

## Managing Ecclesiastical Heritage

# Managing Ecclesiastical Heritage

Transformation of Discourses, Roles and Policy in  
Sweden

Maria Nyström



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## Abstract

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Religious heritage is in a state of transformation. Changing religious practices and secularization affect the established Christian congregations in many countries, as membership decreases and churches close. During recent years, new approaches to use and develop churches have been explored by the heritage field and the Christian congregations. A parallel development in heritage theory and policy focuses on broad definitions of heritage and questions the position of the heritage expert. In Sweden, the ecclesiastical heritage has a prominent position through heritage legislation and the shared management model of the State and Church. Departing from two case studies of projects that explore new approaches to heritage management, the purpose of the thesis is to describe how ecclesiastical heritage is constructed and understood by public heritage institutions and the Church of Sweden. In addition, the thesis aims to describe how professional and institutional roles and responsibilities are constructed and understood within the field.

The case studies cover two contemporary projects involving the built ecclesiastical heritage in Sweden: the Cathedral Hill Project in Strängnäs and the Hamra Project in the village of Hamra. The projects unite actors from the public heritage field and the Church of Sweden and aim to develop and extend the use and management of the church. Adopting a qualitative approach, the material consists of interviews with key actors, documents, and observations of the case studies. Synchronic discourse analysis is applied to identify discourses on heritage and understand the roles of the actors.

The results reveal parallel discourses on heritage among the actors, which are constructed through coinciding and conflicting values on the management of the past. Conflicting values may be negotiated to reach consensus, while different interpretations of governing frameworks and objectives cause tension between actors. The institutional roles and responsibilities of the key actors provide different capacities to incorporate policy strategies in practice. Despite the difficulties of balancing the objectives of the organizational framework of public heritage management, the actors use the available resources and tools to transform the boundaries of their institutional roles from within.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

The conditions for the religious heritage of many western countries are transforming. As traditional Christian denominations face decreased attendance and secularization increases, many congregations struggle to keep their historic churches open to the public, or even to remain consecrated. At the same time, the built religious heritage enjoys a privileged position in many national heritage regulations and has a generally broad public support that goes beyond its' religious values. In Sweden, the state funding for maintenance on the built ecclesiastical heritage amounts to more than a third of the annual grants provided for cultural heritage in total (Myndigheten för Kulturanalys 2020:43). The vast funding from the secular Swedish state, as well as recent surveys reflecting how the public values the historic churches, suggest that the heritage of the Church of Sweden is characterized and defined beyond its' religious nature. In addition, the Swedish Heritage Act provides these buildings with a broadly defined protection.

In parallel to the development of these conditions, a new paradigm in heritage management has gained ground, primarily in research and successively through policy and practice. The new paradigm stems from a notion of cultural heritage that reinforces the democratic potential of heritage and encourages the use of heritage to achieve sustainable development. This has been described as a "human-centred approach" to the management and conservation of heritage, in contrast to a previous, protection-centred approach (Wells & Steifel 2019a). The Council of Europe's 2005 Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) marks a unified effort to establish these principles in a broad European context. In order for a human-centred approach to be adopted in practice, it has been argued that the role of the heritage practitioner, the "heritage expert", needs to be transformed (Burström 2014). The role of expert knowledge in relation to the selection, definition, and management of heritage has been scrutinized and faced critique based on established top-down approaches to management, and the western-centred incapability of engaging with intangible and indigenous forms of cultural heritage (e.g. Smith 2006). While this paradigm has been well established in the scholarly field of critical heritage, the governance models of many European



countries are based on legislation and listings intended to safeguard the tangible past. To conclude, new ideas are being incorporated in heritage theory and policy at present. Despite this, it has been argued that practitioners lack the appropriate tools presented through theory to implement new approaches to management (Wells & Stiefel 2019b). A gap can be identified between the developments in theory and the approaches of practice and policy.

Having these developments as a point of departure, the care of the built religious heritage can be characterized as an intertwined management practice, where the Church and the public heritage field have coinciding as well as conflicting interests. From a historical perspective, there are parallels to be drawn between the western practices and definitions of heritage management and how the Christian Church cares for the tangible past. The related practices of the heritage field and the Church have been presented as “the religious heritage complex” (Isnart & Cerezales 2020). Understanding these relations as the: “continuity between the habitus of conservation of the past within religious traditions, and a conscious policy regarding the care of the past in heritage contexts” (Isnart & Cerezales 2020:7), allows for the complexity and intertwinement of religious heritage management to be taken into account.

Considering the transformative state of Christian congregations and the shifting paradigms of the heritage field, the management of religious heritage is located in a multi-faceted context. As a response to the development of the Church that was outlined initially, new projects have been initiated that aim to explore new methods of engaging with the ecclesiastical heritage. One example is the work of the Churches Conservation Trust in England, which emphasizes community engagement and has introduced extended uses of churches such as champing (church camping). With new approaches to engagement follows novel challenges for the actors within the public heritage management as well as the Christian congregations. Considering the strong position of the Church of Sweden in the Swedish governance model of ecclesiastical heritage, the question of who sets the agenda for future management practices becomes even more challenging. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden was until fairly recently a state church and still holds close bonds to the Swedish state. As the Church and State split in the year 2000, the management and protection of the ecclesiastical heritage was defined as a shared responsibility between the two parties. In the twenty years that have passed, the Church of Sweden has become an established actor within the Swedish heritage field. The extent of this role needs to be further examined.

## Purpose and research questions

The thesis aims to describe how ecclesiastical heritage is constructed and understood by public heritage institutions and the Church of Sweden. It examines how discourses on heritage are shaped in the transformation that Swedish ecclesiastical heritage management is currently undergoing. A more far-reaching goal is to gain a deeper understanding of how heritage discourse relates to professional and institutional roles in the field.

To achieve these aims, I address the following questions:

- What approaches to and values of ecclesiastical heritage are expressed by the key actors?
- Which different discourses on heritage and heritage management are constructed and activated?
- How are boundaries and responsibilities of heritage actors involved expressed through language and action?
- How do changes of institutional and professional roles relate to changes in ecclesiastical heritage management?

The built ecclesiastical heritage is the only coherent group of buildings that is protected through Swedish heritage legislation at present. Considering the prominent position of the ecclesiastical heritage within the Swedish public heritage field, the results of the thesis have relevance beyond this context and illustrates the broad tendencies and developments within the contemporary public management and development of heritage.

## Delimitations

The thesis is limited to the Swedish context of ecclesiastical heritage management, and the empirical material originates from Swedish projects. However, some brief comparisons are being made to the governance models of Finland, Denmark and Norway, as they have similarities with the Swedish model and have close State-Church relationships.

The thesis only deals with the cultural heritage of the Church of Sweden. This delimitation excludes other Christian congregations and faiths that exist in Sweden. While the examination of how the heritage of these groups has been perceived and managed constitute an interesting area of research, focus of the

thesis concerns the governance model of the heritage of the Church of Sweden. Using the notion of “ecclesiastical heritage” (*kyrkligt kulturarv* in Swedish), indicates a more narrow approach than “religious heritage”. One aim of the thesis is to understand the relations of, and within the public management of heritage. Due to the historical, and continuous strong bond between the Swedish State and the Church of Sweden, the ecclesiastical heritage is a relevant example to study how contemporary management of heritage change and evolve at present.

The study is furthermore limited to the public heritage field. This includes the government heritage agencies at a national and regional level as well as the regional museums. The Church of Sweden is not a government agency since the separation of Church and State, but still has close ties to the Swedish State through the Church Law and heritage legislation. It can be mentioned that there are numerous private actors that have an interest in the ecclesiastical heritage. These include private heritage companies, craftsmen and architectural firms among others. Although the private actors have important roles in the management and development of the ecclesiastical heritage, I have chosen to focus the thesis on the public heritage actors in relation to the Church of Sweden. The government heritage agencies and the Church of Sweden have formal positions in the management of the ecclesiastical heritage due to the shared responsibility of the Swedish State and the Church. As the ecclesiastical heritage constitute a shared national heritage according to legislation and heritage policy, the primary actors responsible for ownership and management have been the focus of the thesis.

In time, the study includes a fairly recent period. The two case studies cover contemporary projects that were studied in real-time. The Cathedral Hill Project completed its’ first phase within the time frame of the thesis and is still ongoing. In the policy review, a period from 2008-2019 was covered. The empirical material, including case studies and policies, mainly covers a 10-year period in time. However, a historical background on the key actors is provided to place their approaches and roles in a wider perspective in time.

## Thesis outline

The thesis is structured through four parts. The first part includes Chapters 1-4 and provides the general framework of the thesis. The introductory chapter

outlines the context of the thesis alongside the purpose and research questions. Chapter 2 provides the methodological framework, focusing on the qualitative case study. The empirical material is described together with the ethical considerations of the study. In Chapter 3, the literature review gives an overview of the interdisciplinary field in which the study is situated, through an international as well as a Swedish perspective. The theoretical framework is covered in Chapter 4 and introduces a synchronic discourse analysis as a central point of departure.

The second part covers Chapters 5-6 and provides historical background and contemporary context for the field of Swedish ecclesiastical heritage management. Chapter 5 focuses on the governance model of ecclesiastical heritage and the key actors. The development and current responsibilities of the public heritage actors are also covered. In Chapter 6, the emerging themes in heritage policy internationally and nationally are described through a new paradigm in heritage management. The chapter concludes by tracing these themes in the government communications on ecclesiastical heritage.

The third part of the thesis presents the empirical material through the two case studies. Chapter 7 describes the Hamra Project during the period 2016-2020, and Chapter 8 the Cathedral Hill Project during the period 2017-2020. The strategies and statements of key actors are identified and described. Conceptions of roles and responsibilities among the actors are also covered.

Chapters 9 and 10 make up the fourth and last part. In Chapter 9 the findings of the case studies are discussed using synchronic discourse analysis and Bauman’s and Smith’s notions of the role of the intellectual. Parallel discourses are identified and their interactions described. Lastly, the institutional and professional roles of the actors and the boundaries of their positions are analyzed. Chapter 10 positions the results in relation to transformations in heritage policy and discusses the policy-practice gap of management. To conclude, some practical suggestions are made, and the findings are considered in the broader context of public heritage management.

## Chapter 2. Methodology

### The social constructivist approach and qualitative research

The thesis is based on a qualitative social constructivist approach, which has also guided the methodological design and choices of the study. Following this approach, it is assumed that knowledge of the world is not interpreted as an objective reality, but rather that knowledge is socially constructed through human experiences, interactions and conversations (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2018:35). While qualitative research can adopt a number of different approaches and perspectives, the qualitative researcher generally “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln 2018:10). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2018:8) makes a similar distinction saying that qualitative methods: “...start from the perspective and actions of the objects studied.”

As the thesis aims to understand how professional groups perceive cultural, professional roles, and institutional responsibilities, a qualitative approach to research allows for a broad repertoire of empirical material and analytical tools to interpret the complex nature of the case studies. In the following sections, the methods of selecting and gathering data are covered, as well as my own role as a researcher in relation to the studied context. Starting by introducing case study research, the empirical material and ethical stances of the thesis follow.

### Case study research

The empirical material of the thesis has been collected using case study methodology. According to Yin (2014:5) the choice of doing a case study should be based on the need of understanding “complex social phenomena”, which makes it a suitable approach to explore how contemporary notions of ecclesiastical heritage are being constructed. In addition, a case study-approach allows the researcher to explore and use a variety of empiric material and approaches for collecting this material (Yin 2014:119). While there are a number of different conceptions of the definition and scope of case study

research (see: Flyvbjerg, B. 2006, Stake, R. E. 1995 & Yin, R. K. 2014), the point of departure of this thesis has been the instrumental case study. In the instrumental case study, the case is used as a tool in to understand the broader phenomenon that the individual case represents (Stake 1995:3).

In the thesis, two projects contemporary projects related to the management and development of ecclesiastical heritage have been selected as cases. The instrumental use of the cases allows for the interpretation of the projects as not only be significant in their own right, but also representative of how the Church of Sweden and the actors of the public heritage field approach ecclesiastical heritage in theory and practice. The specific and general knowledge embedded in case study research allows for the researcher to capture nuances and details, and as Stake puts it: “maximize what we can learn” (Stake 1995:4). Although the cases present context-specific knowledge, they can be utilized to illustrate and deepen the understanding of the theoretical issues related to the subject (Flyvbjerg 2006:222-223).

### Selecting the cases

The selection of the cases is based on a number of criteria. Firstly, the thesis aims to understand contemporary perceptions of ecclesiastical heritage. To achieve this aim, the cases need to be contemporary or recent in time when the material was collected.

Secondly, a central notion of the cases need to be the management of ecclesiastical heritage, while also having transformative or developmental objectives. In a management- and transformation context, strategies and statements on cultural heritage and management by the Church of Sweden and actors from the public heritage field are activated, which allows for conceptions on ecclesiastical heritage to be discerned, and discourses on heritage and professional roles to be constructed. The criteria excludes routine procedures such as minor conservation or physical transformations of churches, and rather focuses on the processes that have an exploratory approach to management.

Thirdly, the cases need to involve actors from the Church of Sweden and the public heritage field present in positions where they had to actively engage in the project to some extent. The criteria includes development- and transformation projects that are tied to churches owned by the Church of Sweden.

The two selected cases, the Cathedral Hill Project and the Hamra Project match the aforementioned criteria. The projects are contemporary to the thesis, aim to develop or transform management practices of ecclesiastical heritage, and involve multiple actors from the Church of Sweden and the public heritage field.

The first case study concerns the “Cathedral Hill Project”, based in the city of Strängnäs in Södermanland County, and run by the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö. The second case study is the “Hamra Project” based in the village bearing the same name in Gävleborg County and run by the regional museum Hälsinglands Museum.

The Cathedral Hill project aims to regenerate the Cathedral of Strängnäs, which includes an architectural project intended to construct a multi-purpose building at the site, and develop the existing spaces of the Cathedral and the surrounding site. While the project was still ongoing at the time the thesis was produced, the scope of the case study covers a chronological period from 2017-2020, ending with the announcement of the winner of the architectural competition included in the project.

The Hamra Project ran between 2016-2020, including the initial pilot study. The case study includes the entirety of the project, starting from the initial phases to the official ending in the spring of 2020. Early contact with the project was made through the Department of Conservation at the University of Gothenburg, where I have undertaken my PhD. The Department of Conservation has previously collaborated with Hälsinglands Museum on issues regarding the management and transformation of ecclesiastical heritage. During the course of the studied project however, there was no active collaboration with the Department of Conservation, and the only representative from the Department of Conservation was myself in the role of an external researcher.

The two cases are located in different geographical and social contexts, but within the same country and the same legal framework on the built ecclesiastical heritage. Each case concerns a project aiming to develop or regenerate a church constructed before the end of 1939 belonging to the Church of Sweden, which thus require permit from the county administrative board regarding physical transformation. Although there are similarities between the two cases, the means and strategies of reaching their objectives differ. The Cathedral Hill Project focuses on the Cathedral of Strängnäs, considered as one of the most well preserved medieval cathedrals of Sweden in addition to being a popular tourist destination. The architectural competition has also affected the historic

center of Strängnäs, and has garnered nation-wide attention through the media. Looking at the case of the Hamra Project, it was situated in the remote, small village of Hamra in mid-Sweden. The project principally aimed at developing strategies for regional development through tourism, using the rarely used parish church as a resource.

In a Swedish context, the cases can be characterized as unique rather than representative of a common phenomenon. While architectural transformations of, or additions to, older churches have been carried out in Sweden (See: Löfgren & Persson 2015 & Persson 2017), few have had the broad scope of the Cathedral Hill Project. The closest model could be the 2011 *Domkyrkoforum* (The Cathedral Forum), a visitor's center designed by the architect Carmen Izquierdo adjacent to the Cathedral of Lund in southern Sweden. This building can be characterized as a "landmark building" in the city center, and the design was decided on following an international architectural competition (Malmström 2012). In the Diocese of Lund, there have also been efforts made to develop new methods to "preserve, use and develop the ecclesiastical heritage" (Lunds Stift *unknown year*). The project *Virket*, aimed to give tangible advice on how to use the ecclesiastical heritage as a resource for the Church of Sweden and the individual parish, as well as for the public in general. This effort has certain similarities to the broad objectives of the Hamra Project and the Cathedral Hill Project. Still, these examples are quite rare, and the two selected cases have the advantage of being contemporary with the thesis, which provided an immediacy to the available material. Although the case studies are not representative of a wide-spread trend in Swedish ecclesiastical heritage management, the unique case can be used for generalization on a subject as it may still be rich with information, or to challenge normative and general assumptions (Stake 1995:4-5).

### Specifying units of analysis

The statements and strategies of the institutional actors are what Yin (2014) calls "units of analysis". The units of analysis need to be identified in relation to the context of the case, and can be said to represent the actual case being studied (Yin 2014:31). Yin (2014) argues for a close attention to these units due to the complexity and embeddedness of case study research that can make cases abstract and difficult to delimit. The specific cases that were selected in the thesis involve numerous actors from different fields and institutional

affiliations, and each have specific and rich contexts where they are acting, which holds an abundance of information. Specifying the units of analysis is a way of discerning the relevant components for the purpose of the study, and delimiting the scope to make it easier to gain an overview.

It has not been the intent of the thesis to trace the entire process or analyse the outcome of each project. The focus of the cases is rather the groups of people involved in the projects at various points. Departing from the research questions of the thesis, the relevant units of analysis were identified as statements and actions of the key institutional actors within public heritage management and the Church of Sweden that were part of the projects. The actors were representatives from the National Heritage Board, the county administrative boards, one regional museum, the diocese heritage departments, the dioceses and the parishes. The government communications on ecclesiastical heritage policies are an additional unit of analysis, that had a more passive role in relation to the cases.

### Empirical material

Departing from an ethnographic approach, the thesis is based on qualitative empirical material mainly collected through the case studies, and include additional material needed to understand the context of the cases within Swedish ecclesiastical heritage management. The material consists of interviews, documents and observations. An advantage of the case-study approach is the possibility of triangulating different sources of data, supporting the findings from several perspectives and strengthening the validity of the study (Yin 2014:120-122). By tracing what Yin calls "converging lines of inquiry", the researcher supports claims through multiple sources rather than one single category of data (Yin 2014:120). In qualitative research, a distinction is usually being made between existing material, and material that is constructed by the researcher (Börjesson & Palmblad 2009:17). In the thesis, the data consists of both categories. The document analysis and the observations depart from an existing material, while the interviews are constructed through the interaction between myself as a researcher and the respondent.

### Interviews – approach, design and collection

The interviews constitute a large part of the empirical data. Interviews as a method of gathering data is grounded in ethnographic methodology, as well as

in the field of *kulturmård* and critical heritage studies. The key motivation of using interviews is to capture the views and ideas held by groups or individuals in the cases, which is a central point of departure for the thesis (Stig Sorensen, 2009:164). The design of the interviews follows a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with representatives of the key actors of the projects. The interviews serve a dual purpose. Firstly, they explore the views of the respondents on a number of pre-determined themes, and secondly they are used to gather additional factual material on the projects that aided the understanding of the cases.

The common themes of the interviews were the following: conceptions of ecclesiastical heritage, views on the professional roles in the current governance model of ecclesiastical heritage, professional motives and strategies within ecclesiastical heritage management, ideas and perceptions of future directions for ecclesiastical heritage management (See Appendix 1 for full protocol). Rather than seeking the true meanings and feelings of the respondents, the interviews were aimed at gathering accounts on the abovementioned themes (Brinkmann 2018). These themes were explored through open-ended questions that allowed for the respondent to develop their answers and to lead the conversation to relevant sub-themes (O'Reilly 2005:120). The semi-structured design of the interviews is an important component in order to remain flexible and challenge the pre-conceptions that might be held by myself as a researcher.

The respondents were interviewed in their various professional roles in connection to the cases. In their professional role, they represent different *institutional actors*. The institutional actors are representatives of some of the major institutions of the Swedish public heritage field. In the context of the thesis, these are the public heritage agencies at a national and regional level (the National Heritage Board and the county administrative board), the regional museums and the Church of Sweden.

While some of the respondents were identified and approached at an early stage of the study due to their key positions in the projects, others were identified as the projects proceeded and through the earlier interviews. The respondents had different responsibilities within the projects. To some, this meant that they had a more pronounced role initially, while others played a more active part during the latter parts of the project. The selection of respondents allowed for a closer understanding of the context and process of each project. It should be noted that not all of the respondents from the Church

of Sweden were clergy, but they were all employed by the Church and worked actively for the Church in the projects.

As the focus of the thesis is to understand the conceptions and responses by the professional field in relation to ecclesiastical heritage, potential respondents such as community or parish members were excluded from the interviews. These groups represent interesting subjects within the context of the management of ecclesiastical heritage and the roles that they may play. However, their roles falls outside the scope of the study as the focus is to explore the institutional field of ecclesiastical heritage management. The respondents were selected as representatives of the public management of heritage and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden. Divided in sub-sections, the public heritage actors in the study consist of representatives of the National Heritage Board (NHB), The County Administrative Boards of Gävleborg and Södermanland (CAB), and the municipal museum, Hälsinglands Museum. The representatives of the Church of Sweden consist of clergy at Parish- and Diocese-level, as well as heritage officers on a Diocese-and National level and project representatives employed by the Parish of Aspö-Strängnäs. The last group consists out of one project leader, one elected representative of the Parish Council and one architect in an advisory position.

Table 1. List of respondents

| <b>Respondent's professional affiliation</b>      | <b>Hamra Project</b> | <b>Cathedral Hill Project</b> |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| NHB   | 1                    | 1                             |
| CAB Gävleborg                                     | 1                    |                               |
| CAB Södermanland                                  |                      | 1                             |
| Hälsinglands Museum                               | 2                    |                               |
| Parish Clergy                                     | 2                    | 1                             |
| Project representatives (non-clergy)              |                      | 3                             |
| Diocese Clergy                                    |                      | 1                             |
| Church of Sweden: National level heritage officer | 1                    | 1                             |
| Church of Sweden: Diocese level heritage officer  | 2                    | 1                             |
| Total number of respondents:                      |                      |                               |
|   | 16                   |                               |

It should be noted that only one representative of the National Heritage Board and one representative of the Church of Sweden at a national level were interviewed. However, these interviews connects to both cases as shown in the table above.

The initial contact with the respondents was made by phone or e-mail in order to plan and set up the interview. Prior to the interviews, the respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and the interview as well as the overall themes of the interview. 13 of the interviews were conducted at the respondent's place of work, as chosen by the respondent, in order to achieve a relaxed and comfortable environment which additionally suits the professional context being explored in the thesis (O'Reilly 2005:146). The additional three interviews were conducted by telephone or remotely through Skype. While it would have been preferred to conduct these interviews in person due to the nuances and interplay between myself and the respondent being limited by the distance of these arrangements (Brinkmann 2018:578), limited time and unforeseen obstacles made this the most appropriate solution.

The duration of the interviews was 1 - 2 hours on average, and they were recorded while supporting notes being made during the course of the interviews. Themes or issues of particular interests were noted directly following the interview, and transcriptions were made as soon as possible. The interviews were carried out during May and December 2018, February and September 2019 and February 2020. All of the respondents remain anonymous in the study, and have only been given titles matching their professional affiliation in the thesis. The original recordings and transcriptions of the interviews are held by the author. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, and the quotes appearing in the thesis are translated by the author with the original quote provided in a footnote.

### Document analysis

In addition to the interviews, a number of different types of documents and written accounts are analysed. The main part of these documents were produced within the two cases. These documents included published material such as webpages, annual reports and planning documents. A number of newspaper articles are also reviewed, primarily those including interviews with project representatives. Additional archival material consist of project

applications and reports. These documents are used in the Hamra Project-case and were retrieved from the Gävleborg County Administrative Board archive. The tables below outline the documents that are used in each case.

Table 2. The Hamra Project – published documents

| Author                      | Year published | No. documents | Document type      |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Hälsinglands Museum         | 2016-2019      | 4             | Annual reports     |
| Hälsinglands Museum         | 2018           | 1             | Invitation         |
| Churches Conservation Trust | 2018           | 1             | Report             |
| Busck, C., af Sandberg      | 2018           | 2             | Newspaper articles |

Table 3. The Hamra Project – archival documents from the Gävleborg County Administrative Board Archive

| Author              | Year published | No. documents | Document type  |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Hälsinglands Museum | 2017 & 2018    | 2             | Applications   |
| Hälsinglands Museum | 2018 & 2020    | 2             | Final reports  |
| Hälsinglands Museum | 2018-2020      | 4             | Status reports |

Table 4. The Cathedral Hill Project – published and unpublished documents

| Author   | Year published | No. documents | Document type                       |
|--|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| The Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö                                   | 2017 & 2019    | 2             | Competition briefs                  |
| The Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö                                   | 2018 & 2020    | 2             | Jury assessments                    |
| The Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö                                   | 2019           | 1             | Communication                       |
| Orviste, Erik, commissioned by the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö    | 2017           | 1             | Cultural-historical assessment      |
| Falk, Anne, commissioned by the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö       | 2018           | 1             | Impact assessment                   |
| Sjöström, Ingrid, commissioned by the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö | 2018           | 1             | Cultural heritage impact assessment |
| The Södermanland County Administrative Board                   | 2016 & 2019    | 2             | Project assessments                 |

The analysed documents complements the data from the interviews and allows for further triangulation of the main findings, as well as additional statements on the relevant themes of the study. Similar to the setup of the interviews, words and phrases related to conceptions of heritage, project motives and objectives, professional roles and responsibilities and management practices were identified in the material. The statements were then analysed to identify the notions and strategies that constructed the different discourses on heritage and management.

Apart from the case study-based material, a review of a number of selected government communication was conducted. Since the Church-State split in the year 2000, the funding and management of the ecclesiastical heritage is evaluated through a Government Communication every fourth year. The communications are based on reports from the Church of Sweden, the county administrative boards, the National Heritage Board and the Swedish Agency for Public Management. The results of the reports and the Government's recommendations for future management are assembled in the communications. The Communications are not legally binding documents. Rather, they cover the Government's conceptions, experiences and strategies on a certain area of interest. As such, they are useful in the context of the thesis to understand how the Government constructs certain discourses on heritage and what they perceive to be the proper management practices. The three

Communications that have been issued so far were all reviewed. These are the following:

- Skr. 2008/09:220 *Kyrkoantikvariska frågor*
- Skr. 2013/14:152 *Den kyrkoantikvariska ersättningen*
- Skr 2018/19:122 *Det kyrkliga kulturarvet*

As the majority of these documents are in Swedish, these have been translated to English by the author when quoted. The original quote is placed in a footnote.

### Observations

Observations are an important component of ethnographic methods, and are generally conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the conditions and activities of the group(s) of people of interests to the researcher (O'Reilly, 2005:84). Due to the limited number of observations carried out in the study, they should be viewed as a complementary material. The observations primarily had the purpose of observing and noting the accounts produced during presentations and discussions on the projects. As such, they are useful as an additional source to the interviews and documents, and given an understanding the contexts in which various activities connected to the cases took place. A total of six observations were carried out during different events within the two case studies. The observations were conducted during public, or semi-public events related to the projects. These were selected as the key actors of the cases gave accounts of the projects through public presentations and discussions, which provided a complementary material for the analysis of the discourses within the projects.

