Leisure activities and youth citizenship

What local councils tell about youths' leisure from the perspective of citizenship on their homepages?
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What local councils tell about youths’ leisure from the perspective of citizenship on their homepages?
Abstract

This thesis is a continuation from my licentiate thesis which covered Swedish Propositions and Governmental investigations about the leisure sector. The main purpose of the licentiate thesis was to describe, and analyse decisions and goals of Swedish government policy with respect to people’s leisure and free time during the period 1962 to 2005. The purpose was not to explore the concept of citizenship but with renewed reading of the documents it became apparent that citizenship is a central theme in the government’s involvement in leisure.

My summary of the licentiate thesis shows that the type of reasoning about leisure presented in the documents changed by the end of the last century. The earlier documents were occupied by suggesting concrete arrangements and creating good conditions for leisure activities. In the latter documents, the main task was to formulate goals and regulations and suggest ways of following up the results. The implementation was handed over to different organizations, official and voluntary, as well as commercial ones. I observed an ambition to encourage the citizens toward individual choices, differentiation, multiculturalism and commercialization.

To understand citizenship in relation to young people’s leisure is a central challenge. Young people spend most of their leisure time in their near surroundings and, therefore, leisure options provided by the local councils are important. As leisure activity is not mandatory to the councils, each council’s political ambition decides to what extent leisure activities will be seen as means of fostering young people into citizens.

Citizenship is a central theme in the government’s involvement in leisure. During the latest part of the 20th century, the question about young people’s citizenship has been actualized in Sweden and Europe. The reasons for this are partly attributable to young people’s decreasing interest in political parties and other associations of thought, the occurrence of anarchistic youth revolts, and the spread of fascistic ideas among the young generation.

The purpose with the thesis is to describe, explore, and discuss the texts that local councils present on their homepages from the perspective of leisure and citizenship for youths. The questions that originate from this aim are the following:

- What kind of citizenship will be represented through the local councils’ goal and steering documents for young people and their leisure time?
- What kind of citizenship will be represented through the way the local councils organize, manage and support the leisure sector?
- What kind of citizenship will be represented through the supply of leisure activities for young people that are presented on the local councils’ homepages?

In this dissertation, I have studied official documents and texts dealing with the field of leisure from ten local councils. The texts were published on the local councils’ homepages by the providers of leisure services. To find answers to my research questions, I have examined expressed goals and aims, organization and management, target groups, offerings and facilities, norms and values and pedagogic ambitions in relation to youths’ leisure.

The method used in my research is cultural content analysis. Different categories were created and put together in an analysis matrix, in order to understand the content and structure of the texts in which notions about citizenship can be made visible.
The results show that the picture of youth citizenship is neither uniform nor coherent, but complicated and contradictory. The image of youths is at least two sided. On the one hand, young people are presented as individuals who are creative and interested in, and willing to take responsibility for, matters which concern them. The councils offer facilities, such as youth houses, and economic support to help them to arrange and carry out activities such as music events, festivals, dance or theatre. There is a notion expressed that through participation in creative activities like dance and music, young people’s democratic sense will develop. On the other hand, young people are seen as individuals who need places to hang around, meet with their friends and have free access to activities such as listening to music, playing games and using the Internet for chatting. These are the youths who do not enrol in voluntary leisure associations. In the texts there are discussions about social problems and the risk of going into drugs and crimes. The idea that the young generation needs to be watched over, controlled and sometimes guarded by social authorities is also expressed in the texts. The picture presented is that young people need protection and tutoring.

Another part of the picture is that the youths need to practice democracy. Special structures are established to enable this and give channels for dialogue with the authorities. Some of these channels, such as different assemblies, are organized in a traditional way as a deputation, while others, on the Internet, are informal and open to everyone. The idea seems to be that young people need special democratic channels in order to exercise their citizenship. Open meeting places for youths should be places where the younger generation learn formal democratic procedures and practice democracy with their friends. In addition, there is the question concerning young people’s need for education and supervision by adults.

The picture of democracy and youth leisure presented on the local councils’ homepages can be interpreted as what is characteristic of a “Dutiful Citizen” (DC). These are the citizens who execute their democratic rights as a collective body by official democratic means and through formalized channels. However, in other documents which discuss what the councils provide for the young people and the aims of the open leisure activities, another type of citizen, the “Self-Actualizing Citizen” (AC), can be discerned. An AC citizen is a person who sees her/his political activities and commitments in highly personal terms. S/he also favours loose networks of community action, established through friendships or maintained by interactive information technology. The activities should contribute to the quality of personal life, social recognition, self esteem, and friendship rather than being part of a collective commitment.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this research are that individual young people can experience democracy and develop their citizenship through leisure activities offered by local councils. However, for this to be the aims and intentions expressed in documents on the local councils’ homepages must be fulfilled. They must be systematically evaluated and guarantees must be provided in order to ensure quality control. In some of the documents there are discussions about the importance of educated staff. If young citizens should have the possibilities to learn and/or develop their citizenship through open leisure activities it is necessary to have educated youth leaders, who work to meet the aims of a participatory democracy. In that way open leisure activities can be a way for young people to gain social capital through leisure.
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Luleå August 2009

Lisbeth Lindström
Introduction

My interest in the leisure sector began during the 1980s, at the same time as our four children were born. As a parent, I was engaged in a lot of activities for several years. I was a leader in after school activities for teenagers, one day a week. I was also a leader in an outdoor organisation (Friluftsfrämjandet) for many years and organized and led outdoor and indoor activities for younger school age children. I have also been engaged as a leader in ice-skating and was involved for several years as a coach in girls’ basketball. For a short time, I also taught gymnastics for small children, an activity organized by a sports club. In my work at Luleå University of Technology I have had possibilities to work with my interest in citizens’ leisure time. Young people and their leisure time have continued to be a priority.

I have worked at Luleå University of Technology since 1993. One of my first working assignments was to establish two programs in leisure education, together with other colleagues. During the years, I have also cooperated with several folk high schools that educate recreation leaders.

My way into leisure research

As my basic discipline is Political Science, I particularly have an interest in the way the government handles questions about leisure. I am interested in the political dimensions of our society. When I got the opportunity to begin my doctoral studies, my choice of topic was to study propositions and investigations about leisure. This resulted in my licentiate thesis (Lindström, 2006). The documents that I have studied are political documents, since questions in the field of leisure depend directly and indirectly on political decisions. One of the findings of the thesis was that the way of governing regarding leisure had changed during the last part of the 20th century from resource-directed to goal-directed policy. This meant that a larger responsibility was put on the local councils to cater for people’s leisure time. Another result was that great expectations were put on the role of leisure to enhancing citizenship in terms of fostering democracy, health and preventing anti-social behaviour as well as encouraging all individuals to participate in cultural activities (Lindström, 2006).

During 2007-2008, I had an assignment from the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs to participate in a book dealing with meeting places for youths (Lindström, 2008). My part of the book was to investigate aims and perspectives on open leisure activities put forward by a number of local councils. As time was short, the easiest way to access information was to search the Internet for information. This resulted in a sample of six local councils and I studied the written documents presented on their homepages. The article in the book presented a new challenge, forced by the councils which has caused traditional leisure activities to change and develop. The demands of reducing costs and efficiency measures on activities, have strongly affected the local councils during the 1990s and have led to many drastic changes. Local councils have tried to find new and often unconventional solutions in order to continue to manage and organize leisure activities. Today, many new actors are seen in the field of leisure nationally. A lot of the activities are today managed by organizations. A change can also be seen in the views presented about what society can do for their citizens’ leisure time and about how that work best can be done.
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An additional project that I have participated in and which was also promoted by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs was about aspects of quality for open leisure activities. That project made me interested in the work that two networks were doing in terms of developing a common platform for leisure regarding questions of quality, methods and aims. What struck me was that these networks acted as the bridge between the governmental body, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) and the implementation of the governmental policy on youth leisure.

When I was given the opportunity to continue my research studies to the level of a PhD thesis I decided to delve deeper into the material I had collected for the book, and also broaden the empirical base by collecting material from additional local councils. I wanted to investigate more thoroughly the view of leisure as contributing to the development of citizenship for the younger generation.

Definitions of the leisure concept

The matter of leisure has been a part of the concerns about the physical and moral qualities of the growing urban population in the industrial era. Leisure has to do with regulation and self control (Rojek et al., 2006). The management and organization of this is of political interest. In the last century, there was anxiety about the dangers of unregulated leisure for health and social order. However, increased resources through the provision of paid holiday and higher disposable income raised other questions about the role of leisure.

There have been many attempts to define leisure. According to Torkildsen (2003; see also Rojek, 1995; Horna, 1994) hundreds of theories and descriptions of leisure have been produced during the 20th century. There is also a difference in the way leisure is understood in different countries due to the variation in the words used to describe the phenomenon. Torkildsen (2003) makes the following observation.

The English word leisure appears to be derived from the Latin licere, ‘to be permitted’ or ‘to be free’, hence the French word loisir, meaning ‘free time’, and the English word ‘licence’, meaning permission or freedom to act. Thus, the word leisure is associated with a complexity of meanings in our language. Generally it is defined in terms of ‘freedom from constraint’, ‘opportunity to choose’, ‘time left over after work’ or as ‘free time after obligatory social duties have been met’ (Torkildsen, 2003, p. 73).

In Swedish, the concept used for leisure is ‘fritid’, which is more equivalent to free time or spare time. A Swedish translation of leisure would be recreation or idleness. Leisure is a broader concept, which has a societal and political aspect but also has to do with life style. In this thesis, I use the concept leisure as it is established internationally.

Often the definitions of leisure have a normative character. In social science, especially in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, the word serious leisure has been used since 1982. Stebbins (2004) states that serious leisure is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience. He continues “/ … those forces have affected activities that have been undertaken in an atmosphere of serious leisure, which is characterized by, for example, significantly greater flexibility, openness, experimentation, and lack of coercion” (Stebbins, 2004, p. 49).

In line with this, different activities, which are looked on as dysfunctional, are called bad
leisure. Serious leisure is seen by Stebbins as a democratic possibility in the society more than access to working life.

During capitalism and modernity there has been a tendency to associate leisure with freedom, satisfaction, and escape, due to Rojek (1995). He considers spare time and freedom as social constructions, which vary historically. In Sweden, Bjurström (1998) argues that there are signs of leisure changing its character in fundamental ways. Tendencies toward individualism and increasing differentiation between children’s, youths’ and grownups’ leisure activities are seen. He means that modern society can be seen as a society where events and personal experiences are central.

Previous research

Research in the field of leisure is still rare at Swedish universities (Olsson, 1997). In Europe, the United States and Canada a considerable amount of leisure research has been accomplished since the 1950’s. Since the formation of the World Recreation and Leisure Association in 1980 the interest in research about leisure has grown worldwide. However, in comparison with other fields of research leisure is a relatively new research area (Haywood, Kew & Bramham, 1990). Leisure research occurs in several disciplines such as sociology, pedagogic, psychology, economics, and political science. Most of the research deals with questions about what functions leisure has whether for individuals, groups, the society or for the state (Olsson, 1997).

The interest in modern leisure is an effect of the industrial society, when organized spare time became available for people. When De Grazia published his large historical exposé Of Time, Works and Leisure in 1962, which became one of the classic texts, leisure was established as a research field. De Grazia (1962) meant that anyone can have spare time but everyone can not have leisure. He also stated that the access to leisure is a democratic question.

In the section below, I first present the research which I have found about open leisure activities for young people and following that I review research about citizenship and democracy for youths.

Open leisure activities for youths

In this section, I make a review of research on open leisure activities for young people managed by the local councils. The form of youth clubs managed by the local councils, which are found in the Scandinavian countries, is not common in other countries. In Europe, youth clubs are managed by voluntary organizations and are often meant for youths from special areas or with social problems. Olson (2009) states that in countries such as Norway, Denmark and Finland, research about youth activities are not well developed. I have made a search on Google scholar on the key words youth, leisure and citizenship both in Swedish and English. Most of the articles, which I found were student assignments. The search with the English words resulted in 37 300 hits. The first 30 hits were mostly articles and books written and presented in journals from Great Britain and the United States. They represented a broad field of research areas such as social policy, political psychology, leisure studies, physical
education and youth studies. I also found that what is written is mostly done before 2000. The same search with the words in Swedish resulted in 1 740 hits. Among the 30 first hits there were no references to scientific articles. Among the hits were many student assignments which had a connection to youth, citizenship, organizations and authorities.

The Swedish National Board of Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) has over the years initiated research about how to develop club activities in cooperation with the surrounding society for prevention (Berjlund, 2006), youth leaders’ professionalism (Swedish National Board of Youth Affairs, 2005:4) and special activities for girls (Börjesson, 1998) and how to strengthen girls’ engagement in associations (Ulmanen, 1995). Some surveys about visitors at the clubs, and methods used, have also been conducted.

The activity, which has been called “the open way” (den öppna linjen) was elaborated by Hans Jensen in 1940. Jensen was a supervisor for the youth clubs and settlements of the city of Linköping. The way these youth clubs and settlements worked was the starting point for the development of open leisure activities in Sweden (Jensen, 1949/2009). High demands were put on the youth leaders and the work required permanently employed staff. Today, this way of running the youth clubs is still recommended (Source: Nackanätverket). This is clearly seen in the survey among Swedish youth leaders which was done by Pettersson-Svenneke and Havström (2007). They examined how youth leaders described the core of their occupation. Through diary journals and interviews with youth leaders they found a pattern that showed the content of the professional youth leadership. Quotations from youth leaders showed that a lot of the work that is going on with the aim of fostering young people is invisible. A great part of this knowledge had not been articulated before Pettersson-Svenneke and Havström made their survey.

In an ethnographic study of four youth clubs in two Swedish local councils, Tebelius & Österlind (2004) investigated how club leaders regard their own profession. The majority of the leaders did not have a clear strategy on how to reach their goals. They tried to meet the young visitors with respect and as friends, not as mates. They wanted the young people to take part in running the club, but found it difficult to motivate them. Girls and boys were sometimes divided into separate groups, a decision which did not result from a reflection on gender. Neither did they have a strategy to meet visitors with non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds. The leaders had a kit of methods for different situations but did not reflect on the extent to which these methods worked toward the established goals. In an article (2007), Tebelius discusses the findings more thoroughly. She found that the youth leaders’ way of reflecting on their own position in the club was normative and based on common ideas about their profession. At the same time, they were conditioned by the policy expressed by the local council, which regulated the running of the club. She concludes that to stimulate development among the visitors of the club “/ ... the management needs to be supported by a notion of the activities and ideas that are best suited to create and govern a process within the clubs in its entirety” (Tebelius, 2007, p. 99).

A research group at the University of Örebro made a longitudinal study of what kind of behaviour visitors at youth clubs learn and compared this to a control group. Statin and Magnusson (1991) investigated 709 males during three time periods and found that some young people (about 4 %), who visited youth clubs in their early teens (14), when followed up some years later showed a delinquent behaviour. No other reason than visiting the youth club could be found. A cross-sectional follow-up study was done at the beginning of the 2000s of a representative cohort of 498 boys which showed the same result (Mahoney, Statin &
Magnusson, 2000). Koutakis (2008) describes the debate that followed of his research about how youth clubs run the risk of developing a negative behaviour among marginalized young citizens. He discusses how structural activities at youth clubs can be a counteractive to that kind of situations. He means that youth leaders can have a hidden agenda to attract young people to open leisure activities and engagement to offer them interesting and challenging activities.

The field of leisure and its autonomy, value and status are discussed in a study by Ekbrand (2009). In his research he has tried to understand the leisure field’s autonomy by examining different tensions that had emerged in the field. He has found that there is a struggle regarding how to interpret and use the concept of leisure. He has also investigated the outcome of youth and leisure politics through counting activities’ contribution to young citizens’ development of their skills. Some actors in the field mean that leisure activities have a value of its own and those children and youths should be seen as subjects with rights, rather than as objects that should be shaped or formed. Finally, he means that youths with limited recourses also have the right to have good leisure.

Granlund (2009) has studied open leisure activities in 50 local councils, their organization and quality and what kind of aims that were formulated in local councils’ goal documents. The survey consisted of a questionnaire answered by 50 local councils and seven interviews with their representatives. The result showed that the youth clubs were mostly seen as meeting places for youths, where they could be without any demands on them self. The educational level of the staff was often insufficient and in many cases there was no demand for education as a condition to be employed. Local councils with activities in their own regime were found to invest more economical resources than those where different associations managed the youth clubs. Those local councils, which did not themselves manage the youth clubs, argued that it would be difficult to put demands on the associations and to be able to control the quality of the youth clubs.

A project to promote cooperation between different authorities dealing with young people in the councils was run between the years 1997-2001, financed by the Swedish State Inheritance Fund (Allmänna Arvsfonden). The aim of the project was to elaborate an action plan for coordination of resources for youths in risk environments in a number of middle-sized local councils. The goal was to strengthen the work to foster young citizens. The work was done in cooperation with the National Police Agency (Rikspolisstyrelsen), the Crime Prevention Council (Brottsförebyggande rádet), the National Agency for Education (Statens Skolverk), the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) and the Swedish National Institute of Public Health (Folkhälsoinstitutet). Fifteen middle-sized local councils volunteered to take part and the work was followed by a group of researchers (Kassman, 2002). The projects were organised in the same way in all the local councils taking part in the research, with a local project coordinator and a steering group formed by the local government board (kommunstyrelsen). The different projects were evaluated by researchers and these researchers were each responsible for a local council. One of the conclusions from the project was that there was a lack of young citizens’ influence in the project. Their interest was mostly interpreted by different adults, who mediated their messages.

A similar result was found by Bohlin (2003). She evaluated the implementation of the Swedish governments’ overall aims for national youth politics by analysis of the 16 authorities’ sub-targets (delmål). The idea was that the conditions for youths’ influence and
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participation should be improved. The result of the evaluation was that the intentions
expressed in the aims had not been fulfilled.

There has been some research carried out about young people’s influence in the local
communities too. Tebelius & Ericsson (1995b) evaluated a democracy project affecting a
specific local council as a whole. They interviewed representatives of the young participants,
youth leaders, teachers, politicians and civil servants involved in the project and also looked
at the documentation from the project. One of the things they found was that young girls were
most active in forming democratic groups and preparing for the hearings with the politicians.
It also become evident that the youth leaders acted as bridges between the authorities and the
youths, and that the politicians had difficulties in seriously meeting the young people. The
authors concluded that it was important for the authorities that the young people learned the
democratic procedures in order to be able to understand how to influence. At the same time,
there were expectations that the young people themselves should invent new forms for
mobilization and daily influence. New ways should, however, be subordinated to the formal
ones.

In another project about local democracy, Tebelius & Ericsson (1997) interviewed 40 young
people in ages raging from 14 to 16 in three different councils to find out their attitudes
towards democracy and participation in local community action. Those interviewed stated that
political action was not a natural part of the teenagers’ self-image. The youths often did not
have any idea about how to influence, and they lacked knowledge and information about
public and political life and how decisions were made. They did not believe that they could
have any impact. Neither did they feel comfortable within the formal political context, nor
with the politicians’ way of defining their problems. Still they realized that together they
could achieve something.

In a summarizing report, Tebelius and Ericsson (2001) conclude that it seems as if the
democracy projects are built on an idea that young people need to practice how to make
democratic decisions. But for the young ones the questions on hand were more important than
the democratic procedures. Though they participated in special arrangements to increase
democracy this did not have much of an impact on the decision process in the council.
However, when the young people actively participated in decisions, important for their daily
life, they got self confidence, developed personally and got a feeling of personal worth.

Sörbom (2003:8) did an evaluation of the establishment of youth assemblies in nine Swedish
local councils as a way to increase youth democracy. From interviews with politicians and
civil servants and collected material, such as document of decisions made in local councils,
she found that the amount of youth assemblies was increasing and that the local councils had
an ambition to listen to young people’s ideas as a part of the decision process. She also found
that the impact of these assemblies on local politics was small. However, the young people
taking part gained a lot of personal knowledge and understanding of the democratic and
political processes. She argues that it would be possible to do much more. She states that the
interviews with politicians and civil servants showed that they actually did not really know
what they meant by influence and participation and that that was a problem.
Introduction

Youth and citizenship

Many researchers are engaged in the question about youth and citizenship most of them in connection with youths, education and citizenship. In a search on the Internet I found 233 000 articles and books about youth and citizenship. Most of them deal with youth studies. I found three journals about citizenship studies, nine journals about youth studies and six journals about leisure. I have studied more than 30 articles that are of interest for my research. The most central of them, from the point of view of the focus of the research, will be described below.

Benedicto and Moran (2007) found it interesting to explore how new generations become citizens as a key issue for understanding the characteristics of the civic life of a society. Their purpose was to design a research tool to make possible the analysis of the discourses, images and attitudes concerning what it means to be a citizen for today’s young people. The techniques used included focus groups and in-depth interviews carried out with young people of different socio-cultural statuses and diverse life circumstances. Furthermore, they argue that the concept of citizenship has revealed itself as a potent conceptual and analytic instrument to explain youth transitions. In their paper they propose an analytical framework structured along two axes: the dimension of belonging and the dimension of involvement, in the empirical study of the discourses and representations of what being a citizen means to young Europeans. They did this in order to define the basic features of the conceptions of citizenship that can be identified empirically.

In an edited collection of international youth research Helve and Holm (2005) present a locally based case study research that was carried out in Europe during 2000. They argue that scholars have written about youth and young people for centuries, while social science research on youth has focused mainly on young people in the United States and Western Europe. Empirically, youth research was either a way to gather information for social policy or a way to test theories from other disciplines they argue. The chapters in the book are both theoretical and empirical studies mainly from research from a sociological perspective. Helve and Holm (2005) argue that the categories of gender, ethnicity, race and social class are important. Furthermore the authors argue that issue from an international perspective deepens our understanding of the youth and suggests new ideas for how to work with young people. Helve and Holm (2005) state that young people can be a positive force in society and a resource in the processes of changing the culture as well as societal structures. They promote an intercultural understanding and a cross-fertilization of the theoretical, substantive and methodological perspectives of youth research from across the world. However, they state that it is impossible to refer to youths as a homogeneous group without qualifying who the young people are.

Harris, Wyn & Younes (2007) address the changing nature of civic and political engagement for young people in Australia. They have made a quantitative survey with data gathered from 970 respondents aged 15 to 16 and overrepresented by males. Their study was an investigation of young people’s attitudes towards and practices of civic and political engagement in the state of Victoria. Their research identifies new activities and spaces in which young people create communities and networks. For example, music cultures have been analyzed as places where young people participate in the creation of political as well as leisure communities with their peers. In the article, they discuss their recent research which explores youths’ engagement from the perspective of changing life patterns. They found that
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the young generation made adult choices in a highly individualised context. They argue that social change has resulted in the fragmentation of older collective identifications and resulted in the increased significance of individual choice and action. In the article, they ask what it means for young people’s participation in civic and political life if they no longer are experiencing continuous, structured identities and predictions of life trajectories. They argue that an alternative trend in research on citizenship and participation focuses on new kinds of engagement by young people outside of formal politics.

Vinken (2005) focuses on some perspectives for studying young people’s citizenship, such as citizenship defined as the process in which young people develop trust in others and in society’s institutions, and associations which to some degree serve a public cause. He wants the debate to turn into more contemporary forms of engagement among young people, especially related to the leisure and consumption domain. He stresses that new generations will invent new forms of citizenship and argues that sticking to the old parameters leads to serious misperceptions of what is going on in youths’ citizenship. Furthermore, he argues that scientists, professional educators, and youth policy-makers focus mainly on citizenship that involves traditional, formally organized civic institutions and classic civic activities, such as organized sports. He means that there is a need for better understanding of the emergence of new forms of citizenship, especially those found in the leisure and consumption domain. The new biography of citizenship is characterized by dynamic identities, weak relationships and more fluid, short-lived commitments in informal institutions and associations. Vinken (2005) stresses that the consumption domain is the ultimate domain with which to build a new community identity and an alternative to establish solidarity and involvement in the common good.

From their research, Vinken (2005), Vinken, Ester, Dekkers and van Dun (2002) and Vinken, Ester, van Dun and van Poppel (2003) make the conclusions that leisure and consumption can be the playing field where the reflexive generation develops their necessary competences which promote their self-socialization. As an example, they take new media where numerous contemporaries flock together. On the Internet, social ties between young people are weak, non-hierarchical and informal. Young people join on the basis of common interests and they are the ones in control of the media. Instead of being involved in traditional political or ideological interest groups they can choose from a wide range of other young people - both virtual and real ones.

In Print (2007) a major national project is reviewed on youths’ participation in democracy in Australia, set in the context of a national citizenship education programme. In the project, a mixed-method approach over a four-year period is used. Data have been collected through in-depth group and individual interviews with young people aged 17-25, in school and non-school sites to identify democratic and electoral behaviour. Print (2007) states that citizenship education in established democracies is challenged by declining youths’ participation in democracy. Print (2007) also states that youth’s disenchantment and disengagement in democracy is primarily evident in formal political behaviour, mostly through voting, declining membership of political parties, assisting during elections or contacting politicians and the like. He argues that if citizenship education is to play a major role in addressing these concerns citizenship education will need to review the impact it makes on young people in schools.

In a paper Osler and Starkey (2006) provide a synthesis of the scholarly literature on education for citizenship and democracy, focusing in particular on research published since
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1995 on schooling in England. They examine the role of education for democracy and citizenship (EDC) in responding to political challenges, setting national policy developments in both European and international contexts and exploring the growing international consensus on human rights as the underpinning principles of EDC. Initiatives in education for democratic citizenship (EDC) are taking place in the England, in Europe and internationally. In both established democracies and newly established democratic states, such as those of Eastern and Central Europe, there is a recognition that democracy is essentially fragile and depends on the active engagement of the citizens. This is so not just in voting, but in developing and participating in sustainable and cohesive communities. In the article, Osler and Starkey (2006) identify some key themes such as diversity and unity, global and cosmopolitan citizenship, children as citizens, democratic schooling, students’ understanding of citizenship and democracy and the practicalities of implementing EDC at school level.

Drawing on Ulrich Beck’s theory of freedom’s children Arnot (2006) has examined contemporary concerns about educating young people for citizenship as well as educating them about citizenship. She does that in an article using youth cultural research findings such as from Beck and Beck Gernsheim (2002). She focuses on the citizen as learner and highlights some gender and class related inequalities. Furthermore, she looks at the learner as citizens in view of the fact that citizenship education often prepares learners for a gender-divided world. The study concludes with reflections on gender-related dimensions of individualisation and their implications for democracy and the one learning to be a citizen.

Mossberger, Tolberg and Stansbury (2003) have made a larger survey in the United States of 1 190 respondents of the age of 20. Their primary source of data is a national telephone survey conducted in 2001. In the survey questionnaire there were questions such as: access to the Internet, about having or not having an e-mail address and about attitudes towards learning new computer skills. They found that a digital gap exists and is characterized by skill divide as well as by an access divide. Digital divide, in this case, means differences in access to information technology based on demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, income, education, and gender. Further, they state that new communication forms like chat rooms, e-mail and list servers represent new forms of information exchange and opinion mobilization. There are new opportunities for shared political information and communication on the Internet. But on the other hand, they ask what implications this gap will have for citizens’ daily life, for earning a living and for exercising the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

To summarize previous research, this shows that a new kind of engagement among young people will influence and affect young people’s citizenship in the future. Implementation of national and local aims and how club leaders regard their own profession will also be of importance.

Disposition

The disposition of the dissertation is as follows. In the next section I present the aim and research questions of my thesis and the limitations of the study. The next chapter is a brief description of the Swedish democratic system. After that I present a summary of my licentiate thesis under the heading The Swedish governments’ interest in leisure (Lindstrom, 2006). It includes a historical survey of the development of the leisure sector beginning with the 1930s.
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The government’s interest in the leisure sector is studied through investigations, the Swedish Government Official Reports series (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, SOU) and through governmental bills (propositions). The final section of the chapter deals with the changing notion of governance, and draws conclusions concerning the possible consequence for the definitions of citizenship.

In the following chapter the Swedish government’s and the Swedish parliament’s youth policy is presented. The governmental agency, The Swedish national Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) with the responsibility to implement youth policies is described and also other regional and local institutions, which are the main actors implementing youth politics on local level. Two local networks, KEKS and Nacka-Network, are also presented.

The subsequent chapter presents a discussion about the role of the local councils as providers of leisure activities and facilities for youths. A historical perspective is presented and the concept of open leisure activities will be discussed. The chapter concludes with a presentation of various meeting places available to young people.

The chapter entitled Theoretical considerations starts with a review of the different perspectives of citizenship found in my licentiate thesis. The meaning of the concept of citizenship and how this has changed is investigated. The concept of citizenship in relation to young people and their leisure activities is also discussed. Furthermore, a global perspective of citizenship, young citizens’ values, and citizenship connected to new technology and finally the question and outcomes of citizen education are also mentioned. Finally, I present a model, which I use as theoretical platform in the analysis of the empirical material.

My ontological commitments towards the research and the data used are presented in the chapter ‘Methodological framework, methods and data’. This chapter describes the local councils studied and the relevant materials from their homepages. I also discuss content analysis and how I proceeded with the methodology. At the end of the chapter I discuss the validity and reliability of the research.

The following section begins with a presentation of the model I have used for analysing the texts. I continue by discussing how traces of laws and the overall aims for leisure can be found in the texts. Subsequently the aims and the organization and management of leisure sector as presented on the homepages, are described. I continue by discussing the pedagogical ambitions together with the norms and values found in the empirical material. This is followed by analysis of the users of leisure services, the target groups and what they are offered.

In the final part of the dissertation, I discuss my findings. I start by analysing the character of the texts on the homepages. Then I discuss how the word democracy is used in the documents, the variety of activities offered due to the different conditions in the local councils, the producers’ views of the youths and the pedagogical methods found in the documents. Finally, the section ends with a discussion about the concept of equality. The next part of the discussion, The governance of leisure for youth, begins with a discussion about the management of leisure from which various conclusions are drawn. The last and final part of the discussion is a summary of the notion of youth citizenship which has been made visible on the local councils’ homepages.
Sweden is a parliamentary democracy, which means that it is ruled by a political majority and general elections are held every four years. The Swedish Parliament, (riksdag), which has 349 members, is the supreme political decision-making body in Sweden. Sweden has three levels of government - national, regional and local. In addition there is also a fourth level, the European level. Sweden’s fundamental laws, which make up the Constitution, hold an exceptional position in its legislation and cannot be amended as easily as other laws. The fundamental laws cover the form of government and democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the order of succession to the throne. For a fundamental law to be amended, it is required that the same decision is taken by the Swedish Parliament (riksdag) on two separate occasions. A parliamentary election must have taken place between the two decisions. The fundamental laws take precedence over all other statutes and no other laws may contravene the Constitution. The first established fundamental laws are, The 1810 Act of Succession, The 1949 Freedom of the Press Act, The 1974 Instrument of Government, and The 1991 Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression. In addition to the fundamental laws, there is the Swedish Parliament Act (riksdagsordning) which holds a special status between fundamental law and ordinary laws. To amend this Act only one decision in the Swedish parliament is required but it must be adopted by a qualified majority (at least three quarters of votes and the support of more than half the members). The Swedish Parliament Act contains detailed provisions on the Swedish Parliament and its procedures. This is the official view of the Swedish parliamentary system. Details are available on Government offices of Sweden. See also Halvardson (1992).

The different parliamentary levels are illustrated in the figure below. The local councils, county councils and regional assemblies are the highest decision-making bodies at the local and regional levels. All assembly meetings are open to the public. Between assembly meetings, matters are managed by the executive committees (nämnder). The executive committees are formed by the party or parties that hold the majority in the local council, county council or region. The leisure sector can be handled by different executive committees. Each committee has an administration office (kommunala kontor) dealing with the daily matters.

