

Preface

One of the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's tasks is to analyse the conditions artists need to create their work. We are also required to analyse artists' financial and social conditions and disseminate knowledge about them. In many ways, artists' financial and social conditions are of decisive importance to their art. We have the task of implementing Government policy in relation to artists but we are also required to apply our expert knowledge to provide the basis for reforms and future political proposals and decisions.

In the period 2009–2011, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee published the first extensive report on the financial and social situation of artists. Other income surveys have looked at individual artist categories or just artists working outside institutions. The report was published in three volumes and was one of the most extensive surveys of artists' conditions in the world, and one of the few of its kind worldwide.¹ We are now following up on this work with a report on an even larger population. This report is based on 29,000 people and we estimate that there are a total of around 35,000 professional artists in Sweden.

The report is based entirely on objective facts, unlike many other reports in this area, including our own, which are based on responses to surveys by individuals according to their personal experience. The material is drawn from the registers of Statistics Sweden (SCB). Together with SCB, we have analysed the figures to generate conclusions but we go no further as the aim is for the material to be presented as neutrally as possible.

The report shows where the artists live, their age distribution, the proportion who are of non-Swedish background, their income, the proportion who have businesses and their level of education. For the first time, we have also included social background, figures at municipal level on the number of artists and a division into originators and practising artists. As we have comparative material spanning a 10-year period, we are now also able to see changes over time, including relocation patterns and income growth. In addition, we make a comparison with the working population. This comparison is generally relevant, and provides deeper insight, but it should also be treated with a certain degree of caution as the population is not an occupational group.

The picture of artists that emerges becomes more complex and differentiated the more we study this group. We believe that a complex picture is necessary to enable us, within the framework of public policy for culture and artists, to apply the right measures to promote the conditions of artists and the work they create, which is the objective of the policy.

As an occupational group, artists demonstrate an extremely wide range of educational achievement and income, and this is true of all artistic fields and all occupational categories. The figures show that income growth during the 10-year period studied is far lower than that of the wider population, and the figures indicate that income differences within the group of artists as a whole are increasing. That said, we would also like to stress that it is possible to earn a living as an artist in Sweden, and that parts of the group also have a good income. However, there must be more artists in a viable financial situation, and the public sector should set an example here and pay artists a reasonable salary or fee for the work they do.

The contemporary perception is that artists have university educations, but the facts indicate otherwise. Many do, but this is really not the case for all, unlike many other occupational categories in society that are more uniform. The question here is whether we want art colleges to be the only way to become an artist.

¹ *Konstnärernas inkomster (Artists' income)*, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee 2009
Konstnärernas inkomster ur ett jämställdhetsperspektiv (Artists' income from a gender equality perspective),
the Swedish Arts Grants Committee 2010 *Konstnärernas inkomster, arbetsmarknad och försörjningsmönster*
(Artists' income, labour market and support patterns), the Swedish Arts Grants Committee 2011

What are the objectives of educational policy and policy for culture and artists in relation to who should be able to work as an artist? We need to ask ourselves this question now that we have figures on the social backgrounds of artists for the first time. In comparison with the wider population, a very large proportion of artists come from a social background in which their parents have a university education. We believe that the level of education of the parents also follows this pattern for artists of a non-Swedish background. The income profile of artists also includes a considerably higher proportion of income from capital than in the wider population, which also indicates a strong socioeconomic background. We have no historical comparative figures for social background but we can see that even more artists in younger age groups have parents with tertiary education. Educational achievement in Sweden is increasing but is that the biggest factor, or is increased segregation behind the figures in our report? Parallel to this survey, the new PISA study indicates that parents' backgrounds have become even more important for school results and that schools have become worse at compensating for background.² We also know that a large proportion of the population with a non-Swedish background often have a less advantageous socioeconomic situation.

This report shows clearly that young artists from families with a lower level of education have a greater need to be self-sufficient early in their career. A weak, uncertain financial situation, which is a general characteristic of artists, may therefore be a more significant reason for people from a weaker social and socioeconomic background to decide not to become an artist.

The wider population has higher incomes and a higher level of education in the cities. Seventy per cent of artists live in these areas and the proportion moving to urban areas, in particular the Stockholm area, is growing. In its report, *Kulturvanor (Cultural habits) 2016*³, the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis showed that a higher level of education and living in a city were factors decisive to participation in cultural life. Regardless of place of residence, there is no doubt that artists work, display their art, give performances, give concerts or are read throughout Sweden. To make this possible, it is increasingly important to have cultural policy that promotes national mobility for artists and works of art. However, it should not be more difficult or be an impediment in itself if you have grown up outside the major urban areas if you want to become an artist. In recent years, we have seen an increased interest in promoting policy for artists at regional level, and this is a positive development.

