

HiT Publication no. 9/2003

# **Teachers' understanding of culture and of transference of culture**

Two investigations in the Norwegian region, Telemark, with  
special reference to cultural heritage

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Porsgrunn 2003**

HiT Publication no. 9/2003  
ISBN 82-7206-220-8 (printed)  
ISBN 82-7206-221-6 (online)

ISSN 1501-8539 (printed)  
ISSN 1503-3767 (online)  
Series title: *HiT Publication* or *HiT skrift*

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Printed by Reprographic Centre, Telemark University College-Bø

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## Abstract

The two investigations concerning teachers' understanding of culture deal with teachers' concepts of culture and their experiences of transferring culture. The results indicate that there seems to exist a relationship between the teachers' understanding of culture and their practice in school.

The investigations have been carried out during a space of 10 years, in a region of Norway called Telemark. The first one started in 1990 and included a purposeful sample of 34 teachers related to aesthetic subjects. Each of them was interviewed for two hours during their school time. The interview guide from this investigation as well as its results represent the basis of the next investigation ten years later. But the project anno 2000 is related to a more representative sample of 300 teachers chosen by chance, engaged in all school subjects. This time the teacher group got a questionnaire of 7 pages, constructed around the same questions as the interview, but formulated more specifically. Unfortunately only 60% of them returned their responses. As both sample and methods are different in the two contexts, it is two different projects concerning the same problems over time, that will be discussed.

In spite of these differences, the results have something in common. Primarily the terms culture and cultural heritage seem to be concentrated to humanistic areas and not to all school subjects.. Secondly each teacher group seems to have the same concept of culture both in relation to life world experiences, experiences of school teaching and as general concepts. Thirdly the results confirm a lack of correspondence between the content of the curriculum and the teachers' views and practice, especially in the last investigation.

The most explicit difference is between a normative concept of culture hold by teachers in the first investigation and a more descriptive one in the last one.

Key words: culture, cultural heritage, transference of culture, teachers' understanding, aesthetics



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# 1. THE FRAME OF REFERENCE

## **1.1 *The intention of the project***

An analysis of Norwegian school documents during the last thirty years reveals that cultural heritage has been a central theme in the compulsory school (Halvorsen 1997, 1998, 2001: 65-107). The basic school commission for that period defined the task of the school in three ways, as a preparation of life, as a *transference of cultural heritage* and as a help in the growth of the individual (Folkeskolekomiteen 1965:113-114). And the latest curriculum called L 97 gives the cultural heritage an important function both in developing roots and common cultural experiences and as a basis in creating new cultural expressions.

What about the consciousness of the teachers about their cultural task and their understanding of culture? In my view conceptions are indicators of practice. Therefore the aim of this article is to reveal teachers' understanding of culture and of processes of culture as a key to understand part of the life in school.

## **1.2 *Concepts and perspectives***

The term culture is a very complex one (Hauge and Horstbøll 1988), (Fink 1988), (Fjord Jensen 1988), (Klausen 1981, 92), (Barth 1994), (Hylland Eriksen 1994), (Halvorsen 1997), (Halvorsen 2001). It deals with processes and products, with normative and descriptive aspects. Culture is revealed in artefacts and institutions and through the daily life of the citizens. In school the subjects of teaching are parts of different aspects of culture (Halvorsen 2000b). At the same time the individuals are exponents of culture, both teachers and pupils. From this complexity perspectives of culture will be chosen with life in school as frame of reference. That means in my view a *normative*, a *descriptive* and a *relational* perspective.

- *A normative perspective*

An explicit normative view of culture is defined in Arnold's well-known formulation of culture as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world,..." (Arnold 1910:11). This elitist view of culture has also been related to definite areas, for instance art, philosophy and other high-level fields. As regards the cultivation of the individual, the term "Bildung" has been associated to this narrow concept of culture during parts of history. Even if this term has a broader content today, it still consists of a normative dimension. So is also the case in the Norwegian school documents related to the transference of a cultural heritage (Folkeskolekomiteen 1965: 113, 117), (Mønsterplanen 1987:14), (L 97).

- *A descriptive perspective*

The anthropological view of culture is a broad one, consisting of "the whole way of life". In this perspective a normative standard is substituted by a more descriptive and differential view. The interest is concentrated upon the typical traits of each culture (Fink 1988:19), (Gullestad 1989, 1991, 1996). As a consequence everyone belongs to a culture.

Life in school may also be looked upon as part of a greater cultural life, where this descriptive perspective will be relevant. It takes into account the experiences of everyday life from teachers and pupils, both within and without the school area, included the complex interaction with normative school activities (Thavenius 1999a,b), (Halvorsen 2000b).

- *A relational perspective: The double concept of culture*

The Danish professor in literature, Johan Fjord Jensen, discusses five dichotomies of culture and makes a synthesis of them, *the double concept of culture*. The dichotomies are as follows:

- the narrow and the broad concept,
- the universalistic and the relativistic concept,
- cultural patterns and social structures,

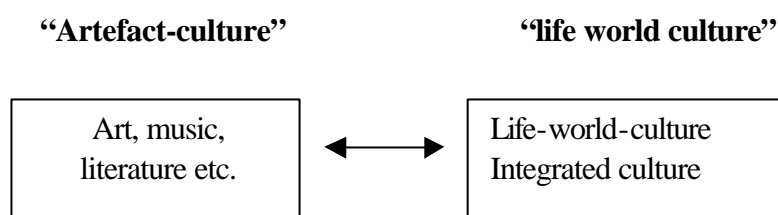


-the expressive and the consensual,

-the visible and the invisible (Fjord Jensen 1988: 160).

All these relations he summarizes into two dimensions, culture as something you “have” and culture as something you “are”. In this view, the “have-culture” is associated to the Fine Arts and the development of taste, to artefacts well known within the tradition of “Bildung”. Culture as something you “are” is an expression of the culture integrated in the individual. This category also seems to include the more silent culture we are living into and which we are carrying with us (Husserl 1937/1970: 281). To me it looks as if the list of the five dichotomies consists of “have-culture” on its left side (narrow, universalistic...), “are-culture” on its right side (broad, relativistic...). Fjord Jensen postulates that those two forms of culture are complementary, related to each other in a continual figure/ground interaction. But in the same way as in the well-known examples of perception (duck/rabbit), it is not possible to face both of them in a simultaneous perception.

While the “have-culture” is mainly normative, the other category has a descriptive character. This double concept of culture is transferred to a figure (Halvorsen 1997: 59) and the two categories are translated to “artefact-culture” and “life world culture”.



**Fig. 1: A model of the double concept of culture**

The “artefact-culture” is the documented culture of a society, representing for instance art, music, literature and science. From this cultural pool the substance of school subjects originates. The other category consists of both the more tacit and taken for granted culture surrounding everyone – the life world culture - and the culture integrated in the individual. This is the

individual's frame of reference in relation to the "artefact-culture". Whether the label is "life world culture" or "integrated culture", our chosen category includes both these aspects.

The arrow between the two categories signals processes in both directions, both the transferring of culture to the individual and the role of the individual in preserving and creating culture. In short this double concept of culture includes both a normative, a descriptive and a relational perspective.