The European level is not included in figure 1 but the local and regional levels are affected by decisions taken in the EU. About 60 percent of the matters handled by the boards in local councils and county councils are directly or indirectly influenced by funding or decisions from EU. Details are available from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges kommuner och landsting).
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Parliamentary, local council and county/regional elections are held on the same day as the general election. In these elections, Swedes vote for political parties to represent them in the three political assemblies: The local council assembly (kommunstyrelse), the county council or regional assembly (landsting) and the Swedish parliament (riksdag). To be entitled to vote in the local council and county council/regional elections, voters must be at least 18 years of age and a resident of the local council and county concerned.

Central government

The Government Offices are led by the Government (regeringen) and thus form a politically controlled body where the Government directs the work and sets priorities. At their weekly cabinet meetings the members of the Cabinet take joint and collective decisions on all government business. The state budget procedure includes the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill presented in the spring and, in the autumn, the Government’s Budget Bill. Each year, the Swedish Government presents some 200 bills before the Swedish parliament (riksdag). Some of these contain proposals for new legislation; others involve major or minor amendments to existing statues. The process from initiative to enacted law involves several steps, which can be as follows: A committee of inquiry is appointed to look into the preconditions for what the Government wants to implement. The committee is given terms of reference, specifying what it is to do. When the committee has completed its work, it writes a report which is published in the Swedish Government Official Reports series (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, SOU). The report is referred to several agencies and bodies for consideration as well as to the council on Legislation which monitors the legal aspects. The Government then drafts a proposal, a bill, to present to The Swedish Parliament. The bill is dealt with by one of the parliamentary committees which give its views. The Swedish Parliament then votes on the bill and, if it is
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approved, a new law can be promulgated and published in the Swedish Code of Statutes, (Svensk författningssamling, SFS).

Agencies (institutions) are subordinate to the Government and responsible for implementing public policies, overseeing the provision of many public services and discharging a range of regulatory functions. Every year the Government takes a decision on the preconditions for the agencies’ operations. In this dissertation The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsens) is an example of agency management.

Sweden has been a member of the European Union, EU, since 1 January 1995. This means that some decisions previously taken in the Swedish parliament (riksdag) are nowadays taken jointly with other EU countries. Elections to EU are held every sixth years. A certain amount of legislation affecting Sweden is enacted by the European Union. Some of these laws apply directly to Sweden without prior sanction by the Swedish parliament (riksdag). Others must be incorporated into existing Swedish legislation. The Prime Minister's Office (Statsrådsberedningen) has the overall responsibility for coordinating Sweden's EU policy. Coordination in this context means to determine the overall political priorities for Sweden's action in the EU and coordinating the work of the ministry in the EU Councils of Ministers (EU-ministerns kansli) according to these priorities. The EU Department (kansliet för samordning av EU-frågor) at the Prime Minister’s Office (Statsrådsberedningen) directs the political coordination of EU-related matters in the Government Offices (regeringskansliet) (Sources: Regeringen and Sveriges kommuner och landsting).

Local self-government

Sweden is divided into 290 local councils (kommuner), 18 counties (län) and two regions (Västra Götaland and Skåne). There is no hierarchical relation between local councils, counties and regions, since all have their own self-governing local authorities which are responsible for the managing of their mandate. The only exception is Gotland, an island in the Baltic Sea, where the municipality also has the responsibilities and tasks normally associated with a county council. Local councils are responsible for matters concern the inhabitants of the municipality and their immediate environment. The local councils’ assignments are to fulfil effective service production for their citizens such as to uphold legal security and to develop democracy in their local councils. The main task of the county councils and regions is health care (The Local Government Act, 1992).

Financing local service

Swedish local councils, county councils and regions are responsible for providing a significant proportion of all public services. They have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation. Local councils, county councils and regions decide on their own tax rates. The average, overall local tax rate is 30 percent. Approximately 20 percent goes to the local councils and 10 per cent to the county councils and regions. Tax revenues are the largest source of income of Sweden’s local councils, county councils and regions and account for approximately two-thirds of their total income.
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Grants from the State are either general or targeted. General grants are paid per inhabitant. Each local council, county council or region can use this money on the basis of local conditions. Targeted grants must be used to finance specific activities, sometimes over a specific period of time. There are major variations in the average income of the inhabitants of Sweden’s local councils, county councils and regions. The cost per inhabitant, for providing the services to which they are entitled, also varies. In order to ensure fairness, a system has been introduced with the aim of providing equitable conditions in all local councils, county councils and regions. This is the local government equalization system, which entails a redistribution of the revenues of the local councils, county councils and regions on the basis of their tax base and level of expenditure. The equalization system is managed by the State.

Local councils, county councils and regions may charge users for their services. A non-profit principle applies, however, which means that fees may not be higher than the costs related to the service concerned. If local councils, county councils and regions are obliged to provide a service, they may only charge for the service if specifically permitted to do so by law.

Local councils, county councils and regions may procure services from private companies. Such activities carried out by private companies on behalf of local councils, county councils and regions are financed using public funds. Privately run activities that are financed using tax revenues must offer citizens services on the same conditions as those which apply to similar public services. This means, for example, that citizens pay the same for a service irrespective of whether it is provided by the public sector or by a private company. Details are available from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges kommuner och landsting).
Leisure and citizenship

The purpose with my licentiate thesis was not to explore the conception of citizenship. However, when I made a renewed reading of the documents ingoing in the thesis it became apparent that citizenship is a central theme in the government’s involvement in leisure. The government’s interest in people’s leisure life is part of an ambition to create the optimal conditions for a decent life for the citizens (Lindström, 2006). In the documents I studied earlier, there is a clear ambition to foster people into being cultivated, healthy and equal citizens. In these documents, however, the youths do not have any prominent part. They are only mentioned in relation to leisure in terms of it being a means of preventing dysfunctional behaviour and contributing to integration. Sport is especially lifted up as a valuable activity and the importance of sport associations meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups of young people is pronounced. Young people’s citizenship and place in our society have however, been of interest for the government throughout the growth of the modern society.

There are several publications of concern, such as Politics for young (SOU, 1997:71), A sustainable democracy (SOU, 2000:1), and To have real influence – developing democracy in local councils and county councils (SOU, 2001:48), all of which deal with the role of young people in a democratic country. In all of these publications the matter of young people as citizens is raised. In SOU 1997:71 questions are raised about whom youth politics are really intended for. The definition of youths is problematized. There are discussions about youths as a resource and the possibilities for young people to have real influence on matters affecting their daily life. In the investigation SOU 2000:1 issues are raised about globalization, the influence of the mass media and information technology. Sweden’s membership of the EU and the existence of politics on international, national, regional and local levels is said to influence the democratic processes. In SOU 2001:48 the possibilities for all sorts of citizens to participate in local democratic processes are discussed. Questions are raised about the possibilities for disabled citizens, citizens with a foreign background and children and youths to be active citizens.

During the latest part of the 20th century, the question about young people’s citizenship was actualized not just in Sweden but also in the rest of Europe. The reason for this is, among others factors, young people’s decreasing interest in political parties and other ideological associations, the occurrence of anarchistic youth revolts such as house occupations and the spread of fascistic ideas among youths (Jonsson, 2006). Much effort was put into education. Research projects in different countries, promoted by the European Union, have studied young people’s political opinions and values, and how to educate citizenship. Most of the European countries have a long tradition in politics regarding children and youths, taking their standpoint from the idea that youths imply problems for the society. Contributions are therefore aimed at special groups that are supposed to be problematic (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2003).

I have not found any systematic studies about the importance or use of leisure time and leisure activities in developing young people’s citizenship. In the society of today, leisure activities and leisure time are of increasing importance especially for young people. They are influenced by the groups they belong to outside of both school and the family when it comes to attitudes toward citizenship, though structural conditions are still determining factors (Helve & Wallace, 2001). Among European countries there exist different perspectives as to
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how to look upon young citizens. They can be perceived as problems or as a resource for the society.

To understand citizenship in relation to young people’s leisure is a central option. Young people spend most of their leisure time and activities in their near surroundings and, therefore, the leisure options provided by the local councils are important. As leisure activity is not mandatory to the councils, it depends on each council’s political ambition to what extent leisure activities will be seen as means of fostering young people into citizens. An interesting question is whether the changing way of governing, which emerged from my earlier study, is observable in the official declaration made by the local councils. This can be mirrored by the way goals, ambitions and different options are presented in their official interface, namely their homepages. In this dissertation my ambition is to discuss what is written on ten local council’s homepages about leisure in the perspective of citizenship for young people.

Aim and the research questions

The purpose with this dissertation is, to describe, explore and discuss the texts that local councils present on their homepages from the perspective of leisure and citizenship for youths. The questions that originate from this are the following ones:

- What kind of citizenship will be represented through the local councils’ goal and steering documents for young people and their leisure time?
- What kind of citizenship will be represented through the way the local councils organize, manage and support the leisure sector?
- What kind of citizenship will be represented through the supply of leisure activities for young people that are presented on the local councils’ homepages?

Delimitations

The research area is the local councils’ leisure activities for youths. The material I am using is rich and complex and opens many lines of approach. In this thesis it was necessary to limit my investigations. The chosen councils are not intended to be a representative selection of the total amount of Swedish councils. These councils were chosen because they had homepages which gave a fairly good view of their activities and policies. When I made my selection, all the materials that I used for my analysis were available on the Internet. This includes a large number of activities and localities. My main focus, however, is on open leisure activities for young citizens between the ages 13-25, especially in youth clubs and similar premises.
The Swedish government’s interest in leisure

This part of the dissertation is a summary of my licentiate thesis, The field of leisure – a governmental challenge, which consisted of a survey covering Propositions, Governmental investigations (SOU) and a paper (Ds) issued by the Government carried out during the 1970s, 1990s and the 2000s (Lindström, 2006). I also make a notation about the movement New Public Management (NPM), which has affected the governing of the public sector during the last decade. The consequences for the citizens are also discussed in this section.

In the period during the 1800s when industrialisation became more widespread the demands for regulated working hours increased. In the autumn of 1919 the Swedish parliament inaugurated a law restricting a normal working day to eight hours and a normal working week to 48 hours. The law was a provisional arrangement but became permanent in 1930. In 1930, the first law regarding holiday provision was legislated by the Swedish parliament, which prescribed two weeks holiday for all. At the beginning of the 1900s, administrative authorities, politicians and folk scholars were anxious that leisure time could be idled away on bad activities such as dancing and movies. There were also qualms that the new legislation about holiday and free time would lead to moral degeneration and the Social Welfare Agency considered following up the holiday reforms with an illumination campaign (Olsson, 1992). Old traditions, norms and values, earlier administrated by the church and homes, now competed with new forms of leisure activities (Mattsson, 1986; Eskilsson, 2000; Åberg, 2002). In 1970 a new law was introduced, which made 40 hours per week the normal working rule. The next law regulating holiday provision came in 1977, which resulted in five weeks annual holiday time. Because of the increasing consumption of leisure goods and experiences, leisure time was now becoming an important part of the national economy. These changes are believed to represent the beginning of the leisure industry (Mattsson, 1986; Hall, 1976; Eskilsson, 2000:1).

Leisure for all

The 1930’s became in many ways a landmark regarding views of leisure time and leisure activities. In 1933, the Swedish Tourism Organisation was established (Mattsson, 1986; Eskilsson, 2000:1; Åberg, 2002) and following year the Folk Movement’s Travel Organisation (RESO) was created. There were now possibilities for workers to rest from work. Eskilsson (2000) however argues that this was not a common welfare privilege. It was intended merely as a means of making the workforce more productive. The employers were interested in having rested employees back to work in order to be able to keep the work rate high (Eskilsson, 2000; Aléx & Hjelm, 2000; Berggren, 2000; Olson, 1997; Olson, 1999; SOU, 1996:3).

This was also the time when the government started to be interested in social politics and to control children and young people’s leisure through implementing a law for mentally ill persons (Vårdslagen) and the establishment of local boards for children (Barnavårdsnämnden). In 1932, a national Youth bureau (Ungdomsbyrå) was also established as a support for social- and leisure politics. Folk movements have in different ways played a role in activating, forming and fostering citizens, both young and old.
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Politicians were, however, not especially interested in giving general governmental grants to folk movements or organizations that were interested in changing the state (Olson, 1992).

In the summer of 1936, the exhibition “Leisure in Ystad” was initiated. On the first page of the exhibition program one could read that leisure would create harmonious people. The exhibition was divided into different divisions with elements of lobbyism, radio, movie, photo call, travelling, theatre and much more. The state showed an interest in the exhibition and about the content of leisure exposed there. At the Ystad exhibition there was a special division, named “Our home and leisure”. In Sweden by that time the many hard working housewives had no leisure time. It represented the greatest occupational group, close to one million persons. This resulted in an attempt to offer housewives grants to be able to go on holiday. Schools for country households and folk high schools arranged recreation weeks for women who were in special need of a stay at a holiday home (Utsållningskatalog, 1936; Eskilsson, 2000). Regarding children and young people, a settlement activity was developed where sick and thin children could have a rest and increase their stamina with sun, bathing and healthy food (Lindfors, 2004). Leisure became a part of the modern society’s welfare program in the same way as other civil rights.

During the 1930s, the concept of folk home (Folkhemmet) was introduced as a metaphor. As a political term it gained attention and the concept itself was used during a debate in parliament in 1928. Per Albin Hansson, who was leader of the social democratic party, used it when describing a society that the social democratic party strived for. Sweden should be like a home, a good home that should be characterised by consensus and uniformity. The folk home became a central concept of social democratic politics and visions about a welfare state. By the time the so-called folk home was planned and constructed, young people represented a large part of the population and different theories about mothering and education had entered into the public domain. Children’s gardens (hämträdgärder) or “kindergartens” had been investigated and the first work house had opened in Stockholm 1887, to be quickly followed by other activities for youths. Leisure activities were now an organized part of society, often aiming at prevention, and in 1936 the first two youth clubs were opened in Gothenburg and Stockholm. Gamlestaden’s youth club in the City of Gothenburg was the first local council youth club in Sweden. In 1939/40, Stockholm followed and from the 1940s youth clubs proliferated in every municipality. A lot of the activities were arranged by private initiative with the aim of preventing children and youths from being out on the streets and market places. This made leisure activities a concern for the officials (Lindström, 2006; Olson, 1999). From the beginning, the aim was that leisure is meant to be for all citizens. The investigators emphasized that leisure activities must not be a question of social class, and for example citizens should be able to participate in sports activities at a reasonable cost. It was seen as the states’ responsibility to stimulate citizens’ cultural activities, work to prevent people’s ill health and foster democratic citizens (SOU, 1962; 1964; 1965; 1966; 1969). These aims were particularly clear when it came to sports movements. As I have shown above, the government started to show an interest in leisure activities for people in the 30’s. The main aim was to support the creation of an active, harmonious citizen with enough knowledge and guts to influence her/his life situation.
The Swedish government’s interest in leisure

The government’s responsibility

From the 1930s, the government wanted to develop a policy for leisure and a number of investigations were initiated, which resulted for example in a focus on children’s leisure time, tourism and recreation, sport fishing, country homes and boats. Governmental aims for the field of leisure embodied health and ethical aspects and were intended to protect cultural values such as art, history, nature, and promote social values by accessibility, equality and involvement in tourism, events and sports.

In 1957, the sports and outdoor life investigation published a report (SOU, 1957). In 1977, the Governmental Youth Board engaged a working group with the task of studying investments for children and youth’s leisure in local councils. Results showed that the local councils promoted local sports investments. Facilities such as ice-, swimming- and sport halls or football grounds were taken for granted (Lindström, 2006). Another investigation, the low payment investigation from 1968, presented another view on the conditions of leisure (Tåhlin, 1985). Now, the political agenda contained questions about leisure facilities because of the discovery that the possibilities of the upper and middle classes for an active leisure time were different to groups who lacked socioeconomic resources and education. It was time to discuss the organization and conditions for leisure.

During the 1970s, there were visible results in the local councils’ investments in the leisure sector as thousands of outdoor clubs, leisure clubs, sport halls and drill halls were constructed. This was also a period when the government’s interest in investing in leisure education could be clearly seen. Education for leisure leaders was established at a group of folk high schools and education for leisure educators at the local council level.

By this time government legislation had also developed. There are several laws and decrees that were adopted for the leisure sector and that had an influence on the local field of leisure. The local government legislation (1991:900) talks about democratic rights and equal access to welfare and services (Source: Rättsnätet). The library law (1996:1596) states that local councils must have a library (Source: Rättsnätet). In the Planning and Building law § 4 (SFS, 1987:10) it is stated that communities must have green areas and parks for recreation (Source: Rättsnätet). The law of Service and Support for People with Handicaps (SFS, 1993:87) entitles dysfunctional people to leisure activities (LSS, § 15, Chapter 15) (Source: Rättsnätet). Other examples are environmental laws, laws about hunting, laws about riding a snowmobile, legislation about seashores, etc (Source: Regeringen).

During this time the Swedish official administration was expanding (Premfors, Ehn, Haldén & Sundström, 2003). New welfare programs started and the state by that time was building a strong interventionist central administration.

My research indicates that Swedish Leisure policy was influenced by a strong belief in planning, covering periods of 3-5 years and of a central government (Lindström, 2006). Children and youth are groups often mentioned in the documents, especially girls from a disadvantaged background. In documents from 1974 and 1998/99, people with handicaps, people living in different institutions, immigrants and other ethnic groups were pointed out as being a special priority (Regeringens Proposition, 1974:28; Regeringens Proposition, 1996:97:3, Regeringens Proposition, 1998:99:107; Ds, 1999:78).
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New forms of government

New ideas emerged from the 1980’s onwards. The Swedish government established a parliamentary decentralization group with a mission to increase decentralization towards local councils and county councils. The aim with decentralization and deregulation was to reform democracy by bringing the decisions closer to citizens. It was intended to strengthen the local council’s autonomy and to improve democracy. At the same time it was believed that decreasing regulation would strengthen local councils’ efficacy and contribute to rationalization. Interest in decentralization was seen among both left and right wing politicians. Premfors et al. (2003) talks about the Swedish Social Democrats’ party congress in 1991 as the time when new liberal thoughts started to penetrate the thinking. Words such as ‘demand’, ‘competition’, ‘private solutions’, ‘the market’ and ‘bidding procedures’ became more common among authorities constituting what is called New Public Management (NPM).

This concept is used to characterize those changes in the official sector which have occurred during the last two decades. The NPM movement can be seen as a cluster of ideas borrowed from commercial and industrial areas as are their methods in regard to steering the organizations. The NPM can be said to depend on two distinct spheres, one more orientated to industrial life and the other more market orientated (Almqvist, 2006). The main hypothesis in the second sphere of NPM is that more market orientation in the public sector will lead to greater cost-efficiency for governments, without having a negative side effect on other objectives and considerations (ibid).

The introduction of goal and result steering meant that the official administration was given another policy stance. The politicians would set up the goals and the public administration would then implement them. One of the basic thoughts in the reform was that politicians should be better at formulating goals, conducting follow ups and evaluating goals and results.

This development has continued during the 1990s and 2000s and in terms of the field of leisure, it can be seen in new forms of organization, new aspects of quality management and cost effectiveness, and in the development of key figures used in the work with budgets, annual accounts and follow-ups (Svenska Kommunförbundet, 2001).

I have been able to notice that privatised solutions have been increasingly accepted in both political blocks. In all areas of the leisure field agents in the private sector, economic associations, and private businesses have expanded their involvement. Local influences, decentralization and freedom of choices have replaced centralism and big scale notions of solutions (Lindström, 2006). The government’s view on the commercial sector of leisure has changed gradually and has since the 1980s undergone a major shift. For example, in the tourist proposition 2004:05:56 and sports politics for year 2000 1998:99:107, the documents express support for privately-owned leisure producers.

To summarize, NPM implies a change from a so-called detailed budget to an overall budget, changes in the principles of management from hierarchy to decentralization, entrepreneurship and networking. NPM implies changes in the organisation of the public sector from administration to management, leadership and steering by goals. Finally, it indicates changes from rules to results and from public monopoly to competition.

Whereas earlier the state controlled almost all parts of the leisure value chain, it has become possible to talk about those who produce, arrange and finance leisure services (see Premfors
The Swedish government’s interest in leisure

et al., 2003). Premfors et al. (2003) state that it is about different ideals of steering in the local councils. The differences in opinion are between, on one hand, those who recommend a high value of justice and almost equal access to services and welfare, often through collective solutions; and on the other hand, an idea that variation and competition between different producers of services will be the best way to increase the level of leisure service (Premfors, Ehn, Haldén & Sundström, 2003; Molander & Stigmark, 2005; Lindström, 2006).

Consequences for the citizens

In the last decade, the leisure field has become increasingly more complex with Sweden joining the European Union and with the introduction of multi-level government systems where decisions are filtered through a series of different agencies (Lindström, 2006; Pierre, 2001; Pierre, 2000). Management by objectives and results in dialogue with citizens and representatives have been developed and framework laws were legislated during the 1980s. It can be seen in the documents that it was a high priority on the part of the government to ensure the well-being of its citizens and common goals such as sustainable development (Lindström, 2006, Regeringens Proposition, 2002/03:35; Regeringens Proposition, 2004/05:56).

Today, in Sweden, there is lot of competition for resources in the broader leisure sector. The development of society until 2005 caused other questions to be put on the agenda; for example questions such as concerns about ethics, commercialization, and increased possibilities for equality and sustainable development. Borders between different areas such as outdoor activities, tourism and entrepreneurship and areas for rest and recreation are discussed in the documents in terms of accessibility and sustainability. Questions about responsibility are raised and at the same time, these areas are becoming more interesting to more actors. The state sees its task as handling conflicts between different interests and aims such as the rights of the Sámi people, demand of growth, snowmobile safaris and outdoor life. Providing good service to citizens is a central aim of the governmental administration in order to secure their wellbeing. However, control no longer resides with the governmental agencies. An example is Bengtsson’s (2005) description and analysis of the central intention with the law of Service and Support for People with Handicaps (LSS) in relation to how the reform is implemented in practice. His results show that local councils and Street-Level Bureaucrats (see Lipsky’s theory, 1980) have a large leeway in handling the reform in different ways. The LSS law was administrated, and applied in different ways among politicians and civil servants. Expectations and values referring to the target group also differed. “Another way of interpreting the differences is to say that economic aspects on local council level are steering the activities” (Bengtsson, 2005, p. 305). He shows that it is not obvious that all activities start from decided aims or from citizen’s needs and expectations. The consequences for the field of leisure can be that citizens will have different possibilities of having their needs and expectations fulfilled depending on the performers of the leisure services.

The changed notion of governance

In this section I will discuss the change in the way the government implements its political goals in terms of a new way of governing and what the consequences are on different levels.
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

Having studied policies about the leisure field as they are expressed in documents, I have noticed that the political playing field has changed and that nowadays many actors have been added that have access to the leisure field. Several NPM trends can be identified, but the most important ones are the decentralization and commercialization of the leisure sector.

Within the NPM, a new way for the government to steer was developed. This could be called governance in contrast to government. Governance means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not. Pierre (2001) talks about governance as processes, where collective aims are defined and implemented in networks and cooperation. "Thinking about governance means thinking about how to steer the economy and society, and how to reach collective goals" (Pierre & Peters, 2000, p.1; Pierre, 1992). The government is only one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved vary depending on the level of implementation but can be associations, cooperatives and Non Governmental Organizations, (NGO). In governance the actors involved are focused on the formal and informal decision-making and implementing processes. The concept also includes the formal and informal structures that have been organized to support the implementation of the decisions. Björk, Bostedt and Johansson (2003) state that governance can be seen as an all-embracing concept that covers all the steering processes. Governance therefore is a broader concept than government, because it includes both official and private actors.

As a consequence of the changed way of steering, which I also pointed to in my licentiate thesis, institutions have been formed with the mission of implementing the aims that have been set up by the decision-makers (Abrahamsson, Berg & Wallin, 1999). New authorities have been established and existing ones are transformed and reorganised. Examples of this, found in the documents I studied, are Falu Folk Music Centre, the Museum of Work in Norrköping, four centres for production of film and a Centre for Art in Malmö. The government has also created authorities connected to the leisure field such as the Swedish Travelling and Tourist Bureau, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health and the National Heritage Board. The National Board for Youth Affairs is one authority which has the special aim of coordinating measures directed toward young people. However, Hatos and Saveanu (2005) argue that the scope of the effectiveness of NGOs in democratization is limited by their credibility. Furthermore, they argue that it is legitimate to ask what the determinants of the credibility of NGOs are. They state trust in NGOs is rather diffuse, springing from a general attitude towards the institutional system and not from assessments of NGOs efficiency or based on direct or indirect contact or fairness. In the next section I will discuss this in relation to the tasks of the National Board for Youth Affairs and their cooperation with local councils, NGOs and other associations.

Conclusions

The summary of my licentiate thesis shows that the way of reasoning about leisure presented in the documents had changed by the end of the century. The earlier documents were occupied by suggesting concrete arrangements to create good conditions for leisure activities. In the latter documents the main task was to formulate goals and regulations and suggest ways of implementing them. The implementation was handed over to different organizations and institutions, official and voluntary as well as commercial ones. I also observed a decline in the ambition to foster the citizens toward a greater focus on individual choice, differentiation, multiculturalism and commercialization.
The Swedish government’s interest in leisure

Presently, the government acts as a strategic and uniting force with focus on setting goals, conducting follow-ups and evaluating programs. Civil servants in the governmental administration work with the implementation of politics and with the framing of political programs and the forming of policies. However, in the latest governmental documents (Lindström 2006) it might seem as if the government wants to centralize activities through creating institutions while, at the same time, it is using a model of management by objectives, results and a decentralised organisation. This can be seen through the establishment of special institutions such as leisure youth centres, or the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. Another example is governmental support for the two networks described in this research.
Implementation of youth leisure

For Swedish authorities like the government, county councils and local councils, leisure is an important link in the process of encouraging young people to become democratic, participating and active citizens. Resources have been put into the leisure sector, handled by the National Board for Youth Affairs, for different projects aimed at supporting young people’s initiatives. An interesting question is whether this contributes to the development of young people’s citizenship.

The Swedish government has chosen to establish four perspectives for decision-makers to start from when designing public activities for young people. These are resource, rights, independence and diversity. This is stated in policy documents and should be seen as advice and recommendations without being legal (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen). The resource perspective means that young people should be seen as holding unique knowledge and experience, which should be valued and utilised in public matters. Rights include young people’s right to have good living conditions, which are safe and financially stable. Independence implies that local politicians should support young people’s possibilities to live independently and autonomously. This includes counteracting stereotypical gender roles. Finally, diversity means to recognize that young people are different as individuals and to work for equal rights and possibilities for all.

In order to clarify these principles and to set their boundaries, the Swedish Parliament has defined five main areas for the Swedish youth policy. These areas are education and learning, health and vulnerability, influence and representation, work and self-support and finally culture and leisure time (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen). National youth policy is directed at all young people and aims to give young people equal opportunities and fair conditions. This means that factors such as gender, ethnicity, cultural or socioeconomic background and age, place of residence, sexual orientation or disability must not be an obstacle. The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality has the overall responsibility to coordinate governmental youth politics. In the budget proposal for 2008, 110 million Swedish crowns are reserved for youth politics (Source: Regeringen).

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs has a special task in implementing the national politics for young people, which I will describe in the next section. However, other organizations are involved too. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) represents the governmental, professional and employer-related interests of Sweden’s 290 local councils, 18 county councils and two regions (Västra Götaland and Skåne). All of them work with the implementation of policies about youths and their leisure time. The regional councils (landstingen) give active support to youth associations. SALAR and the regional councils are presented under the subtitle Regional and local councils. The two networks, KEKS and the Nacka network, which I will present later, are examples of collaboration between local councils (Source: KEKS and the Nacka nätverk). All of these organizations are examples of how the government is dependent on other actors to implement leisure politics. This is part of what is described earlier as governance.
The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, as presented earlier, is a governmental agency that works to ensure that young people have ways to influence and access to welfare. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs produces and communicates knowledge about young people’s living conditions, as well as following up the objectives set for national youth policy by the Swedish parliament and the Government. Their target groups are decision-makers, officials and interest organisations working with youth issues at national, regional and local levels. They support youth policy, work by distributing funds for development of methods for youth activities, promoting local influence and international cooperation. For example the interlocutor for the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations (LSU), which is a coordination body for almost 100 Swedish youth organizations, is supported by the National Board for Youth Affairs. LSU monitors the field of youth policy in order to assist the members with information and lobby the government, parliament and other officials (Source: National Board for Youth Affairs - LSU). It is a central actor in the development of the leisure sector with focus on young citizens (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen).

The two objectives of the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs policy are set by the Swedish government in its bill The power to decide – the right to welfare, from 2004. Firstly, young people shall have possibilities to influence the development of the society in general, as well as their own lives and their local environment. Secondly, young people shall have real access to a good material, cultural and social standard of living. They shall also be afforded beneficial conditions for good health and be protected from being subjected to crime and different forms of discrimination (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen).

In the governmental policy about young people’s lives, citizenship is a central part. Hence it has been a highly prioritized issue for the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs for many years. One of the latest initiative is the cooperation during a period of four years with six local councils to support the political influence of youths. These six local councils have acted as good examples and supported other councils and organizations in the region in helping to develop methods for local youth politics. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs declares that young people shall have real possibilities to influence and participate and to feel that their engagement, creative skills and critical thinking can be a resource in their local society. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs supports projects about young people that are interested in establishing, managing and organizing their own activities. In 2008, almost 200 projects for exchange projects, voluntary activities, local initiatives from youths and projects for youth leaders were funded. The total amount allocated was 22 million Swedish crowns. The content of the supported projects are about political influence, equality, creative work models and training in democratic methods. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs supports international cooperation in the youth area. Youth leaders are trained in how to work with international projects. Involving young people in international youth projects provides non-formal learning and may also arouse greater interest in other cultures. It can also contribute to young people’s awareness of democratic processes. International cooperation can function as a tool for achieving youth objectives. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs also initiates research projects and evaluations of the different projects, the knowledge of which is spread through different publications (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen).

Questions are raised from advocates in the field of youth studies about just who should be considered as young and who can be considered as adult. In youth research, a distinction is
Implementation of youth leisure

made between three principles in terms of understanding youths. One is to see youth as a distinct period in life, with special conditions. Another way of expressing this is to say that they are all in the same social category and meet a common definition such as the possibility to take a driving license at 18, obligation to attend compulsory school, and exemption from penalty law. A third definition, which is often used in empirical studies, is a classification of youths as persons between 15 to 25 years of age. Waara (1996), Bohlin (2003) and Ungdomsstyrelsen (2002) use the age range 13 till 30 years, when discussing politics for young people.

Finally, in The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2005) a question was raised considering whether the importance of institutions as a united force for young people and their free time and leisure, was diminishing. That question was discussed as research had shown that young people are increasing adapting post modern values, and want to be recognized as individuals, to be able to stand up for their opinions and assert themselves.

Regional and local councils

The main actors that cater for the lives of the young citizens are the local councils. The decisions made on a local level have an impact on many of the factors of importance for the situation of young people. Local councils have extensive autonomy. This means that the goals established by the Parliament are only advisory. If local councils so desire youth policy may start from the national objectives, but the way that it is executed in practise is shaped by the conditions in different local councils.

Local councils have many different kinds of motives for their specific local youth policy. They can choose to give young people influence over issues that affect their everyday lives, prevent and combat problems that young people may run into, or focus on welfare and resources for young people. Examples of the latter are work, residents and education. Youth policy is a cross-sectored area meaning that issues affecting the conditions of young people are located in many different sectors in the local council. In some local councils, objectives are based on the results of local investigations into young people’s living situations; other local councils have based their objectives on the national objectives for youth policy.