Our hope with this report is to provide a new and in part more complex picture of the demographics, incomes and social backgrounds of artists. We want it to be possible to approach it from different directions, and for the rich material in it to be read, interpreted and used.

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PISA 2015, the Swedish National Agency for Education, Report 450, 2016 *Kulturvanor (Cultural habits)*, the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis, report 2016:1, 2016

1. Summary and introductory comments

Background

The report is a survey of artists working in Sweden in 2014 by demographics, income and social conditions. The report contains information on nearly 29,000 artists, 25,000 of whom are aged 20–66. The artists are divided into 19 occupational categories which are grouped, in turn, in six artistic fields: writing, art & design, music, theatre, dance and film.

The information is based on register data from SCB. Income comprises all income, i.e. income from both artistic and non-artistic activities.² Taxable and tax-exempt grants and subsidies from the Swedish Arts Grants Committee and the Swedish Authors' Fund are also included.

The information is compared with the general population and with the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's previous study *Konstnärernas inkomster (Artists' income)* and also, to some extent, the report *Konstnärernas inkomster ur ett jämställdhetsperspektiv (Artists' income from a gender equality perspective)*.

Some of the most important findings:

Artists live in cities and are relocating to urban areas at a fast rate

Nearly 50 per cent of artists are registered in Greater Stockholm, and 70 per cent are in one of the three major urban areas. The highest concentration in major urban areas is in dance, film and theatre, while music and art & design are spread more widely across the country. However, national registration is a poor indicator of where artists are established as many work throughout the country (cf. table 5).

Inward migration to major urban areas was fairly constant during the period (cf. table 74).

Gender equality

Gender distribution in 2014 was more equal than in 2004. The proportion of women increased from 45 to 48 per cent. The proportion of women increased in all artistic fields except the female-dominated occupational category choreographer, where the proportion of men increased.

In the group of artists, women's median income was 85 per cent of men's median income in 2014. This means that the income difference was slightly lower among artists than in the entire population, in which women's median income was 81 per cent of men's (cf. diagram 6, tables 21 and 22).

Artists' level of education

Nearly 50 per cent of artists have completed tertiary education of 3 years or more (including postgraduate studies). This is an increase of 3 per cent on 2004, when 46.8 per cent had a corresponding level of education. The corresponding proportion of the entire population is 23 per cent. 3.5% of artists have primary and lower secondary school as their highest level of education, and 26% of artists have upper secondary school education as their highest level of education. The remaining roughly 70% have completed tertiary education (cf. tables 76, 14 and 15).

Long periods of education and university education often lead to high incomes, but this is not generally the case for artists. The income differences between artists and the wider population are particularly remarkable given that artists largely have a high level of education.

The median income for all artists in 2014 was insignificantly above the level of the part of the population

² For information on the extent to which artists' income derives from artistic or non-artistic work, please see the Swedish Arts Grants Committee report *Konstnärernas inkomster, arbetsmarknad och försörjningsmönster (Artists' income, labour market and support patterns)*, 2010, p. 69. The most common supplementary work is in education (25 per cent), culture, entertainment, leisure (17 per cent), health care and social care (14 per cent) and communications (12 per cent).

that only completed primary and lower secondary school. The median income for people with tertiary education of more than three years was SEK 354,000 for the wider population, and the median income for artists was SEK 232,000. For artists with an advanced university education, the annual income amounted to 65 per cent of that for people with a corresponding level of education in the entire population (cf. tables 36 and 37).

Social background

The group of artists has at least one parent with a high level of education to a considerably greater extent than the entire population. Nearly half of artists, 46 per cent, have at least one parent with tertiary education. In the wider population, this figure is 24 per cent (cf. tables 16 and 17). At younger ages, artists with a background in families with a lower level of education have a higher income than those with a high level of education, which indicates that they probably need to be self-sufficient earlier and probably do more supplementary work (cf. table 38).

In a comparison between the various artistic fields, the highest proportion of artists with a parent who has completed tertiary education, 55 per cent, is in film. The lowest proportion, 41 per cent, is in art & design. However, all groups therefore have parents with a considerably higher educational background than the wider population (cf. table 18).

The level of education in Sweden is increasing over time, and in the youngest age group, 20 – 29 years of age, the proportion of artists with at least one parent who has completed tertiary education is also highest, 70 per cent. The figure in the wider population is 43 per cent (cf. table 16).

Artists have higher income from capital than the wider population. 16 per cent of artists' income comes from capital compared with 11 per cent in the wider population (cf. tables 64 and 65). The high proportion with income from capital also indicates a stronger socioeconomic background and/or higher socioeconomic level.