- *Comments on legitimacy and status*

The transference of cultural heritage depends upon its validity in relation to a present cultural situation. The Swedish professor S. Beckman discusses this problem in an article called "Kulturarvets väsen och värde" (Beckman 1993:108-111) where he distinguishes between two sorts of arguments. On the one side cultural heritage may be looked upon as a collection of artefacts, a "treasury", taken care of by society. On the other side it may be related to "infrastructure", for instance special factors contributing to communication and identity formation. In this case the treasury plays an instrumental role as means towards aims of infrastructure. Translated to a school context, what is looked upon as treasures depends upon what is appreciated by significant members of society. As regards the question of a cultural canon in school, it has to be discussed over and over again not only because values change in society, but also because the transference of a cultural heritage depends upon the receivers, the pupils, and what seems to be existential to them. The aims of infrastructure in school related to the development of personal and cultural identity depends partly upon the existence of a cultural treasury suitable to fit these aims, partly upon the status from the pupils point of view both of aims and of chosen treasures.

## **2. THE INVESTIGATIONS**

To get insight into teachers' understanding of culture, I have gathered information from teacher groups in the Norwegian region of *Telemark*. The choice of Telemark was based upon

its great variety of culture. On the one hand the inner, rural parts of the region is associated to a folk culture with national status, where preservation of a cultural heritage has been important. On the other side the region consists of towns with great industrial production, where transformation and change is usual. To study whether this span between preservation and change of culture might effect teachers' way of thinking about cultural heritage, a rural and an urban group of teachers were chosen.

The first investigation was carried through in 1990, where a purposeful sample of 34 teachers representing aesthetic subjects were interviewed.<sup>1</sup> The second investigation in 2000 consisted of a more representative group of 180 teachers responding to a questionnaire based upon experiences from the first investigation<sup>2</sup>. Because of different kinds of samples and different methods gathering data, the investigations will be treated separately. Finally we will discuss main results.

## ***2.1 The first investigation (1990)***

This investigation deals with teachers' understanding of cultural heritage and of transference of culture, especially related to the aesthetic dimension. A phenomenological approach was chosen in order to illuminate concepts and experiences, partly by choosing a purposeful sample of key persons, partly by using a qualitative interview as source of information.

### **2.1.1 Methods**

- *The sample*

To reveal teachers' understanding of culture it was important to find teacher groups that were able to explain their thoughts about cultural heritage and transference of culture based upon real experiences. Therefore local school authorities were asked to choose teachers with a positive reputation of school practice transferring cultural heritage within the subjects of art

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<sup>1</sup> The first investigation is part of my doctor dissertation (Halvorsen 1997)

<sup>2</sup> The second investigation is published in detail in Hit-skrift nr. 4, 2000.

and craft, music and literature. The purposeful sample of 34 teachers consisted of an urban group of 18 members and a rural one of 16. Our conclusions as to rural and urban teachers refer to those two samples. There are 24 females and 10 males in the whole group.

- *Qualitative interviews*

To illuminate concepts and experiences it is important to find valid contexts, themes and questions and establish a dialogue that opens up for the insight of the informants. Each of the teachers was interviewed for two hours in their own school contexts. To get insight into the life world of the informants, an open ended qualitative interview was chosen.

The responses are relating to three different contexts. The first context consists of the teachers' *cultural experiences from everyday life* in early years. After telling parts of their life story, they were asked to comment the cultural status of the region of Telemark today and the daily cultural experiences of their pupils.

The second context contains *experiences from their teaching practice* primarily concerned with the substance of teaching within aesthetic areas. The intention was to get insight into what substance of culture and cultural heritage teachers preferred in the subjects of art and craft, music and literature, and to what extent they involved the culture of their pupils in this task.

Finally the questions were related to their *understanding of concepts* partly concentrated to associations to the term cultural heritage, partly to comparisons between different concepts of culture. Moreover arguments related to legitimacy and status were in focus (*Halvorsen 1997*). The experiences of these dialogues were positive, both as regards the richness of the descriptions and the interpersonal relations.

## 2.1.2 Results

The results are treated according to the three main groups of questions.

### 2.1.2.1 Cultural experiences from early life

Most of the *urban teachers* have vague reports from their early life, accompanied by phrases as: “there are no special experiences to account. It was usual experiences, you know”. If they were challenged to be more concrete, they added experiences as “a mother playing the piano”, “experiences of music in brass bands” or “old stone ruins to live within and play with”. But these experiences did not seem worth mentioning. Only two of the urban teachers embroidered their cultural experiences in a positive manner.

Most of the urban group have grown up in small towns and rural districts in different parts of Norway. Only a minority comes from Telemark. They confirm a special cultural image to the region of Telemark, but relate it to the middle and upper parts of the rural districts, areas they do not belong to.

The *rural group* is quite different. Most of the teachers have grown up in this special rural area of Telemark with its status of hegemony. Their experiences were related to folk music, folk art and folk literature. Living and working in the same area for lots of years, they have got the opportunity to develop rather homogeneous experiences. Their verbalizations differ from those of the urban teachers, partly by their more vivid and embroidered character, partly by the pride of own culture they signal. But we also find comments of cultural discrimination in relation to this hegemonic culture of Telemark. The majority of the teachers seem to reflect cultural pride and focus from a golden period years ago, a rest which still seems to prevail in their memories and lives. Their school practice related to transference of a local cultural heritage is highly appreciated by parents and grandparents. In contrast to the urban teachers the rural ones seem to be accustomed to portray their cultural experience.

Finally it is worth mentioning that *neither of the teacher groups are satisfied with the daily environment of their pupils as a cultural impulse valid to involve in the processes of cultural*

*transference at school*. The life world of the pupils today is filled with international popular culture, which is not defined as a resource in the school's task of transferring cultural heritage.

### **2.1.2.2 Experiences from teaching practice**

The experiences of teaching are related to the kind of cultural heritage used within the school subjects of art and craft, music and literature. As regards the subject of *art and craft*, the experiences are scarce, because the time is used to free, creative activities. Very few of the teachers seem to be responsible towards a new compulsory topic in curriculum related to studying products of art and craft. Their reports are to a greater extent corresponding to a tradition of freedom according to an earlier curriculum, and to the development of creativity which at that time was the dominating aim.

The reports from the transference of *a literary heritage* give little information, even if they reveal the existence of such a transference. The teachers seem to assume that everyone knows that sort of teaching, so it is not necessary to comment any further. Most of their responses are concerned with problems of transferring selections of a Norwegian cultural heritage. While some teachers tell about rich experiences in relation to works of our famous authors, others have negative experiences related to the same works. As a whole, the interviews reveal a complicated balance in the mind of the teachers between their insight into the pupils' "life world culture" and an appreciated "artefact culture". Different teachers seem to pay different attention to those two kinds of culture.

On the other hand the *transference of a musical heritage* is portrayed in a very lively, embroidered and varied way. The material reveals that singing plays an important role on the lower levels, where pupils sing by heart the most different types of songs, from well-known songs from the classical repertoire (Haugtussa-sanger) and from older songbooks (Mads Berg's songbook), to modern popular melodies. At the higher level it is more difficult to get the pupils sing. It is too personal. The instruments used have traditionally been associated to a

special flute (blokkfløyte), an instrument that seems to challenge the skills of the pupils too much.