Granlund (2009) states that for a good quality development in open leisure activities, it is necessary to have clearly defined aims. In her investigation of 50 local council’s goals and aims for leisure, she furthermore states that the demands for quality assurance coincide with the size of the local councils. Balanced score cards (BSC) and key figures are mentioned as examples used by a few of the local councils included in her research. The result shows that there are many reasons why the measurement and assurance of quality are missing. One is that the leisure sectors are not forced in the same way as the school sector to declare quality reports by law.

The state, regional councils (landstinget) and local councils can give active support to youth associations. On the local level this is stated in a law (1989-977) (Source: Rättsnätet). There are two kinds of support for youth activities, from the government and from the local council. Non-profit organizations that are members of the national sports association (Source: Riksidrottsförbundet) can get governmental support for activities and facilities. The Swedish Association of Municipalities (2004) argued that the local councils’ support to associations
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

should be modelled in order to fall in line with the government’s support, and furthermore, that the government’s policy should steer the work of the local councils.

During the last years this pattern has changed, and the local councils have become aware of the steering effect that different models of support can have. Several of the local councils have started to formulate their own rules for giving out support. The Swedish Association of Municipalities (2004) found that every year local councils allocate 1, 3 billion Swedish crowns in financial support to associations working with children and youth. Apart from activity support, which depends on the participants present, support is given for leadership education and the management of different facilities. Support for separate activities for boys or girls, for immigrants and for people with functional limitations are also common. County councils and local councils give support to young people that facilitate active leisure (Source: Sveriges kommuner och landsting).

The role of the networks

I showed in my licentiate thesis that networking is an important part of modern governance. As the civil servants in the local councils are the ones who meet the users face to face and have to design the leisure activities, they must have a certain freedom to adjust to the situations and make their own judgements. As Lipsky (1980) declares, they are after all the ones working with the policy and not the politicians. To develop new intentions and methods, they have to support each other and find allies in other councils. It was in that way that the networks which I have studied, were formed. The two networks are both supported by the National Board for Youth Affairs with funds for projects about democracy and influence, such as young people’s perspectives on the European Union. It is also invited to contribute with special competence in different projects.

The network, Quality and Competence in Cooperation (KEKS) was founded in 2006 as a network for the development of quality and competence in the field of cultural and leisure activities for young people. It started when youth workers met and discussed their work. They wanted to find new ways to improve methods and quality. The network has about 25 different local councils as members, mostly located close to the city of Gothenburg in the south west of Sweden. Local council departments and other decision-makers for youth clubs can become members if they agree with KEKS’ aims and goals. These are developed together with the local councils that are members in the network. The result has been an IT platform for dialogue around different youth activities, such as health projects and cultural events such as football tournaments. KEKS declares that the motive for the network is to strengthen quality and the development of competence in youth activities.

KEKS is based on the belief that the best way to strengthen young people is to support them to be resources in their own lives. By giving them real influence and allowing them to take responsibility for their wishes, actions and activities, we believe that young people will develop a good self-esteem and solid social capacity (Source: KEKS homepage).

Other than developing common aims, they discuss methods, target groups and questions about quality. A methodology for open leisure activities has been developed, called process learning.
Implementation of youth leisure

In order to improve quality, a unique model has been developed for setting goals and measuring to what extent they have been achieved. The ambition is to meet young people’s social needs but also to get more “solid” economic figures to show the full picture of their work; strengths as well as weaknesses. One of their main activities is to arrange different training courses for youth workers. At the homepage the importance of qualified staff is put forward. They also have “sub-networks” for the development of methods and starting youth projects in different areas such as youth influence, health and gender. The network KEKS has suggested four different aims which are possible to measure. These aims are connected to citizenship and are about justice, participation, responsibility and influence.

The KEKS network has taken as its mission to address norms and values. On the homepage it is stated that the network has developed a platform with ideas aiming to elucidate norms and values as a ground for good open leisure activities. Their overall aim is that the user’s basic social needs will be fulfilled. It is stated that “… aim and method of the activities are superior to the content. The main thing is not what you are doing; it is instead about how activities are organized and the social needs that they satisfy” (Source: KEKS homepage).

The Nacka-network was created in 1999 and was formed by three local councils around Stockholm and three from the south of Sweden. The Nacka network started as a discussion forum in order to find models to describe and measure the advantages of organized open leisure activities. A task for the network has been to develop definitions and criteria for youth clubs and similar meeting places. The aim is to work to develop open leisure activities. Key figures for measurement of quality in youth clubs and meeting places have been developed. The Nacka network also works in cooperation with the National Board for Youth Affairs and gets support for different projects.

The Nacka Network has pedagogical ideas about how to get young people to participate in the leisure activities and how to get the young people to take responsibility for activities. It is written on the Nacka network’s homepage that it is a long-term, goal-oriented work, to create health and build relations on democratic grounds. In practice it has to be a permanent and safe meeting place for young people, a place for young citizens that is supposed to be free from bullying and other harassment. There is an aim expressed about fostering young people’s democratic awareness through participation. Other aims include promoting the development of a positive lifestyle among young people. The Nacka network holds that the activities should meet the needs of young people with an individualistic leisure style. Activities should also be geared to socioeconomic needs of the youths in the youth clubs’ catchments areas.

On its homepage the Nacka network defines a youth club as a safe and attractive meeting place, organized by educated staff and with a political board as principal and financier. It is stated that the local councils should be responsible for formulating aims, mission and range of activities. They should also be responsible for evaluation and the revision of quality.

The Nacka Network has measured young people’s influence and participation through a questionnaire to 285 visitors at a number of youth clubs. The result shows that young people feel that they do not have the possibility to take on responsibilities and have influence. The young visitors mean that the grownups do not let them take responsibility for activities at the youth clubs or other meeting places.

To summarize, these two networks are interested in developing the aims, methods and content of open leisure activities. The two networks have also developed measures to ensure quality
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

and to obtain feedback in the system of open leisure activities. They are both supported by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. The networks play a bridging role between different actors in the field of leisure to influence the development of the leisure sector and the implementation of national leisure policies.
Leisure activities in the local councils

Leisure activities in the local councils

In Sweden, the local councils are responsible for offering leisure activities to its citizens, which includes young people. These are however, not obligatory activities in the same way as school and healthcare are. Nevertheless, leisure activities have been seen as important means in fostering young people into responsible and democratic citizens. The local council’s main responsibility is to facilitate infrastructure and give active support to the youth associations. From a historical perspective local council’ investment for young people’s leisure time activities has expanded during the whole of the 1900s. Different sports get most of the support, though young peoples’ influence in these associations is small. Thousands of facilities for sports have been built, such as indoor public swimming pools, football grounds and ice arenas. Still, formalized club activities are seen as the corner stone in local culture-and leisure activities. The notion is that through associations, young people will be fostered formally and informally into democratic citizens.

From the 1990s, it is common for different associations as well as corporations and foundations, to manage leisure and culture facilities such as youth clubs, meeting places, activity venues, indoor public swimming pools and similar facilities. In some areas, local councils are phasing out their ownership and responsibilities for management of camping grounds, facilities for downhill running and halls for squash and badminton. By examining the statistics from 1997 onwards, one can see that about 47 % of all facilities for leisure were both owned and managed by local councils, 41 % were owned and managed by associations and 12 % were owned by local councils but managed by associations. During 1990 and 1995 effective cutbacks were made in the leisure sector by approximately 20 %. During 1995 until 2002 approximately 200 million Swedish crowns was spent on the development of youth clubs. The net cost in total for local councils for the leisure and culture sector is 2, 5 % of the total budget (Source: Sveriges kommuner och landsting).

In Sweden, it is a voluntary commitment for local councils to have a board for leisure and culture activities. Although it is voluntary, 34 % of local councils have a combined board for culture and leisure, 19 % have a board for education and leisure and 10 % have a separate leisure board. 15 % of local councils have chosen another type of organization and 11 % have chosen to handle those questions in the local government board (Svenska Kommunförbundet, 2003).

Leisure activity as prevention

By the early 1900’s attention was being paid not only to the idea of young people being seen as a disturbing factor in society but also to the idea of fostering. A child protection agency was established by the government in order to have better control over children and youths’ leisure time. The first so-called working houses (arbetsstugor) were established to keep young children from the streets and to give them adequate schooling and education. The aim was to foster them into citizens through encouraging them to learn an occupation and discipline. After the Second World War, young people once again came under focus but from a somewhat different perspective. People were upset over young people’s wild behaviour. They were dancing and listening to jazz music, which was viewed as evil.
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

The steps taken were intended to foster young people into responsible and well-behaved citizens. The folk movements’ youth sections and other actors were seen as important, and the government invested support in these associations. By tradition, the authorities have seen the activities in the associations as a way of preventing crime and idleness (Bjurström, 2000; Bjurström, 1998; Olsson, 1992). During the 1950s, local council youth clubs were established to organize the youths who were not interested in membership of associations. Young people were believed to have different preferences and those, who had an expressive leisure style, were the potential visitors to open leisure activities (Blomdahl & Claesson, 1989). This group was also in need of local councils’ youth clubs as alternative to commercial options that were not affordable for them, and to the increasing occurrence of drugs in society as reported by researchers. In this way, the importance of youth clubs increased and the need for educated leaders was identified. Due to government allowances, the educations of leisure leaders were established at some folk high schools in Sweden (See also Laxvik 2006; Ardström, 2001; Mattsson, 1986; Havström & Pettersson-Svenneke, 2008, 2007).

In the late 1980s, there were about 1 500 local council centres in Sweden most of which were run in the regime of the local council. Youth clubs were seen as local social meeting places and a complement to cafés and card rooms. The youth clubs were also supposed to be a counter force to commercial leisure services. During the 1980s the professionalization of the leisure sectors continued. Leisure activities for young people were seen as prevention and collaboration started with schools, the social services agencies and the police (Gunnarsson, 2002; Lindström, 2006).

The youth leaders who had a relevant and specific training became a forceful group managing the change of youth clubs into places where young people could develop into positive, proactive citizens, rather than it being seen as simply a homey place free of drugs. This work was reinforced by the EU proclamation of the World Youth year in 1985 (SOU, 2001). The government allocated funds to a number of projects for developing democracy at youth clubs. Havström and Pettersson-Svenneke (2008) report that different democratic projects at the youth clubs were carried out during the 1980s. Young people learned about democratic values through participating in democratic forums and by being allowed to decide about, plan and carry out activities by themselves. By means of different events for young people, for example peace festivals and cycling for peace, young people were made aware of societal matters and the possibility of influencing. During the 1980s campaigns initiated by civil servants for increased local democracy were carried out in some of the suburbs of Sweden (see Mattsson, 1986). A method called “arbetsboken” (literally meaning workbook) was used by which people could formulate their opinion and make suggestions regarding their local area (Tebelius, 1998). The youth clubs were involved and this opened up new ways of looking at the views held by young people and on their influence of the local society. Different measures were taken to provide forums where politicians and young people could meet, whereby the youths could formulate questions and demands directly to the politicians. During the 1990s, almost every local council formed one sort of youth assembly in order to have a direct channel to the young people in the local council and get to know their needs and expectations (Sörbom, 2003:8). In Sweden, national convents for youths were held during the whole decade but ceased as the participants did not formally represent anybody except themselves. The first EU youth convention was held in Brussels in 2002 (Source: European convent).
Leisure activities in the local councils

**Open leisure activities**

The main characteristic of the local council’s youth clubs (fritidsgård) and similar meeting places are that the leisure activities should be open for everyone whenever he/she wants to visit the club. When I use the term “open leisure activity” I refer to a way of running the youth clubs, which was developed during the 40ties. Jensen, the head of Linköping’s youth clubs and public yards (hemgårdar) developed a method, which he called the open line (den öppna linjen). The idea was to give the young people on the streets a place to be with free access to different activities and opportunities to have a free dialogue (Jensen, 1949/2009). This idea still prevails and youth clubs, youth houses and similar meeting places do not require a membership card and there is no registration of who is present. These meeting places are open for all young people from the ages 13-25 and they are almost free of charge. It is free for the young people to come and go and there are no demands to ‘do’ things. They can just hang around or take part of the offered activities, such as table tennis, parlour games and so forth. The visitors may start activities from their own interests, such as forming a film club or making outdoor trips. In the local councils there are also clubs for younger children below 13 years, which are called free time clubs (fritidsklubb). When I use the word youth leader (fritidsledare) I mean civil servants that work with open leisure activities at youth clubs and similar meeting places. Open leisure activities are sometimes run and organized by the local councils themselves or at other times organized by organizations and associations and run with funds from the local councils. In this dissertation, no examples have been found of private entrepreneurship for open leisure activities.

Within this environment a special pedagogy is developed, characterized by participation, dialogue and empowerment. Ardström (2001), who writes about management in open leisure activities, argues that the most qualified pedagogical mission is to work with young people at the youth clubs and similar. Havström and Pettersson-Svenneke (2007; 2008) also point out that this is a qualified pedagogical mission that needs reflection and methodological efforts from educated staff. In their investigation, they found a connection between the educational level of the staff and the positive work with democracy at the youth clubs. Laxvik (2006) declares that it is not a matter of social work but of meeting the young people on their own terms. Thorn and Wollnert’s study (2003) shows that leadership for young people is not about therapy. They state: “It is important to get away from an attitude that was predominant some decades ago. Today one works with an operation which is fostering, strengthening and focusing on what is positive” (Thorn and Wollnert, 2003, p. 53) in young individuals.

Havström and Pettersson-Svenneke (2007; 2008) further argue that developed and well-functioning democratic methods have a lot to offer the visitors at the club. Young citizens will have a chance to develop their talents and interests, strengthen their self-confidence, and find fellowship. By arranging their own leisure activities and putting their mark on them, they develop their skills and self esteem (ibid).

**New places for youths**

During the 1990s, the demands for lower costs and a reorganization of local governmental activities became a reality as a result of the Swedish economic crisis. Both the leisure and culture sector became aware of the new reality. Many traditional youth clubs were closed down or offered to be taken over by voluntary or private actors. The local councils’ premises
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

that remained were facilities such as “House of all activities” or “House of Youth” which the young people or associations took responsibility for managing (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen and Gunnarsson, 2002). The goals were to create self-administration and a mix of different groups of citizens, not just have the young people in one place. In 2002 there were more than 200 local councils in Sweden which had some kind of “House of youth”. The activities are usually organized spontaneously for the visitors and it is not always necessary to be a member to be involved or a part of the activities. In the most recent decade, young people have come into focus with regards to the Internet. The local councils have also shown ambitions to provide young people with a broad field of activities such as concerts, festivals, sports events and other events. These are not free however; the young people have to pay on these occasions. Still, the local councils are striving to meet the needs of cost free meeting places for youths in order to provide an alternative to the increasing commercialization of society.
Theoretical considerations

The aim with this thesis is to investigate leisure from the point of view of citizenship for young people. The theoretical discussions concerning citizenship mostly concern adults as citizens although the concept has been broadened during the last decades; for example with the implementation of the children’s convention, laws for equality and laws against discrimination. The concept of citizenship is relevant to young people. The perspective on citizenship will be useful in understanding the role of leisure, which young people are offered in the local society. Regardless of their legal, social or residential status, young people do not live in isolation. They are part of a community, to which they are obliged to adjust as well as expecting certain rights. In terms of the youths, it is only when the idea of educating young people to act democratically, for example to vote, that the concept of citizenship has been actualized. However, open leisure activities and education for citizenship can have much in common. At the youth clubs there are a lot of occasions when citizenship can be taught informally. In open leisure activities, young people meet with both friends and adult leaders, which open the possibilities of discussing values and attitudes, such as citizen’s duties and responsibilities, moral and ethic principals, and law and justice. Besides, in planning and running the youth club young people can also practice procedures of formal democracy.

In this chapter I will firstly present the different perspective found in my licentiate thesis about citizenship. Subsequently, I will discuss how the meaning of the concept of citizenship has changed in modern times and how the theorists look upon the importance and specifically of the concept. I then continue by relating the concept of citizenship to the situation of young people and their leisure activities. Equally, a global perspective of citizenship will be discussed. The consequences of young citizens’ values are discussed from the notion of changing and floating values among young peoples. In addition young people’s interests and legal rights to have political influence will be discussed. Finally, questions of citizenship and connections to new technology and ideas of citizen’s participation are presented. The final section of the theoretical chapter discusses the question and outcomes of citizen education.

Citizenship

A citizen may be described as a member of a political community or a state, who has certain legal, social and moral rights, duties and responsibilities. Citizenship is a political concept with a variety of rights and responsibilities in a given political community. These rights and responsibilities change over time as the result of social struggle, economic change and shifts in governing ideology. Citizens are persons living in a country and either born in the country by native parents or by parents who have achieved citizenship in the country. Citizenship has both a formal and informal meaning. Formal citizenship means the legal obligations and rights which a person has, in terms of being a citizen in a certain country. This varies depending on the country and often includes such tasks as paying taxes, obeying the laws and participating in the political life at least by voting. Informally, there is a philosophy that citizens should work towards the betterment of the society through economic participation, volunteer work and other efforts to improve life for all citizens. Though young people can be included in the informal part, they are seldom looked upon as real citizens. Rather they are considered citizens-to-be, in need of education to be able to fulfil their role as citizens.
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In the documents that I studied in my licentiate thesis, some examples can serve as an illustration of how the government looks on citizenship in relation to leisure (Lindström, 2006). In SOU 1998:76, for example, the main reason for the activities mentioned in the text are said to be their role in fostering democracy. Their aim is to promote democratic activities and to strengthen the single citizen to be able to take part in democratic processes. Other documents show that sports as our greatest folk movement are looked upon as a foundation stone with the main goal of fostering democratic citizens and to strive for social integration. Already in the 1990s, special aims were established for children and youths from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds, that have limited possibilities to experience Swedish wildlife and outdoor environments (Regeringens Proposition, 1998/99:107, see also SOU, 1996:3). In addition, the task of the public sector to contribute to the citizens’ possibility to be culturally active is also mentioned in the document. Cultural politics were seen as having a particularly important role in creating an alternative to commercialized culture for children and youths. The public sectors’ tasks and responsibility to contribute to the citizens’ real possibilities to be culturally active were discussed, and arrangements to improve the situation in areas of dance, theatre, music, film, pictorial art, architecture and design were suggested. Furthermore, it was also pointed out that the state, together with local councils, cultural institutions, folk movements and associations has the responsibility of preserving the historical heritage (SOU, 1996:3; Regeringens Proposition, 1996/97:3; Regeringens Proposition, 1974:28). Through Sweden’s membership in the EU, cultural politics became an issue, since cultural dimensions should be implemented in all the Unions’ working areas, both in Sweden and among the other members of the Union. Another task for cultural politics put forward in the investigations was that of internationalisation. The goals stated encourage all citizens of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to have contact with each other and express a desire to resist xenophobia and racism (SOU, 1996:3).

It is further stated that the overall aim for the government is to support and strengthen non-profit organizations and member governed activities for children and youths. This should include all citizens, regardless of gender, social or ethnic background or physical or psychological circumstances (SOU, 1998:76).

From the 1960s onwards, a moral responsibility was placed primarily on organisations in athletics and sports/games. In the documents, I can clearly see that athletics, sports and games were supposed to foster citizens. Some additional values and attitudes are placed on organisations in the field of games, sports and athletics, such as clean games and drug-free activities. It was also mentioned in the documents that sports organisations could play a positive role toward integration in society (SOU, 1998:76).

The investigators write that the government is supposed to support a free and independent sports movement that maintains good ethics and gives equal opportunities to all regardless of gender, ethnicity or class. The movements should also work actively with integration and the fostering of democratic values (Regeringens Proposition, 1998/99:107).

The authors of the investigation SOU 1969:29 point out fundamental areas, which are of special interest and should be prioritized in order to promote democracy, such as youths’ leisure activities, benefits to youth organizations and leadership education. Neglected groups among citizens such as children, the disabled and institutionalized citizens, immigrants and other ethnic groups and citizens from sparsely populated areas received special attention by the investigators. Activities should be prioritized and based on participants’ experiences and
Theoretical considerations

wishes; a responsibility to meet these needs lies with institutions, organizations and associations.

The citizens’ wellbeing is in focus in many documents. For example, in the government’s Proposition 2002/03:35 there is an overall concern about people’s health. Fourteen political areas are pointed out as being responsible for people’s health. It is stated that the aim is “... to create social conditions for good health on equal terms for all citizens” (Regeringens Proposition, 2002/03:35, p. 1). Leisure is seen as one of the factors which create satisfaction in life. This includes the sports movement. A motivation in supporting sport is the supposed importance of physical activity in health promotion; sport is also seen as an appropriate leisure activity, not at least for the youths (SOU, 1969:29). However, in this thesis I will not put a special focus on sport.

The notion of citizenship

Everything written today about citizenship starts with the theories of Marshall in the 1950s. He discussed citizenship in his essay Citizenship and social class (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992). The Marshall paradigm of citizenship was intended to bridge Liberalism and Marxism. In his writings he took a historical approach by focusing on the development of citizenship from ancient times. According to Marshall, three different kinds of rights, civil, political and social, are included in citizenship. He argues that these different rights were achieved in a particular order. Firstly, the citizen was given civic rights, such as freedom of speech, thought and faith, individual freedom the right to own property and the right to justice. Secondly, political rights, including the right to vote and to stand for political office, followed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Finally, the welfare state guaranteed basic social and economic rights. Each of these three kinds of rights corresponds to a particular set of institutions; that is a court system that protects civil rights, political rights corresponding to institutions of local government and parliament, and social rights associated with the welfare state (Biesta & Lawy, 2006). The state looks upon its citizens as a collective group with certain common values to defend. Those are values such as equality, solidarity and the national culture and its values (Rothstein, 1998).

From the beginning a citizen was associated with a man carrying a gun, being a land owner and being his own boss. Women did not have the status of citizens. Their obligations were to secure the perpetuation of the state through giving birth, protected by a family. The rights they had were given through their husbands and this was the case even for the young. Women’s struggle for citizenship started with claiming social and economic rights. Only much later they did achieve political rights and finally civic rights.

Yuval-Davis (1997) criticises Marshall because social division and social position such as gender, ethnicity, and class and so forth have not been problematized in his work. She stresses that these aspects are crucial to the construction of citizenship as well as individuality. Furthermore she argues that Marshall’s definition of citizenship as membership of a community rather than of the state is too vague. She means that his notion of citizenship is too narrow because of people’s membership in different communities. In different communities citizens can have different possibilities and positions depending on for example gender or ethnicity. “The community” should not be looked upon as a given natural unit to which one can either belong or not belong. Some citizens may not share the hegemonic value systems in
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sexual, religious and other matters, which she calls the moral community. The result will be
alienation, she argues, and states that different social attributes construct the people’s specific
position within, and across, the communities into certain social categories. Other factors such
as class position, people coming from the city or from a village, people’s ability, stage in the
life cycle would also determine people’s citizenship (ibid).

She further states that cooperatives and communities are ideological and material
constructions whose boundaries, structures and norms are a result of a constant process of
struggle and negotiation and of general social development. This means that citizens are
constructed as strangers to each other rather than as members of the community. “/ ... they
share a complex set of assumptions and expectations about each other which, when not
fulfilled, can be enforceable by the state” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 70). Main areas of struggle
concerning citizenship are related to ethnic, class and gender division and are focused on
inclusion and exclusion. There can be sub-collectives which experience informal and formal
discrimination as for example by skin colour, origin, sexual orientation, age or of functional
limitations.

To illustrate this, she uses a metaphor of the theatre of citizenship taking place on a daily
basis meaning that people’s membership in communities and politics is dynamic and multiple
(Yuval-Davis, 2002). She argues that if citizenship is defined as full membership in a
community, then usually people are members in more than one community, sub-, supra- and
cross-states. Furthermore she argues that any comparative theory of citizenship must include
an examination of the individual autonomy allowed to citizens such as ethnicity, gender or
stage in the life cycle and so on. Therefore she argues that a citizenship must be a multi-
layered construction. My interpretation of Yuval-Davis’s work is that a universal content of
the conception of citizenship is impossible to find because being a citizen means different
things on an individual level and is constantly changing.

Together with Pnina Werbner, Yuval-Davis (1999) argues that modern citizenship is inserted
into a social field of competing, heterogeneous and partially overlapping discourses. They
argue that democratic citizenship overtly stresses rationality, individuality and the rule of law.
Furthermore, they argue that central credos of democratic citizenship such as freedom,
autonomy and the right to be different are pitched against the regulation forces of modernity,
the state and subverted by the discourses of traditions, culture, nationalism, religiosity and the
family (ibid).

Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) define citizenship as a more total relationship than Marshall
does. They think that citizenship is inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural
assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging. They argue that this is much
more than a formal relationship between an individual and the state as presented by earlier
liberal and political science literature. However my interpretation is that they also argue for
the existence of ground rules such as laws and conventions and for the legitimacy of publicly
articulated differences such as gender, race, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, religion, class and
economic interest.

For Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) citizenship is a social and political construction that
defines the limits of state power and where a civil society or the private sphere of free
individuals begins. They are hopeful about the future of the concept and mean that “/ …
discourses of citizenship constitute horizons of possibility” (Werbner and Yuval-Davis, 1999,
p. 3). They state that national and transnational citizenships constitute two coexisting and
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interrelated modalities of citizenship. In that sense they argue, the work of citizenship becomes a work for the future, for generations yet to be born.

Turner (1993) also asks whether there is a single version of citizenship or if there could be many diverse and different formulations of citizenship according to different social and cultural traditions. Bennet (2003) states the common definition of citizenship is based on a conventional model of a “Dutiful Citizen” (DC), while today we have to focus on the “Self-Actualizing Citizen” (AC). Characteristic for a DC-citizen is that voting is the core democratic act. The citizen’s obligations are to participate in government-initiated activities, keep informed about actual political issues by following mass media, join civil organizations and/or express interest through parties, Bennet (2003) argues. For an AC-citizen, he continues, voting is less important than other activities such as consuming, leisure activities or work in voluntary associations. She/he has a mistrust of the media, politicians are looked upon with suspicion, and she/he has a high sense of individual purpose. A self-actualizing citizen (AC) sees her/his political activities and commitments in highly personal terms that contribute more to enhancing the quality of personal life, social recognition, self esteem, friendship and relations, than to understanding, support, and being involved in government. Finally, an AC-citizen favours loose networks of community action often established through friendships or maintained by interactive information technology (ibid).

The notion of the Self-Actualizing Citizen has been a focus of debates and policy-making in the last decades. Here formal rights coincide with the growing crisis of the welfare state, which has resulted in some of the social rights that have been taken for granted now being threatened. This is seen in the leisure sector in the closing of municipal youth clubs, fewer activities for disabled young and increased costs for participating in leisure activities (Sörbom, 2003:8; Granlund, 2009).

To describe the relationships between individuals and communities simply in terms of formal and abstract rights and ignore the development of emotional resources does not help us to understand citizenship today (Plummer, 2003). Harris, Wyn & Younes (2007) have found that songs, dances and gigs often are used as explicit tools for public articulation of political concerns such as equality and human rights. Different cultural events have also been analysed as places where young people participate in creating politics as well as consuming leisure activities.

Plummer (2003) argues that knowledge from the sociology of emotion and psychoanalysis can help to stretch citizenship theory beyond its traditional focus on formal rights. He requires us to carefully consider more intimate kinds of resources and types of relationships entailed in active citizenship. Plummer’s lists of intimacy cover factors such as emotional life, sexuality, relations, body, and family. He suggests the use of the concept “intimate citizenship”, through which it is possible to bridge the personal and the political. Intimate citizenship envisages that the social bonds between individuals and communities need to be strengthened in modern society. Hence, it is impossible to understand citizenship simply in terms of formal and abstract rights and ignore emotional qualities (ibid).

Earlier Putnam (1996; 2000), in his studies from Italy, had pointed to the importance of emotional bonds between community members as a way of keeping the community vital. He found that the success of democratic reforms in Italy was strongly related to the presence of social capital among citizens. Social engagement, equality, solidarity, trust and tolerance and strong associations became a successful hotbed for democratic reforms. According to Putnam
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(1996) the most frequent membership associations were the leisure ones such as sports, recreational and cultural groups. In these public spheres an active debate between citizens took place and paved the way for a democratic development of the society.

Hemingway (1999) is interested in the role leisure plays, or alternatively might play, in the development of democratic citizenship. He implies that as the move from representative to participatory forms of democracy, the demands on leisure increase accordingly. Further, he states that the citizenship required by a representative democracy can be labelled “weak citizenship” and citizenship required by a participatory democracy a “strong citizenship”. Different configurations of form, content and distribution of leisure can result in either strong or weak democratic citizenship (see the figure below). This may have direct and indirect political implications; direct implications because it is about distribution of resources and of power in a given society and how these factors are mutually reinforcing each other. Indirect implications are seen through the role of leisure in creating social capital. “The forms, contents, and distribution of leisure activities represent a major potential factor in the development of democratic social capital and thus in the stability of democratic society” he states (Hemingway, 1999, p. 157).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participatory democracy</th>
<th>Representative democracy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High citizen involvement</td>
<td>Low citizen involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual focused</td>
<td>Group focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process orientation</td>
<td>Outcome orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental model</td>
<td>Market model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater demand on leisure</td>
<td>Lesser demand on leisure</td>
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Figure 2. Characteristics of a democracy leading to weak or strong citizenship. Source: Hemingway (1999).

Hemingway (1999) argues that if leisure is to contribute to the formation of a social capital necessary for strong citizenship, it must include the attributes of representative democracy. Attributes such as participation, open communication, autonomy, trust, cooperation and development are necessary for a well functioning participatory democracy. This can be developed in the leisure sector. He means that the forms, content, and distribution of leisure activities represent a major potential factor in the development of democratic social capital and thus in the stability of democratic society. Autonomous forms of social activity such as youth clubs in which individuals are able to enhance existing capacities and develop new capacities built on democratic norms can be a breeding ground for a participatory democracy. Hemingway further discusses whether commercially provided leisure activities may create democratic social capital. He finds it important to know more about participation in public and commercial leisure to be able to compare their effect on democratic social capital formation (ibid).
Global challenges and citizenship

In the last decades of the twentieth century, modernization and globalization have challenged the states as the sole source of authority of citizenship and democracy. That means that institutions are seen to be less and less effective at drawing the concerns of individuals into the public sphere (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2007).

Although there are some young people that show engagement in different aspects of the political process many experience a sense of alienation from politics. Young people no longer believe that politicians have the capacity to solve issues that impact upon their lives, and global warming is presented as an example. This is happening at the same time as social change has resulted in the fragmentation of older collective identities and resulted in an increased interest in individual choice and action. These processes have replaced collective concerns with private, personal and individual ones where democratic participation is to vote on television reality and game shows.

Beauregard and Bounds (2000) state that the nation state is no longer as dominant as it once was and this is dependent on two forces, globalization and cultural diversity. As a response to this, they suggest an alternative concept “cosmopolitan citizenship” in recognition of the multiplicity of the world. Their argument for using cosmopolitan citizenship is their concern for vulnerable groups and oppressed communities. A cosmopolitan approach places obligations on citizens above the obligations to their own nation. Cosmopolitan citizenship is the idea of a varied and multi-cultural identity in relation to other signifiers such as ethnicity, class etc (ibid).

A similar idea is put forward by Isin (2000). He states that globalization has intensified the role of the city in the Western democracies and describes cities, particularly global cities, as political spaces where the concentration of different groups are intertwined with the articulation of various claims of citizenship rights. If globalization is seen both as a process of increased linking of places and a dominant strategy, two different effects are seen on citizenship, he explains. Firstly, there has been a rise in the global flow of capital, images, ideas, labour, crime and culture, which has been enhanced by the Internet. Regimes of governance like the World Bank and the IMF mean that the dominance of global agents was accompanied by the decline in the sovereignty of the nation states. The answer to this development has been city-regions like Bombay, Singapore, London and New York. In the public realm of these cities a form of urban citizenship is seen. These global city regions generate spaces for new identities and projects and generate new citizenship rights and obligations. This has especially affected the life of young people.