Observations were made during the following events:

- “The Cathedral in the Future”, Seminar, Strängnäs, February 6 2017
- “The Role of the Church in the Local Community”, Workshop, Hamra, November 20 2017
- Hälsinglands Museum and CCT meeting, Hudiksvall, November 21 2017



- Forum för det kyrkliga kulturarvet (FFKK), Seminar, Uppsala, May 24 2018
- “Faith, heritage and local development”, Seminar, Uppsala, November 11 2019

In the Cathedral Hill Project, observations were made at one full-day seminar in the Cathedral of Strängnäs on the 6th of February, 2017. Observations were also carried out at a presentation of the project at Uppsala University that was part of the Forum for Research on the Ecclesiastical Heritage (Forum för forskning om det kyrkliga kulturarvet) On May 24th, 2018. In the Hamra Church Project, observations were carried out during a one-day workshop called “The Role of the Church in the Local Community” (Kyrkans roll i lokalsamhället) in Hamra village during the pilot-project on November 20th, 2017. The workshop included on-site visits in the village and discussions on the project’s objectives. Participants included myself, representatives of the Parish of Ljusnan, the Municipality of Ljusdal, Hälsinglands Museum, the Regional Theatre of Gävleborg and Hamra community members. On May 2nd 2018, observations were made during a meeting with Hälsinglands Museum and the Ministry of Culture. Additionally, observations were made during the half-day seminar “Faith, heritage and regional development” (Tro, kulturarv och lokal utveckling) at the Diocese of Uppsala on November 11th, 2019.

During all of the occasions above, I overtly stated my role as a researcher and the purpose of my participation. Notes were made during and directly following the observations. Central themes and issues which were discussed during the observations were particularly noted. The observations aided my understanding of the dynamics between the various professional actors and how the process of implementation of the projects unfolded. This further strengthened the analysis of the cases and my knowledge context-specific conditions of the projects.

### Choice of methods and ethical concerns

Research focusing on the views and perceptions of people needs to take ethical concerns into consideration (O’Reilly, 2005:59). The ethnographic methods used in the study closely engages with human subjects and the professional setting that they are part of, which may touch upon sensitive topics within the organizational structure but also the relationships to other professional actors.

Furthermore, the qualitative researcher needs a reflexive approach in order to acknowledge how one’s role as a researcher affects the subjects of the study, and how bias and pre-conceptions may influence the analysis.

A common denominator of the two cases are the partnerships between the actors of public the public heritage field and the Church of Sweden. An assumption within the study is that the interview respondents may be eager to maintain a good relationship to other actors within the field, which can potentially affect what information and which views they choose disclose to an outsider. The role of the researcher is also generally considered to affect the respondent’s answers, as they can be inclined to reply with what they think the researcher expects rather than their actual views on the subject.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2009:77-78) argues that the method of interviewing is intrinsically dealing with issues of morality and ethics through its’ purpose and practice. The interview setting may put a great deal of pressure on the respondent, with potentially uncomfortable issues being raised (Brinkmann & Kvale 2009:79). Openly providing information on the study continuously during the contact with the respondent and conducting the interview in a comfortable setting for the respondent can create a safer environment for the respondent and the researcher.

Concerning the Hamra Project-case, I have a personal connection to one of the actors in the project, Hälsinglands Museum, that is situated in my hometown of Hudiksvall. I have one close family member employed by the museum, however only having a minor role in the Hamra Project, and I have worked at the museum for a brief period before starting my PhD. In addition, my university department has collaborated with Hälsinglands Museum in a number of different projects. My position could raise the risk of bias in the study, it has provided me with an increased understanding of the organization, strategies and activities of the museum, as a visitor and from an internal perspective. However, a higher degree of reflexivity and critical distance to my own interpretations is required.

## Chapter 3. Literature review

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the intersection of the various fields and issues that the thesis covers. The research on management of religious heritage deals with issues located in the cross-section of different fields such as heritage studies, museology, sociology of religion, tourism studies and archaeology, to mention a few. Within the abundance of research, the literature in this chapter has been delimited to reflect the scope of the thesis. The chapter begins by discussing some of the research on the diverse roles and changing perspectives of the heritage professional in a more general context that is not limited to religious heritage. While the focus of the thesis are the professional roles of the public heritage field and the discourses on the ecclesiastical heritage, these need to be considered in relation to the broad paradigms and themes in recent research. Following the broad focus on critical heritage, the literature is narrowed down to the religious sphere, focusing on issues related to the management of Christian built heritage. Lastly, the results departing from a Swedish and Scandinavian context are covered.

### Management of heritage – discourses and roles

During the last few decades, there has been an increasing attention among scholars on the critical assessment of how heritage is being constructed and managed, and the role of the heritage professional in the process of management (See Chapter 6 for a more thorough discussion on shifts in theory and policy). Laurajane Smith has presented the concept of an authorized heritage discourse, where the western-centered and expert-reliant definitions and practices surrounding heritage were questioned (Smith 2006). While Smith focused on a post-colonial context and the issues surrounding western definitions of indigenous heritage, the roles and functions within the heritage field have been the subject of further research in diverse geographical contexts. In *Who Needs Experts? Counter-mapping Cultural Heritage* (ed. Schofield, 2014), a number of researchers discuss the role of the heritage expert, departing from the 2005 Faro Convention. A central theme of the different authors is the relocation of power from the expert to the public to select and define heritage. In one contribution, Sarah Wolferstan applies an ethnographic perspective on

her own role as a “heritage expert” (2014). She argues that the privileged position of the heritage expert must be accompanied by a large degree of self-reflection and a humble approach to local contexts and needs. In the chapter “More than a Sensitive Ear: What to Expect of a Professional Expert” in the same publication, Mats Burström (2014) also emphasizes how a broader definition of heritage transforms the expectations on the responsibilities of the expert. He points out that an inclusive approach to heritage requires the expert to be able to balance different, indifferent and conflicting meanings. Burström’s main argument is that the heritage expert should adopt a representative stance, as it may be necessary to advocate for unwanted heritage that could otherwise be bypassed by public opinion. While this research provide relevant insights on the contemporary developments of the role of the heritage professional, they do not fully take into account the multiple meanings and values that can be found internally in the heritage field through different professional roles and institutions.

In the recent book *Human-Centered Built Environment Heritage Preservation: Theory and Evidence-Based Practice* (2019) edited by Jeremy C. Wells and Barry L. Stiefel, a similar point of departure is offered to understand how the management of built heritage could include the broader approaches in contemporary heritage theory. In the introduction, the authors argue that there is a gap between critical heritage research, where heritage management is viewed as culturally constructed, and the reality of the heritage practitioner who may not as readily or easily embrace these ideas (Wells & Stiefel 2019a:5-6). While the idea of heritage as discourse has come to be firmly established within the social sciences and certain humanistic disciplines, Wells & Stiefel claim that there is a lack of communicative tools between research and practice to introduce these principles. Furthermore, the hegemony of the traditional practices concerned with the protection of the tangible past often find legislative support, making a critical approach to management difficult to implement (Wells & Stiefel 2019a:13).

Having criticized the established heritage management, critical heritage studies have not fully engaged with the various practitioners of the field according to the authors. The aforementioned gap is particularly valid to consider in the context of the thesis, as one aim is to offer a deeper understanding of the relations between the approaches to heritage and the institutional roles within the heritage field. This knowledge contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the possibilities and obstacles in theory and

practice of the field. Having these potential issues in mind, the book presents a number of chapters where researchers and practitioners reflect on the potential of introducing “human-centered” heritage management practices. While the development of new methodologies that incorporate a broader range of values is not the primary purpose of the thesis, these aspirations provide an additional perspective when considering how the Swedish public governance model is organized.

In a 2012 publication, Ola Wolfhechel Jensen discusses the role of the heritage expert from the point of view of a Swedish democratic tradition of a strong local governance in parallel with a strong central authority. The contemporary tendencies in the Swedish heritage field are described as an inclusion of a wider array of private heritage actors and democratization, where civic participation is being increasingly encouraged. Jensen argues that there are two principal trends that dominate the contemporary approaches to heritage management and the role of the expert; the expert-centered and strongly centralized model and the more recent decentralized approach involving more civil stakeholders and the functions in accordance with the conditions of the commercial market (Jensen 2012:136).

While Jensen’s division may reflect a somewhat over-simplified picture of the tendencies within the heritage field, he draws attention to the existence of multiple, and potentially conflicting approaches to management. He further states that a potential way forward is to include additional stakeholders in the process of heritage-making, while the role of the expert should be to understand how these processes function and how heritage is selected and used for different purposes in various contexts.

Remaining in the context of the Swedish heritage field, the 2019 thesis by Malin Weijmer further explores how participatory approaches are being incorporated in cultural heritage policy and practice. In the thesis, she raises questions concerning the scope of responsibility and range of action of the heritage field. A particularly relevant result concerns the practical application of the democratization of heritage in policy, where the selection, ownership and interpretation of heritage are considered as participatory processes. Weijmer argues that the scope of the public heritage field cannot properly incorporate the broad policy objectives, creating an uncertainty that may cause these issues to be pushed aside.

The two aforementioned publications partly reflect the gap that Wells & Stiefel (2019b) describe above. While this thesis examines a limited section of

the Swedish heritage field as a whole, the incomplete implementation of certain political objectives in public heritage practice contributes to an understanding of the broader uncertainties within public heritage management.

Another recent contribution in the Swedish context is the 2020 report *Kulturmiljöarbete och fysisk planering - roller och ansvar* (“Heritage management and spatial planning – roles and responsibilities”) by Krister Olsson, Susanne Fredholm, Elin Sahlin, Johanna Alton and Maria Håkansson. The report is based on an analysis of a survey with actors from the public and private heritage field and a review of a number of Swedish policy documents related to heritage management and spatial planning. While focusing on spatial planning, the report has a partially similar purpose to the thesis, as the authors aim to gain a deeper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors within the heritage field. Their results indicate that the roles of the public heritage actors have transformed during the most recent decades, but that these transformations have not always been established in relation to other actors in the field, thus creating uncertainties on expectations and responsibilities (Olsson et al. 2020:49-52). Furthermore, the results pointed to an integrated approach to heritage management being an effective strategy, rather than implementing a stricter legislative framework. This recent study points to some relevant tendencies within the contemporary Swedish heritage field, and provides a basis for the case studies of ecclesiastical heritage that have been used in the thesis.

### Religious heritage – development, management and protection

The research on religious heritage covers a wide range of themes and issues, from minority religions and threatened religious practices, to the major religious denominations and religious heritage sites. The particular definition of what features differentiates the religious heritage site from other types of heritage has been debated among scholars from various disciplines. The holy nature of the religious heritage site is clearly a highly complex and fluctuating concept.

A common theme in the research on religious heritage management is the living religious heritage site as a contested space where the values of heritage professionals and the religious congregation meet and interact. Stovel (2003) argues that the conservation and preservation of living religious heritage

requires a specialized knowledge on behalf of the heritage professional, in order to understand the religious context and maintain a productive dialogue with the religious congregation and make informed decisions of the management of the site. The case has been made by scholars from a number of different fields, including heritage conservation and archaeology, that the inclusion of the religious congregation as a central actor in the management and protection of the heritage site is an important factor to ensure a sustainable long-term commitment (Whiting 2003).

Having explored the case of the management of the ancient monastery of Mount Athos, Alexopoulos (2013) presents how collaborative management practices creates new arenas that challenge the expert-centered approach of heritage professionals and allows for parallel interpretations of heritage to co-exist. These issues align with the growing body of critical heritage research that challenges the authorized notions of heritage, and calls for more inclusive approaches that include multiple groups of stakeholders and actors. The question of who controls the narrative, management and use of the religious heritage site has been particularly investigated in relation to minority religions, but in the context of this thesis the position of the dominant religious congregation in relation to heritage management is more relevant. However, these results shed light on what has been considered as an artificial divide between tangible and intangible religious heritage (Stovel 2003).

Muskett (2016) applies a theological perspective within the emerging field of Cathedral Studies. While the new field is closely related to the study of religion, it also sheds light on the multiple functions and meanings of the cathedral which has relevance to critical heritage studies. Muskett departs from the metaphor of the Cathedral as “sacred space, common ground”. (Muskett 2016:276). She describes how this metaphor captures the dual function of the cathedral as a public space and as a space with sacred qualities, noting that the duality may be a cause of tension between different usages. Drawing on similar notions, Coleman (2019) departs from the perspective of religious studies. He notes how the Christian congregation has adopted management strategies of Cathedrals that includes the utilization of heritage to merge and balance the needs of practitioners and outside visitors. He further argues that the tourism management of the Cathedral and the religious practices can co-exist without the liturgy and sacredness of the church being threatened. This indicates that the conscious use of the religious heritage can incorporate different motives that may seem contradictory. As Coleman is departing from the study of

Cathedrals belonging to the Anglican Church, there are parallels to the Swedish context with a dominating Christian congregation. Looking at the strategies of incorporating the religious site in a tourism context clearly illustrate how various actors can utilize the economic potential of a “heritage brand”, while maintaining the active religious use of the site.

### The heritagization of religion

The heritagization process of religious heritage is another central theme that has been explored in recent research. Scholars from various disciplines engaging with religious heritage have examined how heritagization as a process and an outcome affects the planning, management and experience of religious heritage. Some argue that the process of heritagization mainly takes place as the religious building loses its’ original use, replacing this with a historical framework used to define the site. Heritagization, according to Poria & Ashworth (2009:523): “...aims at legitimizing a certain social-political order and ideological framework.”. This notion positions the heritage site as a deliberately constructed resource for various uses in the present, while failing to acknowledge the contemporary as well as past complexity of the site (Poria & Ashworth 2009). Looking at this definition, heritagization as a concept is used critically to understand and analyze how established notions of heritage have been constructed, and what the motives are.

Helena Wangefeldt-Ström (2011) uses heritagization as an analytical concept to understand the historic handling of Catholic heritage in Protestant Sweden, which included a construction of pastness as a way of domesticating these potentially problematic objects. Looking at heritagization from a contemporary perspective, Noppen & Morisset (2012) applies the concept to describe how the motivations for safeguarding redundant historic churches are being constructed based on notions of historical and cultural values, rather than religious in a widely secular context. These scholars describe how heritagization is being utilized from an outsider perspective in order to use and understand objects that are perceived as problematic or redundant.

However, the heritagization of religious sites and buildings can also be promoted from within the religious group. Scholars from various disciplines have noted the close intertwinement of religion and history, which has led to a growing interest in examining the instrumental use of history by religious institutions. A point of departure of the book *The Religious Heritage Complex:*

*Legacy, Conservation and Christianity* (2020) by Cyril Isnart and Nathalie Cerezales, is the intertwinement of Christian congregations and the care of the past. In the introduction to the book, Isnart & Cerezales argue previous research has put too great emphasis on secularization, through a “migration of the holy”, as a defining component of the changing conceptions of religious heritage. The critique raised by Isnart & Cerezales concerns the division between secular and religious values that the “migration of the holy” assumes. They argue that religious heritage need to be considered through a more complex lens, that considers the intertwinement of religion and secular society (Isnart & Cerezales 2020:6). Rather than a “migration of the holy”, they present “the religious heritage complex” as an analytical concept that: “...describes the continuity between the habitus of conservation of the past within religious traditions and a conscious policy regarding the care of the past in heritage contexts.” (Isnart & Cerezales 2020:6).

In the same book, Löfgren & Wetterberg (2020) argue that although heritage practitioners and the Christian congregation may have different motives for heritage preservation (or in their case reconstruction), their discourses may coincide and reach consensus in practice. The conclusions of Isnart & Cerezales as well as Löfgren & Wetterberg provide some insight into the relationship between the Church and the discourses and practices of heritage professionals. The complexity of this relation, as well as its’ historical basis provides a useful background to understand the case studies of the thesis.

Considering these results, heritagization has been identified as a powerful political tool to promote particular narratives of the past, but also of particular importance to the thesis, heritagization can be used to legitimize and strengthen a particular (professional) group. As shown here, heritagization has not been interpreted as a single process with one outcome, but rather as a complex selection and exclusion of different values to meet certain objectives.

### Ecclesiastical heritage and heritagization in Sweden and Scandinavia

The particularity of the historical and political context of these processes has further been emphasized through research from different disciplines. In the thesis, the research on the Swedish context need to be particularly reviewed in order to identify the questions that relate to this situation. The research on historic churches and ecclesiastical heritage in Sweden covers a number of

perspectives ranging from art history to tangible heritage conservation (see: Hermerén 2009 & Persson et al. 2014) .

Persson et al. (2014:31-33) identifies one of the main categories within the research on Swedish ecclesiastical heritage as: “heritagization and relocation of meaning”, . This perspective has recently come to emerge more broadly within Swedish research, partly through the interdisciplinary projects within the research portal “Religious Heritage in Transformation”<sup>1</sup>, that the thesis is part of and which several of the authors below has contributed to. The reviewed research will be divided into two sections; the first concerns heritagization processes and the second concerns management, governance and professional roles.

Several recent studies depart from notions of increasing secularization and decreasing numbers of visitors to historic churches. The studies often include an implicit, or explicit critique of how heritage is constructed through the Swedish governance model of ecclesiastical heritage. Hillström (2012) states that:

“The separation of the State and the Church of Sweden, along with the conditions for the state funding of the protection and care of churches, imposes a border between the religious values and the secular cultural-historical values.” (Hillström 2012:166)

Tobias Harding (2019) provides another perspective on secularization in Sweden. He suggests that the ecclesiastical heritage has not been secularized, but rather undergone a re-enchantment, and come to represent a merging of

<sup>1</sup> See: Löfgren, E., Persson, E. & Wetterberg, O. (2014). *Svenska kyrkans kulturarv Forskningsöversikt 2009-2014*, Institutionen för kulturvård, Göteborgs universitet, Harding, T. (2016). The Dawn of the Secular State? Heritage and Identity in Swedish Church and State Debates 1920-1939. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. 22 (4): 631-647, Harding, T (2018) Preserving churches for future generations: Central values in Swedish policies on Church heritage 1920-2010, *Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy* 1, Löfgren, E.(2017). Platsens lager. Om rekonstruktioner och mångtydighet i Skaga. In M. Kurkiala, (Ed.) *Var du är, är vad du är?* Skellefteå: Artos Academic, s.51-62. Harding, T. (2019). Heritage Churches as Post-Christian Sacred Spaces: Reflections on the Significance of Government Protection of Ecclesiastical Heritage in Swedish National and Secular Self-Identity. *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*. 11(2): 209-230, Löfgren, E. (2020). Reconstruction as Enchantment Strategy, Re-enchantment, Swedish churches burnt, rebuilt and rethought. *Ethnologia Europaea* 50 (1): 53-72, Löfgren, E. & Wetterberg, O. (2020). The Church Building as a Practiced Duality of Religion and Heritage. In N. Cerezales & C. Isnart (Eds). *The Religious Heritage Complex: Legacy, Conservation, and Christianity*. Bloomsbury. Studies in Material Religion. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

faith, history and tradition that goes beyond the specific Evangelistic-Lutheran Church of Sweden. This situation is described using the notion of a “post-Christian” or “post-Lutheran” society. Reviewing Swedish policy on ecclesiastical heritage, he particularly notes how notions of religious use become intertwined with the heritage values of historic churches. In a 2018 article by Harding, similarly based on a historical review of heritage policy, he shows that values related to local historical identity and an everyday place attachment have replaced notions of national identity.

A similar intertwining of secular and religious values in the construction of ecclesiastical heritage has been noted by Löfgren (2017a). She found that the churches sold for private use in Sweden have generally been transformed to a higher degree than those remaining in the ownership of the Church of Sweden. The results suggest that the religious use provides a different basis for physical change. Building on these results, this thesis offers additional perspectives on the complexity of how ecclesiastical heritage is being constructed, with the case studies offering contemporary insights to policy and practice.

Hillström (2017) & Löfgren (2017b) further provide a re-evaluation of the definition of redundant historic churches. By interviewing the involved actors and local stakeholders, context-dependent factors such as everyday practices and tradition were identified as determining whether the church was considered as redundant, rather than the actual number of parish members or visitors.

In a 2008 report for the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), Wera Grahn examines how non-Parish members valued a local church that was facing demolition. Through a discourse analysis of interviews conducted on people from the local community, she found that the majority of the respondents were opposed to a demolition and connected the church to a number of spiritual and cultural values. Grahn concludes that the values attached to the historic church goes beyond the strictly Christian values, as well as the tangible heritage values of the building. Rather, immaterial values related to personal memories and local identity were emphasized.

These results, together with those of Harding (2018) above, suggest that the historic churches may carry context-specific, local meanings, making interviews a compelling method to grasp the complexity and variety of the ecclesiastical heritage. While the abovementioned studies mainly provide insights on how different groups of people experience the ecclesiastical heritage, further research is needed to include how various actors in the professional field relate to this heritage.

Moving to the research on the professional heritage management of ecclesiastical heritage in Sweden, these studies range from historical perspectives to contemporary issues of heritage conservation. The focus in this thesis is the research that covers the development of different governance models and approaches for managing the ecclesiastical heritage. Looking at the development of restoration and heritage conservation from the turn of the last century, Wetterberg (1992) has noted how ideology of restoration and conceptions of heritage have been expressed through the application of these ideas on the ecclesiastical heritage. Wetterberg (1992) and Elmén Berg (2017) also outlines the development of the professional heritage field in Sweden has developed in close relation to the management and restoration of historic churches. These studies have a historic perspective and end in the early 20th century (Wetterberg 1992) and the 1960's/70's (Elmén Berg 2017), which provides a basis for tracing the professional development of the heritage field in the present through the thesis.

A more recent historical perspective on the Swedish governance model is provided by Beckman (2017). Departing from the Church-State separation, he argues that the State-Church model was not abolished as much as transformed into an antiquarian, or heritage-based, governance model. These results provide an important insight into the particularity of the Swedish context of ecclesiastical heritage. Although the Church of Sweden is theoretically an independent religious congregation, the intertwinement of Church and State partly remain – and particularly concerns the ecclesiastical heritage.

Another perspective on the division of professional roles in current ecclesiastical heritage management is provided by Lindblad & Wetterberg (2017). They depart from a comparison of the guidelines of heritage evaluation of the Church of Sweden and the National Heritage Board, they discuss the principal differences in definitions of values and relations between the two parties. Two points made here are of particular interest for the thesis. Firstly, the recognition of a new professional category concerning ecclesiastical heritage within the Church of Sweden and in the public heritage field, and secondly, the identification of the ambiguity of the division of professional roles in practice.

While the above study provides an analysis of the policy and debate on ecclesiastical heritage management, this thesis offers additional insights on the relationship between the Church of Sweden and the actors of the public heritage field in practice. Another gap that can be noted in the research on ecclesiastical heritage management in Sweden is the development of the role of

regional museums during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at present. The perspective on the organization of the public heritage field can be found in historical studies, but need to be thoroughly investigated from a contemporary standpoint.

### Conclusion & identifiable gaps

To conclude this chapter, the most relevant gaps that have been identified in the literature review are summarized. Starting within a broader context, the increasing critique of the orthodox approaches to the definition and management of cultural heritage has raised a number of issues that have bearing for the understanding of the Swedish ecclesiastical heritage field. As new perspectives and priorities have entered the field of public heritage management, practitioners are being faced with situations that they lack the resources to engage in (e.g. Wells & Stiefel 2019b, Weijmer 2019).

While the tensions between civil society and practitioners of the heritage field have been documented, there is a further need to understand how actors within the public heritage field relate to their responsibilities and the interactions with other actors. The study of contemporary cases in the thesis allows for a deepened understanding of how these processes unfold in practice. As demonstrated in the literature review, the definition and value of expert knowledge has been identified as a central theme to understand the interactions between various parties in the heritage field. The value of knowledge also relates closely to Smith's (2006) conception of the authorized heritage discourse, which is further elaborated on in the theoretical approach of the thesis as a point of departure for the analysis.

Previous research points to the multitude of meanings attached to ecclesiastical heritage among religious and secular groups of people, the potential conflicts between the demands of heritage and preservation and the contemporary use and needs of the religious congregation, as well as tensions between different groups in civil society (eg. Alexopoulos 2013, Grahn 2008). In the context of Swedish ecclesiastical heritage management the values and meanings constructed through different heritage discourses among the actors of public heritage management and the Church of Sweden, and their relation to strategic choices in practice, need to be further examined. The intertwinement between the heritage field and the Church of Sweden has proven to be contradicting, while also holding a considerable amount of similarities, which

adds a layer of complexity to the interpretation of these relations in a transformative situation (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017, Löfgren & Wetterberg 2019).

Another gap in current research relates to the relations and interactions of the various actors within the public heritage field. In the Swedish context in particular, there are a number of studies that covers these issues historically (Wetterberg 1992, Elmén-Berg 2017), but a perspective that connects the historic background with the contemporary policies and practices on ecclesiastical heritage management is lacking.

## Chapter 4. Theoretical approach

The theoretical and analytical tools used in the thesis have been selected based on the purpose of identifying and understanding the different discourses on cultural heritage of the key actors of the case studies. Furthermore, the discourses on heritage are studied in relation to the different professional and institutional roles within the public heritage field in Sweden. The first theoretical layer departs from a number of approaches that considers the existence and interactions of parallel discourses on heritage. Secondly, Zygmunt Bauman (1987) and Laurajane Smith (2009) provide a theoretical basis to understand how the roles of different actors can be interpreted in theory and practice.

### Parallel discourses and incomplete paradigm shifts

A point of departure for the thesis is the conception of heritage as being inherently constructed through discourses that shape the way sites and objects are selected, managed and protected as cultural heritage. The discourses are reflected and reproduced through language and related practices, which are connected to tangible sites and objects. Discourse analysis has its' roots in the "linguistic turn" within the social sciences, and is used in order to deconstruct the subjective realities created through the use of language (Börjesson & Palmblad, 2009:10). One way of understanding discourse analysis is as the study of "language in action", namely the written and spoken statements on a particular object (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2018: 281). However, discourse is not limited to the use of language, but also shapes the practices related to the concept in question (Smith 2006:14).

In critical heritage studies, the greater recognition of unequal power relations and multiple conceptions of cultural heritage has been described as a "discursive turn" in the field (Harrison 2013:110-112). Laurajane Smith (2006) has coined the concept of an authorized heritage discourse (AHD) to understand the set of values and practices that governs the selection and management of heritage. The AHD stems from critical discourse analysis, according to which the social context and consequences of particular discourses need to be taken into account (Smith 2006:15). According to Smith, this discourse is not neutral, but rather constructed through unequal power relations and an expert-centered



system of governance. The critique raised by Smith has been reflected in heritage theory, political policy and practice, a notable example being the 2005 Faro Convention that calls for a broad and democratic definition of cultural heritage, and a greater integration of heritage in other fields of public policy and management (see: Chapter 6 for a more thorough overview of this perspective in theory and practice).

However, while a people-centered theory and practice has been established in the contemporary heritage field, scholars have argued that this has not led to a complete paradigm shift. The incomplete paradigm shift in heritage theory and management has been described by Gregory Ashworth (2011). He claims that multiple conceptions and discourses on heritage exist in parallel, and in combination. Ashworth defines these as three perspectives to approach the definition and care of the past. He refers to these perspectives as: *preservation*, *conservation* and *heritage* (Ashworth 2011:4). A similar notion has been presented by Janssen et al. (2017), who also argue for parallel perspectives on heritage, labelling these as *sector*, *factor* and *vector* respectively. However, Janssen et al. are departing from the different strategies through which heritage has been integrated in spatial planning. This perspective has the advantage of considering different approaches to heritage as integrated in broad societal processes beyond the field of heritage. Due to the variety of actors and the complex context of the cases in the thesis, the parallel discourses need to be considered as part of these contexts, and not isolated from them.