These reports represent the widest span of experiences of teaching in this investigation. The accounts have a characteristic personal profile according to the teachers' own preferences. On that background the material does not support statements proclaiming that selected popular music is the only realistic substance of teaching in school. On the contrary the reports reveal that pupils are interested in the most different kinds of music, if their teachers have enthusiasm and skill.

Comparing school practice in *urban and rural groups of teacher*, the results vary between the three subjects reported. There seems to be little differences as regards the *literary* heritage, probably because the State is controlling the teaching of the mother tongue subject to a greater degree than the subjects of music and art and craft. As regards *art and craft* rural teachers seem to concentrate more upon transferring rich local traditions of craft to their pupils than teachers in urban districts. This local heritage is also related to ethical standards concerning the fulfilling of projects and the appreciation of "the work of the hand". But because of the status of these local models, it seems difficult to inspire pupils to use them in a freely manner. This does not prevent teachers to find contexts where it is possible to combine consolidating and transforming processes related to the field of craft.

The richest reports and also the most remarkable difference between urban and rural teachers are found in the subject of *music*. The *urban* teachers choose modern instruments in order to engage the pupils in active and creative work. From that platform other sorts of music are introduced, also a more classical cultural repertoire. As a whole their teaching seems to aim at engaging and activating the pupils more than transferring a cultural heritage. The reports of the *rural* teachers signal more consciousness about the aspect of inheriting culture. In this group the folk music is commented, both as vocal and instrumental activity. The teacher with

the most characteristic profile is starting her systematic influence of folk music already in the “kindergarten”, following the same pupils during the first six years of compulsory school. In addition to plan a systematic process of teaching over years, she tries to raise the reputation of that sort of music by involving the pupils in TV- reports and recordings. Other teachers are more engaged in a general Norwegian canon. But also a more popular repertoire is represented. Even if the rural teachers are reporting of active and interested pupils, their pedagogical methods are not the same. While our eldest teacher uses folk music as his starting point, followed up by our national composer Edward Grieg and further on to great European composers (Bach etc.), our youngest informant uses the pupils’ own music as her starting point (pop and rock) continuing with folk music and classical music. In spite of a different kind of progress, they all seem to have a conscious plan of their teaching, including a perspective of cultural transference.

- *External and structural frames of references*

The teachers do not use external and structural frames of references to defend weaknesses in their own practice.

### **2.1.2.3 Understanding of concepts**

The teachers were asked to give their versions of concepts of culture, especially related to cultural heritage and its legitimating and status. Moreover the aesthetic heritage was in focus.

- *The general concept of cultural heritage*

The material consist of many *associations* to the term cultural heritage, to a great degree related to concrete artefacts as “fiddle, national costume, old furniture and buildings”, but also to the literature of “the four great poets”, “the works of famous artists”, “folk culture of Telemark” etc. Most of the associations deal with a normative kind of “artefact-culture” of classical style, supplied by folk culture of Telemark with its national status. But the material



also reveals examples of culture as everyday experiences, as part of a “life world culture”. This cultural heritage is integrated in the individual, often as vague and unconscious traces. In a positive way the responses signal support to arguments related to roots, continuity and the experience of belonging to a common context. On a negative way they tell about discriminating and rejecting processes.

The interpretations related to the *essence* of the heritage strengthen its durability and its dimension of value, its quality. Moreover cultural heritage is related to the individual, as a personal and relational term. Even if cultural heritage in most of the cases is reported as a treasure you receive, it sometimes is looked upon as a potential in a further creative setting. This is also the case when the term is compared to the term tradition. However, in relation to both the terms culture and tradition, cultural heritage is interpreted as a more normative and a lesser active concept.

Confronted with formulations of cultural heritage in school documents, most of the teachers have a more narrow and a more humanistic concept than the official papers. Science and technology do not belong to their concept of cultural heritage.

In short the general concept of cultural heritage contains a normative dimension related to “artefact culture” within humanistic areas. The reports are revealing both fragments of the heritage and terms that indicate a more comprehensive concept. The authority of the concept is partly due to the long-lasting life of this heritage. The relation between the cultural heritage and the individual is primarily concentrated to the effect upon the individual in a process of developing consciousness about one’s own identity. The comments upon the heritage as an active and creative term is rather scarce.

There are small differences between the two teachers groups as regards their understanding of the concept of cultural heritage. The rural teachers embroider their reports in a more enthusiastic way and give more and stronger arguments regarding the quality of the heritage,

because of its integration into the individual. This underlining of the process of inheriting gives the concept a dynamic profile.

- *The aesthetic dimension*

The aesthetic dimension is not easy to define. In the opinion of the teachers it consists of both a subjective dimension related to emotions in the individual and objective conditions related to qualities of art products. To the question whether they would use the term aesthetic in front of Edward Munch's famous picture "The Cry", most of them answered "No", because this meeting had no character of pleasure. A minority responding "Yes" uses the term as an expression of being touched, also including responses that might be unpleasant.

Even if there is no difference between the reports of the two teacher groups as regards the understanding of the term aesthetic, there is a marked difference in their frequency using the concept. While the urban teachers seem to use the concept, most of the teachers in the rural districts avoid the term, in spite of their enthusiasm about the heritage of art. The term is "too abstract", "superficial", "it expresses snobbery". It is better to use words that communicate.

- *Legitimacy and status*

The legitimacy of a cultural heritage is related to its function in developing continuity and roots, both on a cultural and individual level. This vertical dimension is supplied by a horizontal one concentrated to what ties people together today, whether it is in local, national or global contexts. Those two dimensions are interrelated. The interaction is explicitly demonstrated in relation to the aesthetic experience, whenever individuals of today are touched by works of art years ago.

The legitimacy is comprehensive and convincing, especially in the rural group. The pupils have to be acquainted with a heritage belonging to them, one of national pride and identity, representing a frame of reference in their construction of cultural and personal identity. In this context the quality and status of the heritage are important. Moreover the heritage gives a

view of history, representing both basic pillars and threads of development, aspects we have the responsibility to renew and improve.

#### **2.1.2.4 Summary**

During the three contexts reported, the term cultural heritage has a dominant normative profile. In the teachers' understanding of *concepts* it represents a common culture of quality, which is validated in its transference to the individual. The values of the cultural treasury are means in the development of personality and identity and in the formation of democratic and communicative societies.

This normative concept seems to be an underlying factor in the reports from *everyday life*. It makes it possible to interpret the difference of volume and content in the reports of the rural and urban group, between a rural group living in a culture of hegemony where cultural standards are developed and an urban group from unthematized fields without an official cultural standard. "Usual" or "conventional" experiences are not paid attention to neither by the teachers themselves nor by a community of authority. Finally this interpretation gives meaning to the fact that neither of the teacher groups conceive the cultural experiences of their pupils to be of any value in relation to the process of transferring cultural heritage in school.