Isin (2000) further claims that these cities generate spaces for new identities and projects of rights and obligations. Firstly, he states, different groups and their identities are intertwined with the articulation of various claims to citizenships rights on the basis of identities such as gender, ethnicity, ecology and sexuality. Secondly, differences have become a dominant strategy with an effect on citizenship in two different ways. On the one hand, various groups that were marginalized and excluded from modern citizenship have been able to seek recognition; the Sámi in Sweden being an example. On the other hand, groups based on ethnic, ecological and sexual identities have articulated claims for citizenship to include group-differentiated rights, e.g. Muslims, and gay people. These various claims have strained the boundaries of citizenship and put group against group in the search for identity and recognition e.g. rules against wearing “burka” in schools. The risk is, as Kymlica (1998)
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states that this will justify every ethnic group adopting their own legal traditions even when these traditions are in conflict with fundamental human rights or principles of a constitutional kind in their host country. Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) also state that membership in one community can collectively have crucial effects on citizenship in others.

Rose (2000) argues that the cities are like a packed zone of enjoyment, managed by an alliance of urban planners, entrepreneurs, local politicians and governmental agencies. In the city inhabitants can promote their own micro-cultures of bohemian, gay or alternative lifestyles. This can be seen in the bigger citizens in Sweden too, though we do not have city regions of the same size as e.g. London.

Faulks argues (2006) that in contrast to this discussion a concept of multiple citizenships can be used, which seeks to move beyond the traditional association of citizenship. Multiple citizenship is suggested when rights and responsibilities have to reach across a range of political institutions ranging from the local level to the global. He claims that to fulfil the statement that all human beings are equal, a citizenship must be internationalist and multi-layered in its obligations (ibid).

This is of special concern for the European Union. For example, Föllesdal (2007) asks what kind of equality European citizenship requires. He talks about three philosophical issues for the union. The first issue is the requirements of a multiple democratic citizenship beyond the nation state, the second is how to respect diversity while securing equality and inculcating commitments to justice and norms of citizenship. The final issue concerns the multiple reasons for equality of various kinds among political equals living in a Union as compared to living in unitary states, which means that European citizens must have co-existing loyalties, one for the European Union and one for the member state. He argues that citizens must be socialised to certain norms through promoting trust and trustworthiness. These include respect for others, respect for democratic decision-making, and tolerance in argumentation. A shared knowledge base should be taught in school by avoiding religious or philosophic premises as far as possible. Citizens should have two political loyalties, one towards their fellow Europeans and one toward their own member state. This discussion indicates that citizenship should be defined as a broad societal concept less resting on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities.

In considering the society to come, Arnot (2006) questions what sort of citizen will be needed in the future and how youths should best be prepared for the social changes that will occur. “Youth cultural research have found that young people today employ the language of individualizing, the concept of freedom and choice, to justify their life styles and decisions” (Arnot, 2006, p. 69). In the same way, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) describe what they call “Freedoms Children”. By that they mean children who have been brought up, unlike their parents, to become choosers, or consumers of what life has to offer. This new culture is described as a self-culture and it is tightly connected to leisure. “Central to this self-culture is the process of individual reflexivity in which individuals come to see themselves as the centre of their own life-world” (Arnot, 2006, p. 70). For young people it is important to belong to certain groups, representing a lifestyle rather than shared values and a common ideology. Participating in collective actions are spontaneous and short lasting rather than a result of long time engagement (Tebelius & Ericsson, 2001). The implications of this for young people’s citizenship will be addressed in the next section.
Theoretical considerations

Citizenship for young people

With the extension of the concept of citizenship to a cosmopolitan or a multiple one, it is of interest to look at the consequences of this for young people as citizens in our society. Young people make their citizenship different from that of most adults since they are dependent on adults to be able to claim and exercise their citizenship (Petersson, Hermansson, Micheletti, Teorell and Westholm, 1998). The idea of a citizenship is built on people’s equal value. All citizens should have several common rights and also some obligations towards the society and other citizens. However, young people are not considered to be of the same full value as adults. They are always under the authority of someone such as parents, teachers and leisure leaders. Petersson et al. (1998) argue that youth are a social construction and at a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. Citizenship for young people is a special category with different civil rights and obligations depending on age, such as protection from physical violence, compulsory school attendance to the age of 16, and the possibilities of having a job. At the age of 18 young people get the right to vote, take their driving licence and they can get married. Children and youths also have the right to have influence in their local councils. Some of these rights and obligations are regulated in laws and conventions such as the Children’s convention.

Helve (2001) has investigated the value structure among young people in Europe in order to find out their ideological preferences. The ages she investigated ranged from 16 to 19. Her study showed that although different value structures can be found among young people only a few clearly belonged to just one category. The values the youths preferred were in accordance with the situation in which they found themselves. This means that the same young person may choose statements of an individualist in some situations and of a humanist in others. Helve, therefore, claims that it is worth asking what type of citizenship will suit young people with non-fixed values and a variety of sub-cultures (ibid).

Jones and Wallace (1992) ask how, and between whom, citizenship is negotiated in the relationship between young people and their families. The same question is asked within the young people’s relations with public institutions of the labour market and the welfare state. They argue that movement from the private word of childhood dependence in the family to adult citizenship in the public word of labour markets, housing markets and political and civil institutions can lead to conflicting pressures from the family and the state. There are young people seeking their independence who are willing to accept the responsibilities of adult citizenship but often unable to gain access to welfare benefits associated with citizenship rights (ibid).

Political interest and legal rights

In all the Western World, the participation of youths in formal democracy is declining (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2007). Young people do not see the connection between political work and democratic participation in everyday life. Even if young people hold political views, they have little ability to influence or to change political decisions. Lack of trust in political leaders can also be seen (Tebelius & Ericsson, 2001). However, it has nevertheless been found that young people do have political views and do participate in alternative political actions (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2007; Print, 2007; Osler & Starkey, 2006; Bennett, 2003).
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Bennett (2003) talks of young people of today as being the “Millennial generation”. Research shows that of those who were around 20 years old at the turn of the century in Britain more than 70 percent believed that voting did not make any difference. Subsequent research showed that 40 percent of 18-24 years old in Britain were not even registered to vote in comparison to the general population where just 8 percent are not registered. A media myth talks about more young people voting in the reality TV show “Big Brother” than in the 2001 general election in Britain (ibid).

Smith, Lister, Middleton and Cox (2005) even argue that this lack of citizenship among young people requires intervention in order to develop their citizenship. Even if young people hold political views, they do not have access to formalised channels such as voting. Neither do they have the ability to influence or to change political decisions (see also Tebelius & Ericsson, 2001). Rather than seeing young citizenship as something starting with adulthood, Smith et al. (2005) claim, “… the fluidity of young people’s self-identity suggests that the transition to citizenship is negotiated throughout the life-course” (Smith et al., 2005, p. 426). Their conclusion calls for a conceptually comprehensive view of citizenships, through which young people’s status as “real citizens” can be better understood. A way to find that is through a greater recognition and support of what young people already do as citizens.

Investigations in Sweden and abroad have shown that young people are concerned about society and want to have an influence on questions that are important to them (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2007; 2000; Sörbom, 2000; 2004; Harris, Wyn and Younes 2007). However, youths are turning away from conventional party politics and instead show involvement in networking, activism, and political consumerism e.g. boycotting certain goods (Tebelius & Ericsson, 2001). Other examples of young people’s civic engagement are autonomous channels such as youth-run media projects, internet-based organizations and alternative public spaces such as clubs, raves, and hip hop gigs (Harris et al., 2007). Music and dance are activities in which young people act politically as well as helping to form leisure communities together with peers (ibid).

Benedicto and Moran (2007) argue that young people become citizens when they make use of their rights to participate in collective decision making. They have found that the identity of European youth is developed by involvement in concrete experiences and practices in the public sphere. One example of this is elections carried out in Swedish upper secondary schools at the same time as the national elections. The aim with these school elections is to engage and inspire young people to influence matters that are of importance to them. Another aim is to make them interested in political questions in the local council and get information about what the different political parties have to offer.

Another example of ways to include young people in the political sphere was the suggestion to allow young people the right to vote at the age of 16 in Swedish local council elections (Source: Ungdomsstyrelsen). The motive was to strengthen the participation of young people in the political life. This reform was not realized in Sweden, but in Germany the voting age was reduced in 1996 in local council elections. The result showed that 16-17 years old people participated more in the elections than people at the age of 18-24. Hence, a lower voting age seems to contribute to an increased participation in elections. In Sweden the local councils have formed different youth assemblies instead, as a way of making young people influence the steering of the local council (ibid).
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Youth councils or youth assemblies are relatively new phenomena in Sweden, the first local youth councils started in the late 1980s. These were inspired by the EU’s world youth year 1985 which had its focus on the three themes of participation, development and peace. In Sweden the focus was primarily on participation. Youth councils were looked upon as one among many possible ways to reduce the gap between authorities and young citizens (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2003:5). The first youth councils were established mostly in local councils with an increasing population. Involvement of the young and the possibilities of making one’s voice heard were supposed to cause young people to want to stay in their local councils or to return after education in other places. Other local councils that established youth assemblies early were those which had a strong leisure sector and had earlier given these assemblies a central function in local council politics. Often these were aimed at giving young people influence on activities at the youth clubs and in questions about implementation of the children’s convention and its intentions. The initiatives to form youth councils were often taken by local politicians or civil servants and they were given economical support by the local council. Youth councils may work as a consultative body in local councils’ politics but they can also have their own issues on the agenda. The engaged youths are often between the ages of 13 to 25 years and many of them are students at a theoretical college program (gymnasiets teoretiska program). Those who chose to participate did so from a personal interest or through contact with civil servants, with the risk that the youth councils being a “friends club”. It is frequently claimed that youth councils do not represent the young citizens in a local council and that they should not be seen as a part of the Swedish representative democracy (Sörbom, 2000). Youth councils can instead, in many ways, contribute to some young people’s influence and improve the possibilities of participating but they are not a solution to what is known as young citizens’ lack of involvement (SOU, 2001:48). According to Sörbom (2003), youth councils and other youth forums open a way for the political world to meet the youths without the necessity of political membership. The members of the youth councils get access to information about the political agenda in the local councils. They are asked about their opinions in general matters and have possibilities to decide about questions concerning themselves. Politicians look upon these forums as a way to develop local politics. They also see youth councils as a citizen’s right for young people (ibid).

Similar ideas of engaging young people in democratic activities have been developed in educational projects. In a special program in the UK, young people were given the opportunity to do something about issues that concerned them at the same time as they learned and practiced democratic skills. Young people were asked to reflect on, recognize and review their citizenship learning and to decide on, and take part in, follow-up actions. This meant that the young people were given a voice and became involved in the local community. Experiences from this program show that it is most effective when young people are creative e.g. in making music, playing theatre and arranging events or outdoor activities (Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong learning, 2007). Similar projects can be seen in some Swedish local council (Tebelius & Ericsson, 1995b). Luleå local council for example budgets money for projects arranged by the youths for the youths such as live music or street dance performances, snowboard competitions and other open house activities (Source: Luleå kommun).

The conclusions from the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong learning are that to enhance the feeling of citizenship among young people the program should be engaging, stimulating and fun. It should, also, be owned and led by the young themselves. However, Sülke (2007) points out that it is difficult to strengthen opportunities for citizenship on a local level for all young people due to different social, ethnic and economic conditions.
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Opportunities for citizenship education depend on educational background and the social context that young people live in.

Generations of recreation leaders have been working successfully with a more inclusive and democratic approach over a long period of time. On the other hand researchers have found that open leisure activities can be counterproductive in terms of helping young people turn away from drugs and other social behaviour. Results show that there is a connection between visitors in open leisure activities and their participation in crime (Koutakis, 2008). As Koutakis (2008) points out; one must remember that this is a relatively small group if counted in percent. Nevertheless, it is not less important that politicians have clear ambitions expressed in their aims for the sector. The aims of the politicians must be clear regarding whose needs and expectations that leisure, or in this particular case open leisure activities, are meeting.

Citizenship and new technology

Investigations by Harris et al. (2007) have shown that new public spaces for youths and new forms of connection to society are created by technologies such as the Internet and cellular phones. These devices give the young people new ways to both express themselves and keep in contact with friends. Digital communication technologies allow young people to blur the difference between consumption and production and to appropriate new cultural symbols, which have relevance to their lives. In a survey of the civic and political health of the nation in the United States, the American “Millennials” are termed the “DoNets”. They are called “DoNets” because of their strong self identification as a generation as well as their preferences for communication through various digital interactive media. This is something that Bennett (2003) argues would be an important factor to have in mind in civic education initiatives. While these young people are turning away from conventional politics they are instead showing a high degree of involvement in activism, protest activities and political consumerism.

Mossberger, Tolberg and Stansbury (2003) state that new communication forms like chat rooms, e-mails and listservs represent new modes of information exchange and opinion mobilization. There are new opportunities for shared political information and communication on the net. Other scholars (see e.g. Norris, 2001; Hague and Loader, 1999; Grossman, 1995) suggest that the Internet may function as a deliberative public forum, and is something which will strengthen democracy. The fear is, however, that information technology will promote further inequality in democratic participation and widen the gap between those who participate and those who do not (see e.g. Putnam, 2000; Alvarez and Nagler, 2002; Wilhelm, 2000; Margolis and Resnick 2000). On the other hand, young people as groups seem to acknowledge digital democracy (Mossberger et al., 2003). The Internet can be a site for construction of new forms of connection to society and the development of citizenship.

As I mentioned earlier, in many industrialized nations the lack of civic participation of the younger generations has been looked upon as a nuisance. A constant decline in the number of youths who vote can also be seen. What has been increasing instead among youths is social networking. Gallagher and Hafner (2008) state that by using modern technology it would be possible to make citizens aware of governmental activities by bringing them into the decision-making process and also bring the government closer to the people. Gallagher and Hafner
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further state that since such a large amount of the youths’ time is invested in online social
networking, they might be more likely to exercise their political authority if they got the
opportunity to vote online. This can be called e-democracy, which is a relatively new concept
that involves using technologies such as the Internet and cellular phones to bring the
government closer to the people. The word originates from the combination of “electronic”
and “democracy” (Wikipedia). The Internet, probably, plays the largest role in an e-
democracy and is different from other communication tools that have been used by
governments in the past. One of the things that e-democracy can evolve into is a direct
democracy. However Gallagher and Hafner mean that there are many different ways and
many different aspects of how e-democracy can be used (ibid).

The Internet is one of the first medium that allows many people to communicate with many
others asynchronously. Through blogs, web casts, forums and chat rooms people can share
their opinions and information. The use of cellular phones and the Internet enables an
authority to reach every single person in an industrialized nation. As an example, US
President Barack Obama used the Internet when campaigning. That is a capability which
governments have not had before.

Cellular phones are common in the industrialized world; almost every single person has at
least one cellular phone. Gallagher and Hafner (2008) argue that with such a high percentage
of the population having access to cellular phones it makes sense to use this equipment to
allow people to vote. However, among governments it has so far not been accepted as a
potential way to vote. Nevertheless plenty of organizations have benefited from the wide
availability of cell phones. One example is American Idol in US, which uses cell phones for
voting. Some countries have started to use e-voting legally. In Australia there is a website
designed to allow citizens to vote on every bill that appears before the senate. An advantage
with electronic voting is the possibility of designing more accessible ways of voting for
handicapped people. A problem for e-voting can be that low income families might not have
cellular phones or computers (ibid).

In Scotland, Macintosh and Whyte (2002) have developed an electronic elections system
called e-voter and a web-based e-democracy toolkit in cooperation with the Scottish
government and the Highland Council. Their ambition has been to develop and present a
system that young people can find interesting, convenient and easy to use. At the same time
they want to provide an opportunity for young people to develop their Information and
communication technologies (ICT) skills. The result from the project was the development of
an electronic consultation system. Young people, who had access to the Internet, could give
their opinion on a range of topics. They could also vote on the key issues they thought were
the most important facing young people in Scotland. The web site could be accessed from
home, school, cybercafé or community centre. Measures showed that young people were
comfortable with the mode of communication and males and females participated equally.
Their conclusion was that e-voting generally is a good way to increase young people’s
participation in the democratic decision-making process (ibid). Evidently Wilhelm’s words
hold true if I add e-voting. He stated that “Through new venues, people can engage in many
sorts of political activities, such as joining interest groups, voting in elections, or participating
in political forums” (Wilhelm, 2000, p. 86).

Drawing on research from Willis (1990), Laermans (1993), Micheletti (2000) and De
Léseleuc (2002), Vinken (2005) states that culturally, today’s society provides space for more
autonomous construction of meanings and builds on individuals who function within multiple
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cultures. He means that the Internet is a constitutive force as it adds to the creation of multiple identities and the symbolization of fluid selves in a setting where no culture has central control. He argues that the main focus of civic socialization could be put on the leisure and consumption sector. Some smaller qualitative studies have suggested that shared consumer interests, shared fashion and shared musical taste create strong sense of affinity and are ultimate factors of socialization for the young ones instead of for instance involvement in traditional political or ideological interest groups (ibid). Consumer and shopping activities can have the same result as the use of Internet. The younger generation is found to create new forms of solidarity and community life and act for common benefit through e.g. buying ecological products (Tebelius, 2004). Through these consumer channels and similar cultural activities people are building trust.

The idea of citizenship education

In discussions about citizen education the school is usually raised as an important factor. Education for democratic citizenship became a common goal of education policies in Europe in the late 1990s. Both the Council of Europe and the European Commission have developed concepts for European citizenship education through their policies and programmes (Süllke, 2007). Harris et al. (2007) state that schools are the places were young people can learn about democracy. However, according to Biesta and Lawy (2006) there are some problems with the idea of citizenship education. Firstly, it is a problem that it is aimed at individual young people. Secondly, there is a problem concerning the assumption that citizenship can be understood as the outcome of an educational trajectory. Thirdly, they argue that there is no guarantee that the outcome of what young people learn is identical to what is being taught. They mean that the problem of citizenship education is not about young people as individuals but about young people in a context. Therefore citizenship education should focus on the social, economic, cultural and political contexts in which the young people live. They argue that a shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy has implications for policy makers and politicians. If policy makers and politicians are concerned about young people’s democratic citizenship they have to pay attention to, and invest in, the actual conditions under which young people live as citizens. Consequently, Biesta argues that any attempt to improve young people’s citizenship should start with the improvement of the democratic quality of the communities and practices that make up people’s lives (Biesta, Lawy & Kelly, 2009).

Biesta et al. (2009) further state that young people learn at least as much about democracy and citizenship through their participation in the range of different practices, as they learn from officially prescribed and formally taught matters. They further state that the teaching of citizenship needs to be supplemented with a more thoroughgoing understanding of the ways in which young people actually learn in the communities and practices that make up their everyday lives.

Steel and Taylor (2005) ask whether western notions of democratic citizenship can accommodate the religious and ethnic forms of government that have arisen against “the West” and whether these notions can adequately protect universal human rights while embracing cultural differences. They have six arguments relating to that question. Firstly, that citizenship in contemporary developed societies is a key element of a democratic policy; secondly, that citizenship is a highly generalised term; thirdly, that the identification of citizenship with the nation state is increasingly anachronistic and exclusory; fourthly they
argue that all perspectives on citizenship are culturally relative; fifthly, that there are certain inherent conflicts of perception over citizenship where certain issues and moral positions have to be asserted such as the rights and social roles of women, the treatment of all ethnic and religious groups, freedom of expression for the marginalised and so on. Finally, they argue that education for citizenship must engage with the complexity of community in contemporary societies to engender such a development in civil society.

However, according to Print (2007) evaluations in USA have shown that young people who are given citizenship education also demonstrate higher levels of civic knowledge and skills than those who have not studied such courses. It is possible to say that school can make a difference. Similar results have been found in Australia.

Johannesson, Lindblad and Simola (2002) talk about changes in the educational systems in Sweden, Finland and Iceland due to budget reforms. In all these three countries there has been decentralization, goal steering, accountability and privatisation. Leisure has been decentralized. Professionalism, goal and result steering are adopted and the sector is influenced by budget reforms (the reader is referred to the previous section on NPM). Leisure activities are managed by both private and official actors. In these matters there are some similarities with the development of schools.

Young people in Finland are described as making rational choices to be independent, flexible, and adaptive and to be active individuals. In Sweden an increased stress on individual agency has been noticed. Johannesson et al. (2002) state there has been a paradigm shift. A break from earlier forms of political governance was seen in the 1980s on both a national and local council level. “Ideas and practice that would have been almost unspeakable in the 1970s have become widely accepted at the turn of the millennium while other ideas are silenced and practices abandoned” (Johannesson et. al., 2002, p. 334). This paradigm shift in is also connected to membership of the European Union. To conclude, the researchers have found an increased individualism with an emphasis on stronger individuals and free choice of schools and less emphasis on decreasing the impact of socio-economic and cultural differences (ibid).

Jones and Wallace (1992) imply that education and the labour market structuralize young people’s future access to social and civil rights. The effects of education are doubtful because of socio economical differences among citizens. As Hemingway (1999) states, the possibilities to reach groups of young people are greater through leisure activities. Still Mattsson (1986) has found that the choice of leisure activities by individuals or groups first of all depends on education and economical position (see also Lindström, 2006).
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Conclusions

As stated, most of what has been written about citizenship started with the theories of Marshall in the 1950s. According to him three different kinds of rights, civil, political and social are included in citizenship. However as this chapter stresses it is no longer possible to describe a citizen just as a member of a political community or a state, who has certain legal, social and moral rights, duties and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities change over time as the result of social struggle, economic change and shifts in governing ideology. Jones and Wallace (1992) state that they want to open up citizenship to the whole population. They argue that we have to understand both how membership is stratified and how it is subject to individual and historical changes.

The restricted view of the notion of citizenship, which is found in Marshall’s work, is no longer useful. When input is given from different disciplines the theory of citizenship can be elaborated. Especially when applied on young people, who are found to have non-fixed values and a variety of sub-cultures, the content of citizenship has to broaden. The global perspective must also be considered. Global city regions generate space for new identities and make demands on other citizenship rights and obligations. As a response to this a concept of “cosmopolitan citizenship” is suggested, which has especially affected the life of young people. In a European perspective citizenship should be defined as a broad societal concept resting less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities. Various claims can strain the boundaries of citizenship and put group against group in the search for identity and recognition. The risk is that this will encourage groups to adopt their own legal traditions even when these traditions are in conflict with fundamental human rights or the principles of the country they live in. New technology such as the Internet can be a site for the construction of new forms of connection to the society and the development of citizenship.

From the different opinions and discussions concerning citizenship rendered in this chapter, I have developed a theoretical model to use in the analysis of my empirical material. The aspects of the notion of citizenship which I will consider are the images we have of the character of the youths and what they do, the ways young people express their opinions, the concern of matters not ideas, subcultures as identity marks, the gap between the politicians and ordinary people, diverse channels of influence, creative ideas and the use of the Internet to create a dialogue between politicians and citizens. These aspects are my screen, which I use to look for images of citizenship expressed in the local councils’ documents.

With the following theoretical model (see figure 3 below) I want to combine the ideas of the “new” citizen with Hemingway’s (1999) theory about participatory and representative democracy. Since it is impossible to review the entire range of conceptualizations of democracy a grid (koordinatsystem) is used. The horizontal axis represents the two types of democracy, participatory and representative. Through what is written in the documents of the local councils I may find traces of these types of democracy. The vertical axis illustrates the notion of citizenship as either individualistic or collectivist as it is discussed by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Helve (2001). This may be seen in the way the local councils address the young citizens and what leisure facilities are provided.
When I went through the research material for the first time I found different fields that emerged in the material (see appendix chart 1). Different levels were also seen in the material, such as the societal level, the local level and the institutional level (see figure 6, page 70).

By using the idea of levels I want to raise the issue that an implementation chain can be discerned, deriving from governmental intentions, seen in political documents, laws and recommendations as well as in allocation of resources for youths’ activities. The chain is emerging on the local policy level, expressed in goals and steering documents, and in statements on the homepages about youths and the supply of leisure facilities for the youths. From this the description matrix was created (see appendix, chart 2), which can be summarised as follows.

Governmental agencies develop policies, overall aims and make laws, which are applicable on the youth’s sector. On the societal level this is seen in the way there are references to these statements on the local councils’ homepages. On the local level the overall intentions are transformed into goals and aims and an organization is formed to implement the youth leisure policy. The implementation of this is seen on the institutional level, where pedagogical ambitions, norms and values are formulated and the supplies to the target groups are presented. I use these categories as an inductive tool to present my material and to be able to distinguish a picture of citizenship for youths. To relate this to the theoretical perspective the different statements and texts were sorted according to the theoretical grid, presented above and a complex pattern of youth citizenship emerged. This will be shown in the last chapter of the thesis.
Methodological framework, methods and data

In the beginning of this chapter I present my ontological commitments towards the research, followed by a presentation of the data used. Then I continue with a description of the local councils of which I have studied their homepages. This is followed by a discussion of the empirical material visible on the Internet and used as empirical data. Next, I present a description of the method used in this dissertation. Finally, there are some reflections about validity and reliability.

In modern society, texts of different kinds are important as a way for society to understand itself. Among these are texts that are produced on the Internet. For me, the leisure documents on the pages represent the way the local councils want the readers to perceive what they present as their ambitions in terms of young citizens’ leisure.

The material that I have studied includes documents written for the users of leisure services such as young people and for the producers, for example youth leaders and other civil servants who can choose to use provided services. These documents are official and can be seen as public information for citizens interested in leisure matters. It is the local council’s public face to the society. Documents published on the Internet are special as they are accessible and visible for almost all citizens. As I have an interest in youth politics, I have found it interesting to study these documents in order to find out what kind of leisure services the local councils offer the youths in their municipality. Furthermore, I am interested in what kind of ideas about leisure the services might represent, as observed from the point of view of citizenship. My scientific standpoint is that these documents actually mirror certain notions of leisure for youths and the leisure producers’ ambitions within this area. On the other hand I presuppose that the contents of the text also include components connected with the ideas of citizenship. Through the contents of the text and all the services offered it is possible to read about what the councils want to support.

My ontological commitment in the research is a critical realistic perspective. Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson and Norrie (1998) state that the critical realistic perspective has emerged as one of the most powerful new directions in the philosophy of science and social science. As a researcher with a critical perspective it is possible to avoid reproducing traditional ideas by systematically analyzing the texts (Alvesson & Deets, 2000).

Realism refers to any position that maintains that there exists an objectively knowable, independent reality, whilst acknowledging the roles of perception and cognition. To say that my commitment is critical at the same time as being realistic means that I want to overcome problems of both positivism and post modernism. Being committed to critical realism ontologically I consider that it is naive to suppose that the reality is completely transparent and possible to observe. However, on the other hand, I will stress that it is quite likely naive to believe that the expressed reality does not affect the construction of knowledge. In this case I also look upon my documents as constructions of meaning as they are written by civil servants in a leisure context. My standpoint is that the written statements on local councils’ homepages show their perspective of citizenship for youths. In the research I use written documents, which are accessible to almost everyone. As I have transformed them to paper format, they have a physical reality, which is independent of the reader. The meaning of the texts is, however, still context dependent. As Lopez and Potter (2007) argue, the social world
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is concept-dependent (made up of discursive structures), but it is also “… made up of non-discursive structures” (Lopez and Potter, 2007, p. 20; Wikipedia).

As I have mentioned previously, questions about accessibility to leisure services, funds and support to leisure facilities depend directly and indirectly on political decisions (Bergström & Borèus, 2000). I mean that the statements in the documents should not be seen as neutral but rather as a way to either confirm or to challenge existing institutions, and established ideas, norms and thoughts. The documents are permeated by the expression of ideological values as they are written in a political context. For me it is of interest how the texts represent ideologically loaded words such as commercialism, values, prevention, equality, welfare and health, equal rights and sustainable growth. Through the implementing agents, which I earlier have described, I have also added a governmental perspective to the analysis of the documents.

As I stated earlier, I position myself ontologically in the research through a critical realistic perspective used as a meta theory. This is critical in the sense that I will critically scrutinize what is formulated in the documents. To be able to do so I presume a distance between myself as a researcher and the texts in the documents. The method I use is content analysis.

It would have been possible to look upon the text as a part of the discourse of leisure. Our language is structured in different patterns as the way we talk about a phenomenon follows from our acts in different social domains. However, I did not take the position as a critical discourse analyst because I do not have the intention of explicitly studying the relations of power and how these are produced or reproduced in the texts.

Below, I will give a presentation of the data used in the research, a description of the local councils included in the research and the material available from the Internet that was used. Subsequently, a presentation of the textual analysis and the content analysis will follow.

The data

The choice of local councils for the research was done with the intention of geographically representing local councils from the whole of Sweden. Local councils were also selected according to the amount of inhabitants, such as small, middle and larger local councils. They are divided into three categories, a metropolitan municipality with a population of over 200 000 inhabitants, larger cities, suburban and commuter councils with less than 200 000 inhabitants and sparsely populated councils with less than 20 000 inhabitants.

I also looked at the age distribution when selecting local councils, and whether they had a lot of young citizens or a more elderly population. In the selection of local councils, I have also attempted to keep in mind patterns in the research material. I am for example, interested to know whether there are some similarities and differences between local councils in the north of Sweden or local councils situated close to Stockholm and Gothenburg. The local councils were therefore selected based on an interest to understand both similarities and variation. However, they should be seen as individual cases and not as representing anything other than that specific council. I am interested in what is unique in the single cases and the research can therefore also be labelled idiographic (Åsberg, 2001).
Methodological framework, methods and data

The research covers ten local councils. Most of the data collection was done during autumn 2007. Some smaller additional collections were also done during 2008. The research covers all materials found on the local councils’ selected homepages on the Internet concerning young citizens and their leisure time. All documents found in the empirical data collection phase are included in the research. Different types of documents are found in different local councils (see chart 2). The local councils had their own homepages, where the political board and administrative organisation were present. There were also pages, which in a general way informed about leisure provided by the council. In some local councils, the questions about leisure are a cross-sector matter, hence the information was found on the pages of different boards. Information was found on the sub pages of the offices that administrate the leisure sector. In larger local councils several offices can be responsible for the administration such as in Uppsala, where there is an office for leisure and nature and another one for children, youth and the labour market. I refer to all texts on the local councils’ homepages by using their www address. Some information was found in documents on sub pages connected to the homepages. Sometimes these were directly connected to the board that handles questions about the leisure sector; often a culture and leisure board and sometimes they were accessible as separate text documents. These documents are referred to with a number after the www address. Pages linked to the councils’ homepages are presented with their own address. There is a large amount of material if one counts all the links connected to the local councils’ homepages and the material accessible separately as documents. All in all, the empirical material comprises more than a thousand pages.

The information from the councils presented on the Internet does not have a uniformed structure. On the contrary, there are differences between each local council. Besides the way they actually present themselves on the homepages, the amount of separate pages and the content and structure of the sub pages differ considerably. These differences are for various reasons. Some of the local councils might have decided to just lay out in public part of their information on the Internet. Others seem to have decided to make all of the information about a broad leisure sector visible for their citizens. In the smaller councils, the only material found was text on one page such as in Munkfors local council, where there is a description about the culture and educational board and the culture and educational administration (www.Munkfors.se). In Motala, the aims for youth clubs are described in a few lines on a page from the educational board (www.Motala.se) and on another page there is a brief description of what democracy is. Some of the middle sized local councils have a lot of material connected to their homepages, which can therefore more thoroughly be analysed. (For detailed information about the documents in the study see appendix, chart 2).