Artists' country of birth unchanged

When artists are divided by country of birth, the distribution in 2014 is largely as in 2004. The proportion of artists born in Sweden increased slightly, from 86.7 per cent to 87.4 per cent. The proportion born abroad in 2014 aged 20–66 was 19 per cent of the entire population and 13 per cent of artists (cf. tables 12, 13 and 75).

Non-Swedish background

Twenty-two per cent of the wider population are of non-Swedish background (born abroad or with two parents born abroad). The proportion in the group of artists is 16 per cent.

The proportion that is of non-Swedish background varies greatly between different artistic fields. The proportion of dance artists is as much as 31 per cent, and in film it is 22 per cent.

The lowest proportion of artists with a non-Swedish background is in theatre and music, 13 per cent each (cf. table 3:10 in the tables appendix).

A more complex picture emerges when we look at the information on where artists come from and their income differences.

Artists born in the EU and large industrialised countries are over-represented in relation to the general population, which means that the opposite is very noticeable in relation to Africa and Asia. The incomes for artists born abroad are generally lower than for artists born in Sweden, but the income differences are lower in the group of artists than in the general population (cf. tables 32, 33, 34 and 35).

Poorer income growth for artists than for the wider population

The report shows that the median value of artists' incomes increased from SEK 183,000 to SEK 217,800 between 2004 and 2014. If we look at income growth in fixed prices, income growth was 4 per cent, whereas the corresponding increase for the entire population was 18 per cent. Income growth for artists as a whole was

thus mildly positive, but considerably poorer than for the entire population during the 10-year period (cf. tables 20 and 78).

Consequently, the report shows that the low income level among professional artists in relation to the wider population has been reinforced in the past ten years. The annual income in 2014 for the population as a whole was SEK 290,000. This means that the median income for artists was 75 per cent of that for the entire population. Ten years ago, the median income was 85 per cent of that for the entire population (cf. table 20).

Large income differences between occupational categories and artistic fields

The report also illustrates the differences in income between different artistic fields and occupational groups. No occupational category in the group of artists achieved the median value for the wider population. Even the occupational category with the highest median income, stage designer, with a median income of SEK 285,000 did not achieve the wider population's median income of SEK 290,000 (cf. table 20).

The clearest changes in income over time can be seen in the following occupational groups:

For artisan occupational categories, the median income increased by 20 per cent.

For authors of literature and theatre directors, the increase was 13 per cent.

For the occupational category choreographer, the median income fell by 22 per cent (cf. table 78).

Incomes are generally higher in theatre, writing and music. The lowest incomes occur in film and art & design. Dance is in-between these income clusters. A characteristic feature is that the spread of incomes is large, both within artistic fields and between occupational categories (cf. table 20).

In the highest income span (P90), theatre directors have an annual income of SEK 541,000. The corresponding income for the entire population is SEK 517,000. Other strong incomes in the same top interval (P90) in the group of artists also occur among composers, SEK 492,600, authors of literature, SEK 502,700, and dramatists, approximately SEK 477,400 (cf. table 20).

The very lowest incomes occur among visual artists. In the lowest income span (P10), the annual income is under SEK 6,000 and in handicrafts/design it is under SEK 7,000. Other occupational categories with low incomes in the lowest income span (P10) are choreographers, SEK 12,700, composers/musicians³, SEK 17,200, and filmmakers, SEK 18,400 or lower as annual income in 2014 (cf. table 20).

The proportion of artists who had an annual income under SEK 160,000 fell from 42 per cent to 37 per cent, i.e. by 5 percentage points. The corresponding reduction in the wider population was from 29 to 24 per cent, also 5 percentage points. However, the proportion of artists with an income of SEK 0 increased slightly from 3 per cent to 4 per cent (cf. table 77).

The income spread in the group of artists has increased

Incomes for artists in the lowest income interval (P10) in 2014 fell further by 27 per cent against 2004 calculated in fixed prices. Incomes for the artists in the highest income interval (P90) increased by 15 per cent (cf. table 78). The report also shows that income mobility was higher than in the wider population. Those with the lowest and highest incomes had the least income mobility. This is true for both artists and the wider population (cf. tables 67 and 68).

Regional differences in income were accentuated. The incomes of artists in Greater Stockholm increased most, by 6 per cent, and incomes of artists in Greater Malmö fell by 2 per cent. For artists with the highest incomes, incomes increased most in Övriga Götaland and Norrland, by 19 per cent. In the major urban areas, the increase was around 15 per cent.