There is a lesser degree of consistency between the teachers' concepts of culture and their reports of teaching practice, where curriculum and school tradition over years seem to have given the practical field a sort of canon. But in school subjects where the tradition has given teachers more freedom, it is possible to follow a trace between the teaching topics and the teachers' cultural and personal frame of reference. Moreover the teaching reports tell that some teachers take into account the pupils' "life world culture" to a greater degree than what is dominant in the teachers' normative concept of culture and in their general attitude to the

value of the cultural background of their pupils. They seem to adjust their practice partly to what fits the situation in school.

## **2.2 The second investigation (2000)**

This investigation concerns the same topics as the first one, but is not a replication study. The aim is no longer primarily to enlighten the phenomenon of cultural heritage by help of a purposeful sample of teachers, but to broaden our insight into teachers' understanding both of culture and of cultural heritage in a more representative group.

### **2.2.1 Methods**

To fit this task a sample of teachers chosen by chance within a stratified context was found suitable. An increase in number will also give an opportunity to supply the variable of urban/rural contexts with gender and age. Moreover a questionnaire of 7 pages constructed around the same questions as in the first investigation was defined as a valid instrument gathering information from a greater group.

- *The sample*

From a teacher population of 2200 a sample of 300 teachers were chosen by chance to represent the teacher population of Telemark. The National Education Office of Telemark carried out the practical part of drawing lots and gathering data. Unfortunately only 180 questionnaires were returned, 60% of the original sample<sup>3</sup> The respondent group is not a true copy of the original one, but the margins are not the same for the three variables mentioned<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Among the 180 responses 4 was condemned because of lack of reactions upon too many questions. 176 is the exact number used in the SSPS program.

<sup>4</sup> An examination of the respondent group shows that the distribution between the two genders are slightly disturbed (from 2/3 females and 1/3 males in the original sample to 68% females and 32% males in the respondent group). As regards the rural/urban variable, the original distribution of 50% in each of the groups is changed to 55% from rural, 45% from urban districts. This deviation may be of little importance, because the teachers in the rural and urban districts are more similar than in the first study. Half of the responders have grown up in Telemark, most of them origin from the urban regions. The members of the rural group rooting from Telemark have a more heterogeneous regional origin than the members in the first investigation. This makes the urban and rural groups in this study quite different from those in the first investigation and diminish a possible effect of a special culture of Telemark. The character of the new groups is that teachers working in towns usually have urban backgrounds, while teachers working in rural districts have rural backgrounds. That means that it is more general aspects of working /living in rural or urban districts that may be tested.

The difference between the original and the respondent group is marginal as regards gender and rural/urban position. The bias is primarily related to the variable of age, where the youngest group is most underrepresented. Moreover it seems to be a bias as to the distribution of school subjects, with an overrepresentation of teachers in artistic and humanistic areas. The total respondent group consists of “all-round” teachers”, responsible for many subjects in their own school class. On the question which of the subjects they experienced to be “their” subject, 35% mentioned “mother tongue”, 23% “all subjects” and the rest distributed the answers to different subjects. A final question testing their own conception of degree of motivation indicates that the responders interpret themselves to be an interested group <sup>5</sup>. Moreover the fact that they fill out a complex questionnaire, indicate more motivation in the respondent than in the non-respondent group. The results have to be interpreted in accordance to this information of the respondent group.

- *The questionnaire*

A greater sample of teachers leads to other methods of gathering data. As it was of importance to keep the same main problems throughout both investigations, a questionnaire of 7 pages was constructed adapted both to the interview questions and to some of the most explicit results from the first investigation. Even if most of the questions are formulated in fixed categories, there sometimes is opened up for more than one response. Because of the complexity of the topic, there also is a few comprehensive questions to respond to in an open manner. To facilitate the process of analysing, the responses are coded to be used in

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As to the age variable, half of the teachers, both in the original sample and in the respondent group, have an age of 40-54 years. While the responders consisted of 25% in both the youngest group of teachers of 22-39 years, and in the eldest group above the age of 55, the non-respondent group had a distribution of 35% in the youngest, 15% in the eldest group.

<sup>5</sup>The responders were asked to describe their perceptions of themselves as being “a lot”, “a part” or “a little” interested in transferring of culture. Their reactions revealed that 40% use the category “a lot”, 60 % the category “a part”. As teachers in school have a central task of transferring culture , it is not to be expected that the category “a little” would be frequently used. If this self-evaluation is added to the character of their total responses, the results do not indicate that the responders are a kind of “super group”.

overviews of frequencies from the SPSS program of statistic. This means a construction of a questionnaire being liberal according to a statistical use of data. The frequencies serve only as means in a broader hermeneutic context. The questions and their responses will be presented in the same sequence as in the questionnaire.

## 2.2.2 Results

### 2.2.2. 1 Cultural experiences from everyday life

The teachers tell of *local contexts* as important sources of developing roots and belongingness both in early years and at present time. The *areas* of cultural transference is dominated by local community contexts (57%), while the influence of family (24 %) and school (17%) is less important.

The teachers were asked to give 4-5 examples of their *cultural experiences*, as revealed in Table I.

<b>Cultural experiences in early life</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
Music (song,dance)	52
Sport	34
Literature (library, fairy tales, poem) language	28
Art and craft (architecture)	28
Theatre and film	20
Religion (church)	19
Traditions and objects (museums, celebration)	18

*Table Ia: Overview of cultural experiences in early life. Distribution in percent.*

Music is at the top of the list of frequency, followed by sport. Literature and art and craft have a middle position. The distribution as to gender is shown in table I b.

<b>Cultural experiences in early life among males and females</b>	<b>Actual numbers support</b>		
	<b>Males</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Music (song,dance)	18	74	92
Sport	25	34	59
Literature (library, fairy tales, poem) language	10	39	49
Art and craft (architecture)	5	44	49
Theatre and film	9	26	35
Religion (church)	11	23	34
Traditions and objects (museums, celebration)	10	22	32

*Table 1b: Overview of cultural experiences in early life. Distribution of gender in actual numbers*

As to gender it is worth mentioning that art and craft is commented by lesser than 10% of the males, but more than 1/3 of the females. The range of popularity is also different. While the females prefer music, art and craft, literature and sport, the males prefer sport, music, literature and traditions.

More than half of the teacher group expresses satisfaction with their early experiences. The local arena with common experiences of music and sport seems to coincide with their needs. But there are still more than 1/3 who experiences their background so ordinary that it is not worth mentioning, a response typical to the urban group in the first investigation.

The teacher group is also positive to the cultural environment of their pupils as a possible cultural resource in school. While 40% proclaim that there is a great cultural potential in this environment, half of them are a bit more reserved and say there probably is a great potential if one is looking for it. This reaction is different from the negative response in the earlier study.

In short the responses converge towards a pattern of locally based participation in common activities of music and sport. The positive responses towards this homogeneous background of leisure time experiences are valid both for their own experiences and as a potential for their pupils. The role of both family and school is modest and it is relevant to question whether culture has been a concept of leisure time use. The results indicate a more descriptive concept of culture than in the first investigation.

