liberal society and liberal civil society (or non-profit) regime. As I have shown through my empirical contributions, the arrangement of the relationship in a corporative model such as the Swedish is instead defined by a close proximity with a high degree of institutionalized trust. The relationship is in a sense deeper and the government field is not just a rule maker, but also an important conversation or dialogue partner for each of the fields under scrutiny. I therefore argue that Fligstein & McAdams initial work in this dimension is still too context dependent.

Taken together, this leads me to the conclusion that the arrangement of government – civil society relationship should to be added as a fifth aspect of the catalogue of aspects of their shared understandings. As I have shown in my work, this relationship is firmly embedded in the shared understandings of the corporative arrangement. It is therefore likely that this will be the case also in other types of state-civil society relationships. In other arrangements this relationship will most probably have another content than in these two particular cases, eventually leading up to other types of consequences for how the SAF operates. But this is also the main function of the concept of shared understandings, that it content matters for how a specific field operates.

Further, this leads me to the important conclusion and suggestion that when the arrangements of state-civil society are under transformation, this

will also imply a possible and more fundamental transformation of the shared understandings in a field.

Discussion

The relationship between state and civil society in Sweden has been characterized by a collaborative, close relationship with a strong dependency and high degree of trust between state and the sector of civil society organizations. Sweden has, together with other Nordic countries, for many decades been regarded among the most corporatist liberal democracies in the world (Lijphart & Crepaz 1991; Siaroff 1999). Strong and deep-rooted traditions for involving interest organizations in the policy-making process can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century. From the beginnings in the 1980s there is, however, ample evidence of a declining or at least transforming corporatism in Sweden (Lewin 1992; Micheletti 1994; Lindvall & Sebring 2005; Blom-Hansen 2000; Christiansen et al. 2010, Jahn 2014).

In this thesis, I have studied the two fields of sports and popular education in Sweden. Both of these fields are dominated by actors from civil society and characterized by their corporative relationship to government. By using Fligstein and McAdam's (2012) work on Strategic Action Fields I have argued that how the relationship to the state is being conceptualized and understood is a core aspect of the shared understandings in these two fields. The shared understanding of the relationship to the state has been heavily embedded in the corporatist model and the popular movement tradition, which together have formed a fundamental backbone of the shared understandings in both of these two fields. Following the general decorporatization of the political system in Sweden, I have further identified transformations in the shared understanding of the government field regarding its relationship to the sport and popular education field, respectively, and pointed to the consequences of this.

The IGUs have a core role in the relationship between the fields and the government. When studying SAFs in a corporative setting, this part of the role becomes obvious. I have in the thesis argued that it is important to understand the role and nature of the IGU, and have concluded that they are characterized by a 'double duality'. They are both internal to the field,

and external, primarily through their close formal connection to government. At the same time, they are both actors in the field, and a kind of arenas, or miniature SAFs, themselves where other actors in the field can play their game. The IGUs studied in this thesis needs to constantly balance in these two dimensions. This complex character of the IGUs, and their possibility to, over time, rebalance the emphasis in the internal/external and actor/arena dimensions provides strategic possibilities for the IGU to navigate in the situation where the shared understanding of the relationship to the state is undergoing change.

My other main conclusion is in this last chapter, that arrangements of state-civil society needs to be added as a fifth aspect in Fligstein and McAdams catalogue of aspects in the shared understanding. It can be discussed whether this holds for SAFs more generally. By dealing with two different fields I have tried to increase the level of generalization of my results. Both fields are however dominated by civil society actors, which might decrease the possibility to generalize beyond SAFs with this clear characteristic. On the other hand, it is hard to argue that it is possible to fully understand for example the Swedish automotive industry or farming sector, which both are completely different fields to the ones I have studied, leaving out the corporative arrangement. Civil society actors such as labor unions, industry or trade associations, and environmental organizations and their relations to the government will both in these examples and more generally play a core role on the input side of the policy making process. They are core actors in setting the rules for the field.