Although the authors refer to the paradigms as perspectives or approaches to heritage, their descriptions can be transferred to the analysis of discourses. The approaches presented by Ashworth and Jensen et al. have influenced the analysis of the strategies and interactions of the key actors in the case studies of the thesis.

These three perspectives have developed in chronological order, and as Janssen et al. (2017) argues, still exist in various degrees and constellations in practice. As the empirical material of the thesis deal with development projects related to ecclesiastical heritage, the perspective of Janssen et al. provide insights into how these perspectives can interact in a management and development context. According to Janssen et al., *heritage as sector* is mainly centered on the protection of monuments through physical interventions such as restorations and material conservation, as well as the creation of inventories of notable buildings and sites to be protected (Janssen et al. 2017:1660-1661). As this

perspective favors the protection of single sites and buildings, it is difficult to merge with development efforts that entails spatial transformation.

*Heritage as factor* developed during the mid-20th century and onwards, and featured a broader definition that shifted the focus from the single monument to the broad historical environment, and included contemporary use as an important factor to take into account when planning for preservation of buildings (Janssen et al. 2017: 1662-1663, Ashworth 2011:9-10). The shift allowed for heritage to be integrated in contemporary processes of development and a wider professional field.

Lastly the most recent perspective, *heritage as vector* entails a process-oriented approach that focuses on a broader and more inclusive set of values from a more democratic point of view (Janssen et al. 2017:1663-1665). This includes the interplay of material and immaterial values, as well as the inclusion of heritage as a resource of sustainable development. Janssen et al. also emphasizes the potential of multiple narratives of heritage to be included in the development and management of heritage.

As these perspectives, or discourses, exist in parallel in through policy frameworks and practice today, they present opportunities as well as potential conflicts for the professional parties involved in heritage management and planning (Janssen et al. 2017:1667). Interpreting the parallel perspectives as discourses requires that attention is brought to language through written and spoken statements, and the implementation of different strategies in practice.

In order to understand how these discourses interact in practice, I have drawn inspiration from the synchronic discourse analysis. The model of analysis was originally introduced by Oevermann & Mieg (2014), and was intended to analyse and describe contemporary transformations of industrial heritage sites. The former industrial sites are often viewed as resources for cultural regeneration within a context of urban planning, where multiple interests of planning, architecture and heritage intersect. Rather than departing from the notion of analysing the construction and evolution of a single discourse, the synchronic discourse analysis allows one to consider the parallel or conflicting interests that exist at one single site of transformation. According to Oevermann & Mieg, the constellation of discourses and their interactions are key to understanding the process and outcome of a transformation project.

## Understanding institutional and professional roles

The authorized heritage discourse legitimizes political heritage policy and management, as well the authority of “heritage experts” such as art historians and archaeologists (Smith 2006). The critical approach taken by Smith (2006:87) also challenges the traditional expert-centred roles within heritage management. Departing from the AHD and the critique of the role of the expert, Smith presented a development of the position of the heritage practitioner in a 2009 publication.

Drawing on the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1987) Smith expands her theories on the political aspects of the professional sphere of heritage management. Bauman’s reasoning on “legislators” and “interpreters” have been used by Smith and applied in the professional field of cultural resource management, in order to understand how the role of the practitioner can be developed (Smith 2009:145-146). Legislators are, according to Bauman, characterized through an authorized role based on the perception of having superior knowledge on a number of matters, making them suited to make objective judgements (Bauman 1987:4). Interpreters on the other hand, while still claiming a position of expertise, recognizes the existence of different knowledge groups, or discourses, and have the role of interpreting and communicating knowledge between the different groups (Bauman 1987:5). These two roles are significative of a modern and a post-modern idea of the role of the intellectual respectively, and according to Bauman, they can exist simultaneously. In addition to the roles presented by Bauman, Smith (2009) adds a tentative third role that she labels “the facilitator”.

The role of the facilitator is to approach the management of heritage from the perspective group(s) of people to which it holds significance. Smith presents an example of indigenous heritage in an Australian national park. In this case, heritage practitioners adopted the role of aiding the affected group of people to record and assemble relevant data on their cultural heritage, and the tools to communicate with park managers. The efforts facilitated the internal management of the heritage sites, and allowed the people for whom these sites had cultural value to gain control of the interpretation and communication (Smith 2009:127-128). Wells & Stiefel (2019b) suggest a similar facilitating approach of the heritage practitioner. Rather than assuming any given values of a certain place, the facilitator collects the meanings and stories of the relevant

stakeholders and provides the framework of balancing and expressing these meanings (Wells & Stiefel 2019b:322).

Despite the different cultural and geographical context of the thesis, the different roles of the expert or intellectual are relevant in order to understand the current management of ecclesiastical heritage. Looking at three different roles presented above, the legislator, the interpreter, and the facilitator, they can be ideologically linked to the discourses on heritage presented above. While the discourses provide the basis to identify and analyze the theoretical and ideological base for different actors within the ecclesiastical heritage field, the identification of roles provides a more detailed understanding of how the roles function in relation to a certain discourse.

Smith (2009:123) also relates the construction of professional roles to the “technologies of government” of a specific field. Based on Michel Foucault’s notions of “governmentality” (Foucault 1991), technologies of government are defined as: “the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions.” (Rose & Miller 2010:273). Furthermore, the technologies are based on the knowledge and different groups of expertise of a particular discipline, through which various aspects of society are governed and managed.

While Smith (2009) focuses on archaeology as a technology of government, this term is applied on the discipline of heritage studies and historical knowledge in the thesis. Following how Smith applies the term, public heritage management is the mobilization of historical knowledge as a technology of government for the state. With that being said, heritage management is not an activity limited to the state, but cuts through different sectors. At present, heritage management in different forms is being undertaken by various private actors and NGOs. However, in the thesis I have chosen to focus on the technologies of public heritage management, and how these affect the interactions of public actors in the heritage field and their relationship to the Church of Sweden. While the Church of Sweden is not a public heritage actor per se, the Church has a formal, public role as manager of the ecclesiastical heritage.

In the context of the thesis, historical knowledge is being mobilized to manage and resolve issues related to the definition, use and protection of the past of the Church of Sweden. The tools available within the technology of government are among other things; the legislation on heritage and spatial

planning, public heritage agencies, national and regional museums, as well as the established practices of the aforementioned agencies and actors.

The *institutional* and *professional* actors within the field of heritage management are also differentiated. The institutional actors are represented by the formal structure and assigned responsibilities of a particular institution or organization. The professional actors on the other hand are the actual practitioners assigned with various tasks within the structure of an institutional actor. As such, the conceptions of the institutional and professional actors may not always align.

Smith (2009) relates the technologies of government that manage heritage to preserving an AHD that allows practitioners to maintain a privileged position of power within the governance model of heritage. The technologies of government as an analytical tool allows for a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of the expert in relation to the established structures of heritage management.

### Applying a synchronic discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis as a method is common within research tradition of social constructionism. In the thesis, the choice of discourse analysis has been based on the need of understanding the parallel perspectives of different actors within the context of ecclesiastical heritage management. In the field of heritage studies and conservation, the analysis of discourses on heritage is an established as tool to understand how people construct various notions of heritage and implement certain practices connected to these notions (Waterton et al. 2006).

The synchronic discourse analysis has been particularly influential on the approach of the thesis as it takes into account the function and interplay of multiple, parallel discourses in a given situation. The use of discourse analysis is based on the need to understand how people construct reality and base their plans and strategies on these conceptions. Considering language as well as the connected practices as part of the discourse analysis also creates a broad understanding of how discourses shape communication as well as action.

The context of public ecclesiastical heritage management involves a number of different institutional and professional actors. The synchronic discourse analysis provides the analytical tools to discern the conflicting and overlapping discourses of the actors, which allows for a deeper understanding of how

contemporary management- and development strategies are evolving. Furthermore, pairing discourse analysis with the theoretical approach that is influenced by critical heritage studies sheds light on the distribution of power and possibilities of action within the public heritage field.

Oevermann & Mieg (2014) who have developed the method depart from the transformation of industrial heritage sites and parallel discourses on heritage, planning and architecture. They argue that the interaction of these discourses during the process of transformation largely determines the final outcome (Oevermann & Mieg 2014:12-13). According to Oevermann & Mieg, the motives and objectives of each discourse are governed by different core values. The core values determine an internal logic within the discourse. However, the different core values of each discourse often cause conflict, or “clashes” between discourses during the course of transformation. In successful transformation processes, these values are negotiated among the different parties, and sub-discourses are created to mediate the potential clashes.

In the thesis, I am departing from three parallel heritage discourses, where heritage is approached as a sector, factor and vector. The table below outlines the values, features and strategies that are associated to each discourse.

Table 5. Parallel discourses on heritage

| FOCUS         | DISCOURSE        |                       |                       |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|               | SECTOR           | FACTOR                | VECTOR                |
| GOAL          | <i>Object</i>    | <i>Ensemble</i>       | <i>Message</i>        |
| JUSTIFICATION | <i>Keep</i>      | <i>Adaptive reuse</i> | <i>Use</i>            |
| TIME          | <i>Value</i>     | <i>Value/Reuse</i>    | <i>Utility</i>        |
| CRITERIA      | <i>Past</i>      | <i>Past/Present</i>   | <i>Present/Future</i> |
| PAST          | <i>Intrinsic</i> | <i>Preserve</i>       | <i>Extrinsic</i>      |
| FOCUS         | <i>Real</i>      | <i>Given</i>          | <i>Imagined</i>       |
| AUTHENTICITY  | <i>Object</i>    | <i>Compromise</i>     | <i>Experience</i>     |
| CHANGE        | <i>Immutable</i> | <i>Adaptable</i>      | <i>Flexible</i>       |
| ACTORS        | <i>Experts</i>   | <i>Policy makers</i>  | <i>Users</i>          |

(Table adapted from Ashworth (2011:13) and Janssen et al. (2017))

While a number of actors from different fields have been involved in the case studies of the thesis, particular focus has been placed on actors from the public heritage sector, including the Church of Sweden. The table above has been used as a point of departure to differentiate the discourses that were present in the case studies. The purpose of the analysis is not to identify the exact features of each discourses, but rather to describe how the discourses of the key actors relate to the parallel “ideal” discourses of sector, factor and vector. The interaction of parallel discourses has been analysed by identifying how different values were expressed, and the strategic choices and responses that followed by different actors in the process of transformation.

Furthermore, the Swedish public management of ecclesiastical heritage is based to a large degree on the Heritage Act. The Heritage Act provides a value-based model of heritage management and safeguarding (see Chapter 5), where the “cultural-historical values” have a central position. The interpretation of these values have been mostly an authorized task for the public heritage

agencies. It has been remarked that the tangible features and expert-centered knowledge on heritage seem to have been favoured in this context (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017, Génétay & Lindberg 2015). Considering the structure of the public heritage field and the authorized position of the public heritage agencies, the synchronic discourse analysis can discern how the cultural-historical values are defined and mobilized by various institutional actors. In addition, using this model of analysis can aid to discern counter-discourses and how they interact with a model of authorized heritage.

## Chapter 5. Swedish Ecclesiastical Heritage: Governance, Protection and Management

In this chapter the division of roles and responsibilities in the Swedish public governance model of ecclesiastical heritage are covered. The key actors of the model include the national and regional heritage agencies, the regional museums and the Church of Sweden. Their current roles and responsibilities are outlined as well as a brief historical background to how the roles of these actors have evolved during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lastly, the chapter includes reflections on the current challenges in policy and practice for the various actors within the public governance model.

Before going more in-depth on the key actors, the legislation relating to ecclesiastical heritage is outlined, with particular attention to the concept of “cultural-historical values”. The ecclesiastical heritage holds a particularly prominent position within Swedish heritage legislation. The Church of Sweden has the legal responsibility of managing and protecting the built ecclesiastical heritage in accordance with the Heritage Act, while the Swedish State provides funding and inspects the buildings in question. Furthermore, the parishes are the legal owners of the churches. This division of tasks makes the individual parishes responsible for the continuous heritage management and protection of these churches.

According to the fourth chapter on ecclesiastical heritage of the Swedish Heritage Act (SFS 1988:950 Kulturmiljölagen Chap. 4) , the ecclesiastical heritage encompasses: “The cultural-historical values of churches, church yards, ecclesiastical objects and cemeteries”<sup>2</sup>. Churches constructed before the end of 1939 and owned by the Church of Sweden in the year 2000 have a particular protection according to the Heritage Act. The group of older churches require permit from the heritage division at the county administrative board if the parish that owns the church wishes to carry out transformations of the church that may affect the cultural-historical values. Presently, this group of buildings consists out of approximately 3000 churches. All of these churches are to be

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<sup>2</sup> “Kulturhistoriska värden i kyrkobyggnader, kyrkotomter, kyrkliga inventarier och begravningsplatser”

managed and protected in a manner that do not compromise their cultural-historical values (SFS 1988:950 Chap. 4, see also the section “The cultural-historical values” below). While the demands that follow the heritage designation of the aforementioned group of churches remain even in the case the church is sold, the state funding can only be collected by the Church of Sweden. Churches constructed after the end of 1939, or those that are not owned by the Church of Sweden do not gain the same status as those previously mentioned, but can be listed individually as *byggnadsminnen* (similar to listed buildings) by the county administrative boards.

The funding of maintenance and repairs of older churches is covered by a yearly state-grant. The grant amounts to 460 million SEK/year, which the Church of Sweden distributes from a national level to the dioceses, where the diocese heritage officers appoints the grant to parishes according to certain standards (Skr.2013/14:152). Putting this sum into perspective, it amounts to approximately half of the state funds spent on heritage yearly (Myndigheten för kulturanalys 2020:43). The state funding was established in connection to the changed relationship between the State and the Church in the year 2000. The sum was calculated to match the increased costs of the Church related to the protection and management of the ecclesiastical heritage in relation to the changed relationship (SFS 1988:950 Chap. 4 16§, Skr.2013/14:152).

The official Church-State agreement from the year 2000 clearly emphasizes the role of the ecclesiastical heritage, stating that:

“The ecclesiastical heritage has been constructed during the course of nearly a millennium and has been shaped through continuous interaction with other parts of society. Through the historical position of the Church, the ecclesiastical heritage has come to reflect and represent a major part of our history. It is of great importance that this common cultural heritage is preserved for future generations.”<sup>3</sup>

(Ku2000/470/Ka, p. 1)

<sup>3</sup> ”Det kyrkliga kulturarvet har byggts upp under närmare ett årtusende och har formats i kontinuerlig växelverkan med andra delar av samhället. Genom kyrkans historiska ställning har det kyrkliga kulturarvet kommit att både avspegla och utgöra en väsentlig del av vår historia. Det är av stor betydelse att detta gemensamma kulturarv bevaras till kommande generationer.”

Considering the above statement, the ecclesiastical heritage is defined beyond its’ religious significance, and also reflects the historically strong bond between the Church and the State. Taking into account the heritage legislation heritage together with the public governance model, the particular significance of the built ecclesiastical heritage within the public heritage field is clearly emphasized.

### The cultural-historical values

The Swedish governance model of ecclesiastical heritage is to a large degree focused on the protection of cultural-historical values. While somewhat similar to the concept of “cultural heritage”, the cultural-historical values are used in a somewhat more limited way. The cultural-historical values of the ecclesiastical heritage constitute the features which are protected through the Swedish Heritage Act. One can argue that these values make up the interface between the public heritage agencies and the Church of Sweden, as the heritage agencies have the formal responsibility of their safeguarding.

In a 2015 report from the Swedish National Heritage Board, cultural-historical values are defined as follows:

“...the possibilities given by tangible and intangible phenomena for the obtaining and disseminating of knowledge and the understanding of different events and contexts – and the living conditions during different times, including the conditions of today.”<sup>4</sup> (Génétay & Lindberg 2015:18)

Looking at the above definition, the cultural-historical values are not connected to any particular tangible or intangible features of the cultural heritage, but focuses on the knowledge and information that a feature can convey. Furthermore, the same report states that the purpose of identifying, managing and protecting these values is to:

“...contribute to an increased understanding of the course of events, processes and contexts in the past as well as in the present.” (Génétay & Lindberg 2015:21).

These two statements provide a rather broad definition and purpose of cultural-historical values. However the National Heritage Board report also discusses

<sup>4</sup> ”... de möjligheter materiella och immateriella företeelser kan ge vad gäller att inhämta och förmedla kunskaper om och förståelse av olika skeenden och sammanhang – samt därigenom människors livsvillkor i skilda tider, inklusive de förhållanden som råder idag.”

what values should be excluded from this definition. Specifically, these are the economic, social, aesthetic and environmental values of a heritage object (Génetay & Lindberg 2015:21-22). The National Heritage Board also remarks that the aforementioned values are closely intertwined with the cultural-historical, which could prove to be an issue when these values need to be defined separately in practice. While the social or aesthetic *aspects* of an object could be considered as having cultural-historical value, the social or aesthetic *values* should not be included in cultural-historical values made by the national or regional heritage agencies. Another aspect which makes these judgements complicated is that the concept “cultural values” exist in a legal sense in relation to the Planning and Building Act (SFS 2010:900), and includes aesthetic, social and cultural-historical values (Génetay & Lindberg 2015:27). While the fourth chapter on ecclesiastical heritage of the Swedish Heritage Act is the most relevant in relation to the built ecclesiastical heritage, the Planning and Building Act can also be applied in certain cases. In practice, the close relation and overlap of the two laws can make the assessments and identifications of particular values difficult.

When used instrumentally by the national and regional heritage agencies, the cultural-historical values need to be identified among other similar values, and be represented by certain tangible or intangible features of the heritage object in question. While there may be numerous public and private heritage actors involved in the valuation process to a certain degree, the heritage agencies have the utmost responsibility (Génetay & Lindberg 2015:17). The position of the heritage agencies also adds a layer of expertise to the process, as the National Heritage Board states that qualified knowledge within disciplines such as history, archaeology, art history and similar is necessary to make these judgements (Génetay & Lindberg 2015:22).

Lindblad & Wetterberg (2017) have outlined parts of the discussions between the Church of Sweden and the National Heritage Board concerning the identification and evaluation of cultural-historical values, in particular concerning ecclesiastical heritage. The main differences between the two parties concerns the extent of how these values can be defined, who holds the main responsibility to identify them, and for whom they should be protected (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017). As the Church of Sweden gained a more formalized position in relation to the public heritage field due to the changed relationship of State and Church, the interest in developing methods to identify heritage values in historic churches increased from both parties. There was a

need to have a solid basis in knowledge and methods to ensure that decision-making and discussions were transparent and ran smoothly. The Church of Sweden and the Heritage Agencies have since developed models of valuation and assessment, that seem to include slightly different definitions of “cultural values” and “cultural-historical values”. Simply put, the Church of Sweden includes a wider range of values based in the past as well as the present, while in comparison, the National Heritage Board has a slightly more narrow definition mainly based on historical features of the building (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017:188-191). Furthermore, the National Heritage Board calls for a more expert-centered approach when identifying values, while the Church of Sweden wishes to include a broad range of stakeholders in the process (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017:185-192).

The different definitions are based on the interpretation of the roles and responsibilities of the public heritage agencies, as well as the Swedish Heritage Act. While the role of the National Heritage Board includes the protection of the cultural-historical values of the ecclesiastical heritage from a secular perspective, separated from the contemporary use of the historic churches, the Church of Sweden claims that the use in the present cannot be separated from the historical values of the church. According to Lindblad & Wetterberg, both of these interpretations finds support in Swedish heritage legislation and the conditions of the State - Church separation (2017:196-197). However, they argue that the different interpretations reveals some of the uncertainties in the current governance model concerning the definitions of values and the separation of institutional roles. In particular, the uncertainties concern the actual scope and definition of cultural-historical values, as they have not been unanimously delimited despite attempts from the National Heritage Board and the Church of Sweden alike (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017:196-197).

Different models of assessing and valuing cultural heritage are central to the field of cultural heritage management. The identification and selection of heritage values has been the subject of research within the field (Smith et al. 2010). One theme that has been particularly raised is the broader inclusion of stakeholders in the process of interpretation expressed through documents such as the ICOMOS' 2008 *Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage* (Ename Charter). The wider international debates on who has the right to select and interpret heritage, and what values should be taken into consideration (Smith et al. 2010:16-17) are reflected to some extent in the discussion between the National Heritage Board and the Church of Sweden.

The definition and application of cultural-historical value is a vast subject, and the use of cultural-historical values in the discourses produced through the cases will be returned to at a later point in the thesis.

### Institutional actors in the field of ecclesiastical heritage

The Church of Sweden and the Swedish State share the responsibility of managing the ecclesiastical heritage. In this section, the institutional roles of the heritage agencies, regional museums and the Church of Sweden are covered. It should be noted that there are a number of actors within the private heritage field, including architects and conservators, that are working actively with matters concerning the ecclesiastical heritage. However, these are not included here due to the scope of the thesis.

#### The Church of Sweden

Following the year 2000, the Church of Sweden has remained close to the Swedish State in relation to the other religious denominations in Sweden. The close relationship of Church and State is visible in several contexts. One example is the former church tax being transformed into a membership fee, which is still being collected through the State as a tax. The Church of Sweden is also partly governed through the Law on the Church of Sweden (SFS 1998:1592). The law governs, among other things, the organizational structure and funding, as well as the geographical distribution of the Church (SFS 1998:1592). As Beckman (2017:107) argues, the Church Law contradicts the equal position of the Church of Sweden in relation to other religious organizations, and allows the Church to remain as the “folk church” of Sweden. While the changed relationship between Church and State deprived the Church of Sweden of the position as State Church, it gained the status of a common religious organization open for everyone. Harding (2017) also argues that the Church of Sweden, and the churches they own, are defined from a Government point of view through a “post-Christian” perspective. Seeing the Church of Sweden as post-Christian allows for the specifically Lutheran aspects of the Church to be downplayed. Such an interpretation also frames relationship between Church and State through a more general notion of Christianity and spirituality.

The Church Law states that: “The Church of Sweden (...) runs a nationwide operation”<sup>5</sup> (SFS 1998:1592). In practice, the Church is required to be present and active in the entire country, a requirement that may be challenging when considering that a majority of people are living in cities in Sweden today. Although the Church of Sweden remains as the largest religious denomination in Sweden, its’ membership and visitor numbers are steadily declining. Between 2000 and 2019 the membership numbers sank from 82,9 to 56,4% of the Swedish population (Svenska kyrkan 2019). According to the predictions made by the Church of Sweden calculated of the current trend, the number will be down to 45% in 2030 (Svenska kyrkan 2015:32) In addition to this, a majority of the encounters that people have with the Church of Sweden take place during ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and baptisms, rather than regular services (Svenska kyrkan 2015:41). Surveys also show that Swedish churches are most valued as open and accessible places of stillness, while the specifically Christian values and uses (i.e. personal relationship to God, celebrating mass) are viewed as less important (Svenska kyrkan 2015:52). As the majority of the proceeds of the Church of Sweden consists of the membership fees, the decreasing membership numbers will have negative economic consequences in a not too distant future if the current trend persists.

#### The Church of Sweden as a heritage actor

The shared responsibility of the ecclesiastical heritage of the Swedish State and the Church of Sweden places high demands on the knowledge of ecclesiastical heritage management within the public heritage field and the Church of Sweden. In practice, the Church of Sweden meets these demands through a particular heritage office at the national level of the Church, as well as heritage officers working at the dioceses. The demands made on the Church to maintain a certain level of heritage expertise, as well as having to report back to the Swedish Government on their heritage operations, can be argued to turn the Church into a semi-government agency (Beckman 2017:114). In relation to other private owners of historic properties or objects in Sweden, the Church of Sweden has to meet certain professional requirements through heritage legislation, as well as having the advantage of a tax-collected state funding. While the Church is not formally a public heritage actor, it does hold many features in common with these.

<sup>5</sup> ”Svenska kyrkan (...) bedriver en rikstäckande verksamhet.”



The national heritage office of the Church of Sweden currently has 12 full-time employees (Svenska kyrkan 2019:40). They mainly engage with the ecclesiastical heritage at a general and strategic level. The principal areas of interest for the national heritage office are the distribution of state funding, evaluation and development of the state funding, support to dioceses and parishes and development of the ecclesiastical heritage as a resource for the Church and society in general (Svenska kyrkan 2019:40). The diocese heritage officers of the Church of Sweden work with a broad array of tasks, including the management of the state funding of ecclesiastical heritage and tasks of a strategic nature, such as analyzing the long-term management and ownership of historic churches.

However, the diocese heritage officers do not have any standardized working instructions, meaning that their strategies and priorities may vary between the different dioceses. The common denominator through all dioceses however is the management of the state funding. At a regional level, the diocese heritage officers decides on the distribution of funding based on applications from the parishes (Svenska kyrkan 2019:28). The CAB can furthermore comment on the decisions made at a diocese level. At the national level, the decisions of the dioceses are overseen to ensure that the funding has been granted on an equal basis nationally (Svenska kyrkan 2019:28-29). Strategically, the Church of Sweden aims to integrate heritage management and knowledge within all levels of the Church (Svenska kyrkan 2019:39-40). While the Church of Sweden has been acknowledged for having a firm professional competence on heritage at the national and diocese level, it has been remarked by the Government that the local knowledge at the parish level varies across the country (Skr 2018/19:122, p. 23).

The shared responsibility between State and Church has also led to the development of common platforms to discuss different matters concerning the management of the ecclesiastical heritage. The principal platforms for discussion between public heritage actors and the Church of Sweden are the regular meetings of the so-called national and regional consultation groups. The national consultation group consists of representatives from the National Heritage Board and the national level of the Church of Sweden (Prop. 1998/99:38, s. 149–150). In the national group, the discussions concern strategic decisions, general information and conflicts of interest within the governance model (Svenska kyrkan 2019:41). The national group furthermore arrange annual or bi-annual national conferences on ecclesiastical heritage,

which gather representatives from the regional consultation groups, the Ministry of Culture and other concerned actors. Additionally, the national consultation group monitors the activities of the regional groups in order to gain insight into current themes and issues (Svenska kyrkan 2019:41-42).

The regional consultation groups consists of representatives from the county administrative board, the Diocese and regional museums (Prop. 1998/99:38, s. 151). However, the actual structure of the groups differs between different groups and is not officially regulated. A main point of uncertainty on the structure concerns the role and level of involvement of the regional museums, which will be further expanded upon in a later section of the chapter. Discussions within the regional consultation groups concerns various general issues on the ecclesiastical heritage, ranging from conservation and restoration to balancing transformation and protection (Prop. 1998/99:38, s. 151). However, no formal decisions are being made during these meetings, nor are specific cases discussed.

### The roles of the government heritage agencies

The Swedish National Heritage Board (NHB) and the county administrative boards (CAB) are the government heritage agencies representing the Swedish State on a national and a regional level. The NHB has the overarching responsibility of maintaining the Swedish Cultural- and Cultural Heritage Policy, and ensuring that the political objectives are being met (National Heritage Board Website). The heritage divisions at the CABs are the regional government agencies assigned to oversee the safeguarding of the ecclesiastical heritage. The NHB defines their responsibilities as the following:

“The Swedish National Heritage Board works for a sustainable society and looks after the interests of the cultural heritage in community planning and construction, distributes grants, supervises, monitors and supports regional cultural heritage management and works to increase knowledge based on research and co-operation with other parties such as universities and international organizations.” (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2021)

While the NHB works at a national strategic level, the heritage divisions at the CABs have the practical responsibility to implement state regulations regionally.