#### **2.2.2.2 Experiences from teaching practice**

- *The most typical cultural subjects and themes*

The first question treated the teachers' understanding of school subjects as expressions of culture. The responses reveal that 60% of the teachers conceive only "some subjects" to be examples of cultural mediation, while 40% include "all subjects". As to which of the school subjects they primarily defined as "cultural subject", the distribution of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the votes is as follows:

<b>The teachers' most central cultural subject</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
Mother tongue	36
Art and craft	13
Society subjects	12
Music	11

**Table IIa: The primary choice of cultural school subject. Distribution in percent**

The primacy of the subject “mother tongue” is as expected both because of its central status and because those all round teachers usually teach this subject. In comparison 8% chose science and 0,6% mathematics. The table reveals that it is humanistic subjects that are characterized as “cultural”.

<b>The most central cultural subjects among males and females</b>	<b>Actual numbers support</b>		
	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mother tongue	17	46	63
Art and craft	4	19	23
Society subjects	11	10	21
Music	4	16	20
Natural science	10	4	14

**Table IIb: The primary choice of cultural school subject among males and females. School Subjects with more than 10 votes.**

The table of gender shows that it is only the primacy of “mother tongue” that corresponds for both males and females.

The teachers were further asked to give 4-5 examples of *kinds of substance* within their preferred subject. Their responses are presented in table III:

<b>The substance of teaching</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
Folk culture of different kinds	57
Local topics (local nature, museums)	46
Simple classical culture (music, literature)	40
The pupils' own expression, also skills of expression	27
Customs (food, rituals)	26
Popular culture	25

**Table IIIa: Overview of the substance of teaching. Distribution in percent.**



The table reflects the preference of cultural school subjects shown in table II. Within this frame of reference the most frequent topics are related to *folk culture, local topics and simple classical works*.<sup>6</sup> This is an extract of a well-known canon of school practice, a sort of a common artefact culture transferred to pupils for years. On the other side local culture may be interpreted as examples from the pupils' life world. This may also be the case both as regards the popular culture and the pupils' own expressions. Looked upon in this way, the substance of teaching consists of a balance between the two parts of the double concept of culture, artefact culture and life world culture. This interpretation is supported by the teachers' responses to more general questions of didactic, where they usually take a position of a "well-composed mixture" of "artefact culture" and the "life world culture". This mixed substance is not looked upon as a one-way transference towards the individual, but also as a challenge to the creativity of the pupils. It is partly descriptive, partly normative.

As regards the substance of teaching, there are some variance related to both *gender and rural/urban contexts*.

<b>The substance of teaching among males and females</b>	Actual numbers support		
	Males	Females	Total
Folk culture of different kinds	26	74	100
Local topics (local nature, museums)	30	62	92
Simple classical culture (music, literature)	19	51	70
The pupils' own expression, also skills of expression	10	37	47
Customs (food, rituals)	19	27	46
Popular culture	7	37	44

**Table IIIb: Overview of the substance of teaching among males and females . Actual numbers of frequency above 10 votes total**

The experiences cover a wider span of subjects among the males than among the females.

While most of the females define only some of the school subjects as subjects of culture, the

<sup>6</sup> Looking in detail as to which school subjects that give raise to these different kinds of substance, it seems as if folk culture, simple classical culture and popular culture refer primarily to the school subjects: mother tongue, music and art and craft. The typical *local topics* are related to school subject as science and history.

male group is divided between those agreeing with the females and those insisting that all school subjects deal with topics of culture. The females range in sequence mother tongue, art and craft, music and the subject of society, the males mother tongue, the subject of society and science.

<b>The substance of teaching among urban and rural teachers</b>	Actual numbers support		
	urban	rural	Total
Folk culture of different kinds	42	58	.100
Local topics (local nature, museums)	28	64	92
Simple classical culture (music, literature)	38	32	70
The pupils' own expression, also skills of expression	22	25	47
Customs (food, rituals)	.10	36	46
Popular culture	.30	14	44

**Table IIIc : Overview of the substance of teaching among urban and rural teachers . Actual numbers of frequency above 10 votes total**

Moreover the urban teachers prefer a selection of folk culture and classical culture in addition to examples of modern and popular culture, while the rural teachers have a broader repertoire and substitute the modern popular culture with more locally inspired content. This may be a result of their adapting to the life world of different groups of pupils. But it may also be a result of the fact that the rural group consists of more male responders than the urban group and thereby relate to other subjects.

- *External and structural frames of references*

As regards certain external and structural frames of reference the teacher groups are satisfied with external conditions as education of teachers, buildings, materials and so on. They also know their own school and its local plans. But it is alarming that 80% of the teachers seldom or never have cooperated with the parents as regards topics concerning transference of culture. In these contexts the rural teachers have some more positive responses than the teachers in towns.

### 2.2.2.3 Understanding of concepts

- *The general concept of cultural heritage*

Three different approaches are used to get insight into the teachers' concept of cultural heritage. The **first one** is their responses to an open-end question asking for 45 associations to the term cultural heritage. After reading through about 40 responses, the results were categorized in three main groups, *general categories*, *specific categories* and *functional categories* (Halvorsen 2000a:22-23). The subcategories are not mutually exclusive topics. Table IV reveals the general and specific categories reported.

<b>General categories</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
Way of life (history, institutions, structures)	56
Traditions	40
Folk culture	35
Art, music and literature	17
Religion, belief	17
Values and attitudes	13
Basis knowledge	7
<b>Specific categories</b>	
Song and music	29
Literature and language	29
Visual art	16
Sport	9

**Table IV: Distribution in percent of associations to the concept cultural heritage. General and specific categories of substance**

As regards the *general categories*, the three categories most frequently used, “ways of life”, “traditions” and “folk culture”, represent *a cluster of everyday experiences* of various kinds, where an anthropological concept seems to prevail. The other categories “religion, belief”, “values and attitudes” and “art, music and literature” represent various aspects of a more sophisticated cultural heritage with normative connotations. In this interpretation the table reveals two main tendencies of the general associations, one of cultural heritage related to the “everyday life”, another one related to normative aspects of culture. Another significant result is that of the low preference of “basic knowledge”.

The *specific categories* supply the general categories of art with more detailed information of the different kinds of art. As these categories are used as alternatives to the more general ones, the total support to the aesthetic area is worth mentioning. On the contrary sport is not the topic that tops the list.

Another table gives insight into the responses related to the *function of the heritage and the cultural processes* (Halvorsen 2000a: 20, table 13). This main category gets weak support compared to the support given to the general and specific categories of substance already reported. This fact makes explicit the substantial character of the term cultural heritage as a sort of “have”-culture. But it may also be due to bias of categorizing (categories of “music” is classified as substance even if it includes both substance and processes). The cultural processes mentioned are mainly related to the longitudinal threads of roots and the more horizontal ones of mutual communication and relationship. Moreover the teachers associate cultural heritage to active processes as teaching, educating or other transferring processes, while the role of the recipient gets little support.

The **second approach** consists of the degree of support to a *proposal from a central school committee*, where cultural heritage is related to “...belief, customs, art and literature, science and technology and institutions” (Folkeskolekomiteen 1965:113). Nearly 40 % include all these areas in their concept of cultural heritage, a result that gives a broader concept of culture than what was the case in their open-end associations. Nevertheless 52% support only some of the areas mentioned, usually neither science nor technology.