By arguing this way, it will in most SAFs be possible to identify a civil society component that really matters, in different fields in different ways, but still matters. Arrangements of its relationship to the state or government will probably affect to which degree such actors can influence public policy and rules within other fields. In a setting with a corporative model that arranges and structures the relationship, the degree of influence is probably rather high and maybe also more complex and comprehensive, and it might thereby be easier to identify in an analysis. This is the case for the fields studied in this thesis. In the two fields of this thesis civil society actors are also clearly part of the output side of public policy, they are core actors in the implementation of government's policy. This makes it even

more obvious that the arrangements of the relationship have such a defining function for the fields. Therefore it should be incorporated as an aspect of the shared understandings catalogue. The advantage of being able to study this phenomenon in this particular context is consequently that it is highly visible, but it nevertheless also points to the more general assumption that these relations are key to the shared understanding also for fields in societies where this arrangement is organized differently.

This thesis is not a longitudinal investigation of the two fields being studied and their development. I have primarily studied micro-processes over a fairly short time period and I have also related different policy initiatives and organizational changes to more general developments both within the particular fields and in the government field. Drawing on Polyanis' (e.g. 1989) work on embeddedness, Gustavsson (2016) shows how we can analyze and connect larger changes in society to parallel and inter-related changes on an organizational level. The micro and meso level analysis carried out in this thesis can, with this perspective, be used to further deepen our understanding and explanation of macro trends and developments in the civil society-government relationship. Gustavsson writes about development phases where organizations from a fairly embedded situation in one period of time becomes de-embedded during another period, before they can again become embedded (ibid.).

I would argue that what we can see in my cases best probably can be understood as a point in time where both the fields are in a process of being de-embedded – out of the previous shared understanding, in the language of Fligstein and McAdam – which was based on and heavily embedded within the corporatist model and the popular movement tradition. Following this de-embedment, or simultaneous to it, it will be possible to start a process where the fields will be re-embedded again, but this time based on a new kind of relationship to government. How this relationship will be constructed and understood in the long run, when re-embedded again can we, however, only speculate about.

Sweden and its civil society are, however, not alone in undergoing redefining transformations where the relationship to the state and government plays a crucial role. In their two seminal works, for example Skocpol (2003) and Smith and Lipsky (1993) show respectively that societal trans-

formations in the US, channeled through government initiatives and changes in public policy, can lead to substantial organizational changes also in civil society. I would argue that also these transformations can be understood as processes of de-embedment where the civil society organizations are, to some extent, given a new role and find themselves in a new relationship to government that leads to organizational changes in the sector.

In her book "*Diminishing democracy. From membership to management in American civic life*" Skocpol (2003) shows how a number of changes in the US government during the 20th century have affected how important segments of civil society in the United States are organized. Large decentralized mass-membership-based organization used to make up a greater part of the organized civil society in the US. However, through tax rules and centralized policies these organizations are challenged by a fast-growing manager-led cadre of highly professionalized advocacy organizations. With a similar line of reasoning, Smith and Lipsky (1993) show in their book "*Nonprofits for hire*" how transformation in public sector policy over the last decades has implied that US civil society organizations are growing dependent on governmental funding in their function as a sub-contractor in the provision of welfare to a much higher degree than before. Taken together, we can understand also this development as a process of essential re-embeddedness of the relationship between the US civil society and the state.

By this short excursion, we can conclude that the proximity to the state easily leads to changes in the structure and organization of fields where civil society is an important characteristic. Transformations of the relationship, or, in other words, a re-embeddedness of civil society actors positions within the field, will most probably have an impact on, for instance, how civil society is organized and structured, in which areas these organizations will be active, and also how individuals relate to them.

In this thesis, I have argued that the cases presented indicate that civil society also in Sweden is now in such a phase, a decade or two after the US development. I have also shown how this transformation plays out on field-level in two fields in Swedish society where the corporative arrangements between government and civil society have been particularly pronounced, namely sports and popular education.

By describing and analyzing field-level processes in more detail, and by connecting these processes more directly to a wider on-going development in Swedish society, I argue that the results from this thesis add to our knowledge not only on how changes in the relationship between government and civil society on field-level will form the future conditions and for and configuration of civil society and its organizations. With support from the result in this study I also claim that we – on a more general level – need to recognize that the relationship between government and civil society in a more explicit manner must be included in our definition of the shared understanding between actors in an organizational field.

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Annika Nilsson, Association secretary, *ABF.* (two interviews)
Johnny Nilsson, association manager, *Studiefrämjandet.*
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