There are 21 CABs in Sweden, representing the same number of counties. As a government agency, the CAB has a broad array of tasks, which include:

“...implementing national objectives, co-ordinating the different interests of the county, promoting the development of the county, establishing regional objectives and safeguarding the rule of law in every instance.” (Government Offices of Sweden 2021)

The CAB does not consist of politically elected representatives, but are appointed directly by the government. Due to the broad range of areas and tasks assigned to the CAB, they are divided into various divisions with different areas of responsibility and knowledge. The heritage division is responsible for the regional cultural heritage, including the ecclesiastical heritage of the county. Besides the tasks related to ecclesiastical heritage, the heritage division manages regional funding of cultural environments and folk museum, assigns permits related to archaeological sites and listed buildings and has the general regional responsibility of the cultural heritage of the county. As a government agency, the cultural heritage division has a largely supervisory role in practice. Their role is governed through the Swedish Heritage Act and the Decree on County Administrative Boards Instruction (SFS 1988:950, SFS 2007:825). As stated above, the CABs are additionally required to implement national objectives in various areas, including cultural heritage. Other responsibilities of the CABs covers areas such as: regional development, public health, sustainable development, conservation, cultural heritage, and more (SFS 2007:825, 3 §).

### A historical background

In order to understand the current roles of the government heritage agency, and the CABs in particular, a historical background of the field is required. The safeguarding and management of churches in Sweden is closely intertwined with the development of a national professional heritage field. In this section, the general development of the field, and of the management of ecclesiastical heritage is covered.

The built ecclesiastical heritage has been under varying degrees of State control since 1571. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Building (Överintendentensämbetet) was the government agency responsible for the construction and management of public buildings. The responsibility for overseeing the protection of churches was shared between the Superintendent of Public Building and the Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities (Vitterhetsakademin). The process of approving restorations and transformations of churches was complicated and involved a number of

secular and religious actors, which could make this a time-consuming activity (Wetterberg 1992:120-122). By 1920, the Decree on Public Building was issued, which governed the protection and transformation of historic churches until 1988 (Kungörelse 1920:744). At this time, the governing body was the National Board of Public Building (Byggnadsstyrelsen). The decree had a large influence on the organization of the public management of churches in Sweden, and what values and decisions were prioritized. A formal unit, the Cultural-Historical Bureau of the National Board of Public Building (*Byggnadsstyrelsens kulturhistoriska byrå*), was appointed and made responsible for the built heritage. Although the unit was officially responsible for the safeguarding of the built heritage, these tasks were carried out in collaboration with the national antiquarian.

The national antiquarian was head of the National Heritage Board as it opened in 1938 (Elmén-Berg 2017:83). Through the National Heritage Board, a stronger regional network of heritage officers around the country was formalized, leading to a more unified governance model (Wetterberg 1992:163). These developments had the effect of a higher degree of professionalization of the Swedish heritage field, and laid the foundation of the contemporary professional roles. Although the organization and professionalization of the heritage field was more pronounced through the 1920 decree, the parishes were critical of the lesser degree of influence that this development had caused (Elmén-Berg 2017: 84-85). Parts of the criticism can be traced to conflicting ideological standpoints and preferences on contemporary church restoration practices. The 1920 decree promoted an expert-centered “scientific” approach to restoration that had emerged as a response to the stylistic restorations that had been dominating around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Elmén-Berg 2017: 84-85). Among many parishes however, the stylistic restorations still had a strong support.

The continuous importance of the ecclesiastical heritage is clearly illustrated through the high numbers of churches that were restored during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with peaks in the 1920’s-1930’s and the 1950’s (Åman 2008:334 & 337). The section for historic buildings of the National Board of Public Building and the National Heritage Board remained as two relatively equal government heritage agencies until 1967, when the heritage unit became unified and was incorporated into the National Heritage Board (Åman 2008:338). The responsibility of the ecclesiastical heritage was also discussed to a higher degree during the 1950’s and onwards, as the relationship between the Swedish State

and the Church of Sweden was increasingly questioned and debated. The Government inquiries that were carried out between the 1950's and the 1970's all supported that the Church ownership of the built ecclesiastical heritage remain even in the case of a split between Church and State (Beckman 2017:111). Slight concern was raised concerning the dual role of the Church as a religious organization and manager of tangible heritage, but other than that there was an overall consensus of the ownership status of the Church from the point of view of the Government and the Church (Beckman 2017:111).

#### *The developments of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century*

The current heritage act was instated in 1988, and draws out the general principles on the safeguarding of churches that remain today. Concerning the division of responsibilities, the NHB was solely responsible to oversee the restoration and safeguarding of churches until 1995. In 1995, the NHB was decentralized as the heritage divisions of the CAB were appointed with the primary regional responsibility of overseeing the safeguarding of the ecclesiastical heritage according to an addition of the Heritage Act (Prop. 1994/95:208, SFS 1988:950 Chap.4). While the NHB remain as the outmost responsible actor for the public heritage operations, the CAB is the responsible regional agency. In practice, this has led to the NHB focusing on strategic issues in their daily operations, supporting other public heritage actors and strengthening the general knowledge in the field, while the CAB is responsible of handling case-specific issues and permissions according to the Heritage Act (Prop 1992/93:100, appendix 12, p. 125). The division of institutional roles between the Heritage Board and the CAB:s has been in place since 1995, and still constitutes the supervision of the built ecclesiastical heritage by the Swedish State.

#### **The county administrative board**

Looking into more detail of the role of the CAB at present, their supervisory position require them to review and give consent to any major alterations of churches according to the fourth chapter of the Heritage Act. The assessment process entails the CAB to procure relevant documents from the parish, including a statement on the cultural-historical consequences of the project by an expert within the heritage field (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014a). The expert

consulted by the parish can have various professional affiliations, such as independent heritage companies or municipal and regional museums, but need to have the professional knowledge and competence required by the CAB (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014a:4-6). Following these requirements, the CAB reviews the plans and heritage evaluation and provides consent given that the cultural-historical requirements are being met.

The current model requires all of the involved parties to have a thorough knowledge of the relevant competence and information that need to be included in order to properly review the case according to the Heritage Act. A related issue that has been raised by the CAB, is that the documents received from the parishes vary in quality, and may not enough information to give or deny consent for the project (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 19-20). Given how the model is constructed, the CAB generally keeps a professional distance to the parish during the process of a project, and do not give case-specific advice ahead of decisions in order to avoid bias during the process of the review.

The institutional role of the CAB is at present well-established within the public heritage governance model in general, as well as concerning ecclesiastical heritage particularly. A general issue for the CAB is their limited resources in terms of funding and staff (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2018:26). The lack of resources prevents the heritage officers from doing on-site visits and regular inspections of historic churches, which otherwise should be a central task. Further consequences may be that the communication and relationship with the parishes may suffer.

#### **The role of the regional museum**

In this section, the role of the publicly funded regional museums in relation to the management of the built ecclesiastical heritage is covered. A museum in this context is understood through the definition of the Museum Law as:

“...an institution that is open to the public and that acquires, safeguards, examines, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible testimonies of humankind and her world.”<sup>6</sup> (SFS 2017:563, 2 §)

<sup>6</sup>“...en institution som är öppen för allmänheten och som förvärvar, bevarar, undersöker, förmedlar och ställer ut materiella och immateriella vittnesbörd om människan och människans omvärld.”

### The significance of the Museum Law

The 2017 Museum Law is the first of its' kind in Sweden, and is intended to strengthen the role of the public museum in societal development, and to clarify the responsibilities of the museum (SFS 2017:563). According to the law, the purpose of the public museums is to: "...contribute to society and its' development by encouraging knowledge, cultural experiences and free speech"<sup>7</sup> (4 § SFS 2017:563). While the law does not state in detail how the museum should operate, it instructs the museums on public activities, research, management of collections and collaboration, departing from the abovementioned purpose. Due to the law being passed recently, there is a limited amount of knowledge on its' impact at this point. According to a 2019 report by the NHB, the main contributions of the law have been to provide a structure to and initiate discussions on the operations of the public museums, and the use and management of the museum collections (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2019:33).

Regarding the other areas covered by the Museum Law, there does not seem to be a considerable impact that has been recorded yet. The NHB remarks that some of the present challenges for the public museums include collaboration, in particular with universities and other actors from higher education, and a lack of funding to achieve the objectives of the law (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2019:35-36).

### A historical background

Before looking at the history of the regional museum, a brief note on concepts and translations need to be made. While the Museum Law provides rather straightforward definitions of the different categories of public museums, the definitions are somewhat uncertain in practice. In Swedish public heritage management, the *county museum* (länsmuseum) is an institution that has an ambiguous definition. On the one hand, this concept originates from the model of *county antiquarians* (landsantikvarier), who normally were the head of a county museum (see below for a more thorough overview). While the county antiquarian does not remain as a head of any regional museums at present, the county museum is still used to describe some of the larger regional museums of Sweden, and in some cases the director still holds the title of county antiquarian.

<sup>7</sup> "...bidra till samhället och dess utveckling genom att främja kunskap, kulturupplevelser och fri åsiktsbildning."

There are 24 regional museums<sup>8</sup> that are currently part of the Council of County Museums (Länsmuseernas samarbetsråd), and most of these still go by the name of county museums.

However, looking at how public museums are defined through the recent Museum Law above, the county museums do not constitute a separate category, but are included as regional museums. The reason for including the discussion on regional- and county museums is the ambiguity in the use of these categories in the reviewed material in this section. Although the county museums constituted an official category of public museums historically, which is reflected in the historical material, the term has continued to be used in different contexts, sometimes interchangeably with "regional museum". Through the historical overview below, *länsmuseum* is translated as "county museum" and *regionalt museum* as "regional museum".

Historically, the publicly funded museums were involved in the management of, and research on the ecclesiastical heritage. In many cases, these activities were done in collaboration with different government heritage agencies. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the formal involvement of museums was carried out mainly on a national level, as the National Historic Museums functioned as an advisory part in the relatively complicated restoration process of historic churches (Wetterberg 1992:121). The importance of the 1920 Decree on Public Construction and following organization of the public heritage field was partly covered in the section above, but it was also highly relevant for the role of the museum. The central, or state museums had a strategic role in this system, focusing on current issues and research in the antiquarian field as well as exhibiting Swedish cultural history (SOU 1922:12, p. 161-162). The other category of museums were the so called "rural museums", which are today's equivalent of municipal and regional museums.

The regional museums played an important part as the new governance system strived to accomplish a nation-wide, equal handling of cultural heritage. The larger rural museums were given the task of performing inspections of relevant heritage buildings, including churches, within their region, by

<sup>8</sup> These are: Blekinge museum, Bohusläns museum, Dalarnas museum, Förvaltningen för kulturutveckling, Gotlands museum, Hallands länsmuseum, Jamtli, Jönköpings läns museum, Kalmar läns museum, Kulturen i Lund, Kulturparken Småland, Länsmuseumet Gävleborg, Norrbottens museum, Regionmuseumet i Skåne, Stockholms läns museum, Sörmlands museum, Upplandsmuseumet, Värmlands museum, Västerbottens museum, Västergötlands museum, Västernorrlands museum, Västmanlands läns museum, Örebro läns museum and Östergötlands museum.

commission of the National Heritage Board (SOU 1922:12, p. 166). The inspections required the heritage officers at the museums to have a thorough theoretical and practical knowledge within the field to carry out their tasks in a satisfactory manner (SOU 1922:12, p. 167-171). At this point in time, the heritage officers of the larger regional museums formed a country-wide network coordinated by the National Antiquarian (Wetterberg 1992: 160-161). The museums where these heritage officers were employed, often as directors or in other higher positions, later became the county museums (*länsmuseum*).

#### *From the 1976 reform and onwards*

The above mentioned governance model remained until the Regional Antiquarian Reform (Länsantikvariereformen) in 1976. The 1976 reform was intended to decentralize some of the responsibilities of the National Heritage Board. The NHB had served as the responsible Heritage Agency to which the regional heritage officers (länsantikvarier) reported (Prop. 1974:28, p. 352-353). The initial suggestion was to transfer some of the formal responsibilities from the Heritage Board to the county administrative boards, making the regional heritage officer the head of a regional heritage division. But as this measure would remove the county museums from their position within the heritage governance model, a compromise was made, ensuing a shared responsibility of the regional heritage operations (SOU 2009:16, p.163-164). The reform made the county museums sustain a dual role as independent cultural actors as well as maintain a position within the state-funded governance model (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:22-23). Keeping the position within this model was also vital to secure additional state funding for the county museums. The continued institutional role of the county museum was mainly to provide support and consultation to the Government Heritage Agencies on a national and regional level (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:22-23). While the museums remain in the public governance model, their role was less central as the CAB:s overtook parts of their tasks.

These roles remained until the 1990's, when the division of roles and responsibilities within the public heritage field were revised once more. The public governance model was divided into three principal categories; tasks for public agencies, knowledge creation and care & public work. The two latter categories were the principal tasks for the regional museums (1996/97:KrU1). The shifting role of the regional museum emphasized the independency of the publicly funded museums within the heritage field. On the other hand, it was

put forward by the Government that the county museums and the CAB should collaborate on cultural-historical tasks as equal partners (Kulturutskottets betänkande 1996/97:KrU1). However, the wording does not clarify the role of other regional museums.

While the museums still had a pronounced role in the public heritage management following 1996, the new role included a shift towards a larger independency in relation to the government heritage agencies. The regional collaboration with the CAB:s was also subject to local negotiations, as the Government did not provide detailed instructions on how the role of neither the county museums, nor the regional museums would function in practice. The decentralization established during the 1990's is an important factor to take into account to understand the current role and responsibilities of the regional museums.

#### **The regional museum at present**

Today, the regional museums are governed through the model of decentralization that was established during the 1990's. The regional autonomy was additionally strengthened as the 2011 Cultural Collaboration Model (*Kultursamverkansmodellen*) was implemented by the Swedish Government (SOU 2010:11). The purpose of the model is to transfer the decision-making of the distribution of the government cultural funding to a regional level (SOU 2010:11, p. 27). The model also emphasizes the regional cultural planning, making regional cultural policy and objectives more central (SOU 2010:11, p. 69).

According to the model, each of the 21 Swedish regional councils (the governing body of the counties) are to set up a regional cultural plan in collaboration with the municipalities and regional cultural actors. The regional councils are self-governing local agencies, whose representatives are elected through the regional electorate. In the cultural collaboration model, the regional councils serve as governing bodies in relation to the regional museums.

The regional culture plans draws up the areas of interest that the regional heritage actors, including regional museums, are to use to prioritize their operations. In the figure below, the relationships between the different regional actors are illustrated. The county museums are formally part of the same category as regional museums. They are included in the figure due to their

historical status, and remaining organization through the council of county museums.

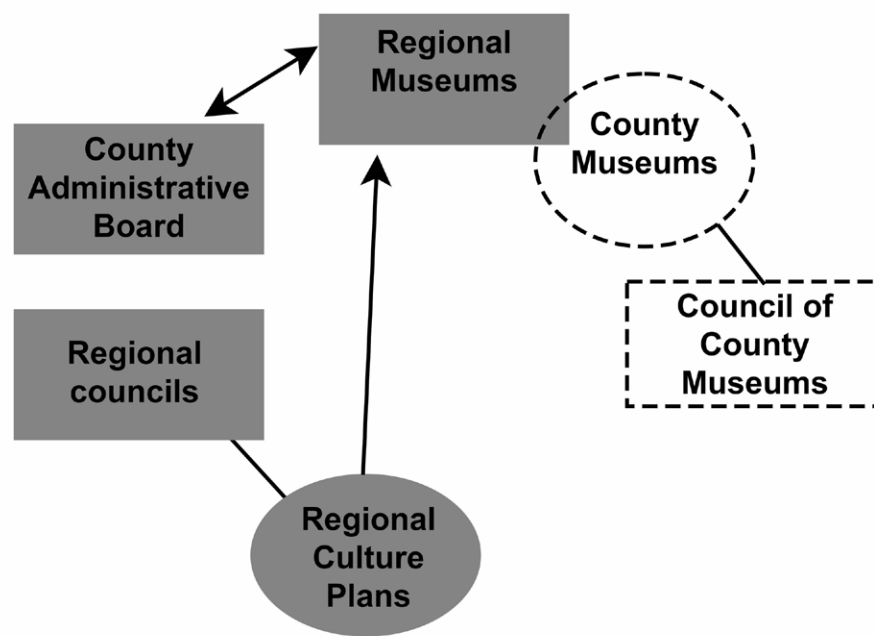


Figure 1. An overview of the governance and relations between regional actors.

The double arrows indicate collaboration, while the single arrow indicate governance.

The decentralization has consequences for the responsibilities of the regional museums within the public heritage field according to the NHB. A central difference in this model is that the government funding of the regional museums is no longer explicitly connected to their role in public heritage management. It has been argued by the NHB that the role of the county museums (as well as regional and municipal museums) became more ambiguous due to the vaguely formulated objectives of the new model (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:24-25).

One effect of the cultural collaboration model is that the regional cultural field has been strengthened through a more thorough knowledge on policy objectives among regional cultural actors. However, few other tangible effects of the model seem to be visible (Henningsen & Blomgren 2017).

In a recent report by the NHB, the contemporary conditions for the regional museums are reviewed. One theme of the report concerns collaboration with other actors in civil society (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2021:68-69). The report emphasizes that collaboration is an integrated method among the regional museums. An issue that is raised however, is that the collaboration is mainly limited to the cultural field at present. As a regional actor, the museums have a potential to engage with a broader set of societal questions according to the report. One objective stated by the NHB, is to make the regional museum a relevant societal actor outside of the actual building of the museum (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2021:100-101).

As demonstrated, the role of the regional museum at present covers a broad field of activities. The museum functions as a regional cultural- and heritage institution. Still, their responsibilities related to heritage remain somewhat undefined.

#### A decentralized field – issues and debate

Henningsen & Blomgren argue that the cultural collaboration model could be seen as a way to “organize for the sake of organizing” rather than actually having a tangible impact in relation to cultural political objectives. The model has also been criticized for not having any effects on the cultural state funding for the regions, while the state simultaneously gained greater control of the regional cultural plans and objectives (Henningsen & Blomgren 2017:62-63). As the regional cultural plans still need to be approved at the state level, the regional independency may, contrary to the purpose of the model, rather have been weakened. According to Blomgren & Johannisson (2016:149-151), the issues when implementing decentralizing measures are that the state and the regions have different interpretations of the objectives of decentralization. While the state aims for an equal distribution of resources throughout the different regions, the regions aim for a greater degree of independency and self-government (Blomgren & Johannisson 2016:151). The conflicting objectives may result in neither party achieving their goals.

According to the National Heritage Board, the model did not clearly specify how the museums should relate to and prioritize their work in relation to the national cultural heritage objectives, causing heritage management to be less visible in their current operations (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:56-57). However, the conditions for government funding were revised in 2018, emphasizing regional heritage management as part of the museums key responsibilities (Kulturrådet 2017:52). In addition, the NHB stated that the funding situation has consequences on how different tasks are prioritized by the museum, and the collaboration with the Municipality and the CAB. Due to the limited government funding, several museums offer advice on various heritage-related issues for companies and organization on a consultant basis, including the Church of Sweden (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:79). As this is a source of additional income, the museum may prioritize these tasks at the expense of the long-term operations according to the NHB (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:58-59). The collaboration with the CAB is also viewed as somewhat ambiguous due to the dual role of the museum as a consultant and an government-funded heritage actor (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2015:60-61). In relation to independent consultants in the heritage field, the close relation of the regional museum and the CAB can be interpreted as an unfair advantage.

### **The regional museum and the ecclesiastical heritage**

The ambiguous role of the regional museum is reflected in the general heritage management field as well as the in the specific governance of ecclesiastical heritage. As described above, the regional and museums are expected to generate knowledge on the ecclesiastical heritage and support, as well as collaborate with the CAB according to the national objectives on ecclesiastical heritage (Skr2018/19:122, p. 29). The involvement of regional and museums in the care and management of ecclesiastical heritage, as well as closer collaboration with the Church of Sweden has been encouraged from a government point of view (Skr 2018/19:122, p. 37-39).

However, some of the obstacles that have been covered above remain. The regional museums still have an ambiguous role in partnerships with the government heritage agencies due to their dual role as state-funded heritage actor and an independent cultural institution. Concerning the ecclesiastical heritage, the regional consultation meetings have proved to be a problematic

setting, as the participation of regional museums may give them an advantage in relation to independent heritage actors (Skr 2018/19:122, p. 31-32).

It should also be noted that the Church of Sweden as well as the National Heritage Board only makes mention of “county museums” when discussing the role of publicly funded museums in the regional consultation groups (Svenska kyrkan 2019:41-41 & Riksantikvarieämbetet 2018:49-50). While the reasoning may be based on an uncertainty of concepts, it could also be an indication that the regional museums that lack the county museum designation may be overlooked in this context.

Furthermore, the government clearly express what they consider to be a desirable development of the regional museum, saying that: “It would be unfortunate if the traditional advisory role of the regional museums in the heritage field is replaced by the role as a consultant.” (Skr 2018/19:122, p. 32). It is furthermore underlined by the government that the Cultural Collaboration Model aims to sustain an equal knowledge on cultural heritage throughout the country, and that these circumstances should be considered by the regional museums when planning their operations in relation to the ecclesiastical heritage. The objectives presented by the government in this context connects to how Blomgren & Johannisson (2016) describes the state’s strategy towards decentralization as an equal distribution of resources.

### **Concluding remarks on the regional museum**

The role of the regional museums in the public heritage field has been, and is continuously being negotiated. While the independency of the regional museums has been emphasized as an important aspect to strengthen, the decentralizing measures that have been taken do not seem to have fulfilled this objective. The historical background provides some understanding of how regional museums have been closely intertwined with the regional heritage agencies. However, the decentralized position of these museums at present do not grant them with the same role and influence.

While the value of including the regional museums in the management of ecclesiastical heritage through various roles clearly has been expressed from the Government historically and in the present, difficulties of properly defining and delimiting this role remain. As described above, the dual nature of the role of the museum as semi-independent, semi-state governed presents a particularly complex obstacle. Overall, the general issues of the regional museums in the

public heritage field are reflected in their role in relation to the management of the built ecclesiastical heritage. However, the potential of the independency of the regional museums does present an opportunity for a greater freedom of action for these actors.

### Discussion & future directions

As can be observed through this chapter, the ecclesiastical heritage is closely intertwined with the development of the professional heritage field in Sweden. Churches continues to constitute a large portion of the building stock that has been considered as cultural heritage in Sweden. At present, the situation is clearly illustrated by the substantial state funding intended to safeguard the ecclesiastical heritage. The particular position of the ecclesiastical heritage can be put in comparison to protected buildings belonging to other religious congregations, for which no unified legislation or statistics exist (Myndigheten för kulturanalys 2020:29). Overall, the public heritage governance model can be said to be a centralized task for the Government as well as a decentralized measure. As Blomgren & Johannisson (2016) and Henningsen & Blomgren (2017) argues, the strategic directions of public heritage management is largely decided at a Government level. The directions for the management of the ecclesiastical are drawn out by the Government, while the regions and municipalities can include ecclesiastical heritage in the regional cultural plans.

### Complexities of the field

The figure below provides an overview of the governance model of ecclesiastical heritage, with the key institutional actors and their relationships outlined.

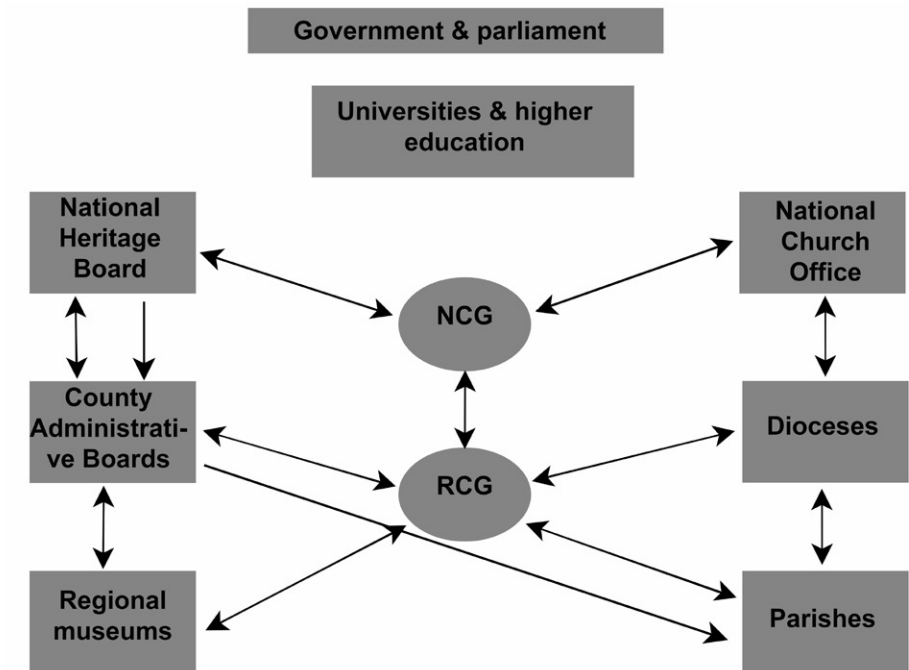


Figure 2. An overview of collaboration and knowledge building among public actors and the Church of Sweden.

The double arrows indicate mutual collaboration and knowledge building, while the single arrows indicate supervision and controlling functions. NCG – National Consultation Group, RCG – Regional Consultation Groups.<sup>9</sup>

It can be noted that the Church of Sweden is an influential actor in connection to the public Swedish heritage field today. While the Church of Sweden is not officially a public heritage actor, the conditions of the State-Church agreement has given the organization a central role in the management of their heritage. The position of the Church in the governance model of ecclesiastical heritage can be interpreted as a continuation of the State-Church model in a new guise (Beckman 2017). Although the Government draws out the directions of future management, the Church of Sweden influences the Government strategies and objectives.

<sup>9</sup> Figure adapted from Hermerén (2009:33) & Riksrevisionen (2008:2, p. 69).



Another point to be raised here is the remaining ambiguity of the regional museums within the ecclesiastical heritage field. As shown above, the regional and municipal museums have a long backstory of close involvement with the national and regional heritage agencies. However, as the heritage field has transformed, the regional and municipal museums still seem to be negotiating their role in connection to the ecclesiastical heritage. While the relative independency of the public museums allows them to have more freedom to take active part in the public heritage field in general, and the ecclesiastical heritage field in particular, there does not seem to exist a clearly defined direction for the museums within the field.

Additionally, there is an uncertainty regarding the concepts of the “county museum” and the “regional museum” that still remain in public policy. This might seem to be a minor detail, but I would argue that due to the historical role of the county museum as an equal partner to the County Administration Board, the concept still holds some amount of meaning. The county museum held a stronger position within the public management of heritage in relation to the other regional and municipal museums, and the continued use of a concept that has lost its’ original content may reinforce outdated roles. The uncertain roles furthermore reflect the ambiguity concerning the role of public museums within heritage management. While the potential of the regional museums is recognized through government policy on ecclesiastical heritage, the Government states that these initiatives need to be initiated by the regional museums (Skr 2018/19:122, p. 31-32).