The quality of the text differs also. In some of the local councils the pages give the reader a lot of information both through texts and pictures. On other pages for example, only a little information is given to the reader, such as the opening hours of the youth clubs. Some documents mirror questions about citizens’ leisure in general as some of the councils do not talk about young citizens explicitly.

As I have mentioned earlier, the homepages have a political bias as all texts are produced in a political context. To decide whether the political majority of the local council had any impact on the way the texts were written I compared writings from two local councils with a different political majority, Uppsala and Sundsvall; Uppsala having a conservative majority and Sundsvall a social-democratic one, but I did not find any systematic differences between the texts. As my data collection was done in 2007 and 2008 it was impossible to know whether the texts in the documents were produced during that mandatory period and what influence on
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the texts the former majority had had. The time during which decisions can gain legal force may differ, which can make it doubtful to point out whose political decision the documents actually emanate from. When I use the word ideologically in the thesis I therefore do not use it in terms of political parties but merely as a value statement. Still I mean that the texts are ideologically permeated but not in a party political sense.

Descriptions of the councils

Ten single local councils (see appendix, chart 2) ranged geographically over Sweden, were chosen, from Boden in the far north and Lund in the south. The following section will describe the local councils and what type of documents I have found in each of them. In the figure 4 below the geographical location of the local councils is shown. Statistics about each local council have been collected from the council for promoting local council analyses (Source: Kommundatabas).

Figure 4. Local councils included in the empirical study.

Boden is a small municipality with 27 838 inhabitants. Per definition, it has approximately 8 000 inhabitants more than the defined sparsely populated category. 17 % or 4 796 of its citizens are youth between the ages 6-19 years and 19, 3 % are citizens 65 years or older. The
board for culture and leisure is responsible for the youth politics. They have one premise for young people’s open activity. I have studied their home page and their strategic plan including their aims for young people’s leisure.

Örebro, in the northern part of southern Sweden with 130 429 inhabitants, has 14 different youth clubs. The percentage of young people is also 17 % which amounts to 21 993 citizens. The responsibility for the youths and their leisure time covers several divisions and boards. I have studied steering documents from the leisure and tourism board and from the board for functional limitations.

Sundsvall, situated in the middle of Sweden has about 94 575 inhabitants and about 16 % are young people, that is 15 252 citizens. They have a traditional organization with a leisure and culture board. Open activities for youths are found in 15 different places. I have for example studied documents from the leisure and culture board, a guidebook to leisure activities and political programmes for leisure and culture.

Munkfors, in the south western part of Sweden is the smallest local council in this research with 3 880 inhabitants of whom 16 % or 623 citizens are young people. That can be compared with 26, 8 % that are 65 years or older. A culture and educational board handles questions about leisure and youth with the local council administration office as a performer of leisure services. There is one youth club and one café. I have studied overall strategic documents from Munkfors. In the case of Munkfors, aims for the culture and education administration office also include aims for schools.

Uppsala, just north of Stockholm has 187 541 inhabitants and 16,0 % are between the age of 6-19 years, that is 30 517 youngsters and 18, 7 % of their citizens are older than 65 years. Uppsala local council has more than 20 youth clubs, cafés and other meeting places for youths. Questions about youth and leisure cover several boards and administration units. In this research I have chosen to study the aims of the leisure and culture program and ten other steering documents.

I have also studied documents from Haninge, a local municipality close to Stockholm with 73 698 inhabitants 19 % of whom are young people, a total of 13 938 citizens and 12,4 % are 65 years or older. They have a traditional organization and I have studied aims and objectives from the leisure and culture board.

Motol is situated in the south east of Sweden and has 42 060 inhabitants. 18 % or 7 475 youngsters are between 6-19 years and 19,0 % of their citizens are 65 years or older. In the local council six houses or youth clubs are found. They have a leisure and culture administration and a board of education. The educational board presents aims for the youth clubs, which I have studied.

Linköping close to Motol has 140 367 inhabitants with 17 % or 23 178 of their citizens being young people and 16, 2 % being older than 65 years. They have a culture and leisure board and the administration handles issues concerning libraries, culture and leisure. Except for cafés and facilities for music and concerts they have 12 meetings places for young people. I have studied the overall aims for leisure and culture with a focus on open leisure activities and a report for quality accounting.
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Gothenburg in the southwest of Sweden has 493,502 inhabitants. This research is limited to the city centre of Gothenburg, a city district in Gothenburg with a local council district committee. The number of young people in this part of the town is 5,665 between the ages 0-19 or 10%. The total number of citizens in the city centre district of Gothenburg is 54,786 (www4.goteborg.se). The amount of citizens in the wider city of Gothenburg between the ages of 6-19 years are 71,028 or 14%. There are a lot of activities in the city centre of Gothenburg. A broad cooperation between different sectors and divisions can be seen. I have studied their strategy plan for 2008-2009 and their aims and budget for 2007.

Lund in the south of Sweden has about 105,286 inhabitants, of whom 15,999 or 16% are young people between the age of 6-19 years and 13% of their citizens are older than 65 years. Questions about leisure are traditionally organized in a board for leisure and culture and are performed by a leisure and culture administration. Lund has 14 youth clubs and one house for all activities. I have studied a strategy document for young people, a programme for sports activities, the political strategy for youth in Lund and the aims of the culture and leisure board.

It is possible to group the local councils such as the city centre of Gothenburg as a part of Gothenburg which is Sweden’s second largest city. Secondly, the city of Lund is situated close to the Öresund area which contains big cities such as Malmö and Copenhagen. Thirdly, Haninge, Linköping, Motala and Örebro are rather close to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden with 1,949,516 inhabitants (about 21% of Sweden’s total population). Fourthly, the local councils of Munkfors and Boden can be labelled as sparsely populated areas. Finally, Sundsvall is situated close to the coast about 400 kilometres north of Stockholm and has an increasing population.

All the local councils have made investments in different open leisure activities. Of the total leisure budget about 2.3% is allocated to this sector. What this results in is of course dependent on the size of the local council. Small local councils such as Boden still invested more than all the other local councils in this research, almost a percent more in real terms.

To summarise, Munkfors and Boden are local councils with decreasing populations in a sparsely populated area. Linköping, Lund and Uppsala are cities with a university and a large population of young people in an area experiencing growth and migration into the area. Haninge a suburb close to Stockholm and Örebro not far from Stockholm are both found in a region with growth. Haninge municipality has a lower amount of elderly citizens. Motala municipality, between the region of Stockholm and the two expanding cities Norrköping and Linköping, can be described as a municipality with a stagnating population development but within a short distance to expanding regions. Sundsvall municipality with an increasing population can be considered as a centre in its own region. Finally, the choice to also include the city centre of Gothenburg in the research was to have the possibility to reflect on a city centre in a metropolitan municipality in contrast to the choice of Haninge municipality as a suburb situated outside Stockholm.

These goal and steering documents are, as mentioned earlier, produced in a political and ideological context. The documents are supposed to follow national and supra-national aims for youth politics and are written by civil servants. The documents cover youth politics, politics for culture and sports, aims and objectives for the board, mostly a board for leisure and culture. The documents are found on each local council’s homepages. An overview is shown in appendix, chart 2.
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Texts on the Internet

The line of action for the study of the text is as follows. After the local councils and the networks were chosen I started to systematically search for information on the Internet from each of the local council’s homepages. It was a rather long process to find all material of interest and to follow all links that led to information relevant for my research questions as the structures were different. I also went back to the web pages many times to be sure that I had found all material relevant for my research questions. As mentioned before, the amount of pages differed between the local councils. In total about a thousand pages were found and printed out. All documents found from the search on the Internet considering leisure with the special focus on open leisure activities are included in the material.

To search for information on the Internet is a complicated process. The local councils have homepages and pages built up in different structures. A reader of the pages does not encounter a unified structure and pattern. In some of the local councils I had to search many links on different levels to find relevant information. The information was also spread out on many sub pages such as from the boards, the leisure administrations, youth clubs’ own homepages and youth divisions’ own homepages. Documents and information have also been visible directly on the local councils’ homepages as written texts not presented under special links.

From the beginning my focus was solely on texts about leisure for young people. However, in some of the documents from the smaller councils, the text only talked about leisure in general and very little was said about leisure for young citizens. This meant that I also decided to analyze documents that more generally talked about leisure. This was expressed in texts like leisure facilities for “all” citizens or leisure activities organized and offered to “all”.

Challenges in analysing the texts

In this research I am interested in what is explicitly stated in the texts of the documents. This means that I have to focus on the way the texts are written, the content and in what context the texts are presented.

The authors of these texts, who are civil servants in most cases, have created a contextual coherence through naming different phenomenon and by using a specific discourse. That means that I use the leisure discourse as a general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that peoples’ utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life. Through this discourse, which delimitates or excludes certain things while it includes others, a reality is constructed. Although I talk about leisure as a discourse I am aware that the concept has become vague (Philips & Jörgensen, 2002). As expressed earlier my standpoint is that our language is structured in different patterns which our statements follow when we act in different social domains, in the case of this research in the field of leisure. My task is to unveil what is expressed in the text and discern the contextual reality (Börjesson & Palmblad, 2007). For example it might be possible to find out about issues such as accessibility to leisure, the importance of a balanced budget and expressed goals and aims. Politicians expressed interest of support for the leisure sector and the way it emerges in the documents will also be analysed. It can be premises about citizens’ welfare, needs and expectations and their possibilities to influence these factors. Within this contextual reality
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

about leisure and leisure’s contribution to young people’s lives, I will analyze what kind of citizenship is expressed in the documents through text analysis.

Textual analysis is a way to practice research in social science. To analyze text means to review the structure of the text and scrutinize the content, which will be done with content analysis. Textual statements and perspectives are often written in an ideological framework. Sometimes a text can consist of basic facts, sometimes of complicated interpretations and conclusions of linguistically constructed pictures of actuality or the state of something that actually exists objectively. For example a basic fact can be the amount of visitors at a youth club. A statement of something that exists can be the presence of drugs at a youth club. There may even be complicated interpretations concerning the reason for referring young people with certain disabilities to a special youth club.

There can be different voices and positions from which those who are talking in the text express themselves. The ways in which the receiver is addressed may also differ, for example whether texts are addressed to grownups or to young people. Sometimes a text contains counter-reaction or counter voices. The text can be homogeneous or heterogeneous, sometimes open and consistent in its attitude or sometimes masked under a veil of an objectified subject. I interpret this in the sense that a subjective value is understood as an objective truth (Bergström & Boréus, 2000; Lindström, 2006; Hellspong, 2001; Bryder, 1985; Holmberg & Lindholm, 1995; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 1994).

In an explanation of what textual analysis is, McKee (2003) responds that “... when we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text” (McKee, 2003, p.1). He means that texts are interpreted in order to try to obtain a sense of the ways in which people, in particular cultures at particular times, make sense of the world around them (ibid). Bruhn-Jensen’s (1989) view is that it is only through language that sense can be made of the world. In my case this is the leisure world that is presented in the documents.

Content analysis

Content analysis can be done both qualitatively and quantitatively. There are different kinds of content analysis. One is linguistic textual analysis in which it is possible to analyse the structure and quality of the text such as metaphors etc. Another is discourse analysis, which looks for the significance of the texts, how different ideas in a discourse are created and what frameworks exist for what can be told as pointed out in the discourse. A third one is cultural studies (Bergström & Boreus, 2000), where the ways of expressing certain standpoints and arguments are investigated and the meaning of these texts is interpreted in its context. One of the key features of qualitative content analysis is that the context is central to the interpretation and analysis of the material (Kohlbacher, 2006). This is the way I use content analysis in this thesis.

Qualitative culture content analysis is used in this research because of my interest in how the text describes certain phenomena i.e. what standpoints authorities take and what arguments they present. Furthermore, I am interested in what leisure activities are promoted and how the texts mirror values and norms. Subsequently, I want to examine how the texts talk about
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concepts such as equality, sustainability, democracy and accessibility, how and in which context, these words are used.

Karseras, Wildemeersch, Stroobants and Bron (2005) talk about having a critical stance inquiring into what responsible citizenship might mean in relation to multiple European identities. They question the effectiveness of established processes of legitimization. To be critical in such, they argue, serves to identify the limitations of existing systems and the failings of representative democratic traditions in terms of inclusion and exclusion.

With qualitative content analysis it is possible to study interpersonal aspects that have to do with the interaction between citizens. It can for example, include how different authorities talk to their citizens or how producers of leisure at youth clubs talk to young people.

Bergström & Boréus (2000) argue that the manual content analysis makes it possible to do more advanced assessments, estimations and interpretations. With the use of the content analysis it is also possible to have a greater overview of an often relatively large amount of research material as is the case in this thesis. At the same time all interesting aspects cannot be described and analyzed.

I have chosen to use qualitative content analysis, starting with a theory and research findings as guidance for initial codes. The object of qualitative content analysis can basically be any kind of protocols of observations or written documents in general. Not only the manifest content of the material is analyzed, but also what can be called latent content as well as formal aspects of the material. I interpret the word latent as something that is veiled and not directly visible. Kohlbacher (2006) argues that the strength of quality content analysis is that it is strictly controlled methodologically and that the material is analyzed step by step. The figure below shows the basic procedure of qualitative content analysis that I have used from the initial theory to the final analysis and interpretations.

From the theoretical section I have found Yuval-Davis’ (1997) statement concerning that citizens in different communities can have different possibilities and positions depending on gender or ethnicity and furthermore that it can be sub-collectives which experience informal and formal discrimination, for example by skin colour, origin, sexual orientation, age or of functional limitations. Together with Werbner, Yuva-Davis (1999) argues that democratic citizenship overtly stresses rationality, individuality and the rule of law. Isin (2000) claims that globalization and city regions have generated space for new identities and that groups based on ethnic, ecological and sexual identities have articulated claims for citizenship to include group-differentiated rights. Föllesdal (2007) asks what kind of equality European citizenship requires. I have also noted Bennet’s (2003) definition of citizenship based on a conventional model of a” Dutiful Citizen” while we today have to focus on the “Self-Actualising Citizen”. Finally, Hemingway (1999) argues that if leisure is to contribute to the formation of a social capital necessary for strong citizenship, it must include the attributes of representative democracy.

The content analyses of official documents proceeded through different steps. Firstly each document was printed out. The next step was to read through all of the material several times to find texts that had to do with young people and their leisure time and make notes in relation to the notion of citizenship. Reading the documents several times gave me a feeling of the totality of what the documents express. Sometimes I have gone through and then returned to
the documents for the selected local councils. During that process statements and phrases containing information relevant for my research have influenced the questions being selected.

Figure 5. Mayring’s step model for qualitative content analysis. Source: Mayring (2000a).

Notes were made on the documents about expressed citizenship, committed resources, strategies and activities, and what values are mirrored in the text. Through the whole process I have had the aim of my research and the research questions in my mind and I used my theoretical perspective as a screen for the text. One step was to make a reduction of the selected material, by listing the documents and their main contents connected to the theory and to my research questions. From that I made my coding agenda. The units of meaning like sentences, words and phrases were grouped in different fields (See chart 1). The following fields have been chosen: forms of steering, type of goals, different documents, management and operation methods, forms of participation and facilities offered and supported. These fields were helpful as a first step in sorting out the huge material as they mirror the central content of the texts in relation to what kind of citizenship is expressed. Through these the material was structured and summaries were made. This was the first constructed tool and was further used in the model constructed for analysis of the empirical material.

I have been observant of special words and statements, which seem to be relevant for my research questions, how they occur and in what order they occur. In stating this, I mean that I am not interested in counting the amount of times they occur but rather whether words such as influence and democracy occur at all. I am interested in how they occur and how they are
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discussed in documents and what kind of citizenship they represent. When I had read through
the material several times certain traits emerged and I had to revise my coding agenda. I saw
for example that in some texts citizens’ health and citizens’ possibilities to have access to
leisure facilities and to outdoor life were mentioned. Disabled citizens and citizens in the
margins were often mentioned too. The priorities made and values expressed in the text have
also been of interest. Sometimes surrounding texts have been included so that the coherence
has been visible. This occurs for example, when questions about leisure time and school are
intertwined because of a common board responsible for questions concerning school and
leisure, for example an education and leisure board. This implies that I have also read in the
documents what is written about children and young people’s leisure time when they are in
some cases connected to school questions. Some local councils such as Uppsala have a
political board and an administrative division that do not handle young people’s leisure time
and leisure at school time as separate questions. For example, youths’ leisure time can be
mentioned together with questions relating to social services and which have a connection to
the law of service and support (LSS), in contact with the police or about facilities for leisure
situated close to school buildings.

The next step was to construct final categories, which could be systematically used to
scrutinize the different dimensions of importance for my understanding of the notion of
citizenship for young people in all the texts. I started to list what the different texts expressed
and what intentions were formulated. I further analyzed what kind of diction the different
texts had, in what context the texts were written and what kinds of attitudes were expressed.
Lastly I noted whether the reader of the text was invited to any kind of interaction. A strategy
I used was to identify the sender of the texts as civil servants or youth leaders. That means
that I am also relating the text to the context of how it is written and how leisure is connected
to the civic society more generally; for example, for the development of social capital,
solidarity and trust. This can be seen in how authorities write about cooperation and
collaboration with the civic society and their forms of management and organization of
leisure.

To conclude, I searched for the ways the documents wrote about young people’s leisure and
what needs and expectations they expressed about the young. I searched for the picture of
citizenship that could be drawn from the ways the local councils formulated texts in goals and
steering documents. I also searched for provided activities and visible strategies aimed for the
development of young people’s citizenship, and what values they mirrored.

Conclusions

To summarise, through textual analysis I scrutinize structures, content and formulations of the
text, and the way the texts are written. The tool used is content analysis. I have also
considered the intended audience and the context of the text (Bergström & Boréus, 2000;
Hellspong, 2001; Holmberg & Lindholm, 1995). In the analysis of the documents, I have tried
to find out what reason a text gives for a special opinion and how the different texts
strengthen or weaken one another; for example discussions about investments and support
contra budget restrictions. I noted changes in attitudes regarding which things are valued and
represented, for example concerning the organization and management of leisure services and
what the text expresses, together with the intentions that are mediated and identified. As an
example, these can be attitudes to support certain groups of citizens or values and attitudes
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Towards organization and management of leisure services. Attention is paid to aspects of democracy and citizenship and the logic of political argumentation is also studied.

The empirical material has senders and receivers. In the documents there are texts about the society’s ambitions for the leisure sector on a supra-national, national and local level. These ambitions mirror the society’s ideological intentions. On the local level the receiver’s transform these results in a structure of organization and management, which should serve the citizens. In texts, the senders write and argue about citizens’ needs and expectations and sometimes invite the receivers to participate in the discussion. On an individual level, the sender can talk about investments to facilitate sports and outdoor activities and support to certain groups such as young girls, different subgroups and citizens with special needs. These investments and support initiatives are addressed to the receiver to realize and implement. To be a receiver or a sender is sometimes intertwined. Local council authorities, networks, organizations or state authorities such as the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs are examples of that. The receivers and the senders differ on different levels. A statement from a supra-national body such as EU can have some authority over, for example, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. Local council authorities can be the receiver of policies from the supra-national and national level as well as from networks. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is simultaneously sender to networks, organizations and to local council authorities.

Validity and reliability

In all research, the question about validity and reliability is important. Validity is a notion about how well the researcher has managed to depict the social reality intended for description. Validity can be expressed as the congruity between, in this case, my theoretical understanding of citizenship and the social reality which is defined by the empirical material from the ten local councils and the two networks in this research.

Kvale (1997) talks about validity as the ability of the researcher to accomplish the research process accurately. With that he means that the research process must be visible. He states that to validate is to control, question and to theorize. The method used, the quality of the researcher and the researchers’ moral integrity is essential for the judgments of the quality and the validity. In order to get my interpretations cohesive I have alternated between reading the material as a whole, scrutinizing the parts and then gone back to the whole again. I have looked critically upon my own analysis and tried to control the plausibility of my interpretations. To validate my interpretations my supervisor has gone through parts of the material and made independent interpretations. These were compared and when there was lack of agreement we discussed it until we found a reasonable interpretation. In this chapter I have tried to describe the procedure openly to make it possible for the reader to follow the process.

Kvale (1997) argues that validity is about questions, and the questions to determine the validity must be the questions of what and why. These two questions must be answered before the question of how is negotiated. That means that the content and purpose must come before the method (Kvale, 1989; 1997). As in Kvale (1997) I have asked myself questions about what I do and why I do it, and whether if I do it one way I will get the answer to my research questions. Finally, I asked the question of how I should do the research.
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Another aspect of scientific quality is how reliable and accurate the documents have been studied. This also affects the validity. As shown in the section about my line of action, I have worked carefully in a structured way to unveil what can be found in the documents. Some disadvantages can be mentioned such as words that are too vague or not clearly delimited, which can be a problem. For example, the word leisure can mean different things, such as leisure in common or leisure for young people; leisure as free time or leisure as an activity. This is elaborated in the text about previous research where I have given a broad definition of the concept. Another problem is words like democracy, which can have different meanings to different persons and at different times. Another disadvantage connected to this research can be that the theoretical concept is not sufficiently developed, if I, for example, have missed important aspects of citizenship.

It is important for the reader of this thesis to remember that results show what is written in the documents. These documents are supposed to be written by civil servants after political decisions made in the local board but I lack information of who the author of the text actually is. The results show what intentions the decision-makers in local councils want to express in the official documents. That means that I lack information about what really happens when the producers of leisure services meet the users. I can just tell what kind of citizenship can be interpreted from the text, expressed in the documents and on the homepages.

The advantage in this research is that the documents are public and are accessible for all readers of this dissertation if they wish to check my findings. The content of the homepages has not changed much since I gathered my material.

Finally, the sample of what was presented on the Internet from each of the selected councils gives only one picture. There might be other documents, which were not presented on the homepages that could have given other answers to my research questions. However, I decided to stick to what I found on the homepages. A problem with the homepages can be that the texts are written in a special form, with attractive sentences and brief facts easy for the reader to grasp. No problematization of or reflection about the messages can be expected.

I have also taken into consideration of some ethical issues and the ethical rules for social sciences research. As my empirical material is published officially everyone has access to it. I have not found a reason to have the local councils’ approval for the research because all material used is public and official. However, I have chosen to inform the local councils that their homepages have been examined as part of a research project. I have also considered the demand for confidentiality and accountability but for the same reason have not found that necessary to comply. Details are available from the Swedish Research Council.
Presentation of the empirical study

As I discussed in the methodological chapter, my intention in this section is to use the official texts on the homepages of the local councils in order to visualise, study and analyse what kind of citizenship for youth that emerges in the documents. The texts can be written by civil servants at the leisure administration or at the leisure board. Texts can also be written by youth leaders who work at youth clubs or other meeting places. They can be written alone by the youth leaders or by the leaders together with the youths.

The purpose with this dissertation is to describe, explore, and discuss the texts that local councils present on their homepages from the perspective of citizenship for youths. The questions that originate from this aim are the following: What kind of citizenship will be represented through the local councils' goal and steering documents for young people and their leisure time? What kind of citizenship will be represented through the way the local councils organize, manage and support the leisure sector? What kind of citizenship will be represented through the supply of leisure activities for young people that are presented on the local councils' homepages?

From the section about citizenship, some theoretical definitions can be seen as useful in terms of analysis. The aspects considered in that chapter are firstly Marshall’s definition of citizenship which included civil, political and social rights with a connection to the court system and to institutions of local government and parliament. Secondly, Rothstein (1998) talks about the state looking upon its citizens as a collective group with certain common values such as equality, solidarity and the national culture (see also Lindstrom (2006). This idea is also seen in Beauregard and Bounds (2000) and Isin (2000) all of who talk about globalization and cultural diversity. Isin (2000) claims that groups based on ethnic, ecological and sexual identities have articulated claims for citizenship to include differentiated group rights. Thirdly, Yuval-Davis (1997) state that citizens in different communities can have different possibilities and positions depending on for example, gender or ethnicity or sub-collectives which experience informal and formal discrimination such as sexual orientation, age or of functional limitations. Fourthly, Bennet (2003) states that the common definition of citizenship is based on a conventional model of a “Dutiful Citizen”, while today we have to focus on the “Self-Actualizing Citizen”. Fifthly, Harris, Wyn, Younes (2007) found that activities such as songs, dances and gigs are often used as explicit tools for public articulation of political concerns such as equality and human rights. Furthermore, they argue that modernization and globalization have challenged the state as the sole source of authority of citizenship and democracy. Hemingway’s (1999) discussion about the role leisure plays or might play in the development of democratic citizenship will also be used in the analysis. The different theoretical perspectives have been used to develop a model for the analysis of the texts (see figure 3). The aim with figure 3 is to use it as a tool to analyze what is written in the documents in relation to individual or collective citizenship, and participatory or representative democracy. Local councils can give priorities to collective solutions to meet the needs of all citizens or local councils can choose to adjust to individual needs and expectations. The local councils can stress formal democracy or be open for more creative and participatory forms. This will be seen in the way they describe their organization and management, what they provide and how they collaborate with networks and other organizations or institutions.
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From the theoretical notions of citizenship as presented above, I have constructed main categories useful for the analysis (see table 1-6). I will give some examples of how the categories were constructed. The first one, policy, laws and overall aims, shows which kind of conventions and laws the research material covers and the number of local councils making references to them. This is seen on the structural level and shows to what extent the overall aims are seen in the texts. The additional categories are organization and management, goals and aims, pedagogical ambitions, norms and values, target groups, offerings and facilities, which were created to find out how the local boards presented how they catered for the citizens’ need and expectations of the leisure area. The category pedagogical ambitions, refers to texts, which communicate to the citizens what type of activities and why the local council wants to support the leisure sector. The pedagogical ambitions are often written by producers such as the youth leaders. The target groups are the receivers of suggested investments and support, and listed activities.

After the construction of the categories, they were put together in an analysis matrix (see figure 6 below). The matrix is divided into three levels: the societal, the local and the institutional level and on each level the main contents are listed, which are relevant for the understanding of citizenship for youth visible in the texts. The society level covers national and international policy, conventions and laws, which are of importance to the leisure sector. These documents represent the overall ideology which should permeate the local activities. The question is if this is seen in the texts on the local councils’ homepages.

At the local level the political documents are scrutinized, which emanate from the boards decisions. The way this is organised and managed in the different councils are studied from the perspective of what intentions that are expressed in the texts and how these harmonize with organisation and management.

The third level represents the actors, who are involved in implementing the activities of the leisure sector and the presumed individuals and groups, who have benefit of the activities. The question on hand is what values are expressed and target groups presented, and how provided activities seem to be able to fulfil stated aims.

![Figure 6. Analysis matrix.](image-url)
Presentation of the empirical study

The analysis matrix will be used as a tool in describing the texts on the local councils’ homepages. It will also be used in describing what I have found of content and structure, which can give a picture of youths’ citizenship. The analysis matrix will be helpful in making visible what kind of citizenship that is represented on the local councils’ homepages.

In the first section of this chapter entitled, societal level, I look at the way the local councils use texts that acknowledge the national and international recommendations and the laws affecting youth leisure. The second section includes an investigation of the presented structure of the local councils’ leisure sectors. I look at the way the leisure sector is organized and managed and how goals and aims are expressed. In the third section, the institutional level, I identify the producers of the different texts and how this affects the way the texts are written. The pedagogical ambitions expressed in the documents are presented. I also analyze the messages of the texts and what norms and values are mirrored in the texts. The texts about target groups and provided leisure service are also examined. Each section has a summary to help the reader follow the discussion.

Societal level

As discussed in the chapter about local councils’ responsibility of the leisure sector, leisure management is not mandatory for the council. However, the councils have a responsibility to cater for the leisure of their citizens, which is stated in other laws and rules on national and international level, for example the System of Governance, Law of service and support (LSS) and UNs Children’s Convention.

Policy, laws and overall aims

In Table 1 below the amount of references in the texts of each council to national and international laws and conventions are listed. The letters refer to the first letter in the councils’ name: U=Uppsala, H=Haninge, Lu=Lund, G=Göteborg, Su=Sundsvall, Ö=Örebro, Mo=Motala, M=Munkfors, Li=Linköping, B=Boden.
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

Table 1. Conventions, laws and overall aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions, laws and overall aims</th>
<th>Amount of local councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and building law</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of service and support (LSS)</td>
<td>H L G S Mo Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN:s declaration about human rights</td>
<td>L Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN:s Children’s conventions</td>
<td>L H U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of government</td>
<td>U L Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda 21</td>
<td>Ö U M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of social services</td>
<td>L Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration Policy</td>
<td>U L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality Policy</td>
<td>U L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health policy</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National youth policy</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug political policy</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above one can notice that the law of service and support (LSS) is most often mentioned in the documents. Lund and Uppsala local councils are the councils that most frequently make references to the laws and policies.

One of the laws that the councils have to consider is the Planning and Building law. The law states (chapter 2, §5) that local councils should arrange green areas for recreation, which should be accessible to people with mobility and orientation disabilities. Chapter 5, §3 includes regulations about facilities for athletics, sports and open air swimming. The influence of this law is seen in the documents from e.g. Uppsala, where it is stated that investments in a good structure of green areas shall contribute to experiences, curiosity and knowledge about both nature and environmental values. It is also added that “Uppsala’s official rooms with
streets, parks, marketplace and facilities shall be useful arenas for festivals and other events” (www.Uppsala.se, 2 and 6). The local council writes about preserving and developing outdoor meeting places such as parks and green areas. These areas are most important in densely populated areas. It is stated that outdoor events in the city may create a common identity and make it possible for the citizens to meet and to enjoying themselves. Furthermore, there are arguments that the use of green areas, roads for cycling and waking and spaces for games, sports and exercise are positive for citizens’ health and quality of life. The formulation about green areas for recreation is very close to the text in the law. In none of the other councils is this law mentioned, yet almost all of them mention the outdoor facilities in the documents.

Another law that is important is the Law of Service and Support for People with disabilities (LSS, § 15), which states that disabled people are entitled to leisure activities (Rättsnätet, http://notisum.se, SFS, 1987:10; SFS, 1993:387). The demands of this law are very much present when the texts talk about people with handicaps, but it is only in Haninge, Lund, Gothenburg City centre and Sundsvall where there is a direct reference to the law. The activities in youth leisure centres are also indirectly affected by the law of social services agencies §1, where it is possible to find the aims for democracy, equality and involvement in social life (Rättsnätet, http://notisum.se). There it is stated that our society is supposed to be built on democracy and solidarity, to promote people’s economic and social security, to promote equality in citizens’ life and to support people actively participating in society for the common good. The local councils’ responsibility to give support to fulfil citizen’s needs for leisure is clearly expressed in the laws.

On an international level, there are other steering documents which the councils have to consider. Direct references to international conventions are found only in a few of the documented aims, for example in Lund it is stated that “UNs Declaration about Human Rights and the Children's Convention are fundamental documents and shall be kept in mind for all activities in open leisure activities in Lund” (www.Lund.se, 2-3), and furthermore “The political strategy for young people is based on the Children’s Convention, the national aims for public health, law of social services and the national youth politics” (www.Lund.se). In this text it is explicit, but even if it is not said directly, the spirit of the convention and laws is found in the texts from other councils, too, especially when the documents talk about young people’s health and well being.

As mentioned in chapter 2, The Swedish governments interest in leisure, the Swedish state has formulated four perspectives to be of special importance for young people's citizenship; the resource, rights, independence and diversity perspectives. Among the areas for the implementation of youth policies which are pointed out, one is culture and the other leisure. It is further stated that young people's knowledge and experiences should be made use of and utilized to influence public activities. Finally, it is recognized that young people differ as individuals but the ambition should be equal rights and possibilities for all. The message of these perspectives is that young people’s citizenship is important and that leisure and culture are important means of achieving this.