The two approaches coincide in underlining the teachers’ preference of a humanistic heritage. Nevertheless the teachers’ concept is broader in relation to an authorized formulation than in their free associations. The distribution of frequency corresponds to the results of the earlier question whether “all” or only “some” school subjects were conceived as cultural subjects. In both connections science and technology were excluded from the cultural area.

In this context there is a difference of gender. While the majority of the female group interprets cultural heritage to include only some of the areas of the curriculum statement (belief, customs, art and craft, local traditions), the male group is divided into two equal parts. One part agrees with the majority of the women, the other part has a broader concept accepting all the formulations, including science and technology.

**The third approach** consists of a comparison between the concepts of culture and of cultural heritage. Firstly the teachers were asked to support sentences they agreed with. 65% frequency of support was given to the similarity of the two terms including processes of “preserving, transferring and renewing”. Nevertheless it was the difference between the concepts that was commented, in detail in Table V.

<b>Differences between culture and cultural heritage</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
Culture is more comprehensive than cultural heritage	60
Culture offers opportunity to participate, cultural heritage is something to receive	51
Culture includes the present, cultural heritage the past	42
Cultural heritage is more than culture related to roots	36
Cultural heritage expresses more than culture durability	32
Cultural heritage expresses more than culture quality	13

**Table V: The relationship between the concepts of culture and of cultural heritage. Distribution in percent**

The results are no great surprise. On the one side culture is a more comprehensive and active term of the present than cultural heritage, while cultural heritage has its worth related to roots and durability. In this context quality is no significant sign of difference between the concepts.

The relationship between the two concepts is also checked by two parallel sequences of questions. The alternatives: Is culture “the best that has been created”, “the whole way of life” or “both parts” are presented both for the term “culture” and the term “cultural heritage”. The fact that more than 50% of the choices are given in the category “the whole way of life” for both concepts correspond to the main impression of the whole material. As regards the

category “the best that has been created”, it is supported by 4% related to the term culture, 16% related to cultural heritage. Such a normative tendency is also consistent with a certain normative profile in the associations of Table IV. In spite of this normative aspect, *the main interpretation remains of conceiving both the terms as primarily an expression of “the whole way of life”- and of a descriptive view of culture.*

In short: even if the term cultural heritage seems to have some more normative threads than the term culture, it is not the dimension of quality that is its most typical trait. To a larger degree it seems related to the “whole way of life”. The heritage enters into the existential cultural process as a durable and lasting part related to roots and relationship. In a world of change and homelessness a factor of continuity may represent a necessary and complementary resource. Finally cultural heritage is primarily a humanistic affair with lesser references to science. It is not related to the rational world and its basic knowledge.

- *The aesthetic dimension*

The fact that most of the teachers are dealing with aesthetic subjects, added to the extended role of the aesthetic dimension in the new curriculum in Norway, legitimates a focus upon the aesthetic dimension in this investigation too. The questions formulated in the questionnaire are constructed according to experiences in the first investigation, where both objective and subjective values were in focus and where the concept of beauty seemed to be complicated. It was allowed to give only one response and the results are revealed in Table VI.

<b>The aesthetic dimension is associated to</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
a subjective experience of beauty	38
a subjective experience of being touched	35
qualities of the object, form	15
qualities of the object, beauty	11

*Table VI : Conceptions of the aesthetic dimension. Distribution in per cent*

According to the table about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the teachers relate the term aesthetic to a *subjective experience*. Half of them characterize this experience as an experience of beauty, the other half to that of being touched.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the teachers refer their experience to qualities of the object.

This question was supplied by an explicit reference to the painting of E. Munch, an art product that might challenge a traditional view of beauty. Do the teachers use the term aesthetic in this context or do they not? Table VII shows the relationship between the responses in those two contexts:

What does the term aesthetic mean?	Yes to use the term aesthetic to Munch's "The Cry"	No to use the term aesthetic to Munch's "The Cry"	Total
Something objective/ beautiful	4	16	20
Something objective/ form	9	17	26
Something subjective/ Beautiful	17	49	66
Something subjective/ that of being touched	53	7	61
Total	85	89	176

**Table VII :The relationship between the conception of the term aesthetic and the use of this term in relation to Munch's "The Cry".**

This question splits the group into two equal parts, where one half is responding "yes", the other half "no". The most dominating trait of the group saying, "yes", is related to that of being touched. It is however worth mentioning that some of the yes- responders experience a kind of beauty in relation to this painting of Munch. The group responding "no" has no experiences of beauty in relation to the same work. The other responses in this group give indications of the role of objective criteria.

When the teachers were asked to argument for their view, they referred to their earlier response to the term aesthetic. The results confirm the teachers' subjective approach to the term aesthetic. It looks like the term "*beauty*" is both a crucial and a complex one, a term that is challenged in relation to "The Cry" of E.Munch.

- *Legitimacy and status*

The teachers' associations to the concept of cultural heritage revealed that "roots", "identity" and "relationship" were frequent terms. When they were asked to give their support to maximum 3 of the statements of legitimacy in Table VIII, their responses confirm the main tendency of the earlier results:

<b>Main arguments for cultural heritage</b>	<b>Degree of support</b>
Roots and development of personal identity	93
Development of basic values	69
Development of relations	49
Content that may develop insight and experience	36
Basic knowledge as a foundation of further development	32

**Table VIIIa : The most important justifications of cultural transference in school. Distribution in percent**

There is a difference between male and females as regards legitimacy, where basic knowledge is more often preferred by males than by females (37%-30%), while the contrary is the case as to attitudes and values (75%-56%).

<b>Main arguments for cultural heritage</b>	<b>Actual numbers support</b>		
	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
Roots and development of personal identity	48	115	163
Development of basic values	32	89	121
Development of relations	26	60	86
Content that may develop insight and experience	21	42	63
Basic knowledge as a foundation of further development	21	36	57

**Table VIIIb: The most important justifications of cultural transference in school. Distribution of actual numbers among male and female teachers**

- *Their concept of cultural heritage. A summary*

The concept of cultural heritage seems to be more related to cultural substance than to cultural processes. The associations reported deal primarily with experiences of daily life, but also aesthetic areas and other normative contexts of culture are mentioned. The heritage has an explicit humanistic character with little awareness upon science and rational basic knowledge.



The dominance of a concept related to “the whole way of life” is revealed in three contexts. Primarily this category is the dominating one both in the associations to the term cultural heritage and in the comparisons of the definition of the terms culture and cultural heritage. Secondly the legitimating of cultural heritage in school does not seem to originate from the quality of the selected heritage but upon its potential in developing roots and relationships. Because the arguments of legitimacy do not underline the quality of the heritage but its role in defining roots and relationships, the heritage gets its primary task in defining the individual within a cultural context. In this connection a descriptive anthropological concept seems to fit the instrumental task of the cultural heritage in school. Moreover the conceptions of the aesthetic dimension underlining subjective more than objective aspects move the focus from qualities of objects to personal experiences in the individual.