The National and Regional Consultation Groups that are illustrated in the figure above are important forums for a number of actors within the ecclesiastical heritage field. Although there are some uncertainties of how these groups should be arranged and function at present, they have the potential of discussing and developing the roles of the public heritage actors further. While these groups have not been the focus of the thesis, there seem to be a lack of agreement nationally on the structure and roles within the Regional Consultation Groups. Creating a firmer framework for these groups may be beneficial for future discussions on the uncertainty concerning certain roles and responsibilities.

### **Institutional and professional roles**

The key actors of the thesis, the CABs, the regional museums and the Church of Sweden, all have different institutional roles as described throughout this chapter. However, they have different positions within the governance model and different organizational structures, which also affects their institutional capacity. The institutional capacity of the actors related to their possibilities to achieve their objectives and incorporate adequate methods and knowledge (Kaufman 2019). Each institutional actor is faced with particular obstacles as well as opportunities. Looking at the Church of Sweden and the Regional Museums, they both have independent roles in relation to the CAB. Their institutional capacity is limited through funding to some degree, while the CABs have numerous boundaries related to their formal role as a government agency as well as limited resources.

These differences affect how the professional actors at the institutions can perform their daily operations and fulfill the institutional objectives. Looking at the three key institutions in this context, heritage officers are employed at the regional museums, the CABs and the Church of Sweden at the National Office and the Dioceses. Many of these individual practitioners have similar training and professional experience from the heritage field. In heavily formalized structures such as the CAB:s, the heritage officers have a relatively limited capacity of incorporating additional policy objectives and strategies. At present, the tasks related to the legal framework of the Heritage Act are largely prioritized due to the CABs lack of resources. The institutional role of the CAB also limits communication and active collaboration on specific cases of managing or transforming the ecclesiastical heritage.

While the field of ecclesiastical heritage is increasingly formalized and professionalized from the point of view of the Church of Sweden as well as the public heritage agencies, there are still uncertainties remaining concerning the process and the roles within the governance model. This somewhat complex context forms the background for the case studies that will be further explored in Chapters 7 & 8.

## A Scandinavian perspective

This section provides a brief overview of the governance model of ecclesiastical heritage in three Scandinavian countries; Denmark, Norway and Finland<sup>10</sup>. The overview will depart from the dominating Church of each country, and how the Christian congregation is intertwined with the state and the management of heritage. Lastly, a comparative discussion considers these models in relation to the Swedish context.

### Denmark

In Denmark, the Lutheran Church, Folkekirken, remains as the State Church. In 2019, 74% of the Danish population were members of Folkekirken (Folkekirken 2020). This reflects the dominating position of the Christian congregation compared to other religious groups in Denmark. Folkekirken in Denmark is partly funded by the Danish State through a church tax and membership fees. The public body governing the Church is Kirkeministeriet (the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs) (Haynes, 2008).

Churches belonging to Folkekirken has got a particular legislative protection in Denmark, that singles them out from other religious building. 2344 churches are covered by the legislation (Haynes 2008:22) *Love om folkekirkenes kirkebygninger og kirkegårde* (the law on churches and graveyards of Folkekirken) regulates the use, management and protection of the churches, to ensure that “the cultural values connected to churches and graveyards” will not be diminished or damaged (LBK nr 1156 af 01/09/2016, §1) If a church is to be constructed, sold or demolished, this need to be approved by the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Any material transformation of the church must be approved by stiftøvrigheden (the administrative unit of the diocese responsible for the management of churches). In cases where the church is over 100 years old, stiftøvrigheden are obliged to consult the National Museum, the Royal Building Inspector or the Academy of Fine arts before giving approval to any changes (Lindblad & Löfgren, 2017). The last three can also be appointed by the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs for other issues concerning the protection and conservation of the churches (LBK nr 1156 af 01/09/2016). The practical management of the historic churches belonging to Folkekirken is assigned to

<sup>10</sup> Iceland has been excluded from the overview due to a lack of material and language issues. However, Iceland has an Evangelical-Lutheran State Church similar to the other Scandinavian countries, where about 63% of Iceland’s citizens are members.

the parish council. The council undertakes yearly surveys of their churches and reports any damages to the building, furnishing or objects (Haynes 2008:22). Potential conservation and repair on churches more than 100 years old need to be approved by the diocese and heritage expertise as has been accounted for above.

Churches of other Christian congregations can be protected through the Heritage Act, in similarity to Sweden. In order to be protected through heritage legislation the churches need to be approved by the Heritage Agency and either listed or appointed as worthy of preservation (Haynes, 2008).

### Norway

In Norway, the Lutheran Church of Norway holds the position as State Church. In 2018, 71 % of Norwegian citizens were members of the Church (Den norske kirke, 2020) The process of separating State and Church in Norway began in 2012 and is still ongoing at present. The parishes are the legal owners of the churches of the Church of Norway, while each Municipality oversees the use and management of the churches, as well as being responsible for the funding of conservation and repairs (Sørmoen, 2017). The practical collaboration between the parish and the Municipality is organized through a council that consists of representatives from the parish and the Municipality.

According to Sørmoen (2017), the local anchoring and importance of the historic church plays a major part in the design of the Norwegian governance model. The division of responsibilities is regulated through the Law on the Church of Norway, a legislation that only concerns the Church of Norway. At a national level, the responsibility of the Norwegian churches is shared between three ministries: the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Climate and Environment. These three ministries reflect the municipal responsibility of the parish churches, the responsibility of religious congregations and law, and the responsibility of cultural heritage respectively (Sørmoen 2017:61).

The heritage protection and conservation of churches is regulated through *kulturminnesloven* (the Norwegian Heritage Act). The law defines cultural heritage, or *kulturminne* as “all traces of human activity in the physical environment, including places related to historical events, faith or tradition”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> ”alle spor etter menneskelig virksomhet i vårt fysiske miljø, herunder lokaliteter det knytter seg historiske hendelser, tro eller tradisjon til”

(LOV-1978-06-09-50, 2§). Older churches are automatically protected along with other buildings constructed before the year 1649. The churches constructed between 1650-1850 are listed as churches of national interest, along with a number of churches from the period 1850-2000. These three groups constitute about 60 % of the actively used churches of the Church of Norway (Sørmøen 2017:63). Riksantikvaren (the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage) has the overarching responsibility of the protected churches, and need to approve of any alterations made to these buildings.

Similar to many other countries, the funding of managing historic churches has come to be an increasing issue in Norway. As the historic churches are not equally distributed geographically, smaller municipalities may struggle to provide funding for a large number of buildings in need of costly interventions (Sørmøen 2017:64). At present, there are discussions on reducing the number of historic churches to be considered as of national interest, which could provide more funding to the remaining protected churches (Sørmøen 2017:63).

### **Finland**

Finland has two Christian congregations that are considered as folk churches, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church of Finland. Neither of these congregations holds a formal position as state church, but both congregations are regulated through separate Church Laws. However, about 70 % of Finnish citizens are members of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, granting the Church a more prominent societal position (Evangelisk-Lutherska kyrkan i Finland 2020b).

Churches belonging to the Church of Finland are protected through the Finnish Church Law. These churches are owned by the local parishes. The 14th chapter of the Finnish Church Law regulates the use, management and protection of the churches. Concerning any new construction, transformation or demolition of a church or chapel, these need to be approved by the Church Council and the Church Board (1054/1993, Chap. 14, 2§). All churches constructed before 1917 are automatically protected through the Church Law (1054/1993, Chap. 14, 5§). If the church is older than 50 years or covered by heritage protection, the Finnish Heritage Agency need to be informed and give an assessment. The Church Council can grant protection to churches constructed after 1917, given that the building has particular historical, artistic, technical or environmental values (1054/1993, Chap. 14, 5§). In addition, the

Church Council, Cathedral Chapter or the Finnish Heritage Agency can appoint a surveyor to ensure the condition of historic and protected churches and that the proper measures are being taken (1054/1993, Chap. 14, 6§).

The Finnish Orthodox Church Law has similar regulations as accounted for above. According to the law, churches constructed before 1917 are protected, and newer churches can be protected by the Church Board if they meet some of the requirements of the Law on Built Heritage (10.11.2006/985, Chap. 11, 116§). The protected churches are to be protected from demolition or transformations that endangers the value of the building. Similar to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the Finnish Heritage Agency need to be informed of any major transformations of historic churches (10.11.2006/985 Chap. 11, 116§).

The management and conservation of the cultural heritage of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is funded by the Finnish State, that provide a € 115 596 000 grant yearly (Finland State Budget, 2020). The grant is additionally intended to fund other societal functions such as holding funerals and the responsibility of the national population registration (Evangelisk-Lutherska kyrkan i Finland 2020a). However, this grant is only intended for the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, and cannot be used by the Orthodox Church.

### **Discussion**

As demonstrated above the historic churches belonging to the Evangelical-Lutheran congregations of the Scandinavian countries have a particularly strong legislative protection in comparison religious buildings belonging to other Christian congregations or faiths. The countries described above all have a broad classification where churches are protected either after a certain period of time, or due to being constructed before a certain year, with exceptions on an individual basis. The responsibility of safeguarding the protected churches is also shared between the Church and public agencies on different levels. Denmark is the only country where the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark still holds the position of state church, and where the position is not planned to change. In Sweden, Finland and Norway, the Evangelical-Lutheran congregations are being increasingly separated from the state, but are still regulated through particular legislation and remain closely intertwined with each

state. The governance models of each country is furthermore highly formalized, and responsibility largely divided among the public agencies and the Church.

The historical, and ongoing, strong relationship between Church and State in the Scandinavian countries has been mentioned as an explanation as to why the protected churches remain in a good material condition in a European perspective (Lindblad & Löfgren, 2017). Despite decreasing membership numbers and an increasing secularization, churches are still considered as important objects of preservation. Van den Breemer et. al. (2014:25) mentions Denmark with its' remaining State Church as:

“...a European society with one of the lowest rates of religious belief and practice accompanied by one of the highest rates of confessional affiliation in the national church, the Church of Denmark. In this respect, to be Danish, to be Lutheran, and to be secular amounts to one and the same thing.”

Some differences exist between the Nordic countries concerning what levels of state and Church are assigned ownership and particular responsibilities on management and protection. Norway holds a unique position in that sense, as each municipality is responsible for management and funding of the historic churches while the *sokne* owns the church. This could suggest a higher level of State – Church intertwinement at a local level. The strong local attachment is also emphasized by Sørmoen (2017) and Grahn (2008). However, Swedish studies also suggest that local identities have clear ties to the ecclesiastical heritage (Harding 2018). Concerning the funding of the maintenance of the historic churches, Sweden stands out as having the most generous state grant available. While the funding has ensured a comfortable foundation for securing the material conditions of the Swedish churches, it has been questioned whether this is a sustainable long-term solution for the ecclesiastical heritage. According to Lindblad & Löfgren (2017) the local relation to the church may suffer if it is not open and accessible to the public, despite being in pristine condition. If the personal attachment to the church is lost, they argue that the risk of redundancy will be greater in the future (Lindblad & Löfgren 2017:36). Following this reasoning, having a too dominant focus on the safeguarding of the tangible values of the built ecclesiastical heritage may cause the intangible values and personal connection to the building to be lost.

## Chapter 6. A new paradigm in heritage policy

The 2005 *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (Faro Convention) defines cultural heritage as:

“...a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time” (Faro Convention, 2005, Article 2:a)

Through the above description, a broad definition of cultural heritage is established in institutional heritage management. A central notion of this definition is the focus on the “interaction between people and places” and the evolving nature of heritage. Statements such as this are not limited to the Faro Convention, but reflect an emerging paradigm within heritage policy and theory. The main ideas and themes of the recent paradigm shifts in heritage management are discussed in this chapter. While there are overlapping themes to the theoretical approach of the thesis, the chapter provides a separate background to developments within the heritage field from an international and a Swedish perspective.

The notion of heritage as an ongoing process, based on the values and selections of people in the present has been gradually introduced in theory and management policy and practice during the last 20 to 30 years. However, the issuing of the Faro Convention marks a united European effort to encourage these principles in practice. Not only does this perspective provide a broad and democratic definition of cultural heritage, it also calls into question the traditional role of the heritage expert. The convention encourages that “heritage communities” (Faro Convention 2005) consisting of numerous civil and professional stakeholders in different constellations are to be given a more prominent position in management and decision making.

Another central notion is the conception of heritage as a resource to achieve sustainable development, whether it be environmental, social or economic. A general contribution of the Convention is to offer a wide definition of heritage, focusing on the values and meanings that people attach to it rather than the specific objects, and to integrate cultural heritage in different contexts and societal processes (Thérond 2009). The ideas presented in the convention have continued to be developed in theory, and implemented in heritage policy since.

There are a number of themes of the Faro Convention that are relevant to pursue further in the context of the thesis as they shed light on contemporary shifts in Swedish heritage management. The introduction of a process-oriented heritage definition calls for new methods and approaches to engage with and manage cultural heritage. The shift in management and policy can be described as adopting a human-centered approach rather than an object-centered approach (Wells & Stiefel, 2019a). The critique of top-down management models and the authorized position of heritage experts and institutions has been fairly well-established in theory (See: Smith 2006, and discussions in Chapter 4 & 6), and has gradually entered policy and practice.

Another aspect of the human-centered approach to the definition and management of heritage is the use of “living heritage”. The concept of living heritage is related to the increased interest in the intangible aspects of heritage. According to Wijesuriya (2015), living heritage is closely linked to continuity and community. Defining living heritage as an object or site that has kept its’ original use and connection to a community of users and practitioners, he also argues that the community in question should control the process of management and care (Wijesuriya 2015:9-10).

The resource-perspective encourages the contemporary use of heritage, rather than it being an asset to protect and safeguard due to intrinsic qualities of the object (Fairclough 2009:36-37). The uses ranges from the promotion of “soft” values, such as heritage being used for social inclusion and well-being, to the more measurable and “hard” economic values, whether this be heritage tourism or adaptive reuse and regeneration in urban planning. When used as a resource, heritage can be included in areas of society that have not previously been associated to cultural heritage. While community engagement and an inclusion of more stakeholders are central to the paradigm, the themes outlined above relate to most closely to contemporary developments in the professional heritage field.

In Sweden, the resource- and human-centered approach is increasingly influencing cultural heritage policy. In 2014, the Swedish National Heritage board suggested for the Faro Convention to be ratified, stating that the public heritage management already complied with the general principles of the convention (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014b:1). However, the ratification of the convention was not carried through. Despite this, recent Swedish heritage policy show influences of the convention and the new paradigm. In the 2016/17 Government Bill on Cultural Heritage it is stated that: “It is central to emphasize that within contemporary cultural politics, cultural heritage is fluctuating and dependent on how it is used by people”<sup>12</sup> (Prop. 2016/17:116, p. 58). The same Government Bill emphasizes the unequal power relations that can be viewed as an expression of the selection and interpretation of heritage, and that established cultural institution can affect the way that we perceive the past (Prop. 2016/17:116, p. 59-60). An overall objective for the public heritage field is defined as striving for a broadening and democratization of cultural heritage, where dialogue between heritage practitioners and the general public is encouraged (Prop. 2016/17:116, p. 68). Parts of the Government Bill can be interpreted as subtle criticism of the existing structure of the public heritage field, as it struggles to incorporate new objectives.

The Bill contains suggestion for the implementation of government objectives among the public heritage actors. In particular, the potential of the publicly funded museums at a national and a regional level is emphasized. The independency of the public museum in relation to the government heritage agencies and the prospective of taking on an active role in societal development are mentioned as two important factors that the museums could use to their advantage (Prop. 2016/17:116, p. 88-89).

Another important development to note in the Government Bill is the use of cultural heritage as a resource for societal development in a broad sense. The Bill states that:

“Through a unified support of the county administrative boards and the national, regional and local museums, the significance of cultural heritage for social sustainability can be given a more prominent position strategically and

<sup>12</sup> “Det är inom kulturpolitiken i dag centralt att framhålla att kulturarv alltid är föränderliga och beroende av människors användning.”

operationally for planning and community development”<sup>13</sup> (Prop. 2016/17:116, p. 144).

Drawing on the same objectives, regional and rural development are additional prominent areas where cultural heritage is clearly considered as a resource (Prop. 2016/17:116, p. 148).

This brief overview gives an idea of how a resource-centered approach has been incorporated in cultural heritage policy. However, the introduction of a broader notion of heritage has also faced some scrutiny. Karlsson (2019) concludes that the broad definition fails to formulate a unified notion of heritage. The consequence of the uncertain definition of heritage can be that policy objectives are perceived as ambiguous and difficult to implement. The Swedish National Heritage Board similarly states that the almost all-encompassing reach of the Faro Convention, may give unrealistic expectations of the transformative potential of cultural heritage (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014b:68). While the National Heritage Board claims that a vast part of this perspective is already implemented in Swedish cultural heritage policy, they also argue that a complete implementation would require a re-organization of the Swedish public heritage field (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014b:68). This suggests that there is a gap between the formal structure of the Swedish governance model of cultural heritage and the context in which the recent policy objectives have been formulated within.

Beyond the Swedish context, Wells & Stiefel (2019a) have also noted the gap between critical heritage theory and the existing governance models and practices in the United States in particular. Although this might be seen as somewhat contradictory attitude, the Faro Convention is in many cases taken as providing guidelines for the direction of cultural heritage policy, but seem to have limited impact in practice.

### Introducing new perspectives on the ecclesiastical heritage

To conclude this chapter, I will turn the attention to the specific field of Swedish ecclesiastical heritage. Although only relevant to the specific heritage of the

<sup>13</sup> ”Med ett samlat stöd till både länsstyrelser och nationella, regionala och lokala museer kan kulturarvets betydelse för social hållbarhet ges en tydligare plats såväl strategiskt som operativt i samhällsbyggnadsprocessen.”

Church of Sweden, the ecclesiastical heritage can be said to constitute a sub-field within Swedish heritage management today. As such, the management of the ecclesiastical heritage share common features with the strategies and regulations of the heritage field as a whole. However, one can also identify traits due to the particular circumstances of the shared responsibility of Church and State. In this section, the Government Communications on Ecclesiastical heritage will be used to analyse and discuss some of the main themes and transformations of the ecclesiastical heritage field. A Government Communication (*Regeringskrivelse*) is a means of communication from the Government to the Parliament on the future strategies and interests of a certain area, or evaluating the work done within said area. As such, a communication is not a legally binding document, but illustrates areas of interest and encourages certain directions. The communications are relevant in this context as they represent the position of the Swedish Government in relation to the ecclesiastical heritage. The Government Communications on Ecclesiastical Heritage are furthermore based on preparatory reports from the Church of Sweden, the county administrative boards, the National Heritage Board and the Agency for Public Management. The three Government Communications on Ecclesiastical Heritage that have been issued since the separation of Church and State in the year 2000, also demonstrate how the approach discussed above have been incorporated and evolved during the years 2008-2019. While the contents of the Government Communications have been the main focus of this section, some attention will also be brought to how the abovementioned actors have influenced the orientation of the communications.

A central point of departure of the government communications is the definition of ecclesiastical heritage. During the reviewed period, one can conclude that the definition has gradually broadened. While the two earliest communications include rather brief and similar descriptions of the ecclesiastical heritage as a carrier of important artistic and architectural values as well as being a “living heritage” (Skr2008/9:220 p.3, Skr2013/14:152 p.3). Furthermore, the 2008 communication emphasizes that the ecclesiastical heritage need to remain “protected, used and accessible”, while 2013 communication slightly changes the motivation into “protected, used and developed” (ibid). Albeit a small change in wording, it may be indicative of the developments coming in the 2018 Communication.

In 2018, the definition emphasizes the major historical role played by the Church of Sweden, and its’ effect on religious and secular life (Skr2018/19:122

p.4). Another important addition is the inclusion of tangible as well as intangible features of the ecclesiastical heritage, and the recognition of the continuous role of the Church in public life. The more thorough notion of the ecclesiastical heritage could potentially be linked to the efforts of the Church of Sweden. The communication states that the Church of Sweden has raised the issue of the ecclesiastical heritage not being integrated in public heritage management in a broader perspective, which further could affect the public perception of this heritage as isolated from heritage in general. The wording of the latest communication suggest that the Government supports a wider integration of the ecclesiastical heritage into other areas.

Moving forward to how the principles of heritage management are defined, the production of knowledge on the ecclesiastical heritage among various professional actors, including the Church of Sweden, is emphasized in the earliest communication (Skr2008/9:220 p. 33-34). The relevant knowledge for management can mainly be related to the tangible past and the artistic values of the Church. The dissemination of knowledge on the ecclesiastical heritage continues to be a central task in the 2013 communication with similar themes being emphasized.

In the 2018 communication, there is a considerable development of the recommended management practices. Of particular interest is that the Church of Sweden is praised for strengthening its' position and knowledge within the public governance model, in addition to being emphasized as a model for setting up management strategies and objectives that were considered as being inspiration for the contemporary heritage field in a broad perspective (Skr2018/19 p.39). The communication further encourages the public management model to include a broader range of heritage actors, and for these to engage more actively in the ecclesiastical heritage.

The question of collaboration is a theme that evolves within the communications over time. As the creation and dissemination of knowledge of the ecclesiastical heritage is prevalent in the first communication, universities are specifically mentioned as important partners for this purpose. The 2008 communication also emphasizes the significance of collaboration through the regional consultation meetings and the potential for discussing matters of principle within management in the context of the meetings.

In the 2013 communication, regional museums and local historical associations are added to the list of potential partners within public management. The role of regional museums is emphasized in the 2018

Communication, where their active participation in the regional consultation meetings and management in general is highly encouraged (Skr2018/19 p. 24 & p. 31) According to the communication, the role of the regional and local museums is perceived as uncertain at present. Furthermore, the communication made reference to recent political objectives to strengthen this role (Prop 2009/10:3 p.24, and the discussion in previous section). It is also noted that the current governance model was lacking in terms of potential partners and opportunities for collaboration (Skr2018/19 p.37).

Lastly, an emerging theme in the communications is the conception of the ecclesiastical heritage as a resource. In the 2008 Communication, this issue is only considered briefly. The main points of interests here concerns how the cultural-historical values of the historic churches can be considered as a resource to raise awareness and interest in the ecclesiastical heritage (Skr2008/9:220 p.23). Practical uses such as utilizing the historic church as a concert venue are furthermore encouraged. The latter is also presented as a way for parishes with less economic resources to keep the churches open and accessible as well as raising funds through extended uses (Skr2008/9:220 p.35).

The 2013 communication provides a global perspective on the ecclesiastical heritage as a resource, and suggests that it can be used towards integration due to its' international relevance (Skr2013/14 p.25). The communication also introduces the potential of ecclesiastical heritage as a resource in regional development, in particular in sparsely populated areas of Sweden (ibid).

Looking at the 2018 communication, the theme claims considerably more space. Sustainable regional development continues to be one of the objectives where the ecclesiastical heritage functions as a resource (Skr2018/19 p.35). Furthermore, the communication states that this includes social as well as economic development. The practical suggestions in the communication includes extended uses of churches in rural communities, and more investments into heritage tourism – particularly through the expanding interests in pilgrimage routes (Skr2018/19 p. 36 - 37).

During the time period of 2008-2018, the notion of how ecclesiastical heritage is defined, used and managed evolves considerably through the Government Communications. As the definition of ecclesiastical heritage is broadened, so is the number of potential uses and number of involved actors. The development that is outlined above bears a number of resemblances with the resource-centered paradigm shift in heritage management. However, one can also note that many of these transformations are fairly recently established

in Swedish policy. The communications features few examples of how these notions can be translated into practice. Furthermore, there still seem to be a lack of integration of the management of the ecclesiastical heritage into the heritage field as a whole, and broader societal processes. These issues can be related to the criticism presented earlier in the chapter. As the scope for the definition and use of heritage becomes increasingly wide, there may be difficulties to implement the new expectations in a coordinated sense (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014b:68, Wells & Stiefel 2019a). To summarize, the Governmental objectives for the ecclesiastical heritage do indicate a paradigm shift to a use- and resource-centered approach. However, the wide-reaching scope of this approach places new demands on the professional actors within public heritage management concerning collaboration and the integration of heritage into new practices.

## Chapter 7. Case Study I – The Hamra Project

This chapter presents and analyzes the first case study; a regional development project in Hamra village in Sweden, run by Hälsinglands Museum in partnership with the Parish of Ljusnan. Hälsinglands Museum is located in the town of Hudiksvall and is governed through a trust shared by the Municipality of Hudiksvall and the Region of Gävleborg. The operations of Hälsinglands Museum are governed through the objectives in the regional plan on culture of the Gävleborg Region, as well as the national cultural policy objectives, in accordance with the cultural collaboration model. Regarding cultural heritage, the regional objectives states that the regional museums are to: “...protect the cultural environment through the creation of knowledge, guidance, education, comments on official reports and encouraging public opinion and knowledge.”<sup>14</sup> (Region Gävleborg 2018:41). In the introductory section, the context, process and objectives of the project are outlined.

### The 2016 background

The current project was officially initiated by Hälsinglands Museum in 2017 when the museum approached the Parish of Ljusnan to propose a new partnership. However, the project was not an isolated occurrence for Hälsinglands Museum. It was rather part of an ongoing strategy of engaging with contemporary issues concerning the ecclesiastical heritage. In addition, the museum hosts a large collection of ecclesiastical objects and have worked extensively with churches from a historic perspective.

In 2016, initial contact was made with the English charitable organization, the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), and measures were taken to initiate a pilot project (Hälsinglands Museum 2016). The project was planned to entail a collaboration with a local parish (the Parish of Harmånger-Jättendal), the University of Gothenburg, the National Church Office and the Swedish Exhibition Agency. Having the main objective of exploring new methods and

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<sup>14</sup> “...värna kulturmiljön genom kunskapsuppbyggnad, rådgivning, pedagogik, remissyttranden och opinionsbildning”



collaboration to achieve a sustainable use and development of underused historic churches, Hälsinglands Museum envisioned its' role as a nave and facilitator in this process (Hälsinglands Museum 2016:1). As the project was set up, the Parish of Harmånger-Jättendal had already entered a process to make interior adaptations to Harmånger Church, in order to carry out extended activities in the church (Lindros 2016). The planned adaptation was integrated into the project's five thematic areas, which were stated as the following (Hälsinglands Museum 2016:1-2):

- New and extended uses of churches
- Religious values of the church
- Cultural values of the church
- Multi-religiosity
- The role of the museum and the heritage expert

Some these themes would be developed as the project later transformed. Not going into matters further, the initial project was not fully implemented nor proceeded with Hälsinglands Museum as a key actor. According to interviews, conflicting key interests and different organizational processes were the main obstacles for the project to succeed. Additionally, the suggested architectural transformation of the church was not approved by the CAB in the first stage, which naturally halted the progress of the project. It should however be noted that the final project in Hamra partly originated from ideas that were first explored in a previous context with another parish as a collaborative partner.