In the documents from the local councils, these perspectives can be seen both in the goal formulations and in the concrete strategies. One example is Uppsala, where it is written in their Leisure political program:

The aim of Uppsala local council’s leisure politics is that their citizens shall be offered a demand of leisure that is developing and stimulating, physical as well as psychical, social and cultural.
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Good possibilities for a rich and varied leisure also contribute to make the local council attractive to work and live in (www.Uppsala.se, 2).

This is not addressed directly to the young people, but from other texts in the document it is evident that the citizenship of young people is included. It is seen in the document that for example leisure politics shall promote youth health, social development and give possibilities for influence and participation. The aims for the political program of sport and leisure of Sundsvall local council are formulated in a similar way. It is written: “The main focus shall be that all peoples have the same value and shall be given the same opportunities to take part in or to have part of what culture and leisure activities are supplied” (www.Sundsvall.se, 2). The writing about “all peoples” indicates that youths are included. These examples show that the texts are permeated by different ideological statements. Below I will show how these words and statements appear in other contexts and in what way they are relevant for my investigation of how the documents express citizenship for young people.

Overall aims

As I presented in the chapter The Swedish governments interest in leisure, the Swedish government has formulated the overall aims for the youth policy in four areas, of which leisure and culture is one. The goals for this area are to support young people to be self sufficient and independent. Most of the local councils’ expressed local aims are comparable to national aims. In some documents it is less clear but still evident; for example Lund and Uppsala, where references are made directly to aims that young people should have real access to welfare and power. Furthermore is it stated that: “Leisure in Lund (the name of the administration office, author’s addition) shall keep and follow national laws and steering documents such as aims for the national youth politics” (www.Lund.se, 2).

In the statement is a direct reference to proposition 2005/5:2. In Uppsala local council, written aims are about participation and influence and references are made to the law of social services, the school law, constitutional laws and policies plans for integration and equality (www.Uppsala.se. 1-4). In the leisure political program in Uppsala the following quotation is seen: “/ ... leisure time consists of social meeting places built on networks, which contribute to increased integration and the transfer of basic democratic values” (www.Uppsala.se, 2).

References to constitutional laws can be understood as a way to show the legitimacy of what is written in relation to the democratic system.

Another example is Lund local council, which directly uses statements about leisure politics and youth politics taken from the national documents. In the culture and leisure boards’ mission to the administration and their activities in Lund is written “/ ... open leisure activities have as a mission to entrench and mediate the fundamental democratic values that our society rests on” (www.Lund.se, 2). Here the administrators seem to addresses the producers of leisure services but do not mention what these fundamental values are.

In relation to overall aims, the word democracy is the most frequently appearing concept in the documents. In Örebro the definition of democracy is taken directly from the system of government, which declares that all official power in Sweden takes its starting point from the will of the people living in the country. In a similar way the goal documents also state:
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"Leisure activities can contribute to young people's democratic fostering" (www.Orebro.se, 1-3). This text expresses an opinion that leisure activities can contribute to democracy. Örebro local council also writes about Agenda 21 and sustainability in their program for democracy which can be found on the Internet. The writings state that the council cares about the environment, the nature and their citizens. There is a request that “Children and young people help adults to take care of our environment, in other words to follow Agenda 21 for the local council” (www.Orebro.se, 1). However, the statement does not say anything about how this shall be organised or how this could contribute to the development of democracy.

Summary

In this section I have shown that the way the goal and aims of the local councils are written is influenced by national and international policy, conventions and laws. The picture of citizenship on an overall level, which is visible, is partly in accordance with the notion of a DC-citizen. According to Bennet (2003) a DC citizen is a citizen who acts democratically through voting and through other formalized channels and government initiated activities.

In the overall aims which are put forward in the local councils, the aspects of democracy and equality are the most predominant. Evidently the councils are aware of the importance of their young citizens. Equally, they seem to be aware of the importance of the leisure sector for the wellbeing of the citizens and for fostering the youth into citizens.

Local level

The way the leisure sector is presented on the homepages of the local councils may indicate both the values a council put on leisure activities and the ideas about how to communicate with citizens of different ages. How the leisure sector is organized and managed is, of course, also a function of size and the amount of inhabitants in the municipality. In this section, I will look at the visible organization and management and written goals about leisure for young people.

Organization and management

Municipality leisure activities are mostly governed by a culture and leisure board and its decisions are implemented by civil servants at the local administration office. These boards have the responsibility to cater for all citizens when it comes to leisure and culture. Activities for young people are just one part of their work.
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

The table below (2) shows the different kinds of boards that were found in the research material.

Table 2. The local councils’ boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boards</th>
<th>Local councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture and leisure board</td>
<td>B Li S H Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure, cultural and educational board</td>
<td>Mu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and nature board</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board for disabled citizens</td>
<td>Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and tourism board</td>
<td>Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and citizens board</td>
<td>Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and educational board</td>
<td>Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social board for youth</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and youth board</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and natural board</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational board</td>
<td>Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Board</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the table one can notice that many different boards are involved in matters about young people’s leisure time. Two of the local councils Uppsala and Örebro have more than one board that is responsible for these questions.

In some of the local councils the leisure activities are presented on the sub page of the board, which handle these matters. It can be a special board of leisure and culture and/or special boards for youth and leisure matters. In some cases the culture and leisure departments only take care of arenas, handle economic grants and are the link to the associations. Örebro local council has several boards considering youth questions, for example a culture and citizens’ board and a leisure and tourism board. It seems like Örebro local council looks upon leisure in a broader perspective considering more aspects of the citizens’ free time, also including tourism. Munkfors local council has a joint leisure, culture and educational board which probably is due to the size of the municipality. It is the same for the other small councils. In the case of Motala local council the leisure sector is handled by an education board, which indicates that leisure is seen as connected to school matters. For the local councils it can be an ideological position how to organize the leisure sector, as a separate board for leisure is not
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mandatory. The somewhat bigger councils such as Sundsvall and Uppsala have chosen another way of managing the leisure sector. Sundsvall has a culture and leisure department, which handles general matters about leisure such as sports, culture, libraries and museums (www.Sundsvall.se). Connected to the page of the board are separate pages for different options such as the youth clubs and the youth assembly. In addition there is a certain division for youth matters, that “/... works with questions about your leisure time and what you want to do on your free time” (www.ungisundsvall.se), with its own homepage. The youth clubs have their own homepages where they present their activities and goals. This indicates that youth questions are looked upon as important in this council.

Rationalization in the public sector demands a balanced budget. The claim for efficiency has resulted in the fact that new forms of organization are more common than before (see Lindstrom, 2006). New forms of organization and management are put forward in some of the documents as something to promote, e.g. in Uppsala new alternative forms of producing leisure services are suggested. A youth club Fyrisgården, which is managed by an independent association, is one example. Fyrisgården is open for young people in all ages from the whole municipality (www.Uppsala.se). It is stated in the documents that these new forms of organization would result in a more effective use of halls and other facilities. “To be able to manage the need for more facilities for sports it is necessary to cooperate and collaborate with external partners about the question of leadership and ownership and forms of organization and management” (www.Uppsala.se, 2, 6-7). Uppsala local council makes the comment that the council will not be able to fulfil the expectations from their citizens without help from other partners.

Another example of new ways of managing open youth activities is found in Örebro. Here local politicians have decided that all boards shall establish so-called self management bodies. In these, the users should be in the majority and have the right to decide in many areas, such as open youth clubs managed by organizations. It is written in the document that:

Many of the services that the local council has been responsible for are now managed by the users. The decisions are taken in users' boards, associations and other groups. The politicians' responsibility is to formulate all aims and long term development plans. They are responsible for a fair distribution of money between different activities and areas. The politicians now meet a lot more citizens and representatives of citizens groups and therefore know much more about what is happening and what citizens think and feel about the services (www.Orebro.se, 1).

Furthermore, in the same document it is written that the base is the Swedish form of government and that “... all public power proceeds from the people” (www.Orebro.se, 1). That means that the text makes connections to the constitution and The 1974 Instrument of Government.

In the above text, the influence of the new way of steering through goals is seen. It is evidently an ideological statement which is said to result in meetings with the citizens to broaden democracy. The local council's ambition can be seen in the following statement:

It is up to the users to grab this possibility. It is the staff's responsibility to inform, stimulate and supervise the users. In this case it is foremost the civil servants who must be ready to hand over some of their power to the users of services (www.Orebro.se, 1).

Young people are not directly addressed but as they are the users of the leisure service obviously they are included. There is a direct request in the text to the users to take the
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opportunity. However, the main part of the text is directed to the civil servants, who are requested to meet the initiatives from the users. This text indicates awareness about the suspiciousness among young people towards politicians. This is an example of how texts reflect an open and consistent attitude among the authorities.

Another aspect of the governance is feedback and quality control. In particular, the documents of the bigger councils address this issue. In Uppsala, the local council writes about the quality of the activities and that cooperation with parents, industrial life, voluntary associations, trade unions, and social- and health care institutions is necessary to keep the quality of the services high. “Cooperation between associations and other non-profit organizations will increase. Youth participation and new meeting places will be developed. New associations will be organized by the youths themselves” (www.Uppsala.se, 6).

The board of leisure and environment states that it does not have the possibility to cater for enough sport facilities. In the text, the term “Official private partnership” is mentioned, which indicates a wish to find partners who are interested in the financing and management of sport facilities (www.Uppsala.se, 6). The word official in the text could indicate that the idea is cooperation and not complete handing over of the premises to other organizations. It continues:

A problem that the board has to handle in its plans is that new kinds of sports and activities have emerged and that their perpetrators want support from the local council. Often these members are not organized in established associations which are an obstacle for funding. The question that the board must take in consideration is how the local council shall react to applications and suggestions from private initiatives (www.Uppsala.se, 6).

Haninge local council’s culture- and leisure board writes in the document about a mission that states: “/ … in the frame of the project “hiving off” expose to competition at least one service that today is managed from the local council should be exposed to competition” (www.Haninge, 1).

The management of the leisure sector is divided between different authorities, but the overall steering principle is still the finances. There is much talk in the documents about the need to have balanced finances in the local councils. There is a focus on balancing the budget together with clear ambitions to minimize charges for young citizens who visit youth clubs and other premises. The following are examples of how it is written. In the City centre of Gothenburg they “/ … shall have their finances in balance” (www.Goteborg.se, 1). “Leisure politics shall formulate that all stimulates to a meaningful leisure. High fees shall not exclude somebody from leisure activities” (www.Uppsala.se, 2). Haninge local council speaks in general about limited resources (www.Haninge.se, 1) In Sundsvall the local council board states that an overall aim is to have good finances (www.Sundsall.se, 4). The economical situation is described as follows in Örebro. “When it is not enough resources allocated to local council budgets it is important not to do things in the same way as they have been done before” (www.Orebro.se). In the text, the local council opens up for new ways of production, organization and management of leisure services to fulfil the aims as a consequence of a restricted economic situation.

Uppsala writes that a balance in the finances is a legal demand, but at the same time the children and youth board writes about the goal to increase the opening hours and arrangements at the youth clubs to attract more visitors. In Aims from the children and youth board for open leisure activities for youth clubs it is written in the texts that the aims are “/ ...
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to guarantee the supply to youth clubs” and to “... strengthen achievements for leisure time for children and youth for functional disorders” (www.Uppsala.se, 2, 3). From the documents one can see that there seems to be a willingness to prioritize open leisure activities for youths although there are budget restrictions.

The questions of measuring effects and quality assurance are rarely mentioned in the documents. There are exceptions like in Linköping local council and Uppsala local councils. In Uppsala the local children and youth board declare that the quality of leisure and culture activities is followed up each year (www.Uppsala.se, 7). Few measurable aims are expressed in the documents and there is also very little about the importance of feedback in the system.

Goals and aims

There is information on the councils’ homepages concerning goals and aims for the leisure sector. In some of the documents aims and strategies are expressed in a more general way, while other local councils, mostly the smaller ones, have chosen to describe their aims more concretely and in terms of activities. Concepts such as democracy, participation, influence, inclusion, integration and equality are frequently seen in the documents, which indicate awareness of overall aims, e.g. the culture and leisure boards in Boden have aims which talk about equality (www.Boden.se, 1). In Örebro, local council integration is an aim for youth clubs (www2.Orebro.se). Haninge and Lund local council make a connection between sports and the possibilities for integration. This quotation is seen in Lund local council’s homepage. “Sports in Lund shall actively work for integration of citizens with different religious, ethical or cultural background in sports associations” (www.Lunds.se, 1). These concepts are mentioned more or less in all local councils’ documents, in some they are more explicit while in others the notions are embedded in general statements about quality of life and opportunities to take part in all sort of activities. The goals and aims are decided in a political board and the written standpoints can be said to represent the ambitions of the local council. In the Table 3 below the goals and aims stated in the documents of the different councils are listed.
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Table 3. Goals and aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals and aims</th>
<th>Amount of councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Ö G U H Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Su U Lu H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>U H Su Lu Ö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>H U Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Su B Ö G U H Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Ö Li Lu H G U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The letters stand for U=Uppsala, H=Haninge, Lu=Lund, G=Göteborg, Su=Sundsvall, Ö=Örebro, Mo=Motala, M=Munkfors, Li=Linköping, B=Boden.

In the table one can see that only one local council has aims that refer to ethnicity. Aims about the importance of leisure services for the quality of life seldom occur in the documents, but there are exceptions. One example is the sports and leisure program for Sundsvall's local council, which declares:

Sundsvall shall develop as a local council with high quality of life and great opportunities for their citizens to take part of, practice and participate in culture and leisure activities. The starting point shall be that all people have the same value and shall be given same opportunities to take part and to use what is offered by culture and leisure activities (www.Sundsvall.se, 2).

This statement includes texts about both the norm of equality and the importance of leisure activities for the citizens. Though it is not explicitly stated, young people must be included in “all people”. In this document the associations’ important role both to create a community between citizens and to encourage democratic work is stressed (www.Sundsvall.se, 2).

One way of presenting democracy as a goal is given on Motala local council's page which states that all people have equal value.

Democracy gives you possibilities to influence, independent of who you are and where you come from. Democracy just claims one thing from you as a citizen; you have to use it by yourself. / ... /

Sorry to say but democracy cannot be gained once and for all. Democracy constantly claims our consciousness (www.Motala.se, 2).

First the fundamental factual elements of democracy are described, such as representative government, fair and anonymous elections, freedom of speech, freedom of information, and freedom of association. These are all concepts, which are part of a formal citizenship. A value statement is then presented stating that democracy is a word about freedom connected to the convention "Rights of men" and a word important for everyone. Subsequently, a normative statement is formulated about individual responsibility directly addressed to the citizen. The text continues with a value statement that a democratic society is built on the belief that all
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humans have equal value and adds with another normative claim that if the citizens are not engaged in questions about their society democracy might disintegrate. The text is full of sentiments and interjections about the responsibility of the reader to be active.

In the above quoted document the texts address citizens in general. However, another aim that is frequently seen, directly or indirectly, in the documents is the ambition to let young people influence and participate in public matters, and at least decide about their own activities. One way to achieve this is to establish some kind of youth parliament. In a document from the culture and leisure board of Haninge local council, an overall concern about young people's involvement, participation, dialogue, influence and involvement is expressed.

The overall aim is to increase young people's engagement through participation, dialogue and influence. This can be achieved through development of the youth council and the youth representative assembly but also through developing a forum on the Internet where politicians and youths can meet and develop a democratic dialogue (www.Haninge.se).

It is not only the formal representative way that is suggested in the text but also a more open dialogue with the politicians through the Internet. This is something that is experimented with in many local councils in Europe today as a means for the authorities to get in contact with the citizens. This indicates a wider view of citizenship than the traditional DC one.

In Uppsala, there are texts which to an even greater extent point at the elaborated concept of citizenship. The young peoples' need for meeting places as a way to be included in the society is recognized. The local council has written that "During leisure time meeting places are created as large social networks, which contribute to increased integration and mediate the fundamental values of the society" (www.Uppsala.se, 7). What these values are is only implicitly expressed. However, it acknowledges them as an important arena for the democratic society.

In all the councils, the aim of arranging meeting places for young people is expressed. These can be common youth clubs, open houses or youth cafés. These places are said to be non-commercial meeting places for young people, which is an ideological position. In the investigated councils this is the situation in most cases regardless of the name. In many of the councils, youth clubs have been transformed to different kinds of youth centres like "Multi-activity centres" and "House of youth" run by managers other than the council. For example, in Motala six youth clubs are managed by parents together with supervisors from an association. "Activities for youths are managed by parents and leaders from associations" (www.Motala.se, 1). A main goal is that these meeting places are run by representatives from the civic society such as parents or associations with funds from the local council’s board of education.

The democratic aim is also present in the presentations of the traditional youth clubs, but in this case the formalized ways of running the club are stressed. The clubs are seen as places for democratic education. This is shown in a strategy plan from the children and youth board about the youth clubs in Uppsala as an example. "At every youth club shall at least one formalized forum be established through which children and youths may influence the activities" (www.Uppsala.se 7). There is something similar expressed in the aims of the youth clubs in Haninge. "... a place where young people can strengthen their personality and develop themselves ..." (www.Haninge.se, 1). The youths clubs are said to be for the youth, where they can learn democratic processes and get opportunities to practice dialogues with others and to take responsibility for running the clubs (www.Haninge.se, 1).
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Not all local councils have explicitly stated goals. In Sundsvall for example the culture- and leisure board addresses the young readers on a special sub page, saying: "We work with questions about your leisure time and what you want to do on your free time" (www.ungisundsvall.se). Further on, the texts are about special arrangements such as a skate hall and culture events. On these pages there are simply statements of what the council offers and nothing is said about goals and aims. I had to search through a lot of pages and on different levels and finally I found a goal document where the aims were expressed as follows: “We have as an aim to support and develop young citizens to be free and thinking individuals who dare to believe in their own possibilities to act” (www.ungisundsvall.se). In this case the text seemed to be addressed to young citizens instead of adults such as civil servants, youth leaders and sometimes parents. An interesting question arises whether the location of the text reflects an attitude that the goals are something only for the administration and not important for the users to know about.

In some local councils aims of another kind are formulated, which have to do with sustainability. One example is from Uppsala, where there are texts about ecological, social and economically sustainable development. In these texts sustainable development is embedded in ideological statements claiming it as a way to reduce the gap between different groups in society. The understatement is that this gap exists and that this should be altered. This is an example of a clearly expressed value. The question of getting young people engaged in work towards a sustainable environment is raised in Örebro and Lund. A forum was established in Örebro with the expressed ambition of getting young people to take care of the common environment. However, there are no activities reported from this Agenda 21 forum. Neither are there any activities reported from Lund, which deal with the matter. The question is whether these statements are only empty words and not real goals.

Summary

The organization of the leisure sector is a consequence of the sector not being mandatory. This was notable at the homepages of the local councils. Matters related to the sector were handled at different levels in the organization and presented on different sub pages. Although there are indications in the documents about letting other agents run the leisure service, most of the open leisure activities for young people are still run by the council or by voluntary associations supervised by the council. Very few premises are put out on the market for sale, not even the cafés. The goals that are most visible are those related to democracy, gender, integration and equality but there are stated goals about influence and personal development as well. In some local councils’ the concept of sustainability is also mentioned. In some of the councils there is a focus in the documents on balancing the local councils’ budget.

Institutional level

The way the texts are written on the different homepages reveals differences dependent on who is the producer of the text. The way the young citizens are addressed by administration officers, youth leaders and voluntary leaders varies and different pictures are given of how leisure is constituted. The question is what these differences mean and what values and
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pedagogical notions they mirror. In this section I will look at the differences between the documents dependent on who is the producer. I will pay attention to the values, norms and statements about quality and the pedagogic ambitions.

The first contact with the leisure area in the local council is often a page which is created to inform about leisure and culture either for all citizens or just for the youths. These pages have a layout of pictures and text, which intend to be interesting and inviting. Often there are pictures of young people when they are actively doing things. There are big differences in the way the documents are written depending on who is the producer and also what type of document it is. The general pages addressed to young people are often flashy and colourful, while the pages of the administration offices are rather formal. Besides, more formal documents linked to the homepages are written in a bureaucratic way, such as year reports or minutes from meetings. It is the same with information from the administration or plans and budgets from the board.

There are great differences in the way the different councils present their view of leisure. In Boden for example, the homepage of the Culture and leisure office invites visitors to take part of the information using both pictures and text, as in the following example:

Welcome to the culture- and leisure administration. In Boden local councils we have a rich variety of culture and leisure activities with hundreds of dedicated enthusiasts, associations and organizations. Via this page you can find interesting and current information about Boden’s culture and leisure life, welcome! (www.Boden.se).

These messages are meant for the general public and not especially written with the youth in mind. Other councils, such as in Örebro the office of leisure and tourism only enumerate its tasks such as fields of responsibility, number of swimming pools found in the council, how to apply for funds, how to make bookings or how to get permission to have lotteries. In both cases the text is produced by administration officers, but evidently with different intentions. In the last case the intentions only seem to be to inform the citizens, while in other cases there seem to be an urge to attract the receivers to come and visit the youth clubs or participate in activities.

When the producer is the personnel responsible for the youth clubs there is quite another way of communicating.

The youth clubs seem to have an amount of autonomy, which some of the clubs’ own pages bear witness to through comments like “we can”, “we have” and “we offer” in the text. This can be seen in the local councils in Linköping and Sundsvall (www.Linkoping.se; www.Sundsvall.se). This is especially so if the ones working in the club are parents or youth leaders from a voluntary association. In many of the councils the goals and aims are fairly generally stated.

This can also be illustrated by the 14 youth clubs in Örebro. Everyone has a homepage of its own linked to the homepage of the council. Five of the youth clubs only give short information concerning opening times and who is responsible. Their homepages seem to be made from a technical mould. About five are more inviting, as they present pictures of their activities and invite the reader to interact.

There is also a third category. These youth clubs have pages, which are very rich in information and messages. One example, Brickebacken, presents under the heading “Come to
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our youth club” its mission and information about activities and excursions in a colourful way with pictures from an art gallery. One can also read about the possibilities young people have to give their own suggestions about activities (www.foreningen-tradet.se).

We believe it as important that our young citizens can feel safe and comfortable visiting our facilities. We strive to achieve that our visitors shall take responsibility, and feel that they are a part of and understand that they can influence and make their voice heard. Welcome with own suggestions, and we will try to fulfil them (www.foreningen-tradet.se).

From the perspective of qualitative content analysis, this is an example of interpersonal aspects of interaction. It shows how different authorities talk to their citizens and how the young people at the youth clubs are talked to. In the aims of Brickebacken the youth club is mentioned as a place for communication, where you can be with other visitors in a private way.

It is not only the bigger councils that have clubs with elaborated homepages. The following is an example of how a lot of clubs present themselves on the Internet. It is from the smallest of the councils, Munkfors. “The youth club is a meeting place for Munkfors’ young citizens. They come here to meet over a cup of tea or coffee, watch TV, listen to music, surf on the Internet, or maybe to play table tennis or billiard or just to hang out” (www.Munkfors.se).

The text and the pictures contain information about what is believed to attract young people, like meeting friends, listening to music and playing some games. The youth leaders are just anonymous persons signing the message.

Other examples of differences in the way the councils present their options can be mentioned. For example Uppsala local council has a detailed guide about all its leisure activities in the municipality with facts about their accessibility. The activity guide is said to be a way for the council to meet disabled citizens’ needs for accessible leisure activities. In Sundsvall local council, all activities for both children and young people are listed in a guide called Childrens’ Sundsvall (Barnens Sundsvall). In this different leisure activities are presented. Haninge local council has what is marketed as an easy-to-read brochure with information about leisure activities for all ages. The brochure seems to be developed to meet needs from citizens who require information more easily written, for example, immigrants who do not have Swedish as their mother tongue. The headline of the brochure is “Culture and leisure information for citizens’ who are in need of extra support” (www.Haninge.se, 3).

Pedagogical ambitions

As I have shown in the theoretical chapter, when education for citizenship is discussed the pedagogical methods used are considered. The leisure sector has by tradition been focused on fostering young people into decent citizens (Biesta, Lawy & Kelly, 2009; Olsson, 1992). Open leisure activities in the youth clubs were developed as a method to reach this goal (see Ardstöm, 2001 and Laxvik, 2006). A question is if this is acknowledged by the local councils and visible in the documents. In the material there are few concrete examples of how methods are addressed. It is possible to talk about two different kinds of orientation seen in the documents that is activity and process orientation. As seen in the Table 4 below both these orientations is found more or less in all local councils.
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Table 4. Pedagogical ambitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local councils</th>
<th>Orientation towards activities</th>
<th>Orientation towards processes</th>
<th>Both orientation activities and processes</th>
<th>Necessity of educated staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lu</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>L, H, U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The letters stand for U=Uppsala, H=Haninge, Lu=Lund, G=Göteborg, Su=Sundsvall, Ö=Örebro, Mo=Motala, M=Munkfors, Li=Linköping, B=Boden.

The most common priority is to present a lot of activities to the young citizens on the homepages. Lund local council, however, in its writings seems to give priority to work with processes to fulfil their aims. In the document "Political strategy for the young" (www.Lund.se, 3) it is written that both formal and informal learning are important for young people and their progress. A priority is given to a method named adventure pedagogy and adventure storytelling. These methods focus on promoting personal growth, group processes and cooperation. On the same page it is also written that a method named "The workbook" has been used to let young people in Lund formulate questions to the politicians. The idea is to find out which questions that are of importance for the youth citizens and to create a dialogue around those. “The workbook is a method to, through open questionnaires, have a dialogue with many people” (www.Lund.se, 3).

In Motala, another method is used, called coaching. It is written in the local council’s homepage that "Coaching is used to develop young people's social competence, help them to build networks, and to take responsibility for their own lives and for their future" (www.Motala.se). Special staff helps young people between 16 and 24 years to work out individual plans and give advices about work, study or practice. It is written in the documents that coaching may be a way to strengthen young people's self-confidence. The aim of fostering is very predominant in the texts. In the documents an individualistic perspective on the youths’ development is expressed.

The importance of competent staff is addressed in other documents, too. In the document Open leisure activities in Lund it is pointed out that "/ … the personnel shall have education but also qualification to be able to fulfil aims and intentions for open leisure activities." It is further stated that those having special skills can be a resource at the youth clubs and it is added that it is important to be able to continuously improve the staff's competence (www.Lund.se, 2).

Haninge local council also stresses the importance of competent staff. It is written in Aims and budget 2008-2009 that "/ … it is necessary with pedagogically educated leisure leaders who may work continuously with the young and be able to build a long term relation" (www.Haninge.se, 1). In Uppsala local council on the homepage of KFUM Hornet’s youth club there are statements about the staff.

The youth leaders must be good. Of course good leaders are the most important for a successful group. The youth leaders must have competence about youth living conditions, they must be educated in subjects of concern. They must be involved to a degree more than what is usually needed ... / (www.Uppsala.se).
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Another aspect of quality mentioned in the text is that staff are offered supervision. In these documents statements are made about the importance of educated staff. This is not self evident at the youth clubs, where it is common to have temporary personal.

Norms and values

As was illustrated in the previous section, there are differences in the way the texts on the homepages are written, but in most cases directly or indirectly expressed norms and values can be found in the documents. The most common values are about democracy, which includes writings about dialogue, participation and influence. An overall concern about young people's responsibility and self confidence is also seen in documents. The extents to which these concepts are mentioned in the documents of the local councils are listed in the Table 5.

Table 5. Norms and values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norms and values</th>
<th>Amount of Local councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>SU Ö H LU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>LU U MO O H G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>LU U LI H B G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>ALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self confidence</td>
<td>Ö</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The letters stand for U=Uppsala, H=Haninge, Lu=Lund, G=Göteborg, Su=Sundsvall, Ö=Örebro, Mo=Motala, M=Munkfors, Li=Linköping, B=Boden.

The word democracy is frequently used in all local councils. From the table one can see that the local councils also frequently use the words influence, participation and responsibility when talking about the youths.

Participation and dialogue

The matter of young people's influence and participation seems to be a main issue as texts about this are seen directly or indirectly in all local councils. In almost every local council special assemblies (ungdomsråd) through which young people can exert influence are presented on the homepages. They are titled in different ways such as "Forum for young", "Board of youth", "Youth advisement" etc. but the purpose is the same. These forums are described as a possibility for young people to practice their ability to think critically, to make their voice heard and to have a chance to influence and to be involved.

An overall concern about young people’s involvement, participation, dialogue and influence is, for example, seen in documents from Haninge local council. On the homepage called facts about the youth assembly the politicians declare that a youth council will be developed. It is stated that the possibilities to influence will be widened through the development of a web site on the Internet as a channel for dialogue.

The overall aim is to increase young citizens’ engagement and influence through participation, dialogue and effects. This can be achieved through goals such as development of the youth
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council, the youth assembly, a forum where politicians and youths can meet and finally through

Örebro local council has taken another step towards local democracy in the community. A
steering document, a decision taken by the local council’s board, is presented with the
intention of deepening the dialogue with the citizens. A special program for developing
democracy, which aims to develop citizens’ influence and participation, has been
implemented. This is presented on the homepage under the link Politics and democracy in the
following way:

We strive to deepen democracy in order to allow more citizens to be involved in the decisions.
Citizens’ participation, influence and responsibility are conditions for a good society. As many as
possible of the citizens in Örebro shall be given opportunities to talk with and work together with
politicians and civil servants. Planning and the decision making process shall be looked upon as a
dialogue where all participants can learn from each other. Dialogue takes time, but it also creates a
strong democracy, a so-called "participatory democracy" (www.Orebro.se, 1).

They state in the text that people's participation, influence and responsibility are necessary for
a good society. Furthermore, they argue that as many citizens as possible should meet
politicians and civil servants for a dialogue or/and to work together. It is further written that
the planning and decision-making processes shall be seen as a dialogue in which all
participants can learn from each other. "Dialogue takes time, but it also creates a strong
democracy, a so-called "participatory democracy" (www.Orebro.se, 1). It is subsequently
stated in the text that all larger decisions are undertaken after a dialogue with the citizens. The
reasons for that, the text claims, is a special interest from the politicians and civil servants in
getting the perspectives of children and young people. This is an example of how politicians
and civil servants express their interest in getting to know how young people want to live their
lives. These texts are loaded with values and arguments.

Another way of meeting the need for a dialogue with young people is found in Uppsala. The
local council arranges meetings between the politicians and the youths twice a year.

The meeting place. Do not let other people make the talks for you. Did you know that Uppsala
local council’s politicians must listen to us youths before they make any decisions that concern us.
The meeting place is the place where you talk and politicians listen before they make any
decisions. The meeting place is arranged twice a year. What we are discussing next time is up to
you how you decide to participate (www.Uppsala.se).

The document named meeting place on Uppsala local council’s homepage informing of this,
gives a clear statement that the young people themselves decide the agenda. It is also said in
the text that the politicians must listen to young people before they make decisions about
questions that concern the youths. There is also a request to the young reader to observe that
this time they should be the ones to talk and the politicians should listen. The message of the
text is directed both to the politicians and the youths and the statements are very clear. All the
quoted texts express the norms of a representative democracy, in which the citizens should
engage in a dialogue with the politicians. Besides, the texts seem to mirror a concern about
getting to know the opinions of the young people in the council (www.Uppsala.se).

Linköping local council declared in an activity plan and quality accounting document from
2006, that "/ … young people participate in the whole process from coming up with ideas of
new activities to planning, implementation and evaluating" (www.Linkoping.se, 1). The
message in the text is quite vague and does not say anything about what this participation
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means. However, an evaluation, a report for quality accounting, is presented in Linköping which shows that young people participated more than expected in the design of a new hall for open leisure activities. “Youth are participating more than what we had expected from the beginning” (www.Linköping.se, 2). This is one of few concrete examples of information in the texts about the real effect of the efforts to let young people participate and influence. The values put forward, and which can be understood from the text, are that young people are capable.