The associations contained also “ideas, values and norms” – to quote part of the definition of culture by the Norwegian anthropologist A. M. Klausen (Klausen 1981:10). There seems to exist a culture outside the daily sphere that is “great enough and strong enough to survive”, but which is not easy to concretise. But this tendency is not strong enough to dominate their responses during the questionnaire as a whole.

#### **2.2.2.4 Summary**

- *The main group*

As regards the *substance of cultural heritage*, the experiences from the growing up life and the practice of teaching do not belong to a high cultural area. The everyday life experiences are concentrated to participation in local and collective leisure time arrangements and are usually reported in a positive manner. Most of the teachers are satisfied with their growing up experiences and those of their pupils.

The cultural heritage in school represents a well-known school tradition of common treasures within humanistic areas. But as the ideal of the teachers seems to be a “suitable mixture” of

old and new substance, of central and local character, related to the world of culture as well as to that of the pupils, the selection represent no canon of values. As a whole the experiences reported are to a greater extent descriptions of parts of a “whole way of life” than reports of a normative view of culture.

It is their comments on concepts that complement our understanding of their view of culture. Their associations to the term cultural heritage confirm the reports of experiences and their focus upon everyday life where customs, traditions and examples of folk culture are dominating. But the associations also widen the perspective of the experiences towards greater aspects of culture and also to more normative dimensions. But neither the responses related to the function of the cultural heritage, nor the responses given when the terms culture and cultural heritage are compared, give high frequency to formulations related to normative perspective. The most consistent result in the material is therefore that of *defining both culture and cultural heritage as expressions of an anthropological perspective of “the whole way of life”*. Within this context there seems to be little room to knowledge, science and technology. That is also one of the tendencies going through the whole material.

The *legitimacy* of the cultural heritage in school is related to the development of roots, relationships and identity, where the individual is defined into a greater cultural setting. In this context it is the relations more than the quality of the heritage that seem to be important. This type of response confirms the interpretation of a predominantly descriptive concept.

The reports of experiences give some insight into the *transferring processes*. They tell about active participation in local activities where the processes in themselves seem to be important. The school experiences reveal a teacher group taking the experiences of the pupils seriously. Moreover they define their task in school not only as one of transferring culture but also as one giving the pupils opportunities of going further and create something new. The main tendency does not underline a preference of a classical view of “Bildung” where a specific

kind of substance is anticipated to have a special effect upon the individual, but a view of activating and developing the kind of substance that already is valid to the pupils.

- *Variance as to urban/rural locality, age and gender*

As a main rule the results of the study are confirmed in the subgroups. Some nuances are reported in relation to some factors:

There exists no significant variance as regards the *rural/urban locality*.

Because of the reduction of responders, the composition of the *age* groups has a certain bias.

Unfortunately it is the youngest group that is proportionally mostly reduced. The results indicate that the variable of age may give some fluctuations, with a broader concept of culture and a greater affinity towards the development of relationships in the youngest group. These nuances are in tune with the time both as regards the use of a descriptive anthropological concept of culture and of a modern view of the aesthetics (Halvorsen 2000a: 42-43).

It is the factor of *gender* that reveals some nuances and confirm a well-known tendency of more humanistic interests of women, more interests of sport and science among men. This tendency also seems to influence the concept of culture and has as a consequence that females have a more narrow and humanistic view of culture, while males have a broader concept including science. This deviation of gender is worth discussing in relation to the dominance of female teachers in school.

### **3. DISCUSSIONS**

*What do these two investigations give us of insight into teachers' understanding of culture?*

In our discussion we have to keep in mind that the two investigations are carried through with different kinds of samples and different methods within a span of ten years.

#### **3.1 What is revealed in the cultural experiences from everyday life?**

None of the teacher groups origin from high culture contexts. But they have different cultural experiences. The teachers in the *first investigation* refer their cultural experiences to their

homes. They confirm the special cultural image of Telemark, but do not conceive the cultural experiences of their pupils today as a resource in the school's task of transferring cultural heritage. The *urban* teachers have no common territorial background and seem to be unconscious about qualities in their earlier cultural experiences. As a contrast the homogeneous *rural* group has lots of experiences to embroider, and reveals pride and satisfaction. These differences seem to refer to both real differences of experiences and differences of interpretations. The rural group seems to have cultural standards related to qualities in the specific folk culture of Telemark which got status in the process of building a new nation of Norway. There still seems to exist a rest of *this status of hegemony*. The urban group, however, does neither belong to this culture nor to a culture related to the Fine Arts. Their experiences are conventional and not worth mentioning. As a whole the responses in the total group may be interpreted according to a normative concept of culture with definite standards.

The everyday experiences in the *second investigation* 10 years later are quite another. The area is no longer the family, but the local community. The reports are concentrated to leisure time experiences being the same for the whole teacher group. Most of the teachers are satisfied with their early experiences and also find cultural qualities in their pupils' everyday life. The results indicate a more descriptive concept of culture.

The most interesting result comparing the two investigations is revealed in the teachers' evaluations of the background of their own and that of their pupils. As the differences correspond to differences in concept of culture, the results raise important questions as to practical consequences of teachers' understanding of culture.

### **3.2 What is revealed in the experienced from teaching practise?**

In the *first investigation* the substance of teaching in the three aesthetic subjects is part of a common normative cultural heritage. The transferring process underlines the relation between

individual and culture with focus upon a receptive process. In some examples the phenomenon of heritage is explicit, also with a more creative perspective.

The interviews reveal traces of an institutional context both as regards curriculum and school tradition, giving different opportunities to formal and informal influence in the three subjects. Both the individual profile of the teachers and their different locality are more visible in music and art and craft than in literature. And while the rural teachers seem to be reasoning within a context of “Bildung”, the urban teachers express a more developmental view of teaching.

In the *second investigation* a more representative sample of teachers was expected to report from all school subjects. But the results reveal that we still get information mainly from the same subjects. Even if the questionnaire gives lesser insight into the experiences of teaching than the interviews, the results confirm the dominance of folk culture, local topics and simple classical culture, a substance of the same character as in the first investigation. The school tradition seems to prevail in spite of different kinds of curriculums. However, the most interesting results are related to the three parallel questions about whether the substance in school is referring to the “artefact culture”, the “life world culture” of the pupils or “a suitable mixture”. Their support to the last category indicates their interest in the learning process through their adaptation to the life world of the pupils. Moreover they evaluate a cultural heritage both as a meeting place for mutual communication and as a basis of further development and creativity.

The different methods in the two investigations cause problems of comparison. The main tendency in the first investigation is the focus of the teachers upon a heritage of “artefact culture”, where the quality of the artefacts is an underlying ground. The teachers want to transfer *to* the pupils a normative heritage that is of higher value than the heritage from the pupils “life world culture”. The other investigation widens the substance from this local

culture. The lesser normative view of culture is accompanied by a greater accept of the life world culture in school. Thereby the processes of culture seem to be *more dialectical* and lesser one –way directed.

Even if the teachers in both investigations have a rather liberal practice in relation to the curriculum, this liberty is more visible in the second investigation because it makes a greater contrast to the canon-inspired curriculum of L 97.