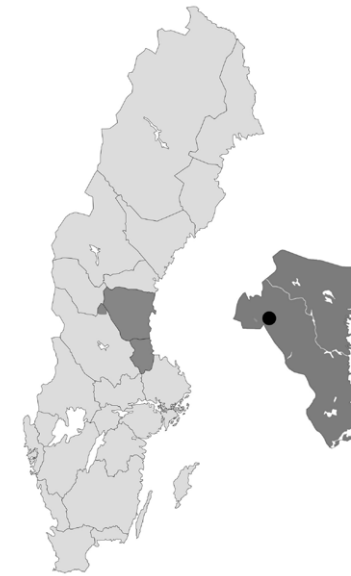


Figure 3. Location of Gävleborg County and Hamra village in Sweden.



Figure 4. The road leading from Hamra Church towards Hamra village, November 2017.  
*Photo by author.*

### The 2017 pilot-project

In 2017, a partnership was established between Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan that included similar notions as the previous project; to explore new and extended uses of historic churches, engage with the local community and develop the role of the museum. It was quickly established that the partnership would involve working with a remotely located historic church, in an area that had been negatively affected by demographic changes and increased urbanization. Following discussions between the museum and the parish, Hamra Church was selected as a case study for the project (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018).

Having identified Hamra Church and village as a case study for the project, a pilot-study was initiated, funded by the regional development fund at the County Administrative Board of Gävleborg (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2017). The pilot-study was planned to run during late 2017 and was partly aided by the Churches Conservation Trust. Most central to this study was a workshop/seminar held in Hamra village in November 2017 that was intended to determine the themes and objectives of the future project (Figure 6). Representatives of Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan, municipality representatives, Hamra villagers, and representatives of cultural institutions such as the Regional Theatre (Hälsinglands Museum 2017) participated in the workshop. At this point, the main objectives were focused on identifying regional cultural-historical resources, including those of the Church, in order to achieve new partnerships to promote social and economic development in the area (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2017).

The workshop findings were presented in a report by the CCT. The report included a number of different project scenarios, but most importantly envisioned a pronounced effort on tourism through new partnerships between the established local eco-tourism and cultural tourism actors (Churches Conservation Trust 2018: 3-4). These findings provided the basis for a more comprehensive project that was clearly focused on regional economic and social development. It should also be noted that the CCT report departed from the notion of extended use of Hamra Church as being most central to the project. Additional tourism and culture actors could eventually be merged into the project through extended networks and partnerships according to the report (Churches Conservation Trust 2018).

### The final project 2018-2020

In early 2018, the final project was granted funding by the same regional development fund at the CAB as previously (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2018). At this point, the project had changed its name to “Natural and cultural values as a basis of touristic development”<sup>15</sup>, reflecting a shift in focus compared to the earlier emphasis on ecclesiastical heritage and the central role of the church. The project was planned to run from October 2018 until March 2020, aiming to achieve a basis for economic development through natural- and cultural-tourism (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2018). An additional objective was to “explore the local potential for recreation and existential health” (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2018:1), referring to activities connected to nature and climate change. The exact geographical context of the project was not defined, other than being a depopulated area in the “southernmost wilderness of Scandinavia” (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2018:2). The development fund is limited to the county of Gävleborg, and it can be presumed that the region directly affected by the project would be the municipality of Ljusdal.

The project was divided into two strategic stages. During the first stage, relevant local businesses, natural- and cultural actors, and the Church of Sweden were approached and connected through the creation of new professional networks. In the second stage, “novel stories” that disseminated local natural- and cultural assets were researched and formulated. These stories were considered as a resource through which new tourism-centred activities was initiated. Combining these efforts would provide a cohesive tourism offer for the region (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2018).

As the project proceeded, a number of different activities were arranged in the village of Hamra and other parts of the municipality of Ljusdal. These activities have included various cultural events as well as those focused on nature. A total of three exhibitions and one art installation took place during the course of the project. The exhibitions all featured locally anchored themes, with contemporary and historical subjects. Hamra Church was the venue for two of these exhibitions. The first exhibition in 2018 was titled “Hamra and Fågelsjö – People and images” and featured photographs portraying daily life of the people living and working in Hamra and Fågelsjö (Hälsinglands Museum 2018a:1). On the closing day of the exhibition, a craft workshop was arranged in Hamra Church where visitors could try wooden and birch-bark crafts, and

<sup>15</sup> “Natur- och kulturvärden som grund för turistiskt utveckling”

the local weaving association exhibited woven carpets (Hälsinglands Museum 2018a:1).

The photography exhibition traveled to the Cathedral of Uppsala in late 2019, with the changed title of: “Faith, cultural heritage and regional development” (Hälsinglands Museum 2020, see also: Figure 7). A “mini-exhibition” of a number of locally crafted historical chandeliers was also on display in connection to the photography exhibition. The second exhibition that was organized in Hamra Church displayed the history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century colonizing farmers of the region, featuring photographs, maps and texts (Hälsinglands Museum 2019b:2). Nearby Hamra Church, a historic woodland cemetery acted as the site of a temporary art installation. The installation used translucent fabrics in different colors to accentuate and frame the partly overgrown cemetery. This can be viewed as a manner of connecting the history of Hamra Church with the less visible tangible remains of its’ past.

There were also activities connected to the project that arranged elsewhere than Hamra village, such as a seminar on textile and women culture in Fågelsjö Chapel in 2019 (Hälsinglands Museum 2019a:2). Furthermore, a number of activities aimed at students in elementary, secondary and upper secondary school were arranged in partnership with Hamra National Park, focusing on the regional natural values. The school activities included guided tours by the students where the previously mentioned local stories could be integrated. Beside these tangible activities, the project also reported that discussions took place in order to initiate potential partnerships with local actors related to culture and tourism. These partnerships were intended to provide a foundation for future development of new tourism offers and networks (Hälsinglands Museum 2019b:2). The actors in questions included the historical cobalt mine in Loos, and Destination Järvsö, a local tourism company. In addition, local tourism actors that have not been explicitly named in the report were present during these discussions.

As can be discerned by the introduction to the case study, the scope of the objectives of Hälsinglands Museum was broadened during the course of 2016-2020. While the pilot project clearly positioned Hamra Church as a central resource and point of departure for future development, the final project shifted the objectives to include regional development that focused on nature, culture and the potential tourism of the area. The process of the project included an ongoing negotiation of various objectives and strategies among the key actors (Hälsinglands Museum, the Parish of Ljusnan and the Public Heritage

Agencies), where the definition of, and navigation between, roles, responsibilities and boundaries were central. This process is analyzed below, tracing how the parallel discourses within the project interacted and caused different strategic responses.



Figure 5. Hamra Church seen from the south in November 2017.  
*Photo by author.*





Figure 6. Workshop participants in Hamra Church, November 2017.

*Photo by author.*



Figure 7. "Faith, cultural heritage and regional development", exhibition in Uppsala Cathedral, November 2019.

*Photo by author.*

## Hamra Church and village

Hamra Church and village are located in the mid-west of Sweden, in a remote part of the inlands of Gävleborg County (Figure 3). Currently, the village has about 75 permanent inhabitants. The region has historically, and continues to, have the forest industry as a main source of employment. As the industry changed, so has the rate of employment and the population decreased. Still, the forest remains as an important resource related to leisure and tourism in the area, which particularly attracts people to hunting, fishing and hiking.

Hamra Church still remains in the small village today, a wooden, gothic-revival style church consecrated in 1872 (Sjöström & Dahlberg 2010:63, Åman 2010:70, see also: Figure 5). The church is owned by the Parish of Los-Hamra, part of the regional Parish of Ljusnan, that holds services at the church monthly. The closest store, school and other types of services are located in the slightly bigger village of Los, 15 kilometres from Hamra. Ljusdal, located within 70 kilometres from Hamra, is the closest city with its' 7000 inhabitants. Hamra village is a typical example of how the effects of increasing urbanization has affected rural areas negatively, particularly in mid- and northern Sweden (Svanström 2015). The issues surrounding the depopulated regions of Sweden are frequently debated in the media, particularly concerning the low employment rates and negative social effects. Despite of these communities struggling for their survival with a decreasing and aging population, the church remains as a reminder of a more prosperous time.

## Identifying values and strategies

This section outlines the decision-making process of Hälsinglands Museum, tracing how the overall strategy of the project was determined and how Hamra Church and village were decided as a case for the project. Unless otherwise stated, the analysis is based on the interviews with project representatives from Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan, as well as heritage officers on a regional and national level.

### Hälsinglands Museum – creating heritage stories

When Hälsinglands Museum approached the Parish of Ljusnan in 2017 to initiate in a new partnership, the parish was recently created by the merging of

the Parishes of Järvsö and Färila. As one parish respondent described the situation, the Parish was already undergoing transformation, making it a natural decision for them to engage in a new partnership in a new context (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018). The selection of Hamra Church and village as a case study for the project, and reaching an early agreement on the objectives and strategies of the pilot project were deciding factors a successful process according to the museum respondents (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018).

Having a tangible point of departure was considered as particularly important by the museum and the parish respondents, as it allowed for the actors to envision tangible and context-dependent strategies for the project. The decisive factors of selecting Hamra as a case for the project were based on the geographical location of the church as well as the characteristics of the region (Parish respondent 1 & Museum respondent 2, 2018). Hamra village is described through the project material as a prime example of a community that had been heavily affected by demographic changes and depopulation, making it a strategic example to explore new partnerships and activities to achieve economic development (Hälsinglands Museum 2018a). Hamra Church on the other hand, did not hold any particular tangible heritage values according to how it was approached the project. Drawing on the same theme, the museum respondents also claimed that the lack of activities in Hamra Church and village were favorable for the project, as the impact would be more noticeable in this context (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018).

Connecting the project to a wider tourism context, the four project respondents from the museum and the parish all stated that the most significant values of Hamra and the wider region were found in the various wildlife experiences. The region of Gävleborg where Hamra is located has an existing wildlife tourism that attracts Swedish and international visitors alike. In Hamra, Hamra Wildlife Centre and Hamra National park are the established actors that partly cater for the tourism at present. According to the project respondents, the current actors and activities constitutes a basis from which a broader tourism network could be developed, including Hamra Church as a venue and an asset (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018). The strategy is influenced by the aforementioned CCT report on several points. The integration of tourism, local stories and the history of Hamra Church as a unified resource is a central theme of the CCT's assessment (Churches Conservation Trust 2018:7-9). In addition, the strategy provided a more unified regional tourism offer according to the project respondents (HM 1 & 2, 2018).

One anticipated result of being incorporated in a broader tourism network was a spill over-effect on Hamra Church, connecting it to the established tourism resources of the region (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018). According to the two museum respondents, the relevant values of Hamra Church in the context of the project were related to the potential of extended use options and transformation of the building. One of these respondents described the church by saying that: "...it's not the highest priority or has the highest value when it comes to cultural values [...], it is identified as a church that could be possible to transform in time."<sup>16</sup> (HM Respondent 2, 2018). Through this statement, the respondent identifies that the church lacks particular tangible historical qualities that usually are associated to historic protected churches within the Swedish public heritage management. While doing so, the respondent further indicates that the perceived lack of tangible heritage values was interpreted as an asset in the project. Following the strategy, Hamra Church not only provides a tangible case as a point of departure when designing new strategies of management and development, but also a comparatively neutral space for potential future interventions.

The statements accounted for above can be viewed in the light of the approach to heritage that permeates the project from the point of view of Hälsinglands Museum. Through these statements and choices, Hamra Church is effectively judged as lacking significant tangible heritage values according to Swedish mainstream heritage discourse. Furthermore, their approach makes it easier to incorporate the church into one of the main strategies within the project; the creation of "another story" of the region, as the museum director described the project in a local newspaper interview in 2018 (af Sandeberg, 2018).

The creation of "novel stories" in the project was a strategic choice that characterizes several of the statements and the activities carried out by Hälsinglands Museum during the period 2018-2020. According to the museum respondents, the strategy allowed the museum to actively engage with the ecclesiastical heritage of the church in a new manner (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018). The creation of "novel stories" can be interpreted as a strategy for museum officials to work actively with contemporary issues related to

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<sup>16</sup> "...den har ju inte den högsta prioriteringen eller, den högsta värderingen om man får säga så vad gäller kulturvärdena och sådär. [...] den identifieras också som en kyrka som där det, om det skulle bli så då, kanske skulle vara möjligt på sikt att göra några förändringar."

ecclesiastical heritage without engaging with religious values - “without the religious weight” as one museum respondent put it (HM respondent 1, 2018). This brief statement highlights that the purely religious aspects of the building can be considered as an issue for the museum to handle in the context of the project.

The museum respondents further elaborated on the strategy, saying that a different framing of the church could make it accessible new groups and other experiences of the building (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018). In practice, this is achieved by various new and extended uses of the church, which is demonstrated through the exhibitions and workshops that were arranged in Hamra Church. The activities allows for a rebranding of the history of Hamra Church and village through other perspectives, and conceptually connected the church to secular life and extend it to the existing tourist sites. The events above connects thematically to local culture and daily life as well as the history of the community and the region. One clear example of these regionally based events is the exhibition “Hamra and Fågelsjö – People and images” (Figure 8) that was described as a way of “moving the local community in to the church” by the museum director in a 2018 interview (Busck 2018:13). Through the exhibition, the people of the local community symbolically inhabits the church, enhancing the activities of daily life in the religious space of the church. By conducting research on and selecting appropriate historical facts with local significance, the “novel stories” of Hamra were constructed by the museum (Hälsinglands Museum 2018a:2). The use of Hamra Church as a venue for cultural events rather than a religious space also discursively links the site to the existing local cultural tourism network. One museum respondent strengthened the claim by suggesting that Hamra village and church could be marketed towards the same “target group” as other cultural tourism sites such as the World Heritage Site of Fågelsjö Gammalgård (HM respondent 2, 2018).



Figure 8. Exhibition “Hamra and Fågelsjö – People and images” in Hamra Church, 2018.  
*Photo by author.*

Seeing how Hamra Church and village were presented through the project, values connected to religion are consciously and continuously evaded by Hälsinglands Museum. While Hamra Church remains consecrated, and the project entailed a partnership with the Parish of Ljusnan, the strategy adopted by the museum can be interpreted as a way to mediate the religious values of the building. The tourism-centered approach of the project includes a conscious effort of incorporating Hamra within a cultural tourism context, with a branding strategy that limits what values could be selected and presented. In this context, the heritagization of Hamra Church includes the selection and enhancement of socio-cultural values, as opposed to the tangible historical features or the strictly religious values. This allows for the church to be more approachable from the point of view of Hälsinglands Museum, but also for a greater commodification of the building as part of a regional development strategy. Looking at the process, the heritage discourse that is constructed around Hamra Church is not incidental, but rather built on international examples and approaches (through the initial partnership with CCT), and the inclusion within a regional development and tourism context.



### **The Parish of Ljusnan & the Diocese of Uppsala – continuity through heritage**

The Parish of Ljusnan, was the main project partner for Hälsinglands Museum as the project was initiated. Throughout the project, they presented an approach to heritage that intersected with the objectives of Hälsinglands Museum at several points, but that also had different motives of engagement than those of the museum. The statements of the parish are presented in this section, as well as those from the heritage officers at the Diocese of Uppsala.

A general objective of the Parish was to reframe the discourse on ecclesiastical heritage. As one parish respondent put it:

“...sometimes I feel like cultural heritage is restrictive because [to me] it is broader than culture. It’s sustainability as a whole, where social, economic, environmental and existential sustainability is included, and where the church can show a way forward.”<sup>17</sup> (Ljusnan Parish Respondent 1, 2018).

This statement summarizes some of the central conceptions of the Parish within the project. These can be further broken down into two notions that reflects their view on cultural heritage. Firstly, cultural heritage is considered as “restrictive” from the point of view of the respondent, indicating that heritage in broad terms was perceived as a narrow concept, alongside the concept of “culture”. Secondly, the statement reflects the strategy of the parish to include the Church in a broader context (“sustainability as a whole”), also allowing it to be framed as a resource of development.

The definition of the ecclesiastical heritage is considered as ambiguous by the parish. The interviews reflects that the continuous history of the Church of Sweden as well as the tangible historical elements of the historic churches were highly valued by the parish respondents (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018 & Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2020). Despite this, the respondents recognized that certain aspects of the definition and management of the ecclesiastical heritage could interfere with the contemporary use of the church. While clearly expressing the importance of the tangible ecclesiastical heritage, one respondent

<sup>17</sup> “...jag kan ibland tycka att kulturarv är begränsande, för det är mer än kultur. Det är en hållbarhetsaspekt som helhet. Och i den finns den sociala hållbarheten, den ekonomiska, den miljö- och klimatologiska, men också den sociala, existentiella hållbarheten, därför att på nåt sätt blir kyrkan en riktninggivare.”

said that: “At the same time we need to find the functionality in this. I’m talking about the tangible space of the church, and the functionality of this space.”<sup>18</sup> (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018). The respondent also expressed concern that the public perceptions of the ecclesiastical heritage was too narrowly focused on the tangible cultural-historical aspects of the historic churches and objects. Through this focus, the intangible ecclesiastical heritage and the contemporary use of the church are considered to be neglected in contemporary heritage discourse and practice (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018). The same respondent also expressed the opinion that these aspects were further emphasized through recent cultural heritage policy (See: prop. 2016/17:116), strengthening the respondent’s belief of the public discourse being partial to the tangible values of the ecclesiastical heritage. Through the perspective expressed in the statements of the parish respondents, the ecclesiastical heritage is perceived as an asset as well as an obstacle for the parish to manage.

In response to the perception of public discourse on ecclesiastical heritage management, the parish intended to shift the current focus towards the intangible and social heritage values of the historic church. In the interviews with the parish respondents, the contemporary use of the church is brought forward as a way of maintaining an interest in the intangible ecclesiastical heritage and the ensure the long-term commitment and management of the building. In particular, the historical position of the Church as a public authority with a wide impact on religious as well as secular life was emphasized as an important intangible quality. According to the respondents, the historical role is characterized mainly by the literal and theoretical openness of the Church, as well as lower boundaries between the religious and secular use of the church (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018 & Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2020). The extended use of Hamra Church, acting as a venue for various cultural events is interpreted by the same respondents as being integrated in the continuous religious/secular use, and part of the intangible heritage of the church.

Although there were no exclusively religious events arranged by the project, the exhibitions provided an occasion for Hamra Church to extend its’ opening hours and welcome a wide audience to the building, consisting of tourists and the local community (Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2020). Rather than being

<sup>18</sup> ”Samtidigt som att vi behöver hitta funktionalitet i det här, nu pratar jag alltså om det fysiska kyrkorummets, funktionalitet i rummets användning.”

viewed as conflicting to the religious use of the church, these events are considered to strengthen the role of the Parish in the local secular and religious community. One parish respondent stated that virtually any extended use of Hamra Church could be considered as long as it has support within the local community (Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2020). Engaging in locally significant events can be interpreted as part of a strategy of the Parish to connect with the historical role of the church, while strengthening the position of the Parish in the present. While the actual building of Hamra Church is considered as important due to its' tangible qualities, it was mainly utilized to serve as a venue for secular cultural events in the project. However, the statements by the parish respondents suggest that these activities were not considered to be strictly secular, but rather examples of intangible heritage practices within the Church.

The creation of “novel stories” that Hälsinglands Museum presented as a central objective of the project, was also considered as an important task for the Parish of Ljusnan. One respondent elaborated on the strategy, saying that: “The Church is a carrier of local history. But we want to be part of creating the new stories as well” (Ljusnan Parish Respondent 1, 2018). The statement not only emphasizes the active role of the Parish in the project, but also roots the role in the historical past of the Church of Sweden. This further underlines how the historical role of the Church is used by the Parish to position them in a continuous process of creating heritage. The intangible and continuous ecclesiastical heritage is also emphasized by one of the diocese heritage officers. The respondent stated that:

“My genuine opinion is that if we freeze it [the ecclesiastical heritage], then we are not managing it [...], it will be like in a museum. We can continue to have an active Church that develops in a musealized building, but in that case the Church of Sweden won't provide anything, won't create any new heritage in their buildings.”<sup>19</sup> (Uppsala Diocese respondent 1, 2020).

Much like the parish respondents, the heritage officers of the Diocese of Uppsala considered the creation of new heritage, and having the ability to manage the continuous heritage, as part of the intangible aspects of the

<sup>19</sup> ”Min absoluta åsikt är att om vi fryser det, då förvaltar vi det inte, och vi, då blir det musealt. Och vi kan fortsätta ha en levande kyrka som utvecklas i en museal byggnad, men då kommer inte svenska kyrkan ge något, skapa något nytt kulturarv i sina byggnader.”

ecclesiastical heritage. Looking at the quote above, the respondent connects the tangible and intangible aspects of the ecclesiastical heritage, suggesting that both of these parts need to be dynamic in order to allow for its' continued management. Another heritage official of the diocese stated that the management of the ecclesiastical heritage has to be able to embrace a multitude of tangible and intangible values (Uppsala Diocese respondent 2, 2020).

The Parish of Ljusnan used a part of what they conceived to be their past practices to legitimize their role in the present. By referring to “new stories”, and incorporating them into the Parish's strategy, one of the Parish respondents also rhetorically connected to the strategy of Hälsinglands Museum and the overall objectives of the project (Ljusnan Parish Respondent 1, 2018). Understanding the ecclesiastical heritage as a process rather than a static and tangible object, the parish use the heritage as a resource for their internal development in addition to the general objective of regional development within the project. By encouraging a broader and more inclusive discourse on ecclesiastical heritage, the potential obstacle posed by the tangible heritage of the church, and the related practices, is mediated by the Parish.

### **Conclusion - mediating objectives through heritage**

The Hamra Project illustrates how the two key actors of the project, Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan constructed parallel, and sometimes coinciding discourses on ecclesiastical heritage as conscious strategies. The approaches of the actors can be interpreted as two parallel processes of heritagization of the ecclesiastical heritage. Although the two parties had different objectives, and sometimes even seemingly conflicting values, their conceptions of heritage coincides at a few strategic points that allows for collaboration. The central values in the project by both parties are associated with the secular local community, culture and history. The common values allows the two key actors to reach consensus and commonly arrange activities in, and in connection to Hamra Church. Additionally, these values mediates the potential conflicts that could arise between the two parties.

From the point of view of Hälsinglands Museum, the strictly religious values of Hamra Church are interpreted as obstacles. The turn towards a resource-centered approach to the ecclesiastical heritage by emphasizing regional tourism, culture and history as the focus of the project serves a mediating purpose internally in the project. The Parish of Ljusnan uses these factors to



strengthen the position of the religious congregation and attempting to broaden the public discourse on ecclesiastical heritage. The overarching consensus on the heritage status and management of the ecclesiastical heritage between the Church of Sweden and the public heritage agencies has been noted previously (Löfgren & Wetterberg 2020). Furthermore, the Church of Sweden has come to be considered as an independent heritage actor holding extensive knowledge, though mainly on a national level (Lindblad & Wetterberg 2017). These results are partly reflected when seeing how the secular and religious actors interacted throughout the project.

However, the case of the Hamra project also positions the relationship between the Church of Sweden and the practitioners of the heritage field in a more complex light. For the Parish of Ljusnan, the project also presented them with an opportunity to create an approach to heritage that went beyond the tangible features of the church. This was done as a reaction to what they perceived as a dominant discourse within public heritage policy and practice, which focused on the tangible historical values of the historic church. The implementation of recent heritage policy was particularly emphasized by the parish as potentially having negative effects on the general public perception of the ecclesiastical heritage. The active role of the Parish of Ljusnan in a regional development project and incorporating Hamra Church as a resource for the future, can be interpreted as an attempt to counteract the impact of what is considered as a negative heritagization of historic churches.

A number of scholars have described how religious congregations may take part in a commodification process of the religious heritage site when facing outside pressure, in order to control the interpretation and presentation of the site (e.g. Olsen 2003 & 2012). In this case, while the parish aimed to counteract discourses in public heritage policy, they simultaneously use an approach that connects to the recent developments on ecclesiastical heritage policy (Skr2018/19:122). The strategy of the parish adds another layer to the similarities between the approach of the Church and the actors within public heritage management as suggested by previous research. Furthermore, it reveals a duality between the public heritage field and the political objectives presented through the recent Government Communication on Ecclesiastical Heritage.

## Constructing professional roles

In this section, the key actors' conceptions of their role, responsibilities and principal tasks are described and analysed. The transformation of professional roles and the recognition of organizational differences and boundaries are two major themes that have emerged and that are examined below.

### Hälsinglands Museum – transforming roles

During the initial phase of the project, the transformation of the role of the municipal museum, in particular in relation to working with ecclesiastical heritage, was a pronounced objective of Hälsinglands Museum (Hälsinglands Museum 2016:1-2). According to the museum respondents they strived for a new role as a coordinator in, and facilitator of, efforts on heritage-led development (Museum respondents 1 & 2, 2018). The introduction of the new approach was presented as a pronounced response to the formal governance model of the management and protection of the ecclesiastical heritage at present (Hälsinglands Museum 2016:2). The strategy was defined as creating a new role for the museum which would be opposed to the “traditional role” according to the respondents (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018). The traditional role is described as being focused on the historical and tangible values of the ecclesiastical heritage, and mainly included tasks connected to the material preservation of, and historical knowledge on cultural heritage.

The new role of the museum was envisioned to have a different approach. Instead of being one actor among a multitude of different actors within Swedish public heritage management, Hälsinglands Museum wanted the regional museum, and the museum officer to adopt an active role in the public governance model of ecclesiastical heritage. According to the museum respondents, the new role would function as a coordinator between different actors in heritage-led development projects, and a facilitator to achieve various events and activities within these projects.

The point of departure was to support community and stakeholders initiatives, rather than being the initiating party (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018, Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2018). Furthermore, these actors were to be coordinated through the creation of formalized regional and networks, where the museum would have a central role (HM respondent 2, 2018). The particular actors that were mentioned while planning these networks were already established local tourism actors such as the historic cobalt mine located in the

nearby village of Loos (Hälsinglands Museum 2019a). The new role clearly positions the museum in a development- and tourism-centered context. Additionally, this context emphasizes the resource perspective on the ecclesiastical heritage, in particular in relation to the local community of Hamra (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2017).

Through the envisioned new networks created by Hälsinglands Museum, the Church of Sweden also gained a new position and contributed with a cultural and tangible resource of the ecclesiastical heritage. Overall, the new role was focused on achieving local economic and social development through the instrumental use of heritage in the process. Connecting the strategy to how the ecclesiastical heritage was perceived through the statements of Hälsinglands Museum, the focus on use-values can be interpreted as a strategic choice to better accommodate for the favored development-centered approach. The process of heritagization of Hamra Church that was outlined previously is thus closely intertwined with the envisioned professional role of the museum. In addition, the Diocese of Uppsala expressed a great interest in how the project was set up, and particularly emphasized the economic aspects of the project (Diocese respondent 1, 2020). According to the diocese respondents, achieving extended use and increased accessibility to the historic church without any major interventions to the tangible space, was particularly positive from an economic point of view. Additionally, one of the respondents raised some critique on architectural additions and rearrangements of the church as an easy, but more costly solution to achieve multi-purpose spaces (Diocese respondent 1, 2020).

The new approach of Hälsinglands Museum has similarities to organizations outside of Sweden, such as the English organization the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). The CCT acted as consultants for Hälsinglands Museum during several occasions starting in 2016, and they were openly stated as an inspiration for the museum (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2017). During the 2017 pilot project, the CCT had an active part in the project by setting up and evaluating a workshop according to their models of stakeholder and community engagement (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2017). The collaborative approach of the CCT was particularly emphasized by the museum, where it was noted that Museum-Church partnerships, such as the one between Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan, were relatively new in the Swedish context (Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg 2017).