On the home pages there is a great ambition expressed to investigate the youths’ experiences and to listen to their opinions. The youth assemblies are a way to meet with the young. Another type of channels which help the politicians to get to know what young people want are special sites on the Internet, which are seen in almost every local councils’ homepage. The young citizens have access to these communities, discussion channels or chats but the interesting question is how frequently these channels are used. I have tried to find out if young people do take the opportunity to participate in the local debates. An example is the latest contribution to the youth adviser chat in the City centre of Gothenburg which was made in year 2005. There had not been any activities at all during 2006 and 2007. Sundsvall local council has an Internet community named “Young in Sundsvall’s Community” (Ung i Sundsvalls Community) and an online guest book (www.ungisundsvall.se). The community has had one single comment since 2005. It is the same within the online guest book established in 2004. Only one single person has written in it during this period. These examples indicate that the councils are not successful in getting a dialogue with young citizens on the Internet.

In some of the documents the text is patronizing and explains to the youths that they must take initiative and exploit the channels they have got. As shown in several of the documents, young people are invited to give their opinion about matters that concern them. To let them have a say in matters of general concern is not that easy, something which the following example shows. It is written in the minutes of a meeting between the youth council and representatives from the local council that the youth representatives asked why they did not get any matters from the board to discuss, although they were supposed to be a consultative body. The answer from the politician, seen in the minutes, was that the previous youth council did not work out as expected. Hence, they had forgotten to invite the youth council to give its opinions in general questions. The meeting decided directly to write to the local council board and explain that they now had a working youth council and that they were prepared to work as a consultative body (www.Boden.se). This type of information is, however, rare on the homepages and mostly the texts are about democratic rules procedures and norms. It is possible to say that these texts are more statements and facts than about values.

Since the 1970s, the youth clubs are seen as forums for practicing democracy through club assemblies and regular decision meetings. Even in these homepages a youth club is often presented as a place “/ … where you can practice democracy, become a citizen and be a part of our society” (www.Lund.se, 2). What this means is that the visitors decide about the activities at the youth club in a formalized way. Again, the value of practicing formal democracy is put forward. Örebro local council mentions on a page that the youth club Vasagården shall promote young citizens’ democratic upbringing and participation in the youth clubs activities (www2.Orebro.se).

Common values for open leisure activities presented in the documents are all about citizens’ equal value, respect for the common environment, and solidarity with marginalised. Lund
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local council writes: “Open leisure activities have as an assignment to anchor and mediate the fundamental democratic values that our society rest on”. Furthermore, “/... leisure shall promote an individual sense of justice, tolerance, generosity and responsibilities” (www.Lund.se, 2).

A long rooted norm of the youth clubs are that they should be free of charge and thus an alternative to commercial meeting places for youths. This is expressed as an example in the aims of the culture and leisure board from Sundsvall local council which states that all citizens have the same value and the same possibilities.

Sundsvall shall develop as a local council with high quality of life and great possibilities for their citizens to take part of, practice or contribute in culture and leisure activities. A starting point shall be that all people have the same value and shall be given the same possibility to take or have part of the culture and leisure activities that are offered them (www.Sundsvall.se, 2).

This value is indirectly stated in the leisure political program of Uppsala local council too, where it is written:

Leisure politics shall contribute to the fact that all, independent of age, gender, ethnicity or functional limitation shall have possibilities to have a meaningful and developing leisure. Grownups and children in families with short education and low salaries are spending less time with physical activities than families with a higher income. Fewer children in these families are engaged in associations. Leisure politics shall be worked out to stimulate all to a meaningful leisure time. High fees shall not disqualify anyone from leisure activities (www.Uppsala.se, 2).

Nowadays, however, a lot of youth clubs have a membership fee for visitors taking part in club activities. The cost for a membership card lies between 50 and 80 Swedish crowns per year and the card can often be used at all the clubs in the same municipality. Some places have differentiated taxes for younger visitors. The fees are quite low so the norm can still be said to let everyone have access. There are no arguments in the documents about the fees. It seems to be accepted as it is enough low not to keep anybody outside.

Safe and meaningful leisure

Other values and norms that are emphasized by the local councils are the issues of drug prevention and safety. In Uppsala, as an example, where the use of drugs is increasing, the authorities make statements about this issue. In the so-called drug political policy one can find the following quotation:

An indulgent and permissive attitude to drugs from our society can have the consequence that the problem of drugs will increase. Even the connection between different drugs such as tobacco – alcohol – drugs, are scientifically imposed (www.Uppsala.se, 5).

In a similar way, the educational board in Motala writes in the aims, directions and results from 2008 that leisure time and leisure activities shall be safe for the visitors in terms of drugs, bullying and other inequalities and also be a physically safe place. The documents further state that to be able to fulfil this aim they need youth leaders or youth workers and talk about their job assignment as follows: ”/... their mission is to be at places where adults are scarce” (www.Motala.se, 3). The message appears to emphasise the importance of adults being present in the environment where young people congregate.
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A similar type of norm is expressed in the homepage of Hagagården in Örebro local council. It is written that:

Staff shall be a good model and be a part of discussions around different questions such as: democracy, norms and rules, citizens' equal value and the way people talk to each other. It is the youth leaders that should be the bearer of democratic norms and social values. / ... / We want the young people to feel that we have time for them, that we as staff can sit down and listen to them, both individually and in groups (www2.Orebro.se).

In the last sentence the value of a personal dialogue is seen and this is put forward in an inviting manner.

The importance of the youth leaders is also addressed in other documents. In Sundsvall, it is written in the leisure and culture board’s aims that the staff’s task is to create good relations between the leaders and the visitors.

Arrangements in free forms are supposed to facilitate and to give room for meetings, which may create good relations between different groups of young people and between the youths and the adults. The activities shall build on democratic values and young people shall have great influence on planning and implementation. Activities shall have a firm structure and adults shall act as good role models for the youth group (www.Sundsvall.se, 4).

It is also written that they work proactively to counteract violence at the clubs. Destructive behaviour such as bullying is handled through an action plan, which is presented on the homepage (www.Sundsvall.se). The values expressed in the text are that destructive behaviour is not accepted.

However there are also pictures of young citizens as users of drugs or having other problems. This is seen both directly and indirectly as cooperation with the local police and the social authorities are mentioned. In Sundsvall, Ljusta activity centre writes about the work against the use of drugs. Bredsands youth club writes about taking contact with parents or others when problems arise involving alcohol, drugs, bullying, threats and violence. “We promise to take contact with parents and other adults when problems arises involving alcohol, drugs, bullying, threats and violence” (www.ungisundsvall.se). From the quotation one can see that all authorities cooperate to solve the problems.

Summary

My research has shown that there are big differences in the way the documents are written depending on whom the producer is and what type of document it is. Pages addressed to young people are often more flashy and colourful while pages to the administration are often rather formal. An analysis of written documents on the local councils’ homepages about young people's development and possibilities show that there seems to be an ambition to let leisure activities contribute to young people's citizenship. In the texts young citizens’ possibilities to influence, to participate in and to take responsibility for activities are mentioned. The importance of also having a dialogue with the young people and about participating in democracy is mentioned. Furthermore, the documents indicate intentions to encourage good relations between youths and grownups and support efforts for safe and meaningful leisure experiences.
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In this research I have also been interested in studying the pedagogical methods that are expressed in the documents. This issue is, however, sparsely addressed in the texts although it is an important question for developing young people as citizens. A few examples of some methods are given, the aim of which is to empower young people. To which extent these are used at the youth clubs are not seen on the youth clubs’ own pages. There is a concern in the documents about the quality of the youth leaders and it is stated that education and training are important. Based on the presentations in the documents of the local councils, it is my impression that the activities and contents are more dominant in the texts than talk about processes. However, processes that are said to develop the visitors as citizens can also be seen.

Target groups

When the local councils produce texts about the leisure sector on their homepages and the range of activities they have to offer, they must have some ideas about who will be using the facilities and what is attractive to these users. In the local councils’ documents there are more or less explicit assumptions about the character of young people today. Who the target group is and what activities the young people will be interested in are central.

Images of the youth

As I described in the theoretical chapter, the assumptions about today’s youths is that they are individualistic, sensitive to the surroundings. Furthermore, that youth quickly change preferences and express their ideological standpoints through creative work and events at festivals. This picture can be seen in the documents. It is possible to talk about an underlying image of the youths from the way the texts talk about the young people of the council.

Young people are supposed to have different life styles, be creative and to be interested in using what new information technology can offer. This is as an example seen in Uppsala. The leisure and nature board states in its plans and mission for 2007-2011 that young people are sensitive to trends and often change their lifestyles.

New forms of activities among young people put demands on new facilities in the council. The youths, who do not want to join sport clubs, instead are interested in open areas for skateboarding, beach volley, and boule (www.Uppsala.se, 6).

Evidently the local board has been sensitive to the pictures that are given of young people from different authorities and media, and tries to meet what is foreseen as new demands on leisure options.

A way to reach the interest of young people, suggested in some of the documents, is by enabling creative work. This is recognized in some of the bigger councils, where young people are offered access to a recording studio and a theatre scene to produce their own musical or movie. On the homepage in the city centre of Gothenburg, the leisure board strategies of one of the youth clubs are presented in the following way: “Meeths in the middle of the town is starting again. Come and play your own music, work in the art studio, film
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studio, photo lab, wood working room, edit music and videos, work with ceramics, learn about DJ-equipment” (www.Goteborg.se).

The text clearly gives a picture of young people as creative and artistic. In Haninge e.g. the youths are offered to learn about art, painting and photography (www.Haninge.se) and in Lund one of the youth cafés has a gallery, where the visitors can exhibit their own work.

Wickmanska is described on the page (www.Lund.se) as a cosy and cheap café were one can take a Café Latte or a cup of tea.

No necessity to buy! You can buy just when you want to. At Wickmanska there is also an “inner place”. It is a place where young people can fix (meckta) with a lot of things such as painting pottery, or sewing. Wickmanska are also following the latest news on internet – wi-fi without any cost (www.Lund.se).

One can also read that Wickmanska keeps up with the latest Internet. They have a wireless Internet hotspot.

A notion about what young people want to do also characterizes the provision of other types of facilities for young people. Linköping as an example announces about "Hangaren Hot Sport Center" on the page where the council’s meeting places are presented. The description below shows all the different possibilities that an activity house like this can offer.

Hangaren has something to offer for all regardless of age. Here you have the opportunity to skate with in-lines, skateboard or ride BMX or why not just take a cup of coffee/soda in our café. Besides being a skate hall Hangaren also has a sport hall where young people among other things can jump on a trampoline and participate in dance courses. We also arrange discos in the sport hall on several occasions during autumn- and spring term. All activities in the hall are of course run in a drug and smoke free environment. In Hangaren one can find a climbing wall run by Linköping's climbing associations (www.Linkoping.se).

The style of the text is inviting and the text enumerates a lot of different activities. It is not just new sport activities that are offered but also disco and dance, which may attract the girls.

A sensitivity to new trends and lifestyles among young citizens is seen in the city regions, particular the councils near to Stockholm, such as Haninge, Uppsala and Linköping. The need for events and festivals as well as activity parks is identified. For example “Elsas Hus”, a culture and media house or the music house “Skylten” in Linköping local council.

In the leisure and nature conservation plan and in the leisure political program in Uppsala’s local council it is written that “Uppsala’s official venues with streets, parks, marketplaces and other facilities are useful arenas for festivals and other events” (www.Uppsala.se, 2 and 6). This is a presumption about the possibilities of the outdoor places and there are arguments which state that outdoor events in the city may create a common identity and make it possible for the citizens to meet and to enjoy themselves.

Age groups

The youth are often classified as persons between 15 to 25 years of age (Waara, 1996; Bohlin, 2003). Ungdomsstyrelsen (2002) uses the age range 13 to 30 years, when discussing politics
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for young people. Which age groups the local councils have in mind when talking about the youths can be seen in the following table (6).

Table 6. The age of the target group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local councils</th>
<th>All ages</th>
<th>Up to 20</th>
<th>Up to 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The letters stand for U=Uppsala, H=Haninge, Lu=Lund, G= Göteborg, Su=Sundsvall, Ö=Örebro, Mo=Motala, M=Munkfors, Li=Linköping, B=Boden.

From the table it is possible to say that all local councils more or less support activities for young citizens up to 20. In some local councils the term includes all ages or activities up to 25 years. A clear pattern is that small local councils supply activities for all ages. The activities are often described as aimed at "all young people". Larger local councils talk more about groups of young citizens, such as young people up to 16 years or young people up to 20 years.

As an example the documents from the local council in Lund expresses in the aims that: "All who are interested shall have possibilities to join open leisure activities" (www.Lund.se, 1-3). However, a lot of the activities are directed to different age groups. The Youth clubs in general are meant for young people between 14 and 18 years, but there are clubs for children from grade 6 (about age 12) up to high school age (16). The word leisure clubs (fritidsklubb) is more commonly used when the documents refer to activities and meeting places for children from grade 6. Meeting places for the older youths are often called “The house of youths”, “The house of all activities” or just “The meeting place”. In the small local councils as for example Boden with 28 000 inhabitants and Munkfors with 3 936 inhabitants, the local council runs just one single "House of Youth" for all young people in the municipality. It must be a definite challenge to have open leisure activities for different ages in the same leisure arena.

Accessibility

Still, if the documented activities are aimed at all young people most of the councils address the matter of accessibility and equality when formulating goals. In a lot of the documents there are ambitions expressed to cater for all citizens, including those who have certain needs. Many of the local councils raise the question in their documents about those citizens for whom accessibility and availability may be problematic. On the local council's home page in Lund (www.Lund.se) it is written that the council wants to be an inclusive community with facilities adapted for disabled citizens. A program, which is called "All are winners", is presented with the following aim:

/ ... peoples with disabilities shall have many possibilities to influence their own lives. With the concept "all are winners" it will be easier to discover what people can do together with others who are living or staying in Lund. Lund works towards being an inclusive local council, both in physical meaning and in the way of thinking (www.Lund.se).
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It is further stated that "Inclusion is a climate that accepts different values and takes care of the possibilities that differences give" (www.Lund.se). This is an ideological statement and in line with what the LSS states.

In some councils, the responsibility to meet the needs of special groups has resulted in certain arrangements. Both in Sundsvall and Uppsala there are separate activities intended for young people who are disabled and in Haninge one of the youth clubs has a special mission to cater for socially disturbed youth. This is written on the page of one of the youth clubs: "It was possible, thanks to the LSS, to open a special section for children and youth with Aspersgers syndrome" (www.Haninge.se, 1-2). Another Youth Club is organized for disabled young people aged 7-25, where they are offered horse riding, exercising with wheel chairs, something called "halliwick swimming", and other playful activities (www.Haninge.se, 2). At the same time, texts are written on the page about the ambition to integrate leisure activities for disabled young people in ordinary open leisure activities at the youth clubs. "Disabled young can find integrated activities at several youth clubs and meeting places" (www.Haninge.se, 2, 8). This is a contradiction because in the above quoted document the opposite is suggested. In Haninge, the council has not chosen to be inclusive but instead cater for separate activities for the handicapped. This is another type of ideological standpoint compared to what is seen from Lund. The difference is that Lund local council makes an ideological statement that a society should be inclusive for all. In Haninge, on the other hand, the local council seems to have identified the special needs of certain groups and has chosen to establish facilities and activities for these groups. The fact that separate youth clubs for young citizens with a diagnosis are established is something that needs to be discussed and I will come back to this in my discussion.

Another aspect of accessibility is raised in the documents of almost half of the councils, namely gender. In Sundsvall, as an example, the ambitions are expressed in Political program for sports and leisure as follows: "Boys and girls shall be given equal opportunities to actively engage in sports and outdoor life. Today girls often choose other leisure activities than boys, but there shall be equal opportunities" (www.Sundsvall.se, 2).

In Sundsvall the idea of separate opening hours for girls has been on trial. This is presented on the home page of Young in Sundsvall. "Every Tuesday evening we have groups for girls with themes like ghosts, make-up and gender equality" (www.ungisundsvall.se).

Vasagården in Örebro local council has special groups for girls (www.orebro.se). "No Remorse" is a hard rock Café open just for girls in Haninge (www.haninge.se) and in Lund the girls have their own girls' exhibition (www.Lund.se). It seems as if group activities for girls are taken for granted, but there is very little written about separate groups for boys. One example is found in Örebro local council where groups for both girls and for boys are presented (www.Orebro.se). In Uppsala, there is also a youth club that has one day per week especially for girls and one for boys (www.Uppsala.se). I have not found any writings about the goals and aims with these separate activities. They are just presented as something unproblematic and seem to rest on the underlying notion that separate groups are of benefit for girls in particular.

Neither the issue of new cultural groups nor the issue of ethnicity is raised in the documents about the youth clubs. However, the matter of integration independent of social and ethnic background is mentioned in some documents. One example is found in Örebro local council, where there are writings about integration and of the creation of meeting places for young
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citizens regardless of background. “Integration is a target for the youth clubs. The activities shall for example be run in cooperation with external actors to create meeting places for more young people regardless of their background” (www2.Orebro.se).

To fulfill aims about integration, the council in the political culture program for Örebro local council is said to cooperate with external actors. Another example is the sport program of Haninge local council. Under the headline integration, one can read the proposition that sport clubs have unique possibilities to reach citizens regardless of their background (www.Haninge.se, 2). That sport is an integrating activity is something that seems to be taken for granted in the documents. It is in line with a common unproblematized notion in the society.

Offerings and facilities

To a great extent, all activities and strategies which the local councils are responsible for are presented in the different documents, both as separate documents or as texts on general pages. The strategies differ due to the size of the local councils. In the smaller ones the leisure and culture board often presents a list of what is provided on the homepages. In the smaller local councils, the activities supplied are often traditional ones with a special focus on sports and outdoor activities. The main difference between the councils is that young people in larger local councils have access to more leisure activities. There are more places to go to and a broader supply of activities to choose between. In Uppsala, as an example, there are more than 20 youth clubs, cafés and other meeting places for youths between ages 13-18. Events that take place at the youth clubs are football, indoor hockey, rock concerts, disco, organised hikes, billiard, fishing, role-play games, trips, computer games, board games, baking and coffee breaks and much more (www.Uppsala.se). There seems to be an idea that young people need a lot of different activities, or they will get bored. More diversified activities and especially creative activities are often offered in the larger local councils. A wish to give young people good opportunities to participate in different cultural events and make their own creations of music, art and theatre is expressed.

Internet

As previously stated Gallagher and Hafner (2008) mentioned that by using modern technology it would be possible to make citizens aware of governmental activities and bring them into the decision-making process thereby also bring the government closer to the people. This is something which has been practised on young people, too, which the local councils seem to know about.

Almost all youth clubs offer young people free use of computers, which can be used for playing or surfing on the Internet. In Sundsvall there is an internet café run by the local council (www.cyberia.se). In the page for Café Wickmanska in Lund it is stated that "Surfing is free on all our computers and if you instead prefer to use your own laptop surfing is also free” (www.Lund.se).

In Sundsvall, the document aims from the board of leisure and culture further state that investments in information technology in most of the youth clubs have given the visitors the
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possibility to contact with young people in Europe. A program named "Youth in action" is described as a chance for the young both to visit, and to receive, visitors and trainees from other countries (www.Sundsvall.se.4).

In Sundsvall, the necessity of influencing the attitudes of young people, when they use the Internet is also mentioned in the documents. (www.ungisundsvall.se) To accomplish this ambition a computer program is used, which check the language of the youths. Ljusta activity centre writes: "Attitudes. We use tools such as www.neteyy.se (IT support program) to actively influence the language of the young" (www.ungisundsvall.se).

In Linköping local council, a document on the homepage talks about international exchange as exciting and fun and furthermore about the possibility for the youths to visit other countries, meet other people, and learn about new cultures. It is stated in the document that this will give the possibility to learn a new language and to develop social competence. There is also an announcement about working as a volunteer at youth clubs in a European country. The advertisement says "Do you have energy, time and an interest for international exchange? Are you young between 18 and 25 years old? Then you can work as a volunteer in Europe" (www.Linkoping.se). This can be seen as a concrete example of how the Swedish membership in the European Union has widened the possibilities for the youth clubs to take part in a European exchange.

Outdoor activities

A lot of councils also offer outdoor activities for their citizens. In document aims from the leisure- and natural board in Uppsala local council, it is written that investments in the structure of green areas contribute to experiences, curiosity and knowledge about nature and environmental values. There are offers about areas for recreation and health. “In the building of the good city the board have to protect green structures, increase the accessibility of high quality areas for recreation, visiting the nature and to create meaningful leisure activities” (www.Uppsala.se, 6).

Some local councils have built cottages situated close to nature, which can be used for overnight activities during the whole year (see www.Orebro.se). In Sundsvall e.g., different kinds of what are called “experience arrangements” are arranged at a nearby wilderness camp (www.Sundsvall.se). Uppsala local council announces that they have a common camping ground named “Camp Östberga” where young people can canoe, barbecue or go on the adventure track. It is written that the youth clubs activities move to a nearby bathing area during the summer guarded by engaged parents (www.ungisundsvall.se). From the texts it seems that local councils are interested in supporting outdoor activities to fulfil aims about sustainability and to increase young citizen’s knowledge about nature and environmental values. In my licentiate thesis, Lindström (2006) the concern about citizens possibilities for recreation were also seen in all documents.

Funds

Another type of strategy that is presented in the documents is financial support, which the youth can apply for when starting different projects. The bigger local councils have funds for
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young people to use for projects like concerts, events, and adventures which can have positive effects on their citizenship.

This type of money is found in many of the local councils under different names. In Linköping it is named "Youth check account". In Örebro it is called "Young penguin" and in Sundsvall "Young pot". In Linköping e.g., the applicable amount of money is from 500 to 5 000 Swedish crowns for each project. Uppsala local council has a total sum of 25 000 Swedish crowns to give out. Haninge local council has also a limit of 25 000 Swedish crowns, which one single person can apply for. It is not that lot of money but still it give the youths a possibility to realize some of their ideas.

Uppsala local council invites young people at the homepage to apply: "At our local council you can apply for an amount of money for different activities for young people" (www.Uppsala.se). Linköping local council has stated that the applicants must be between 13-20 years old and form a group of at least two (www.Linkoping.se). Sundsvall local council is inviting young people to organise a group of friends to apply for money for arranging concerts, theatre performances or making films (www.ungpott.se).

These funds are announced in the documents as a way of raising participation and to support young people's initiatives. On the homepages of both Linköping and Örebro local councils it is said to be a way for the local politicians to meet the needs and expectations of the visitors. The following example from Örebro local council gives more detailed advice to the young citizens. The information is found on the local council’s homepage under the link named "Young money".

Young citizens between 13-24 years can apply for money to organize events for other youths. The events must be free of drugs, religious and political propaganda. They must be performed in Örebro and it is not possible to search for school projects or for sports events (www.Orebro.se).

There is another example from Haninge local council, where the information is found on the council’s homepage under the link named Youth council. It is stated that the 25 000 crowns are for young citizens who are interested in realizing an idea but do not have money to do so. It claims that it can be any kind of event but some examples are given such as playing theatre, music, making a newspaper or having an exhibition.

These funds are presented as a way of enhancing democracy and promoting citizenship. It is further stated that whether it will be successful or not depends on the involvement of the young people themselves. It will depend on what the money is used for and how many young people at the youth clubs the funds will attract. These statements are ideological and show a trust in young people by letting them have access to money. The idea of a single person being able to apply for a lot of money can, however, be discussed critically. The sum varies between the different councils. There do not seem to be any restrictions concerning what projects will be funded. Only the amount of money offered puts a limitation on what can be done.

A place just to hang around

From the local councils’ own investigations often called the “leisure investigation” about people’s leisure time patterns and habits, they obtain an idea of citizens’ expectations concerning the demand for leisure activities. Based on these investigations local councils or other producers of leisure services expect that citizens will use certain leisure facilities if they
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are established. For the young people in the councils the view of the needs and expectations of
the young influences what actually is offered to them. As mentioned earlier traditionally, the
youth clubs were arranged for young people who were not interested in joining member
associations. This notion is found in Sundsvall as an example. The strategic document from
the local council, with the title “Aims from the culture and leisure board 2004 and 2007”,
states that the youth clubs first of all are for the young people, who are more attracted by open
leisure activities rather than leisure associations with organized activities. The texts states that
in the clubs young people can come and go whenever they want during opening hours.

The youth clubs are mostly for groups of youths that prefer leisure activities that are unplanned.
Activities aim to give young people’s possibilities to just “be” at the youth club without doing any
organized activity. The youth club shall be a place where young people can meet with their friends
and with adults in an environment where they are able to build up good relations
(www.Sundsvall.se, 4).

The message of the text mirrors the idea that the youths at youth clubs are different from other
young people and that they only need a place to be at where they can meet with friends. A
value statement is added about building good relations with adults. Though the club is
presented as a place where the youths can come and go as they like, it still has an aim.

This is obvious in the following quotation from Sundsvall local council’s homepage: "A
guiding star is that all activities must fulfil the aims from the local council about youth and
leisure activities which is “a club for all”” (www.ungisundsvall.se). The sentence “a club for
all” is a value statement, which indicates no limitations of visitors. On the same page there are
statements about the needs of the youths as it is written that they should have possibilities to
develop their interests and also be physically active (www.ungisundsvall.se).

On Munkfors local council’s homepage, the issue of what expectations the youths have is
evident in the following formulation:

The youth club is a meeting place for young people in Munkfors. Young people come here for a
cup of coffee, to watch TV, listen to music, surf on the Internet, maybe play table tennis and
billiards or just to mingle. In the cafeteria you can find coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches, candies and
ice cream to buy at a reasonable price (www.Munkfors.se).

There do not seem to be any demands on the visitors at all. They are just addressed as
consumers. Another example of how the users are addressed is found in Boden local council.
The information given to the young people is more like a statement:

The house of youth is situated in the old fire station on the road “Strandplan”. Here you can meet
youth leaders working in the cafe and they also arrange different activities. In the hall divided into
two sections you can find among others things a billiard table, ping pong table, facilities for
handicraft, music room and dance hall (www.Boden.se).

The activities listed indicate what interests the youth are expected to have. Both these councils
are very small and the activities are directed to all young people between the ages of 15-25.
That might be the reason why there are no explicit aims and goals.

Healthy development

In some of the local councils the documents openly writes about the need of the young to
strengthen their self image and personal skills and that they are dependent on qualified
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leaders. As an example, Haninge local council writes in its aims and budget for the culture and leisure board 2008-2009 that open leisure activities are an arena where young people can strengthen their personal skills and develop as citizens. “If open leisure activities shall be an arena where young people can strengthen their personal skills and develop as citizens it is important to continue to focus on the youth leaders’ role” (www.Haninge.se, 1). It is further stated that “This will put demand on pedagogically educated youth leaders, who will be able to continuously and in long term build relations capital” (www.Haninge.se, 1). Furthermore “... if this should be the focus, a lot depends on the leaders and their skills in fulfilling the aims” (www.Haninge.se, 1).

The importance of the leaders is underlined in the text. This text is one of the few where the concept citizen is mentioned in connection with the youths. The importance of educated youth leaders is mentioned as well. In “Political strategy for the young, 2006” (www.Lund.se, 3) and the mission from the culture and leisure board from 2005 local council state that: “Open leisure activities shall foster individuals to be sensitive to justice, tolerance, generosity and responsibility” (www.Lund.se, 2). The text mirrors strong values and a conviction that this fostering is needed.

There is also another matter that some of the councils touch on in the documents namely health and the prevention of crime and drugs. Young people are seen to be in need of support to be able to withstand the temptation of drugs and crime. The city centre of Gothenburg is one example of a local council that is interested in working with strategies for health and to reduce the use of drugs and crime. A Little social welfare office (Lilla socialbyrån) and a unit named Social unit (Sociala enheten) are established that works to secure that the local council puts into practice laws such as LSS. The text states that:

/ … through a health fostering strategy the city centre of Gothenburg will prevent insecurity, criminality, drugs and unhealthy living. / ... / To avoid the increased use of drugs and criminality all forces must pull in the same direction. In the City of Gothenburg schools, social services, the field of leisure, parents, police, associations, single citizens and business industry must cooperate to create a safe environment” (www.Göteborg.se).

It is notable that the term “fostering” is used in the document. Although not all councils openly state the aim of preventing crime and drugs, all of them have some organization to implement this. It can be field workers, walking on the streets, special teams to meet young citizens at their meeting places or some civil servants who have a special assignment to be part of the social emergency group. In the text the need for collaboration is often mentioned. Club leaders, police, human service agencies and other authorities in the local society should work together to nip the problems in the bud. One example is the quality accounting from the local council in Linköping where it is written that “/ ... social services and leisure activities shall be complimentary activities and be resources for each other” (www.Linköping.se, 2).

The city centre of Gothenburg writes in the documents entitled goal and objective/budget 2007 and long-term planning for Gothenburg City centre 2008-2009, about organizing youth clubs if there is a need for them. “Centrum shall create open meeting places for youths through the establishment of youth clubs were it is needful” (www.Goteborg.se, 1).

However, it is not expressed in the document which special needs actually could lead to the establishment of a youth club. Subsequently, it is said that a club can be arranged in connection to a school for young people to have something to do after the school day. So the
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needs can be presumed to be something to keep the young away from messing around after school. This is in line with other documents talking about prevention.

Summary

In this section I have presented what is directed to the user of the leisure facilities in the local councils in the different documents. The documents show that the size of the population and other socioeconomic questions influence what young people are provided with in different local councils. In small local councils there is a focus on activities such as billiard, ping pong, computer games, listening to music or visiting the café. In the clubs there are no demands put on the visitors. They can just meet with friends and do nothing else. Larger local councils are seen to offer more creative activities such as art studios, painting, pottery, sewing, editing music and videos, which puts another demand on intention and persistence. They also give the youths in the council the possibility to realize ambitions to arrange an event or start a project by offering grants. This can be seen as a gesture of trust towards the young citizens.

In many of the documents there is an underlying notion about how young people are, which opinions they have and what they want. The image of the youths found in the documents points towards the need to control and protect young people because they are faced with the dangers of drugs and crime. Indirectly stated are goals about prevention and promoting health in cooperation with social welfare officers and others dealing with social problems. Another image about young citizens is that they need a place to be, either to “hang around” or participate in the activities that are supplied to them. Another image is that they are interested in taking responsibility for the activities at the youth clubs and that it is possible to develop their self confidence, self esteem and self image. The clearest image of the youths presented is that they are in need of control and a place to stay but the idea of how and for what purpose young people should develop is more unclear.

The target groups for the leisure strategies are said to be all young people in the councils. However, in the larger councils there are special youth clubs for young people with different disabilities. Another issue which is not addressed in more than a few of the documents is the matter of different ethnic backgrounds. Not even the youth clubs which reside in a multicultural environment mention this on their homepages.

In many of the local councils young citizens can search for funds to make arrangement for the youths. This is an example of how the authorities show trust in the young by letting them take responsibility for their own activities. All local councils have made investments in computers and given the youths’ access to the Internet. This is said by the authorities to be a chance for young people to learn to know young people in other countries and to develop their social competence as well as knowledge of languages. In some of the local councils, investments in facilities for outdoor activities are also seen as a way to meet new lifestyles among their young citizens.
Discussion

As I have discussed earlier in this thesis, leisure and citizenship for young people has a strong connection. This is what I also have found in the literature and in the documents which I studied for my licentiate thesis. The government looked upon voluntary associations as forums for fostering young people into decent and democratic citizens. The same was found in the local councils, where a special concern was the youths, who did not join voluntary associations. Youth clubs, managed by the local councils and run by educated leaders were organized. In later years, young people’s decreasing interest in political parties and the presence of anarchistic behaviour have become a concern. Hence young people’s citizenship has come in focus. From this perspective leisure time is important as young people spend a lot of time in leisure activities. It is a mission for the local councils to both cater for young people’s leisure activities and development as citizens.