³ These are composers/musicians who, at the time of selection, were not affiliated to the Swedish Musicians' Union, the Swedish Union of Professional Musicians, SKAP and FST and were those who have applied for grants and subsidies from the Swedish Arts Grants Committee (cf. section 3).

The proportion of artists declaring income from business activity increased

A characteristic of the group of artists, and something that was further reinforced during the past ten years, is the strong element of business activity. Just over 60 per cent of artists declared income from business activity in 2014 for a sole proprietorship, partnership or close company, a substantial increase on 2004. The biggest proportions were in the artistic fields art & design (73 per cent), film (66 per cent) and writing (64 per cent) (cf. table 5:1 in the tables appendix).

In addition to these 60 per cent, there are artists active in other legal entities such as non-profit associations or co-operatives, often in the collective artistic fields, music, theatre and dance. These entities are not included in the survey.

Artists who only have income from business activity and no salaried income have a lower income than artists who only have salaried income or a combination of salaried income and income from business activity. This is also true of the wider population (cf. table 23).

However, the majority of those who declare income for a sole proprietorship are also active as salary earners. 12 per cent of artists only have income from business activity. There is a growing group of combination earners, i.e. those who have income taxed as salaried income and income from business activity, subject to corporation tax. As many as 23 per cent of artists belonged to this category in 2014, compared with 3 per cent of the entire population.

Level of self-sufficiency and income structure

The group of artists has a higher level of self-sufficiency than the wider population (cf. table 66). The biggest difference in income structure is that artists' incomes consist, to a greater extent than those of the entire population, of income from business activity and income from capital and to a lesser extent of salaried income (tables 64 and 65).

Originators and practitioners

Some artistic fields such as writing and art & design consist primarily of originators, while practitioners make up the majority in theatre, music and dance. To clarify certain differences in conditions between practising artists and originators and also illustrate the conditions for artists in theatre, music and dance who are originators, it is important to dissect the statistics and information accordingly.

However, many artists come under both categories, for example choreographer and dancer, director and actor, visual artist and performance artist or composer and musician. There is also clear growth in the numbers of artists working across the boundaries between artistic fields.

Practising artists who are in employment have a higher median income than originators. For practitioners, the median income was SEK 268,000, nearly 40 per cent more than for originators, whose median income was SEK 193,300.

One reason for the difference is that the proportion of business owners among originators is considerably higher, 70 per cent compared with 41 per cent. In both cases, annual incomes are lower for women than men, but the difference is slightly smaller for originators.

72 per cent of the practitioners only had salaried income and no income from business activity. The proportion of originators with only salaried income was 48 per cent.

Transfer payments and subsidies

Despite artists' generally low incomes, artists are no more dependent on the public benefits and subsidies systems than the population in general. In 2014, there were no great differences between the group of artists

and the wider population in terms of the proportion with various types of transfer payment and subsidy. The group of artists had a slightly higher proportion than the wider population receiving unemployment benefit and payments for job seeker training, 11 per cent compared with 8 per cent. For several other types of transfer payment and subsidy, a lower proportion of artists than the wider population received them. These were sickness benefit, activity benefit, financial support, housing allowance and parental allowance (cf. table 59).

Strong reduction in transfer payments and subsidies to artists

During the 10-year period, the proportion of the group of artists receiving unemployment benefit and payments for job seeker training fell dramatically from 30 to 12 per cent and in the wider population from 13 per cent to 8 per cent. The reason is not an improved labour market. It is primarily due to changes in unemployment benefit rules. The changed rules have meant that it has become more difficult to qualify for the insurance. For some occupational categories, this reduction was considerable (cf. tables 94, 95 and 100). The median value of the amounts paid out in unemployment benefit also fell. For the artists who received unemployment benefit in 2014, the median amount was 31 per cent lower than in 2004.

The proportion receiving sickness/activity benefit fell among both artists and the wider population. The proportion receiving financial support and housing allowance also fell between 2004 and 2014. 1 per cent of artists received financial support in 2014 and 4 per cent received housing allowance. In 2004, the corresponding figures were 3 and 7 per cent. The proportions also fell in the wider population but not by as much (cf. tables 94 and 95).

Net income

The report also shows net income for artists. This is the amount left for consumption or saving after taxes and social security contributions have been paid. The median net income evens out the income differences somewhat. The net income for artists was 81 per cent of that for the entire population. This was a dramatic reduction of 12 per cent since 2004 (cf. tables 63, 64 and 65).

Income mobility

Income mobility is interesting as it shows how much incomes for artists may vary from year to year, primarily for originators but also for freelance practitioners. For example, a composer or author may concentrate on a single work for several years without receiving any payment, and then receive a large sum when the work is performed or published. Income mobility for artists as a group is considerably higher than for the wider population.