The reviewed material shows that the museum continuously emphasized the novelty of the strategy and the new role that they attempted to implement. This can be interpreted as a way for Hälsinglands Museum to further position their organization within an expanding part of the heritage field, while also attempting to push these borders through the project. The strategy is additionally strengthened as one of the museum respondents raised the possibility that the project could result in the creation of a new model of managing and developing ecclesiastical heritage in rural contexts (HM respondent 2, 2018). The objective shows the inspiration of the CCT-approach, where the trust has developed a number of different models to protect and regenerate historic churches that can be applied in various contexts (Churches Conservation Trust 2020). Developing this role further suggests that Hälsinglands Museum strived to introduce practices in a Swedish context that was close to those that have been established during the course of a few decades in an English context.

#### *Novel obstacles*

The novelty of the approach was also an obstacle to succeed with the project according to the museum respondents. When approaching other actors within the heritage field, the museum was met with some extent of scepticism due to their new strategies, according to one museum respondent (HM respondent 1, 2018). In particular, the heritage division at the County Administrative Board (CAB) of Gävleborg was mentioned as being hesitant towards the new role of the museum. One museum respondent said that: “They [the CAB] were very critical at first because they are stuck on this conception of how a museum official should engage with a church” (HM respondent 1, 2018), and developed the argument by stating that “It [the traditional role] really limits collaboration on, and elevation of, the ecclesiastical heritage.” (HM Respondent 1, 2018). The critical attitude by the CAB was described as being partly based on the traditional expectations of the role of the museum, and was additionally strengthened through the Museum-Church partnership. This suggests that the broader role of the museum and the religious aspects that inevitably entered the project through the collaboration with the Parish of Ljusnan are perceived as potential obstacles by the CAB of Gävleborg. The museum respondents stated that the communication with the CAB presented a challenge to the project, as

it was difficult to establish a dialogue on the change and development of ecclesiastical heritage (HM respondents 1 & 2, 2018).

These obstacles shed light on how the dependency on other actors within the public heritage field can pose obstacles to the implementation of new professional strategies by the museum. Hälsinglands Museum, similar to other municipal museums in Sweden, is largely dependent on external funding to carry out ventures beyond the core functions. The different divisions of the CAB are one important source that can provide external grants, in addition to supervising the protection of ecclesiastical heritage. The statements by the museum respondents indicate that the design of the project and the discourse on professional roles is influenced by the dependence on, and quality of communication with other actors.

During the course of the project, the Church-Museum partnership was an object of negotiation as Hälsinglands Museum attempted to regenerate their professional role. As the project proceeded, the relationship with the Parish of Ljusnan was described as follows: “Instead of having the Church as a point of departure for regional development, the Church would be one among the local actors that forms a basis of a network.”<sup>20</sup> (HM respondent 2, 2018). One museum respondent stated that the multitude of local actors that showed an interest in the project was one reason for expanding the single partnership into a wider professional network (HM respondent 2, 2018). As mentioned above, this shift entailed creating a broader network of partners where the museum was positioned in a central and coordinating role. The changes can be interpreted as a way of the museum of becoming less dependent on the Parish to meet the objectives of the project. Positioning the Parish within a wider network of actors makes it easier for Hälsinglands Museum to maintain the central position as coordinator and not having to negotiate on this role.

#### *Overcoming organizational and religious boundaries*

Another reason to downplay the Church-Museum partnership can be traced to the relationship between Hälsinglands Museum and the CAB as mentioned above. According to one museum respondent, the CAB of Gävleborg were reluctant to provide funding if there was a too distinct religious presence in the project (HM respondent 1, 2018). Hälsinglands Museum interpreted the

<sup>20</sup> ”... som en aktör bland flera, fast ändå centrala aktörer, istället för Kyrkan som utgångspunkt för den lokala utvecklingen, så Kyrkan som en av de lokala aktörerna i ett kitt liksom mer.”

situation as having to balance the religious values attached to the ecclesiastical heritage as well as to the Parish of Ljusnan. While museum respondents claimed to strive towards engaging with the ecclesiastical heritage without taking a stance on religious matters (HM respondent 1, 2018), the relation to funding parties of the public heritage field proved to be an obstacle. This adds another layer to the issues discussed initially. Not only did the museum venture into an unexplored field of heritage development in a Swedish context, but the religious aspects that came with the new partnership are also considered to be controversial.

These issues are intertwined with how Hälsinglands Museum perceived the partnership internally in the organization. One central theme of the project was the use of new partnerships and professional networks as strategic tools as well as the objectives of the project. As the Parish of Ljusnan was a central partner to Hälsinglands Museum, at least during the initial phase of the project, the stance taken by the museum towards the parish clearly illustrates how the professional collaborations are handled in practice. During an interview in a local newspaper, the Museum Director said that:

“We are collaborating with the Church of Sweden at the moment to arrange an exhibition in Hamra Church this summer. It’s a balancing act. We are entering an area that is someone else’s responsibility, and we need to consider the fact that we are entering a religious space.”<sup>21</sup> (Busck 2018: 13)

The statement partly reflects the strategy of the museum and identifies some of the potential obstacles in the project. Two points are being made here. Firstly, the museum acknowledged that they are navigating within the professional boundaries of another organization, and that one need to carefully consider these. Secondly, the religious values of the historic church are being recognized in connection to how the museum could approach the building in a professional manner.

The professional boundaries constitute a theme that emerged throughout the interviews and material from the museum. In the context of the project, this is particularly interesting as the definition of the role of the museum is

<sup>21</sup> “Just nu samarbetar vi med svenska kyrkan, med en utställning i Hamra kyrka i sommar. Det är en balansakt. Vi är ju inne på någon annans ansvarsområde och måste ta hänsyn till att vi går in i ett religiöst rum.”

repeatedly constructed in relation to the Parish of Ljusnan. During the pilot-project and the initial phase of the project, the two actors were dependent on each other to a high degree. The dependency created some level of uncertainty within the project. As Hälsinglands Museum had envisioned their role as the nave and coordinator of the project, the position required other actors to initiate activities that were to be coordinated by the museum. While Hälsinglands Museum was the experienced in organizing exhibitions and art-related events, the museum respondents stated that the Parish of Ljusnan would have to take the formal initiatives as well as responsibility for the activities located in Hamra Church (HM respondent 1 & 2, 2018). This can be viewed as a strategic choice to implement the role of the museum, while aiding the Parish to position themselves as an actor within regional development, according to one museum respondent (HM respondent 2, 2018). However, it also reflects how the formal ownership (of Hamra Church) sets the boundaries of how the museum could engage with the church. In order for Hamra Church to become a resource for the project, the Parish of Ljusnan also needed to have an active role within the process. Another aspect raised by a Diocese respondent was the lack of interest by regional agencies to collaborate with the Church on regional development projects, as they considered the responsibility of these issues to belong in the field (Uppsala Diocese respondent 1, 2020).

The religious aspects have been partly addressed previously. Still, it needs to be acknowledged that although the events that took place in, and in relation to Hamra Church were secular in their nature, the church as a venue is not considered as a neutral space, as illustrated through the quote above. Although Hälsinglands Museum attempted to separate the secular and religious aspects of collaborating with the Parish of Ljusnan, this still affected how the museum could relate to the parish.

### **The Parish of Ljusnan – redefining the Church**

Much like how Hälsinglands Museum approached the project, the Parish of Ljusnan regarded it as an opportunity of redefining public roles and find a position in a broader field of heritage-led regional development. As the Parish of Ljusnan was created through the merging of several smaller parishes in 2017, they also formulated their official vision for the development of the parish (Parish of Ljusnan, unknown year). Under the heading “Showing hope for the

future”, the Parish states that local businesses and organizations are important potential partners when striving for the development of the individual person and the local community. The wording suggests that the openness to collaboration with secular actors was at least partly established as a strategy by the Parish as Hälsinglands Museum initiated the pilot-project. One of the parish respondents also confirmed that the initiative from Hälsinglands Museum had been a welcome addition to their regular activities, in particular during the transformative period of being merged into a new parish (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018). In addition, the Parish respondents perceived their internal objectives and strategies to be similar to those of Hälsinglands Museum, which could facilitate the partnership. From the point of view of the Parish, the development of rural communities went hand in hand with the preservation and accessibility of the historic churches (Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2020). Despite the openly stated objectives of the parish, the same respondent said that this approach probably was surprising to the general public (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018). Similarly to how Hälsinglands Museum perceived their new approach as somewhat controversial in the public heritage field, the Parish believed that the new role that they aimed to implement would potentially change people’s perception of the Church of Sweden.

The negative perception of the priorities of public heritage management and the general discourse of cultural heritage is reflected through the Parish’s perception of their role in the project. The role that the Parish envisioned was to take an active part in the local community and “make history” as one respondent put it (HM respondent 1, 2018). The strategy reflects how the Parish perceived their role as actively creating heritage in the present, rather than only managing the past. Seeing how the Parish viewed their activities in the present as connected to the past of the Church of Sweden, an approach to heritage that focus on the tangible values of the historic church can potentially harm the position of the Parish in the present. One parish respondent said that an objective from their point of view in the project was to:

“The Church becoming central, maybe even a nave. In a tangible, but also spiritual sense, in the development and preservation of history, but also the

development and creation of new stories.”<sup>22</sup> (Ljusnan Parish respondent 1, 2018)

The statement reflects how protection and development were continuously intertwined aspects when the Parish described their present role in relation to the ecclesiastical heritage. Participating in the Hamra project can be seen as a strategy to balance the perceived risk that the ecclesiastical heritage could pose to the Church, and position the Parish as a relevant actor in the local community as well as in regional development. While the diocese respondents largely expressed a similar stance to the Parish, they also stated that drawing out management schemes for the intangible heritage of the Church can be a challenge (Uppsala Diocese respondents 1 & 2, 2020). According to the respondents, this requires different approaches than those traditionally applied to the management and preservation of ecclesiastical heritage. These statements can be interpreted as a support for the new claims on management and development made by the Parish.

Although the Parish of Ljusnan strived for the local community to perceive the historic church as a resource for secular activities, one respondent admitted that the interest among stakeholders beyond the Hamra project had been low so far (Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2020). The same respondent said that an important task for the Parish was to find ways of connecting with the community by offering locally relevant activities, such as events related to hunting and hiking (Ljusnan Parish respondent 2, 2018).

### **The County Administrative Board & the National Heritage Board – maintaining professional boundaries**

While the National and Regional heritage agencies played a relatively minor part in the Hamra project, they provided some interesting insights into the organization of the public ecclesiastical heritage management, and the division of institutional roles. The section is based mostly on interviews with representatives of the National Heritage Board and the County Administrative Board of Gävleborg.

<sup>22</sup> ”Och kyrkan har där blivit en central, en slags nav kanske till och med. Rent fysiskt, men kanske också andligt på ett eller annat sätt. I utvecklingen och i bevarandet utav historien men utvecklingen och skapandet av dom här nya berättelserna.”

One theme that was particularly emphasized by the heritage agencies was the importance of having distinctive and clearly defined roles among the actors and stakeholders involved in the management of ecclesiastical heritage. Boundaries and responsibilities needed to be outlined and understood by all the involved parties, which mostly was the case in practice today according to the respondents (Gävleborg CAB respondent 2019 & NHB respondent 2018).

The stances expressed by these two parties should be considered from the point of view of their institutional roles established through the 1995 Government Bill on ecclesiastical heritage (Prop. 1995/96:80). Due to the authorized role of the public heritage agencies, the roles need to be clearly delimited and defined as to avoid bias when the Church is planning projects that need approval by the same agencies. Despite their stance seemingly being quite strict at first glance, the respondents both expressed positive views on their relationship with the Church of Sweden, and how it has evolved since the Church-State split in particular. These views are furthermore reflected through the recent Government Communication on ecclesiastical heritage (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 22). The NHB respondent explained that the Church of Sweden has adapted to the formal roles in the management model, in particular concerning the level and nature of communication between the two parties. Concerning discussions on current issues of ecclesiastical heritage management, the respondent stated that:

“...we [the heritage agencies and the Church of Sweden] can't consider this together, you have to find out what you want to do, and then we can reply from our point of view.”<sup>23</sup> (NHB Respondent, 2018)

The statement underlines the importance of maintaining professional boundaries to uphold a successful management. In addition, the respondent assigns the Church with an active role; “to find out what you want to do”, and the agencies with a passive role; “then we can reply”. Situations such as the one presented above were perceived as the major issue that could arise within the current management model, but it was also stated that these issues are becoming less and less frequent.

<sup>23</sup> “... vi kan inte tillsammans fundera, utan ni måste fundera ut vad ni vill göra, och sen kan vi svara på det utifrån våra utgångspunkter.”

The NHB respondent believed that the role of the heritage agencies had come to be more formalized since the new Government model was established, saying that they were driven by the “...focus on their assignment, rather than the love of heritage”<sup>24</sup> (NHB respondent 2018). Concerning the role of regional museum, the NHB and CAB respondents stated that they had little experience of collaborating with these actors on issues concerning the ecclesiastical heritage, other than the museums doing cultural-historical assessments on a consultant basis. These experiences are also reflected in recent political policy, and the lack of current cases involving these actors (Skr2018/19:122). However, they both perceived the Hamra project as a positive approach for a regional museum to engage with the ecclesiastical heritage. Overall, the role of the heritage agencies is described as successful in relation to the Church of Sweden, and defined as being largely governed by, and dependent on heritage legislation.

#### *Issues in theory and practice*

The CAB respondent provided some additional reflections on how the heritage legislation is applied in practice by the CAB. The respondent admitted that there were potential conflicts between the Church and the CAB when faith-based transformations of historic churches were suggested (Gävleborg CAB respondent 2019). According to the respondent, when planned transformations of historic churches that required permission from the CAB were based on evolving liturgical needs by the parish, those values can not be taken into consideration by the CAB. The liturgical and cultural-historical values were described as fundamentally different, as the respondent stated that: “There is no way these lines of argument can meet. You can come to a mutual understanding, but you can’t weigh them [the arguments] against each other”<sup>25</sup> (Gävleborg CAB Respondent, 2019). Firstly, the separation of responsibilities and priorities among the two parties are clearly underlined. Secondly, the statement suggests that the parishes might have different expectations on the CAB:s priorities in practice. Another issue brought forward by the CAB respondent that strengthen this assumption, was that the results of the cultural-historical assessments performed by independent heritage consultants may differ from the final decisions of the CAB. Although the assessments are made

<sup>24</sup> “...fokus på uppdraget snarare än kärleken till kulturarvet.”

<sup>25</sup> “... det måste finnas någon form av ömsesidig nyfikenhet som bygger på en respekt för kompetens”

based on the same conditions and heritage legislation, the Parish in question may be disappointed by a denial of the CAB, when a consultant has suggested otherwise (Gävleborg CAB respondent, 2019). Although the respondents perceived the roles to be clearly delimited, the authorized role of the CAB is not entirely evident for all actors in practice.

The respondents also raised an additional issue that suggests uncertainties in the application of the ecclesiastical heritage legislation. A central point of departure for the heritage agencies in the management of ecclesiastical heritage is the safeguarding of cultural-historical values (SFS1988:950, Chapter 5). However, the legislation leaves space for interpretation regarding the acceptable level of impact on the cultural-historical values, which can be an issue in practice (NHB respondent, 2018). A similar notion was expressed by the CAB respondent who said that the CABs in general has gained a greater understanding for the needs and the approach of the Church of Sweden, and that their assessments have come to be adapted to the specific context and prerequisites of each parish (CAB respondent, 2019). Support for this stance can be found in the recent Communication on ecclesiastical heritage, suggesting that the flexible approach has become a nation-wide practice (Skr2018/19:122). In addition, the long-term sustainability of specific transformations suggested by a parish has been taken into greater consideration (Gävleborg CAB respondent, 2019).

This suggests a somewhat contradictory approach from the point of view of the heritage agencies. While the (secular) cultural-historical values are clearly separated from the religious values in theory for the respondents, the approach of safeguarding these values is more complex in practice. Although the respondents admitted that there are uncertainties in the application of the heritage legislation, these were not presented as any major issues, or as contradicting the generally positive view that they shared of the current division of roles and responsibilities in the governance model.

#### **Conclusion – institutional roles and heritage**

This section has covered the institutional and professional roles through the case-specific experiences of the key actors in the Hamra project and on a more general level through the government heritage agencies. From the point of view of Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan, there is a need to update

the institutional roles within the management of ecclesiastical heritage - which includes a broad perception of heritage. Although these actors had different motivations, they share some of the same objectives that allows for a functional collaboration. The government heritage agencies based their perceptions on the formal division of roles between the Church of Sweden and the State, that need to have clearly defined boundaries. The current division of roles and responsibilities, as well as the communication between actors was perceived by the heritage agencies as mostly successful.

One issue that was emphasized by the secular actors is the separation of secular and religious values, and how these are being balanced and managed in practice. One assumption that can be discerned, particularly by the heritage agencies, was that the secular cultural-historical values can be clearly distinguished from the religious values when managing the ecclesiastical heritage. The parish had a different point of view, claiming that the secular and religious values are an intertwined part of the ecclesiastical heritage and impossible to separate. However, as the CAB respondent expressed, the priorities between secular and religious are difficult to make in practice. In many cases, the contemporary needs of the parish are taken into consideration by the CAB in their assessments.

The parties covered here all have formally different roles in the management model, which are more or less clearly defined. Besides these formal differences, the institutional roles are connected to certain assumptions on the ecclesiastical heritage. The logic behind the approaches to the ecclesiastical heritage can also offer an explanation to why the actors perceive the roles within the governance model as more or less successful

## Chapter 8. Case Study II – The Cathedral Hill Project

The second case study, the “Cathedral Hill Project” (Projekt Domkyrkoberget) had a long backstory when it was officially initiated in late 2017 (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling 2017). In 2009, the former Dean of the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö formulated a vision aiming to regenerate the Cathedral Hill, which was the starting point of the current project (Strängnäs diocese respondent 1, 2018). The objective were set at an early stage; to regenerate the Cathedral of Strängnäs departing from three separate roles. These roles were:

- The Cathedral as parish center
  - The Cathedral as diocese hub
  - The Cathedral as town center and community space
- (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling 2017)

Through these roles, the Cathedral was presented as a religious as well as a secular center, locally in Strängnäs and regionally in the entire diocese. The overall vision included a regeneration project of the Cathedral of Strängnäs and its’ surroundings, where extended religious and secular use of the Cathedral and other buildings would be explored. A central notion of the project was to strengthen and develop the cultural-historical values of the site through extended uses of the Cathedral, and the construction of a new multi-purpose building at the site (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling 2017).

The regeneration strategy of the project included a material and a conceptual transformation of the Cathedral Hill. Firstly, the material transformation entailed the construction of the new multi-purpose building adjacent to the Cathedral, and the interior transformations of the Cathedral for more effective and extended use of the existing spaces. In preparation for the construction of a new building and transformation of the Cathedral, a number of preliminary surveys of the area were carried out during 2015-2017. These included an evaluation of the use-and experience values in the Cathedral, as well as measuring acoustics, a ground-penetrating radar evaluation and a cultural-historical description of the site. The preparatory work was carried out by an



architectural firm specializing in ecclesiastical architecture, in partnership with the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö. The results of the preparatory work were included in the brief for the architectural competition that was launched in 2017. Secondly, the conceptual or ideological transformation would be achieved through the extended uses of the Cathedral and the multi-purpose building, and as an effect of re-branding of the site through the material transformation.



Figure 9. Södermanland County, Sweden and the location of Strängnäs.



Figure 10. The street Gyllenhjelmsgatan stretching through the historic centre of Strängnäs towards the Cathedral, September 2019.  
*Photo by author.*



Figure 11. The choir of the Cathedral of Strängnäs, September 2019.  
*Photo by author.*





Figure 12. The Cathedral of Strängnäs seen from the south of the Cathedral Hill, September 2019.

*Photo by author.*

## The architectural competition

The architectural competition had two objectives. Firstly, to create a design for a new multi-purpose building at the Cathedral Hill, and secondly, to design adaptations to, and suggest extended uses of, the existing spaces in the

Cathedral. The new building was envisioned to be a: “...functional and sustainable landmark building, which meets high architectural standards and where people can gather”<sup>26</sup> (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling 2017:14). The building was planned to include a visitor’s center for the Cathedral, office spaces for Parish staff and a number of flexible spaces that could be used either by the Parish or by the other partners of the project.

The initial brief for the competition had quite open-ended instructions. It was set up through two consecutive stages. The first stage was an international open call for architectural proposals, while in the second stage, five contributions were selected to be individually reviewed and further developed before the final winner was selected and announced. A jury consisting of representatives of the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö, the Diocese of Strängnäs, Strängnäs’ Municipality, two architects and one landscape architect were appointed to review the suggestions.

During the first stage of the competition, that was concluded in November 2017, a total of 97 proposals were submitted. The competition garnered wide attention in local and national media (Andersson, 2018, Berwick, 2018, Serrander, 2017). Although the media reports were generally positive, concern was raised on whether the new plans would damage the cultural heritage of the Cathedral, and if the new building would interfere with the atmosphere of the historic environment of Strängnäs (Kilström, 2018, Mähler-Onnered, 2017). The second stage of the competition began in May 2018, with five proposals selected by the jury to proceed to the final stage of the competition. The winner of the competition was announced in June 2020; *AART architects* and *Bach arkitekter* with the proposal: *Stora och små möten – för stora och små* (“Big and little meetings – for the big and the little”) (Figure 18).

The other part of the project included a conceptual or ideological transformation of the Cathedral of Strängnäs and its’ surroundings. The transformation included the development of activities and events connected to the Parish that were taking place in the Cathedral, and the initiation of new partnerships with nearby secular actors. Particular attention was given to the educational and social activities located at the site of the Cathedral (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1). Although the architectural competition was the object of most of the media attention of the project, the Parish had far-reaching ambitions to be an inspirational model for other Swedish parishes and dioceses

<sup>26</sup> ”...samlade, funktionell och hållbar märkesbyggnad med hög arkitektonisk kvalitet.”

wanting to achieve conceptual as well as architectural transformations (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling, 2017).

The new partnerships of the project were mostly based on geographical proximity to the Cathedral Hill in Strängnäs, or ownership and responsibility of the adjacent buildings. Five new partners were approached, and became part of the project. They were the following: the Diocese of Strängnäs, Strängnäs' Municipality, Europaskolan, the Royal Library and the Swedish National Property Board (NPB). The Diocese of Strängnäs, Europaskolan and the branch of the Royal Library are all housed in buildings on the Cathedral Hill. Strängnäs' Municipality is responsible for zoning and urban planning in the affected area, while the NPB own and manage several of the buildings at the site, such as the 15th-century bishop's residence "Roggeborgen". When agreeing to the partnership, the principal actors signed letters of intent stating their interests and involvement in the project. Common areas of collaboration were specified as follows:

- *Strängnäs' Municipality*: strengthen the historic center of Strängnäs to develop tourism and stimulate economic growth, where the Cathedral is a vital part. (Strängnäs Kommun 2014)
- *Europaskolan*: develop the Cathedral Hill and collaborating on the use of the existing and future spaces at the site. (Europaskolan, 2017)
- *The Royal Library*: investigate possibilities of shared spaces with the Cathedral Library, developing common activities with the parish, employing a shared librarian (Kungliga Biblioteket 2017)
- *The diocese of Strängnäs*: develop existing and future space in, and close to, the Cathedral, develop common activities (Strängnäs Stift, 2017)
- *The National Property Board*: Increase accessibility to Roggeborgen, and use the existing spaces more effectively (Staten Fastighetsverk 2017)

Through the letters of intent, the principal actors agreed to support the vision of the project and participate in relevant meetings. As accounted for above, the extent of collaboration and engagement varied among these actors. In the context of this study, the various secular actors that took part in the process are

worth noting as part of the strategy of the project, but their specific roles will not be further analyzed due to the scope of the thesis.

## The Cathedral and city of Strängnäs

The Cathedral of Strängnäs is located in the city of Strängnäs in Södermanland county, situated south of Stockholm, Sweden (Figure 9). The city has about 14000 inhabitants. The city and the Cathedral of Strängnäs have medieval origins, with the oldest part of the Cathedral being constructed around 1250-1340 (Bohrn et al. 1964, see also: Figure 12). Historically, the Cathedral of Strängnäs has been the subject of numerous additions and renovations, with notable interventions during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Cathedral of Strängnäs is located on a small hill, "the Cathedral Hill" (Domkyrkoberget) in the historic center of the city (Figure 10). A small cemetery and a number of historic buildings surround the Cathedral. These include "Roggeborgen", a 15th century bishop's residence, the 15th century Cathedral chapter house, an 18th century printing house and, a 19th century gymnasium. Furthermore, the Cathedral is an important tourist destination, and is listed as one of Strängnäs' top attractions (Strängnäs Kommun 2020).

The historic environment of the Cathedral Hill, and several of the buildings are protected through the Swedish Heritage Act or the Swedish Building and Planning Act. Furthermore, the historic city center of Strängnäs is appointed as being of national interest for the management of the cultural environment through the Swedish Environmental Code (SFS 2019:1263; Länsstyrelsen Södermanland 2014). The protection and management of the Cathedral of Strängnäs is governed through the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter on ecclesiastical heritage in the Swedish Heritage Act. The Diocese of Strängnäs includes parts of Södermanland and Örebro counties and is comprised of a total of 73 parishes, and 332 churches and chapels.

## Motives and arguments of transformation

This section covers the motives and arguments by two of the key actors of the project; the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö and the Diocese of Strängnäs. Particular focus is placed on how the actors incorporated notions of heritage in the strategies of the project, and how they relate to and define ecclesiastical heritage in general. Firstly, the notion of heritage as perceived by the Parish and Diocese

will is described, secondly, arguments of transforming the current practices and within the heritage field are presented, and lastly, the strategic utilization of heritage is outlined.

### **The Diocese and Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö – presenting a living heritage**

As the architectural competition for the new multi-purpose building was launched, heritage-based descriptions dominated the descriptions of the Cathedral by the parish and the diocese. Although notions of preservation and protection of the tangible heritage values of the Cathedral were stated as being central concepts within the project, several respondents expressed that the immaterial heritage values needed to be further articulated in the discussion on ecclesiastical heritage. Generally speaking, the project respondents perceived notions of intangible heritage to be overlooked in the public ecclesiastical heritage management and discourse. The intangible and tangible values of the Cathedral were considered as integrated with, and dependent on each other. Notions of merging intangible and tangible values are continuously used in the material when describing the project in various contexts. The following statement introduces the open call for the competition:

“The Cathedral of Strängnäs and its’ surroundings are a living cultural environment. While elevated beyond the swift passing of time, it remains as part of the present. Tradition and regeneration, preservation and change are all concepts that have shaped life in and around the Cathedral as well as transformed the building itself.”<sup>27</sup> (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2017:1)

The opening statement reflects a prevailing notion expressed by the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö throughout the project. Seemingly contradictory concepts such as “preservation” and “change”, “tradition” and “regeneration” are joined and incorporated into the characterization of the Cathedral and its’ heritage. The integration of the above concepts can be interpreted as a way of bridging the

<sup>27</sup> “Strängnäs domkyrka och dess omgivning är en levande kulturmiljö. Höjd över tidens snabba skiften är den samtidigt en del av sin samtid. Tradition och förnyelse, bevarande och förändring, har alltid format livet i och omkring domkyrkan såväl som byggnaden.”

potential conflicts between the aforementioned concepts and the values attached to these. The Cathedral as a “living cultural environment” is another concept applied to merge the past and the present. Furthermore, defining the site as a living environment suggests a distancing to the opposite, namely a dead and static environment.