In my licentiate thesis I showed that the leisure sector has undergone influences from NPM, which means decentralization and commercialization. For the local councils, this means that they have the responsibility to formulate goals and aims, allocate money and develop structures for implementation of the goals. The local councils also have the responsibility to follow up and evaluate the activities in relation to the goals. A question is how this is documented in the local councils. The Internet can be a way to communicate information and values to the members of the municipality. This is something that the local councils have adapted to, which is seen in the way they present themselves on the homepages. That was why I chose to investigate the information and documentation, which were presented on the local councils’ homepages. The homepages are an official interface, where people in the municipality can get information about the local councils’ intentions, in this case, about young people’s leisure activities and citizenship.

The purpose with this dissertation was to describe, explore, and discuss the texts that local councils present on their homepages from the perspective of leisure and citizenship for youths. By youths I mean the age group between 15 and 25 years. I have mainly focused on texts which address the youths in the municipality and where the local council’s open leisure activities are presented. The homepages and related documents of ten local councils of different sizes, in various parts of Sweden were studied. My research questions were: What kind of citizenship will be represented through the local councils’ goal and steering documents for young people and their leisure time? What kind of citizenship will be represented through the way the local councils organize, manage and support the leisure sector? What kind of citizenship will be represented through the supply of leisure activities for young people that are presented on the local councils’ homepages?

I start up the discussion by looking at the character of the texts in the documents. I follow up the discussion by looking at what indications of the notion of citizenship there are in the texts. This is related to the image of the youths which can be unveiled through how young people are characterized in the texts and what measures are suggested. This is also seen in the activities and other supplies, which the councils provide for the youths and in statements about democracy and equality. Connected to the notion of citizenship are the methods and means suggested to be useful in the work with young people’s leisure. Even the way the leisure activities for young people are organized shows something about how the local councils look on the youths as citizens to be and whom the measures and activities are directed to.
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Under the headline Governance of leisure for youths, I discuss the question of how new ideas about governance have affected the local councils’ leisure sector. The way of steering and managing the open leisure sector, offerings and strategies found and ways of getting feedback in the system, which can be found in the documents, are presented. Finally, I end the chapter by discussing what kind of citizenship for young people can be interpreted from texts on the homepages of the local councils.

The character of the texts

To find the answer to my research questions, I have used a qualitative content analysis. I have looked at both the content and character of the texts in the different documents. The way the texts were written differed due to the local councils’ size and who was the producer of the texts. However, there were similarities dependent on the type of document. The presentation of leisure offerings in the local councils was often done on a general page, which was laid out to show all the opportunities and activities the council provided. This page was not specifically directed towards the young. From this page, there were links to other pages and documents, such as a presentation of the board/s/ dealing with the leisure sector and the connected administration offices. Links to youth clubs, leisure facilities and voluntary associations could also be found. Besides, different formal documents were often part of the homepages.

Documents about goals and aims are produced by the political board and contain statements of values and attitudes. Sometimes references to general policies and laws were found, which seemed to be a way to legitimize what was written. Following the value statements there could also be argumentation as a way to make the statements more trustworthy. This could have a persuasive effect on the reader. The pages produced by the civil servants presenting the administration very often had a similar model, briefly presenting facts about them and their tasks in a straight forward manner. In some of the councils, official documents such as plans, minutes and annual reports were linked to the homepages. These were written in a formal style, presenting the information in a way that is expected in such a document. The pages produced by the youth leaders inviting young people to the youth clubs or other activities were written in quite a different way. The style was inviting, addressing the text directly to the individual youth and the message was accompanied by interesting pictures. This was also the case when the civil servants addressed messages and invitations directly to the young people. All the material presented on the homepages was directed in one way. Except for some special forums, there was no room for questions, exchange of opinions or discussions. The idea of the homepages seemed solely to be a way to present facts, attitudes and political opinions about the leisure sector. Other characteristics of the texts were that words such as for example democracy, self confidence, trust, norms and values were not further elaborated or problematized.

Youths, leisure and citizenship

As seen in the theoretical chapter, citizenship can be defined as a formal concept, which refers to the legal rights and responsibilities of democracy resting on legal rules and group interests.
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It can also be seen as a broadened concept of social belonging, resting on individual choices, practices, meanings and identities. Globalizations, cultural diversity, the growth of global cities and new lifestyles have changed the notion of citizenship into an individualistic, multi-layered concept. Of importance is also Arnot’s (2006) question about what sort of citizenship will be needed in a future society where young people are bound to individualization, freedom and choice. All these facets of citizenship can be seen at the homepages of the local councils, which I have studied.

Democracy

In the documents, the word democracy was frequently used both as a way for the youths to have influence and as a formal way of deciding on matters of importance. Democracy as formal means was especially seen in connection to the activities of the youth clubs. That the young visitors should be involved in deciding about the activities at the youth club seemed to be evident but it was pronounced that it should be done in a formal way and guided by youth leaders. Many of the activities at the youth clubs and other meeting places can be characterized as, what Hemingway (1999) labelled, participatory democracy.

Another aspect of formal democracy that is of concern for the local councils is representation. To meet representatives of the youth groups in the council most of them had established different kinds of youth parliaments or youth assemblies. These were also seen as meeting places between young people and the politicians. There are two problems with these assemblies. One is the question of whom the members of these assemblies represent as they are handpicked or just randomly asked to take part. Sörbom has pointed to this problem in her reports (2000; 2003). The other problem is that the assembly does not have any power to force matters and will easily be neglected by the politicians, which the example from Boden shows. To meet the first problem, some of the councils have opened channels on the Internet, where the young people in the municipality can chat with mates and authorities and express their opinion in matters of importance to them. Scholars like Norris (2001, Hague and Loader (1999) and Grossman (1995) argue that the Internet may function as a deliberative public forum, something that can strengthen democracy. The result from Macintosh and Whyte (2002) showed that young people, both male and female, are familiar with electronic modes of communication.

Activities offered

The fact that traditional democratic practices such as voting are less important than other activities such as leisure activities and consuming among young people (Bennets, 2003) is noticed on some of the homepages of the local councils. This is seen in the writings about activities which could be attractive to the youths. Mostly the young people are offered a lot of leisure activities such as billiard, ping pong, computer games, listening to music or visiting the café in which they are mere consumers. Larger local councils are seen to offer more activities and even more creative activities such as making an art gallery, editing music and videos, and playing theatre. In some of the larger councils the young people also have the possibility to arrange concerts and other events. Harris et al. (2007) found in their research that songs, dances and gigs were often used as explicit tools for public articulation of political
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concerns. Invitations are also given to single citizens to search for funds to arrange things for
themselves or for a smaller group. In some of the local councils it is not even expressed for
what purpose the money shall be used. It seems like authorities trust young people as they can
get funding of as much as 25 000 crowns.

The documents also show awareness about the role of computers and Internet in the lives of
the young. For example, the visitors are offered on line access at some of the youth clubs and
cafés. The Internet Café is presented as a meeting place for the youths and they are provided
with free access to the Internet. It seems that authorities and the producers of leisure have
noticed the increasing interest among young citizens to use computers. On the other hand
however, the fear that information technology will promote further inequality in democratic
participation and widen the gap between those who participate and those who do not, is not
discussed in the documents (Mossberger et al., 2003; Alvarez and Nagler, 2002; Wilhelm,
2000; Margolis and Resnick 2000).

The type of activities provided can be seen as an indicator of what view the local councils
have of the youths and their needs. The main focus is on activities in which the young people
take part just as consumers. In the texts the idea frequently appears about the youths needing a
place to meet and just be together, doing nothing. Nevertheless what the contribution should
be to young citizens’ lives from these “hang around places” are not clearly expressed and not
in equivalence with the goals and aims of the local councils where more ambitious results are
expected.

Views of the youths

The view of the youths, which is implicit in the text, is that they are individualistic, critical
towards politicians and less interested in participating in traditional democracy. It is also
possible to ask if what is offered by the local councils is enough to attract young people to be
active citizens, as political activities are considered less important by them than consuming
and taking part in alternative actions, such as festivals and cultural events.

One of the themes evident in my licentiate thesis was concern about citizens’ health, welfare
and development (Lindström, 2006). I have found the same in the strategies written on the
local councils’ homepages. The most frequent picture of the needs of the youths and the role
of leisure is seen by how it is written in the documents about young people’s personal
development. The type of citizen indicated in the texts is someone with a good self esteem,
actively taking part in the public life and collectively influencing the community. However,
on the other hand the pattern of youths is that they need to strengthen their self confidence
and self knowledge. During leisure time young citizens are expected to learn how to take
responsibility, how to participate in the society and to develop their self confidence. The
documents also talk about a safe and meaningful leisure time free from drugs and conflicts.

Another ambition regarding leisure expressed in the documents is to contribute to young
people’s health through support to young marginalised citizens such as youths from families’
with a lack of social capital, and reducing the use of drugs and criminality through preventive
activities. The way to do this is twofold. There are writings about collaboration and
cooperation with the police and the social authorities. There are also writings about how to
foster the young people to be responsible and fair to their friends. Some of the documents
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write about the possibility to discuss values and attitudes and about what is right or wrong at the youth clubs.

The way the texts are written in the goal documents are value oriented, stressing the development of the young people and the risks they face. Appellants are made in the texts about the possibilities for young citizens visiting youth clubs and similar meeting places to develop their self confidence, self knowledge and self esteem.

I have found that some of the local councils write openly and consistently about prevention, while the texts of others are more about fostering young people. However, all of them claim the necessity of close contact with other actors surrounding the young ones. Young citizens are supposed to be in a need of control and/or development. On the one hand there are texts about young people using drugs, sometimes being criminal and about the need of collaboration with the police and the social authorities. In Koutakis research this can be an explanation for arguments, developed aims and collaborations with human service agencies, police authorities and other authorities. This is often indirectly seen in the documents. On the other hand the young people’s will to take responsibilities and create their own projects are encouraged. There are writings about young people’s interest in doing things and meeting with friends and that this is promoted.

When addressing democracy, it is mostly the traditional aspects that are mentioned but from a participatory perspective. Looking at what is written about the youth clubs and meeting places for the young, the documents show an adaption to young people’s interest and need of individual choices. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) use the expression “Freedoms children” to illustrate this phenomenon. Arnot (2006) has expressed similar thoughts and questions what sort of citizenship will be needed in the future because of the fact that young people of today employ the language of individualization and the concept of freedom and choice.

Pedagogical methods

How to achieve a future citizenship is addressed in some of the texts as being a question of certain conditions, such as a stimulating environment and how the young people are treated. In the documents, there are often texts about the youths’ opportunities to be creative and artistic at the youth clubs and similar meeting places. However, these clubs should also be places where it is possible to meet other young people and adults for talks and discussions about important and interesting things in the young citizens’ lives. In this context the importance of educated staff and pedagogical methods are mentioned.

In the documents of some of the local councils, certain pedagogical methods for open leisure activities are prioritised, which can be called process orientated. The focus is on open communication and practicing trust and cooperation. The attributes mentioned by Hemingway (1999) regarding participation, open communications, autonomy, trust, cooperation and development as necessary for the development of a participatory democracy seemed to be fulfilled. In some local councils this is presented as a possibility for the young people, but the initiative is left to the visitors to take part and use the opportunity. There is no recognition of the obstacles that the young people may face and which might stop them from trying.
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The notion expressed in the texts is that young people visiting youth clubs are supposed to learn to cooperate with youth leaders, parents and other youths. Young people visiting youth clubs are often supposed to be some kind of frequent visitors. According to the documents, in such cases they will have a lot of opportunities at the youth clubs to develop trust in their friends and in adults. The notion of who are visiting the youth clubs often seen in the documents is that they are mostly unorganized youths.

The two networks in particular write about the methods of open leisure activities as a way for the visitors to become a tool for their own development. It is also stated that open leisure activities can be constructed in a way to help young people to handle their lives. This is said to be a joint mission together with the youth leaders. As seen in the theoretical chapter, pedagogical methods are one strategy for the development of young people’s citizenship. Print (2007) claims that there is evidence that young people who have taken citizenship education also demonstrate higher levels of civil knowledge and skills than those who have not. But most of the documents in this research do not writes of educated staff or well developed pedagogic skills as being important for the development of young people’s citizenship.

Equality

Some of the larger local councils have civil servants who work as coordinators for special issues considering youths. In the larger local councils there are also more structured investments done for young people with functional limitations, such as having a special board or written guidelines and information about accessibility.

Young people with disabilities are sometimes offered separate clubs for their own activities, though it is said that even ordinary youths are welcome. The reason for separate clubs is often a reference to the special law for disabled people. In one of the documents there is a statement that says that it is better if disabled people are integrated, though this local council also provides separate activities for the disabled youth. This contradiction is not mentioned in the documents and there is nothing on the pages of the youth clubs that show that they are adjusted to, and can meet people with, disabilities.

The question about activities for girls and boys is handled in the same way. In some of the documents it is mentioned that girls are in separate groups for different activities a few times a week and in rare cases, there are also activities for just boys. This is a way to handle gender inequality, which has been supported by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. But as Börjesson (1998) has shown, the tendency is that this rather supports stereotypical attitudes towards gender rather than leading to equality. It is more about fair sharing of the resources of the youth clubs.

Another aspect of equality which effects citizenship is cultural and ethnic diversity as a part of globalization as Beareggard and Bounds (2000) show. I have noticed, however, that very little attention is made in the local councils’ documents about integration and ethnicity although Sweden is a multi cultural country. In the documents, some texts talk about the importance of young citizens having international contacts. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs supports international cooperation and integration. However, nothing of this is seen on the homepages of the local councils or the youth clubs, or other meeting places. As
Discussion

Föllestad (2007) discusses, the membership of the European Union might have consequences for the notion of citizenship, but this does not seem to be of concern for the local councils.

The governance of leisure for youth

As I described in the beginning of the thesis, the use of governance alludes to the fact that steering has changed from detailed budgets to an overall budget and steering by goals. This is seen in the documents on the local councils’ homepages. It also means a change in the principles of management from hierarchy to decentralization, entrepreneurship and networking. There are some examples of this seen in the documents, together with a change in the organisation of the public sector from administration to management. In the next section I will discuss the findings about organization and management.

Organization and management

One strategy found in the research is the way local councils have decided to organize and manage the leisure sector. In the local councils, leisure activities are mostly organised and managed by a traditional cultural and leisure board with a culture and leisure administration. In some councils, several boards and offices handle tasks related to the leisure sector. The managing of infrastructure can be separate from open leisure activities. Leisure for special groups is handled by a certain board and so forth. New forms of organisation and management for the production of leisure services are promoted in some of the local councils. Some youth clubs are run by cooperatives and voluntary associations. However, there is no sign in the documents about private companies taking over from the local councils, not even the cafés. Some local councils encourage self-administration in cooperative form on their homepages, according to the Community Law Chapter 8 § 20 and government legislation chapter 6 § 38. This is presented as a positive offer without any writings about the consequences for the parents or the staff. In the written texts, the users are supposed to be positive to this and willing to try this new opportunity. This is an example of a change in the paradigm about production, distribution and management of leisure services. It is an example of how NPM as outsourcing is seen as a positive possibility without any further comments on eventual negative consequences. It is possible to be critical to this. However this is something that is veiled because of the economic priorities made from the local councils. Some documents talk about trying new forms of management in order to achieve a balanced budget.

In some documents there are tendencies to question the achievement of stated aims and the quality of the activities offered. An increased concern about this question was also seen in my licentiate thesis (Lindström, 2006). Some of the local councils write about the need for quality control concerning services. However, the documents mostly lack text about systematic evaluations of how aims for the leisure sector have been achieved. A reason for that can be that aims are written in a way that is not measurable. Statements about influence and participation or the development of health need to be more clearly specified if they are to be measured.

A comparison between the local councils contributing to the research shows that larger local councils have a broader supply of leisure activities and also a broader target group. The same
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

differences are seen in the amount of information on the homepages, the use of information technology and the quality of the information. Some larger local councils have a special youth department/division with civil servants, who only work with questions concerning the wellbeing and welfare of the youths. Larger local councils also make special investments for young people with functional limitations such as having a special board or written guidelines about accessibility. The differences between the local councils can have different explanations such as the geographic localization of the council e.g. closeness to a bigger city and the taxpaying capacity of the citizens. Political priorities can vary, as can the extent to which the civic society, such as voluntary organizations and economic associations take their share.

It is interesting to notice that Boden, a small municipality with 27 838 inhabitants has invested almost a percent more in real terms than the other local councils in research. This resulted in a “house of youths”. Something similar can be seen in Munkfors local council. It seems like small local councils with a geographic localization far away from larger regions or a large number of citizens have fewer possibilities to use the civil society and its associations to develop the leisure sector. Motala local council has established six houses or youth clubs run in close cooperation with youth leaders and parents. This can be compared with Sundsvall local council that is a larger city than the three mentioned above and also a centre in the region and therefore can offer a lot of activities for youths.

In Örebro local council, situated not far from Stockholm, the responsibility for the youths and their leisure time covers several divisions and boards. It seems from documents that this shared responsibility can be fruitful for the amount of leisure activities for youth.

Uppsala and Haninge local councils close to Stockholm have a lot of youth clubs. Uppsala local council has more than 20 youth clubs, cafes and other meeting places for youths. In Uppsala questions about youth and leisure also cover several boards and a special youth administration for youth matters has also been established in comparison to other councils which do not have a certain organization. Uppsala local council also has a lot of information about leisure visible on its Internet site. One example is a guide book for accessibility to leisure activities. In Haninge local council, youths are provided with a lot of activities and they have also a lot of information on the Internet such as for example, a brochure for leisure and culture activities.

Linköping with 140 367 inhabitants has 12 meetings places for young people apart from cafes and facilities for music. Lund local council, with more than 100 000 inhabitants has 14 youth clubs and one house for all activities. Again, it seems like larger populations have greater possibilities to cooperate with the civic society and make use of the amount of organizations and associations that provide leisure activities. Finally, City centre district of Gothenburg, a part of Gothenburg, Sweden’s second largest city has one place named Meeths for young citizens. But as a part of the city district of Gothenburg with 493 502 inhabitants there are a lot of activities in the nearby areas.

Conclusions

The picture of youth citizenship which emerges from the documents is neither uniform nor coherent but complicated and contradicted. The image of youths is two sided. On the one side is the notion of “Freedom children”, which Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) talk about. The
picture given is that young people are creative and that they are interested in, and willing to, take responsibility for matters that concern them. The councils’ offer facilities, such as youth houses, and economic support to arrange and carry out their own activities such as music events, festivals, dance or theatre. There is a notion expressed that through participation in creative activities like dance and music young people’s democratic sense will develop.

Another part of this picture is that special structures are established to enable the youths to practice democracy and have channels for dialogue with the authorities. Some of these channels such as the different assemblies are organized in traditional ways as a deputation, while others on the Internet are informal and open for everyone. The notion seems to be that as young people do not have the right to vote they need other democratic channels to execute their citizenship. This is in line with Marshall’s view about citizenship. There are some traces of an idea of multiple citizenship in line with what Faulks (2006) claims that to fulfil the statement that all human beings are equal, a citizenship must be international and multilayered in its obligations. This is seen in claims that young people at the same time should develop their own interests and take a responsibility for joint matters.

It is said in the documents that young people need democratic education, which can be supplied by the youth clubs. The youth clubs should be places for the youths to learn formal democratic means and practice democracy together with their friends. Together with this goes the statement that young people need education and supervision by adults. On the other hand, the youths are said to have a need for places just to hang around, meet with their friends and have free access to hobby activities like listening to music, playing games, using the net for chat. These are the youths, who do not enrol in voluntary leisure association, and the picture given presupposes social problems and the risk of going into drugs and crimes. Expressed in the texts are the ideas that they need to be watched over, controlled and sometimes guarded by social authorities. The picture of the young people is that they need protection and tutoring.

To conclude, in the local councils included in this research, traces of representative democracy can be seen and participatory democracy is recommended in the leisure practice. On the other hand, focus is often on the development, participation and influence of the individual. Individual solutions and offers to individuals are often seen in the texts at the same time as opportunities are presented to groups such as girls or disabled citizens.

By using the grid presented in the theoretical chapter I want to visualize the type of citizenship and democracy, which are present in the documents. This is shown in figure 7 below.
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**Figure 7.** Indications of different forms of democracy and citizenship in the local councils.

The figure shows a citizenship, which starts with the individual and participatory aspects and ends up in a representative democracy with collective interests (Hemingway, 1999). On the homepages the local councils offer different types of citizenship, which can be placed in any of the four squares. In square A are the facilities, which give the youths opportunity to participate as individuals. In square B are the facilities, which are open to individuals to use in the interest of themselves and their mates to get in contact with the authorities. Square C covers the assemblies, which work within the formal democratic frames, but in which those participating only represent themselves. The only representative forum based on collective interests is the leisure club councils, which are seen in square D. In this square I also place democracy education.

The images presented in the documents on the local councils’ homepages which talk about democracy and youth leisure in the councils can be interpreted as what Bennet (2003) calls DC citizens. These are the citizens who execute their democratic rights as a collective act by official democratic means and through formalized channels. However, in other documents which explain what the councils provide for the young people and the aims of what is offered in the open leisure activities, an AC citizen can be discerned. Bennet describes the AC citizen as a person, who sees her/his political activities and commitments in highly personal terms. An AC citizen also favours loose networks of community action, often established through friendships or maintained by interactive information technology. The activities should contribute to enhance the quality of personal life, social recognition, self esteem, friendship and relations more than being part of a collective commitment and executing formal democratic procedures.

It is possible to say that what is expressed in the documents of all the local councils is that they promote representative democracy through the establishment of youth assemblies and other channels of influence. It is also possible to argue that local councils promote participatory democracy through providing opportunities for young people to take part in
planning and managing the activities at the youth clubs and similar meeting places and by open up for dialogues with the authorities.

**Epilogue**

As a way to get an overall view of what the local councils offer the young people and their contribution to citizenship can be to use Andersson, (2008) who talks in a metaphorical sense about seven rooms for youth work. Each room is connected to youths’ expected needs. He talks about the "hang around place", which could be compared to the youth clubs, or other meeting places such as the café. "The activity centre" in his vocabulary is directly mentioned in the documents as a place where young people can carry out their different interests. The documents present the youth clubs and other meeting as places where young people can discuss questions of importance for themselves together with other young people and adults. This can be compared with "the free place" in the metaphor. "The parliament" can be the youth boards or the Internet channels for dialogues with the politicians. "The mirror room" is supposed to be at the youth clubs as a place for self reflection, acknowledgement and confirmation, which is said in the documents to be a mission for the youth leaders. Texts about "outdoor rooms" such as festivals, concerts or camps are also seen in the documents. Finally, meeting places like houses of youth and other places for people of various ages are expressed in the documents as places where people with different lifestyles, interests and in different stages of life meet at a "cross road". All those perspectives can be important for young people when to fulfilling their citizenship, as they touch upon values, norms, attitudes, trust and aspects of democracy. At the youth clubs communication between citizens can develop. This involves discussions about perspectives and questions about what is right or wrong in our society. In the local councils’ documents there are aims written about trust in one’s fellowmen, chances to participate in social life and the official debate and even about formal democracy such as participating in youth assemblies.

In this thesis my ambition has been to investigate the image of young people’s citizenship as seen on ten local council’s homepages, in the aims and the type of activities they provide. The result is, of course, my interpretation of what is presented and coloured by the understanding I carried with me from my theoretical studies. Another researcher might have found other fields and categories to concentrate on. One example is to go deeper into the documents and study their genres and the way the texts are laid out on the homepages. In my research I have only briefly looked at this question. Instead I have concentrated on the content of the different documents from the point of view that what is present in the texts mirrors the local councils’ ambitions.

The choice of local councils also has an effect on the results. If I had chosen more local councils from the southern part of Sweden another picture might have appeared and provided a new insight. The research includes ten local councils of the nearly 300 local councils in Sweden. The number of local councils of course also limits the picture I have got from my research. Another restriction is that all material that would have been helpful in answering the research questions may not have been presented on the homepages at the time of my data collection. I could have asked for more written documents from the local councils e.g. about evaluations. As my aim was to investigate what was visible on the homepages at the time for the data collection I did not contact the councils in personal. I found a large amount of material on the homepages, which was accessible for anyone interesting in searching for it.
Leisure activities and youth citizenship

This material was rich in information and helped me to meet my aim for the thesis. However, I do not know anything about what really happens in the councils and if the open leisure activities fulfil the intended goals. I found in my material that little response from the youths on channels for dialogue or offers to take initiatives was reported on the homepages. For me it would be a challenge to be able to follow up this thesis by investigating how the open leisure sector is managed in reality and the young people’s view of the council’s initiatives. It is also of interest to study what happens when other organisations than the local council take over the management of the leisure facilities.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this research are that individual young people can learn democratic principles and develop their citizenship through leisure activities. But if that is to be possible aims and intentions expressed on homepages must be developed and fulfilled. They must be systematically evaluated and through backups in the system the quality must be secured. In some of the documents there are discussions about the importance of educated staff. If young citizens should have the possibilities to learn and/or develop their citizenship at youth clubs and similar meeting places it is necessary to have educated youth leaders, who work to meet the aims of a participatory democracy. In that way open leisure activities can be a way for young people to gain social capital through leisure.
Syftet med denna avhandling är att beskriva, utforska och diskutera texter som kommuner presenterar på sina hemsidor utifrån perspektivet medborgarskap för unga. Följande forskningsfrågor besvaras i avhandlingen. Vilken typ av medborgarskap uttrycks i kommunala mål- och styrdokument för unga och deras fritid? Vilken typ av medborgarskap finns representerade genom kommuners sätt att stödja, organisera och leda fritidsektorn? Vilken typ av medborgarskap finns representerat genom de fritidsaktiviteter som unga erbjuds och som presenteras på kommuners hemsidor?


Slutsatsen i denna avhandling är att enskilda ungdamar kan lära sig om demokrati och kan utveckla sitt medborgarskap genom de fritidsaktiviteter som erbjuds dem. Men om detta ska vara möjligt måste de mål och intentionerna som har uttalats i de undersökta dokumenten och hemsidorna vara uppfyllda. De måste systematiskt utvärderas, följas upp och kvalitetssäkras. I några av dokumenten talas också om vikten av utbildad personal. Om unga medborgare ska ha möjlighet att utveckla sitt medborgarskap vid fritidsgårdar och liknande mötesplatser är utbildad personal en nödvändighet.
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On line (2009-03-12).


Oslo: Springer. On line (2008-12-17).


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and youth and their leisure time. Control or autonomy]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
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Tebelius, U & Ericsson, M (1995b) "*Det är val att ungdomar ska få säga till. "*. En utvärdering av Ungdomsförums - ett demokratiprojekt i Jönköping. ["It is a choice that young people shall have influence". An evaluation of “Ungdomsförum” – a democratic project in Jönköping]. Jönköpings kommun.


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Åsberg, R. (2001). Det finns inga kvalitativa metoder – och inga kvantitativa heller för den delen. [There are no qualitative methods – and no quantitative either]. 

*Pedagogisk forskning i Sverige*. RG 6 nr 4 p. 270-292.
### Chart 1. Thematic fields occurring in the documents.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Forms of steering</th>
<th>Local council/Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subvention and benefits</td>
<td>All local councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering with an organisation</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering with information</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws and rules</td>
<td>All local councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services and posts</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal- and result steering</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
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<tr>
<th>Type of goal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy stance</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
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<td>Effect goals</td>
<td>Nacka- and KEKS network, Haninge, Lund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production goals</td>
<td>Nacka- and KEKS network</td>
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<th>Documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Haninge, Lunds and Uppsala local councils and KEKS-network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategical plans and documents</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget plans</td>
<td>Bodens- and Haninge local council and Gothenburg City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webpages/Homepages</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platforms with ideas</td>
<td>KEKS and Nacka Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports- and leisure political program</td>
<td>Sundsvall and Haninge local council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture political program</td>
<td>Sundsvall local council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture- and leisure activities</td>
<td>Haninge local council</td>
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<td>UNGSAM, goal- and action program</td>
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<td>Organisations</td>
<td>All local councils and networks in different extent</td>
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<tr>
<td>and associations</td>
<td>Nacka-network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Motala local council</td>
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<td>Associations &quot;Houses&quot;</td>
<td>Motala local council and Nacka-network</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
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<td>Discussions and examples of values</td>
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<td>Adventure pedagogies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue and learning</td>
<td>Bodens local council</td>
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<td>Process minded</td>
<td>KEKS-network</td>
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<td>Informal learning</td>
<td>Lunds local council</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Participation</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
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<td>Youth parliament or similar</td>
<td>All local councils and networks except from Munkfors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunity</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
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<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>All local councils and networks</td>
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<th><strong>Different kinds of activities</strong></th>
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<td>Seen more and less in all local councils and networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table tennis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Games</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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<td>Theatre</td>
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<td>Concerts</td>
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<td>Dance</td>
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<td>Movie</td>
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<td>Photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Café</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

Chart 2. Local councils’ pages and documents in the field of leisure and culture.

Local Councils and type of material

Boden


Aims for the culture- and leisure board (2007). (http://www.boden.se/db/web/external.nsf/0/9345B9D1ECB5FF04C1257096003E3C1 ...) (2).


Örebro


Political aims from the leisure and tourism board. (2007). (http://www.orebro.e/politikoch demokrati/namnder/fritisochturistnamnden.437c0d5...) (2).

Political aims from the culture- and citizens board (2007) and the board for functional limitations (http://www.orebro.e/politikoch demokrati/namnder/kulturochmedborgamnamnden4.3...) and (http://www.orebro.e/politikoch demokrati/namndernamndenforfunktionshindrade.4...) (3).


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**Sundsvall**


*Children’s Sundsvall, a guide book to leisure activities 2007.*
(http://www.sundsvall.se/badidrottochfritid/fritidsevenemang/barnenssundsvall.4.627988f410febca17f68000131518.html). (1).

*Political program for sports and leisure (2004).*
(http://www.sundsvall.se/div/sok.4.19f9c7a107dc1557c5800057824.html?query=m%C3%A5l+fritid+2004). (2).

*Culture politics in Sundsvall (2004).*
(http://www.sundsvall.se/div/sok.4.19f9c7a107dc1557c5800057824.html?query=kulturpolitiskt+program+2004). (3).

*Aims from the board of leisure and culture (2004).*
(http://www.sundsvall.se/demokratiochpolitiker/namnderochkommunledning/namnderochpolitiker/kulturochfritidsnamnd.4.19f9e7a107dc1557c5800015396.html). (4).


(Ung ey.se). On line (2008-12-13).

**Munkfors**


*Description of the culture and educational board and the culture and educational administration. (2007).*
(http://www.munkfors.se/showPage.asp?PID=1122820480&Temp=0). (1).

**Uppsala**


*The city councils program and the United Nations convention. (1999).*
Appendix


A guide for accessibility to culture, leisure and sports in Uppsala.(2007.) (http://www.uppsala.se/sv/Startsidan/Omsorgstod/Aldreomsorg--senior/Aktivitet--samvaro/TillgangligRendat/guiden/). (8).


Haninge


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No Remorse. (http://unighaninge.se/content/blogsection/9/22/). On line (2007-09-10).


Motala


Linköping


Appendix


Hangaren Hot Sport Center.

City of Gothenburg


http://www.goteborg.se/wps/portal/PoliticalSearch?num=10&lr=&as_filetype=&as_occt=&as_sitesearch=&as_dt=&q=%C3%B6ppen%fritidsverksamhet%20Lund%20med%20fritidsverksamhet%20Lund%20omd%20framtiden). (2).

Meeths.

Lund


Aims from the culture- and leisure board (2006).


KEKS-network
A platform with ideas.

Nacka-network
Strategically document.