### **3.3. Understanding of concepts?**

The teachers in the *first* investigation associate the concept of cultural heritage to a common and normative “artefact-culture” related to humanistic areas. The understanding of the term aesthetic strengthens the normative dimension by its claims of quality. This normative perspective is intensified as regards the relationship between culture and the individual. Because the heritage of artefacts is a central frame of reference in the formation of the individual (Bildung), it has to be of great value. Even if the teachers in the rural and urban group have much the same understanding of concepts, the rural teachers have a more intensive and comprehensive interpretation related to the quality of the heritage because of its role in the formation of the individual.

In these contexts terms as “treasure”, “fortune”, “roots” and “experience” are used to legitimate the cultural heritage. Because of the intended effects upon the individual developing identity, belongingness and relationships, the process of internalisation is crucial to make the heritage valid to the inheritors.

The understanding of concepts is not the same in the *second investigation*. The emphasis of the heritage of customs, traditions and folk culture are referring to experiences from daily life confirming a profile of culture as “the whole way of life”. But as both the aesthetic area is in focus and associations related to “attitudes, values and religion”, their concept also has normative traits. The influence of normative standards is however reduced in relation to the

aesthetic dimension, with their greater focus upon subjective aspects than upon qualities of the work of art in se.

The teachers' concept of cultural heritage has a normative dimension in the first investigation and a more mixed one in the last one where a descriptive perspective seems most prevalent. This result is accompanied by different arguments of legitimacy, where arguments related to roots and relationship are frequent in the last investigation, arguments as regards quality in the first investigation. It looks as if a view of "Bildung" referring to a special selection of substance is replaced by a view of belonging to a group.

The main tendency in *both investigations* gives the cultural heritage a certain passive character, where assimilation and reception are central terms. In the last investigation its role in new creative settings is explicit. Nevertheless the term cultural heritage is not as active as the term culture. The fundamental view seems to be that the cultural heritage is a treasury that has its most important role to develop a positive infrastructure related to roots, identity and common experiences.

### **3. 4 Conclusions**

The results throw light upon both substance and processes of culture, but are mainly concentrated to *the substance* of culture. The first investigation reveals the teachers' normative concept of culture related to something given the status as "the best". This frame of reference is used in all contexts, also confronted with their own life world experiences and those of their pupils. In the second investigation the dominating view of culture is more an anthropological one with descriptions of culture as "the whole way of life". This view is most visible in the responses related to everyday experiences of their own and those of their pupils and in their interpretations of concepts.

As regards the *processes of transference* of a cultural heritage, it is important to keep in mind the necessity of building a bridge between an heir and his heritage. The dominating aspects in

the reports are therefore processes of assimilation and *preservation*. It may elicit great effort on the parts of the teachers to integrate such cultural experiences in the individual's frame of reference. In this connection it is possible to suggest a motive of existentiality whenever the assimilation process succeed <sup>7</sup>. That means that even when teachers report of one-way processes from the heritage to the individual, this may not be translated as a static "swallowing process", but as an active one, which may continue in new ways. According to the new curriculum in L 97 the cultural heritage is defined as a base for further creative work. On the level of society it is worth discussing whether the processes in school to a greater extent may expand to a cultural level, involving pupils in projects of cultural *production* (Halvorsen 2001, chapter 5).

*The results confirm the teachers' consistent view of culture in all three contexts in both of the investigations.* The most important result is the *strong individual profile* going through their responses. The teachers' experiences of culture in leisure time, their choice of substance in school and their verbalized conceptions have a unique character. *Does that mean that a teacher's concept of culture is an important indicator of how teachers behave in relation to pupils and colleges, how they evaluate themselves, and what sort of content they choose in school subjects within a given range of choice?* My research indicates such a relationship. It is my hope that this question can be followed up in further research both within and outside a Norwegian frame of reference.

This consistent understanding of culture may be interpreted as an indicator of validity and reliability. But the consistency may also be looked upon as a lack of sufficient flexibility. In

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<sup>7</sup> The legitimating arguments of roots, identity and relationships are referring to qualities that seem to fill a gap in society today.



my doctor dissertation the view of cultural heritage was investigated also among artists and other central cultural actors, who revealed a more flexible and situated view of culture depending upon the context. They also used arguments of legitimating adapted to different contexts (Halvorsen 1997). I will argue for such a *contextual concept of culture and of cultural heritage* also among teachers because:

Cultural heritage is both substance and process. It has normative and descriptive threads, containing the best artefacts created in the world as well as visible and invisible signs of “the whole way of life”. The heritage is both outside and within the individual. In a pedagogical context this complexity is an argument for a flexible concept of culture, a descriptive, anthropological concept related to our experiences of the life world, and a more normative perspective related to the world of artefacts. It is as unfortunate to evaluate the pupils’ life world experiences with normative standards as it is to avoid putting normative standards upon selection of substance in an institution of education. As a consequence the different kinds of cultural heritage also have to be associated to different arguments of legitimacy.

The different views of culture in the two investigations may be due to different types of questions, different samples, different periods of history or an interaction of these variables. As regards the *types of questions*, we know that the first investigation was concentrated upon the term cultural heritage to a greater degree than the second one. The results from the second investigation show such a slight tendency to look upon the term cultural heritage as more normative than the term culture, that it seems possible to exclude this factor.

As regards the difference of *samples*, we have to raise the question whether the normative view of teachers in the *first* investigation also might have been found in a representative study at that time. We can only guess such a conclusion. The argument would be that a normative concept of culture seemed to be usual at that time among the ordinary man (Ek

1988),(Thavenius 1999a,b), (Fink 1988). Nevertheless there seems to be special causes for a group of selected teachers within aesthetic areas in 1990 having a normative approach to culture related to the dimension of quality. A parallel question in the *second* investigation will focus upon whether a purposeful sample of teachers within aesthetic areas in 2000 is expected to have a normative view of culture and cultural heritage. Because art today is lesser related to standards and norms than years before, the probability diminish that teachers in these areas will have more normative views than ordinary teachers.

Even if it is not possible to exclude that the different views of culture in the two groups may be explained as a consequence of a more elitist group contrasting a more representative one, in my opinion the most probable explanation is based upon a *general trend in society*. During the actual space of 10 years the concept of culture has been widened in society and a more descriptive anthropological view has been usual. Moreover the development has continued to diminish the influence of home and family in favour of contemporaries and a more institutionalised society. The expansion of the locally structured leisure time is an underlining of this trend. It is also associated to the development of cultural democracy. The differences in the two investigations follow this trend of the time, both as regards the type of experiences that are reported, the context of socialisation, and the more accepting and descriptive profile of culture.

This interpretation does not take into account a possible effect of school documents and plans, because it is not possible to find explicit normative traces from L97 in the conceptions of the teachers' view of culture in 2000. This result is an enormous challenge to the implementation of reforms in school.

Both the investigations of teachers' conceptions of culture in Telemark may be treated as a kind of ethnographic research where it may be possible to translate results to other relevant settings. Schofield uses the terms "fittingness", "comparability" and "translatability" to direct

the attention to possibilities of comparisons (Schofield 1990: 206-209). Therefore it has been necessary to give insight into the samples used in both of the investigations.

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