A majority of the project respondents agreed on that the lived experience of the Cathedral, in the past as well as the present, provided a particular “atmosphere” and “sense of place” that set it apart from other historical buildings (Strängnäs Parish respondents 2 & 3, 2018). These use-centered arguments are connected to the concept of a “living heritage”, as the project respondents often expressed. One parish respondent further argued that the societal inclination to provide public funding for the preservation of ecclesiastical heritage is dependent on the use of, and accessibility to, historic churches (Strängnäs Parish respondent 1, 2018). Notions like these find support through the general developments of international heritage theory and policy, as well as in recent Swedish cultural policy (Skr. 2018/19:122, Prop.2016/17:116). Despite the evident support for these ideas through theory and policy, the project respondents did not perceive that these values were taken into consideration in practice, particularly concerning the material transformation of churches.

### *Resisting cultural heritage*

Another recurrent theme of the interviews with the project respondents is the reluctance to the term “cultural heritage” to describe the past and the cultural and religious significance of the Cathedral. Cultural heritage was generally related to the passive and “dead” past by the respondents, in contrast to what they perceived as the living heritage of the Cathedral. One respondent even argued for the replacement of the term cultural heritage, and said that:

“When talking about ‘cultural heritage’ you run the risk of only relating it to the past. If you were to talk about ‘culture’ instead, you could connect with the past while also shaping the future.”<sup>28</sup> (Strängnäs Parish respondent 1).

<sup>28</sup> ”Och om man då talar om kulturarv, då är det risk att man tänker att det här var nånting som var förr, och om man bara skulle tala om kultur istället, då skulle man få ihop den här kopplingen mellan det som varit och det man därmed också formar för framtiden.”

The same respondent argued that culture functions as a dynamic concept that allows for development and change, while cultural heritage rather tends to “freeze time”. The statement is further reflected in the preparatory material of the architectural competition, where another definition of culture appears: “We interpret culture as a heritage as well as a present, as something to experience and to create.”<sup>29</sup> (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:5).

Harding (2018:21) argues that the protection of historic churches (i.e. those constructed before the end of 1940) relates to the contemporary secular notion of having abandoned a religious pre-welfare-state. The interpretation of a disenchantment of the ecclesiastical heritage through heritage designation and related policy explains the secular context in which historic churches are being managed by the public heritage field. While the religious values are not completely removed from public policy, they have rather been re-formulated to relate to a general sense of spirituality that is individual and separated from organized religion (Harding 2018:20-21). By integrating use-values and development in a heritage discourse in the case of the Cathedral Hill Project, the perceived negative consequences of heritagization can be mediated. Several respondents specifically added that they recognized that there was a high public interest in the material ecclesiastical heritage that needed to be met (Diocese respondent 1 & Parish respondent 1, 2018). Still, the terms “museum” or “musealized” were used in a negative manner to contrast the perceived positive notion of the living heritage of the Cathedral (ibid).

The Cathedral Hill Project reflects a dual attitude on cultural heritage, where it is viewed as a burden as much as an asset. While the historical past added value to the Cathedral through the public interest of the tangible history of the building, it needs to be mediated through a use-centred strategy in order to not be perceived as a musealized environment. From the point of view of the project and the respondents from the Church, the ecclesiastical heritage includes intangible as well as tangible values, with the intangible values such as use, traditions, rituals and atmosphere being important to emphasize.

<sup>29</sup> ”Vi förstår kultur både som arv och som samtid, som något att ta del av och som eget skapande.”

### *History and continuity*

Looking into more detail on the history-based arguments, the medieval roots of the Cathedral are continuously invoked throughout the material of the project. In a 2017 video presentation of the project, the Bishop of the Diocese of Strängnäs stated that:

”...it is not only the parish church on the hill, it is not only the diocesan center, the Cathedral on the hill, it is not only the focal point of the civic society on the hill. All those three role come together, as indeed it did many, many hundred years ago in the medieval times, before we started to subdivide life into different areas.” (Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö, 2017)

While it may seem contradictory to invoke the medieval and indeed Catholic past of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden, viewed in the context of the project, this can be interpreted as a strategy to base the broad social scope of the project in the historic past of the Cathedral and the Church. Although the Cathedral of Strängnäs has medieval origins, it is not so much the materiality of the medieval history that is being invoked, as the medieval position of the Church as a central societal institution. The notion of merging religious and secular life is continuously repeated throughout the analysed material of the project. One respondent elaborated on the historical concept of the Cathedral as a symbolic as well as physical space, stating that the Cathedral at present was only used at: “10 % of its’ actual purpose.” (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018). The actual purpose that is being referred to by the respondent in this statement is similarly located in the historical origins of the Church, as its’ function as a diocese centre, even pre-dating the medieval use of the Cathedral.

Through arguments such as these, extended secular uses could be seamlessly introduced to the space of the Cathedral. Practical examples of the planned extended uses are such as the recently initiated partnerships with the secular actors of the Cathedral Hill. In collaboration with the partners, the Cathedral was envisioned to be utilized for teaching high school history classes among other things. These activities could furthermore be introduced at an early stage of the project, and did not require any transformation to be made of the Cathedral. The expectations from the point of view of the parish were that new groups of people would be familiarized with the Cathedral and its’ surroundings, and in the long run be more inclined to visit the Cathedral on

their own. Several parish respondents also stated that they wanted the Cathedral to become a “living room” for the people of Strängnäs, a space that would be approachable for people for a number of different purposes, religious and secular included (Strängnäs Parish respondent 1, 2018, Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018). Looking at these statements, the longing for the return of the medieval Cathedral of Strängnäs is not specifically intended for introducing historical ecclesiastical practices, but is rather a conceptual objective of strengthening the societal position of the Church. Invoking the historical past can be interpreted in the light of the Church’s continuous relationship with the past through religious practices, but also as a way to broaden the scope of the general discourse on ecclesiastical heritage.

#### *Transformation as heritage protection*

The Cathedral Hill Project strived to include use- and immaterial values as part of the ecclesiastical heritage. Another aspect where the transformation of the heritage discourse was expressed was through the objectives of the project. According to the project material, the survival and continuous relevance of the Cathedral’s was dependent on the implementation of the project, and in particular the material additions to the site. In 2018, the Cathedral Hill-project group published a “zero-action” impact assessment (Falk, 2018). The overall results of the assessment claimed that a “zero-action” – that is to say that the construction of a new building not being carried through, would affect the heritage of the site negatively. These arguments relates to the “living heritage”-approach that the parish continuously expressed through their statements in the project.

According to the assessment, a successful heritage management, as well as the significant characteristics and heritage values of the Cathedral are dependent on the long-term survival of the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö (Falk 2018:1-2). The future multi-purpose building was also argued to be a feature that could improve the accessibility of the Cathedral Hill site. Additionally, the increased physical presence of the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö would strengthen the Church of Sweden, and advance the economic situation of the parish, thus improving the ability to manage the ecclesiastical heritage.

Another religiously based argument to construct a new building was that the symbolical identity of the Cathedral as the episcopal see would be strengthened (Falk 2018:2). Through these arguments, the Cathedral Hill Project is

intertwined with the management of the ecclesiastical heritage and the current responsibilities of the Church within the Swedish governance model. Establishing a strong bond between the survival of the present congregation and the ecclesiastical heritage can also be interpreted as a motivation of continued public support of the project. By addressing the ecclesiastical heritage rather than the religious activities of the parish, the project is positioned in a secular context with secular interests.

The 2017 brief for the architectural competition describes the contribution of the new building as: “...it will add qualities to the historic environment of the Cathedral and the city of Strängnäs, as well as strengthening the National Interest [of the Management of the Cultural Environment].” (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö, 2017:6). Through these claims, the construction of a new building is motivated not only by religious arguments, but by claiming to enhance the secular heritage values of the city.

In the 2019 competition brief, it is similarly stated that: “The new additions will be another step in a historical development”<sup>30</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö, 2019:10). The reasoning taps into the notion of the Church having been a patron of large-scale architecture historically. Following this argument, the continuing heritage of the Church includes the material manifestation of their presence in society. Relating to the architectural history of the Cathedral, the various historical additions and transformations to the building during different eras are used as arguments to place the contemporary architectural interventions in a longer historical perspective. From the point of view of the project, the transformation of the Cathedral and the construction of an additional building related to the historical continuity of adapting the material fabric of the Cathedral Hill to suit contemporary religious and secular practices. These arguments connect the intangible ecclesiastical heritage that was emphasized through the project, with the tangible spaces of the site. Through the use of history-based arguments, change is being integrated as a central feature of the ecclesiastical heritage of the Cathedral of Strängnäs.

#### **The County Administrative Board – balancing tangible values**

This section covers the perceptions by the government heritage agencies, through interviews and written statements by the County Administrative Board

<sup>30</sup> ”De nya tilläggen kommer att vara ett ytterligare steg i en historisk utveckling”



of Södermanland. The CAB was responsible of overseeing that the project conformed to the legal requirements according to the Swedish Heritage Act. Representatives of the CAB took part in relevant presentations and meetings during the project, and provided a number of early evaluations of the impact on the Cathedral's cultural-historical values of the project.

#### *Tangible and secular values*

During the early phase of the project in 2015-2016, the heritage division at the County Administrative Board of Södermanland was informed of the plans and objectives by the project group. This led to an early assessment being released by the CAB in 2016, where the 2015 project plans were reviewed from an evaluative heritage perspective (Gillbrand 2016). While the CAB supported the overall objectives in the early stage, there was a considerable hesitance on their part concerning the details of the execution of the project. The potential of enhancing the use-values and achieving a people-centred development on the Cathedral Hill was positively received by the CAB, who also accepted minor transformations of the Cathedral and the overall site to better accommodate contemporary demands (Gillbrand 2016:2-3). However, the majority of the tangible suggestions brought forward in the 2015 plans were considered to be too invasive and harmful to the cultural-historical values of the Cathedral and the Cathedral Hill by the CAB (Södermanland CAB-respondent).

The cultural-historical values of the medieval building fabric of the Cathedral were considered to be particularly sensitive to transformation due to its' age and perceived authenticity (Gillbrand 2016:4-5). As the interior of the Cathedral is perceived as an intricate, though not impossible, space to house new additions, a newly constructed building was preferred by the CAB. Still, the new building was dependent on there being no considerable affect on the cultural-historical values of the Cathedral Hill. The CAB further suggested non-invasive means such as digital technologies to improve the visitor experience of the Cathedral and achieve the social objectives of the project (Gillbrand 2016:3-4).

As the project proceeded, the CAB increasingly questioned the comprehensive material transformation of the Cathedral Hill. A second assessment was made by the CAB in 2019, where an additional review of the five selected architecture proposals from the competition is included (Gillbrand 2019). In the second assessment, the CAB:s stance on a new building has

changed considerably, as the five selected proposals are all considered to cause substantial damage to the cultural-historical values of the Cathedral Hill (Gillbrand 2019:1). Additionally, the criticism of the CAB concerned the long-term viability of a new building at the site. According to the CAB, the major intervention caused by the construction of a building was not thoroughly motivated by the project.

As mentioned already in the 2016 assessment, the CAB continued to ask for less intrusive methods to achieve the objectives of the project – such as an improvement of the signs at the Cathedral Hill and the utilization of information technology in the Cathedral (Gillbrand 2019:5). Their stance is motivated partly through claims on the potential damage to material cultural-historical values, and partly through the role of the CAB to secure secular interests in the ecclesiastical heritage. Carrying out major construction work at the Cathedral Hill site could also potentially diminish the secular-historical experience of the Cathedral according to the CAB (Gillbrand 2019:5). Additionally, the CAB wished for the potential tourism to the Cathedral to be taken into greater consideration, and become more visible in the project plans (Gillbrand 2019:1). The criticism brought forward in the 2019 assessment is also underlined by the CAB respondent.

In the arguments posed by the CAB, the tangible heritage and the secular experience of the Cathedral are considered as intertwined. Furthermore, the potential of developing tourism to the site is also perceived as dependent on the authenticity of the tangible heritage values. Looking at the argumentation of the CAB, the cultural-historical values are mainly limited to the tangible, historical features of the building. This relates to the guidelines on cultural-historical values produced in relation to the role of the NHB (Génetay & Lindberg, 2015). Even though these values are not limited to the tangible features in general, they are the main focus of the context of the study. Although the CAB showed an initial support for the project, their support lessened as the material transformations and the religious use values became more pronounced in the project plans.

#### *Expanding the cultural-historical arguments*

It may not be surprising given the abovementioned arguments and the role of the CAB, that the cultural-historical values of the Cathedral Hill are central to the stance of the CAB. As described previously, the overall objectives of the

Cathedral Hill Project were supported by the CAB, given that these do not interfere with the cultural-historical values. In contrast to how the heritage-based arguments were constructed within the project, the CAB:s arguments are mainly motivated through the tangible properties of the Cathedral.

The central values of the Cathedral were described as “authentic”, “sensitive” and a preserved “medieval character” (Gillbrand 2019:1-10). One of the properties contributing to the authenticity of the Cathedral was the absence of any major 19th century stylistic restorations, which have been performed at several other Swedish medieval cathedrals. In the Cathedral of Strängnäs by contrast, large parts of the medieval building fabric has remained untouched. Interestingly, the existing later additions are still considered to endow additional value to the Cathedral and are described as being “added with great respect to the older additions”<sup>31</sup> (Gillbrand, 2019:4). This suggests that the CAB considers the particular approach through which previous additions had been conceived as being carried out in a more appropriate and respectful manner than the contemporary proposals. One of the latest major changes to the Cathedral from the early 20th century is also described as being; “a milestone in the history of restoration”<sup>32</sup> (Gillbrand, 2019:4).

The statement clearly signals the historical and documental value of the transformation. While the medieval building fabric conveys the most characteristic material value of the Cathedral, later additions are still considered as carrying enough historical value to be considered as significant. Due to the aforementioned cultural-historical values (medieval as well as more recent), the CAB also quotes the cultural-historical assessment commissioned by the parish, saying that it would be impossible to carry out any other measures besides “careful maintenance and conservation” (Gillbrand 2019:4 cited Sjöström 2018:8).

Considering the arguments by the CAB, a clear line is cut between the historical fabric and the new additions of the Cathedral. The former adds value to the building, while the contemporary transformations poses a threat to the historical values. This stance significantly hinders the possibility of constructing a new building at the Cathedral Hill, or performing any major transformations of the Cathedral. According to the CAB, the overall objective of the project to “achieve a careful, reversible adaptation to the spaces and the site of the

Cathedral” needs to be brought forward more clearly (Gillbrand 2019:5). The statement can be interpreted as there being a profound difference concerning definitions by the two parties.

Clearly, the CAB did not perceive the project at that point to be able to achieve the objectives of a “careful, reversible adaptation” of the Cathedral, suggesting that these concepts are understood differently by the project group. Furthermore, the tangible cultural-historical values, as defined by the CAB, are mainly connected to their assignment of protecting the public’s interests in the heritage of the Cathedral. The definition may seem superfluous as the CAB:s role is to ensure the protection of cultural-historical values for the public. Still, this aspect is mentioned repeatedly in the reviewed material (Gillbrand 2016 & 2019). In the 2019 assessment, the CAB underlines their stance by stating that: “Churches and cemeteries do not only function as religious spaces today. They also have a historical and existential dimension of interest to a lot of people.”<sup>33</sup> (Gillbrand 2019:5). Although referring to intangible aspects such as the “existential dimension” of the Cathedral, the statement was made in connection to the tangible heritage values of the building. Using the word “existential” rather than “religious” also suggests a connection to a more general sense of spirituality and Christianity than that of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden. The “post-Christian” nature of the church that is implied through the above statement has also been noted in previous research on the Church of Sweden (Harding 2019). Following the reasoning by the CAB, there is also a close intertwinement of tangible and intangible values, where the safeguarding of the latter is made dependent on the former being preserved in its’ authentic state. Furthermore, the interests of the (secular) public are related to the protection of the tangible features of the Cathedral.

As the published material from the CAB provides a perception of ecclesiastical heritage that was dominated by tangible heritage values, the interview with the CAB-respondent reflects a more complex stance. On the one hand, the CAB-respondent said that:

“...the churches are dependent on being used, and that use is organic and also connects to the protection and the cultural values. The cultural values

<sup>31</sup> ”tillfogats med stor respekt för de äldre.”

<sup>32</sup> ”milstolpe i restaureringshistorien”

<sup>33</sup> ”Kyrkobyggnader och begravningsplatser har idag inte enbart en funktion som religiösa rum. De har även en historisk och en existentiell dimension som intresserar många”

creates the use, and the use becomes the cultural value.”<sup>34</sup> (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019)

On the other hand, the same respondent stated that they (the heritage officers at the CAB) needs to consider the Cathedral’s values according to the Heritage Act and the public interest, that is to say, the predominately tangible values of the building. It can also be noted that the respondent mentions “cultural values” rather than “cultural-historical values” here. Although this may seem like a minor difference, these values are connected to specific heritage legislation, where cultural values have a considerably broader definition than the cultural-historical values (Génetay & Lindberg, 2015) Additionally, the respondent expressed an understanding of the increasing need of making additions and transformations of historic churches due to changing practices and uses (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). Still, according to the respondent, these transformations are primarily allowed in churches carrying less prominent cultural-historical values.

This suggests that the decisions of the CAB in practice varies on a case-by-case basis. Although the vast group of historic churches protected through heritage legislation is considered as equally significant in theory, they may not be managed accordingly in practice (Löfgren, 2017). The CAB respondent further elaborated that the level of transformation that can be allowed is largely dependent on the significance of the cultural-historical values and on the long-term viability of the suggestions (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). In the case of the Cathedral Hill Project, neither of these arguments were sufficiently met according to the CAB.

As shown in this section, the arguments posed in the Cathedral Hill Project, and those posed by the CAB, illustrate the difficulties of attempting to balance the Cathedral’s intangible use values and the protection of the tangible cultural-historical values of the building. Despite of the CAB taking the religious use values into account in practice to a certain extent, their main interest concerns the tangible heritage of the Cathedral as this is perceived as being most significant for the general secular public.

<sup>34</sup> ”...kyrkobyggnaderna är ju avhängiga av ett bruk, och det bruket är organiskt och hör ihop organiskt också med skyddet och kulturvärdet. Så kulturvärdet skapar bruket och bruket blir kulturvärdet.”

However, the discussion sheds light on the fact that historic churches can in practice be classified differently according to their heritage values, although no official classification system of these buildings exist at present. The experiences of the Södermanland-CAB respondent is also reflected in the 2018/19 Government Communication on Ecclesiastical Heritage (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 30). The Communication outlines the need for CAB-representatives of being more pragmatic to accommodate for the contemporary needs that churches are facing. The strictly supervisory role of the CAB may be more flexible when dealing with real-life situations, although it comes with limitations.

### Conclusion – conflicting and coinciding approaches

As demonstrated in this section, a majority of the arguments by the CAB and the Cathedral Hill Project are heritage-based. The interpretations of what constituted heritage and its subsequent management and use clearly varies between the two parties. The Cathedral Hill Project presents use-values, religious as well as secular, as integral to the Cathedral’s heritage. The CAB on the other hand, argues for the value of the tangible and authentic historical qualities of the ecclesiastical heritage.

Departing from these conceptions on heritage, the strategies and objectives of both parties are constructed through different, but parallel perspectives. Looking at their stances and strategies, they each have an internal logic motivated by the different values assigned to the ecclesiastical heritage. Following the logic of each strategy, the development project can be interpreted either as an integrated part of the continuous heritage of the Cathedral from the point of view of the project, or as potentially being harmful to the tangible heritage of the site according to the CAB. During the course of the project, discourses on heritage are constructed and verbalized at certain points where the similarities and differences in the two lines of argument either intersect or are shown to be incompatible.

Although the two parties represent seemingly conflicting stances on management and development, there were points of agreement where their strategies can be balanced, or even potentially merged. The CAB includes intangible features as important characteristics of the Cathedral, though the tangible values are more prominent in their statements. Accessibility to the site, the spiritual atmosphere and the extended use of the Cathedral are all objectives



that both parties agreed on as important. However, the disagreements focuses on the strategies and practical implications of these objectives. Looking at the statements from both sides, neither actor felt as though their arguments and strategic decisions had been taken properly into account by the other.

The situation may not be described as a “clash of discourses” (Oevermann & Mieg 2014), but rather that the two parties reached several points of negotiation during the process. However, it was not only the construction of potentially conflicting discourses on heritage that prevented these negotiations to take place. The formal responsibilities and the different expectations on the institutional roles of the actors within the Swedish heritage governance model also play an important part in understanding the interactions and relationships between the actors.

### Professional roles and responsibilities

This section covers how the formal responsibilities and roles within the project were perceived and upheld. The approach of the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö to actively engage with the heritage field was emphasized during an early stage of the project. As a natural consequence, the roles of the Church, represented by the parish and the diocese, and the CAB, have been central components of the process. The roles that are being considered here firstly reflects the institutional practices and discourses, but also the individual practitioner. The conceptions by the actors of the different roles in the project also reflect notions and issues relating to ecclesiastical heritage management in a wider perspective. The section also focuses on how the actors conceived of their own as well as other’s roles in the project, and how these expectations were met in practice.

#### **The Diocese and Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö – constructing new roles**

Since the start of the Cathedral Hill Project, the objectives were focused on the internal development of the Diocese and the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö. The conception of the Cathedral as a living heritage was integrated into these objectives. One project respondent described the objectives of the project by saying that: “...from an ecclesiastical point of view, I would call it a radical anti-

secularization project”<sup>35</sup> (Strängnäs Parish respondent 1). Although quite a bold statement, it does reflect how the Church had far-reaching expectations of regenerating the Church and perhaps even regain some of its’ former societal position.

A conscious strategy of the project was to engage in partnerships with a number of secular actors, in particular those located adjacent to the Cathedral, thus tying closer bonds to civil society. While the secular partners are central by providing a local network and additional support for the project, it was also vital to the project to maintain a good relationship with the CAB of Södermanland in order to carry out the new construction at the Cathedral Hill according to the project respondents (Parish respondents 2 & 3, Diocese respondent 1 2018).

Several project respondents stated that an important aspect of their strategy was to acquire inspiration and guidance from previous projects that had aimed to develop and regenerate churches in Sweden. The lesson they had learned from previous projects was to strive for an open and extensive communication with the CAB, starting at an early stage of the project. By continuously gathering information and sharing it with the CAB through different stages, the project group aimed to create an amicable relationship. According to the respondents, the motivation behind the strategy was to overcome the potentially conflicting values of the CAB and the Church. Several respondents stated that they believed that the CAB are likely to have other priorities than those of the project (Strängnäs Parish respondent 2 & 3, 2018).

In order to bridge the conflicting values and differing priorities, it was perceived as a central task to establish a dialogue with the CAB at an early stage. One respondent particularly expressed a wish to achieve a beneficial situation where both parties could make their voices heard and reach consensus, saying that: “...there has to be a sort of mutual curiosity, built upon respecting [each other’s] competency” (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018). The statement implies that the respondent aims for an equal relationship with the CAB, where the two parties would take on similar positions in the transformation process.

<sup>35</sup> ”...ur ett kyrkoperspektiv så handlar det ju också om, jag säger så att detta är ett radikalt antisekulariseringsprojekt.”

*The Cathedral Hill Project: expectations on professional obligations*

The communication with the CAB was mainly carried out through a number of meetings, and the two early assessments done in 2016 and 2019. Despite the existing means of communication, several respondents said that they were not satisfied with how the CAB had responded and acted in relation to the project. A lack of active collaboration and dialogue are stated as the main issues of concern by the respondents. One project respondent described the problem as follows:

“They don’t want to be part of the conversation, because they are saying that “we are a supervisory government agency”, and that’s how they have chosen to interpret it. We had still wished that we could talk to them. But now they have chosen to do it in this way.”<sup>36</sup> (Strängnäs Parish respondent 2, 2018)

The quote highlights an issue between the parish and the CAB that is illustrated in the case study. The respondent suggests that the CAB could have been more cooperative and played an active part in the project but that they deliberately chose not to take that role. The conception that the CAB might deliberately refrain from adopting a more active approach to the project was reflected by several other project respondents (Strängnäs Parish respondent 2 2018, Project respondent 1 2019). From the point of view of the project respondents, the CAB:s role in relation to transformation projects was unpredictable and shifting depending on the county. Respondents held the conception from studying earlier projects that the CAB is collaborating with parishes differently and more extensively in other counties.

Several project respondents also referred to the “former role” of the CAB, that existed prior to the Church-State split in the year 2000. They implied that the new role that evolved from the shared responsibility of State and Church is less clear and straightforward (Project respondent 1, 2019). While the project respondents wished for an active engagement and partnership with the CAB, they perceived that the CAB were deliberately distancing themselves from the project. According to them, the former role was characterized by a more flexible

<sup>36</sup> ”De vill inte vara med och samtala, för de säger att ”vi är en tillståndsmyndighet”, och då har de valt att tolka det på det sättet. Vi hade önskat att vi ändå kunde få prata med dem. Men nu har de valt att göra på det sättet.”

attitude by the CAB, which included on-site discussions and specific recommendations. One project respondent said that:

“It’s not easy for the county administrative boards either. Their tasks have become really one-sided. Instead of being a resource of knowledge to the parishes [...] they require you to submit complete documents before even reviewing the case, and at that point the parish has already wasted all its’ funds and then they get declined.”<sup>37</sup> (Project respondent 1, 2019)

As the statement above reflects, the role of the CAB is perceived as being limited in relation to the parishes who own the churches. Additionally, the respondent expresses sympathy with the limitations of the CAB. Another consequence that was emphasized was the economic situation of the parishes. The process of acquiring permission for alterations or conservation of a church can be a complicated process, which the respondent connected to the procedures and responsibilities of the CAB. This issue is partly addressed in the recent Government Communication on Ecclesiastical Heritage, although the government rather suggests that there might be a lack of knowledge and resources concerning the decision-making process of the CAB among smaller parishes (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 23). In addition to this, the impression that the CAB do not make equal decisions in different counties was a cause of uncertainty among project respondents.

Considering the conceptions of the project respondents, there is a high degree of uncertainty concerning the boundaries of the formal role of the CAB and how they implement this role in practice. While the respondents understand the role as a government agency, and the supervisory responsibility of the CAB, they did not agree with how these responsibilities are being carried out. The 2018/2019 Communication on Ecclesiastical Heritage refers to the lack of resources of the CAB, stating that this limits the heritage officers in carrying out tasks such as preventive supervision of the ecclesiastical heritage and the general dissemination of knowledge (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 20-21). At present, regular supervision of churches and general discussions with parishes are rarely

<sup>37</sup> ”Så det är inte lätt för dom på Länsstyrelserna heller, för nu har deras uppdrag blivit så ensidigt, i stället för att vara [...] en kunskapsresurs för församlingarna så blir dom, man måste lämna ifrån sig helt färdiga handlingar innan de ens tittar på ärendet och då har församlingen bränt alla pengarna och så får dom nej.”

done due to the limited resources of staff. The consequences of the lack of resources can possibly be a cause of the disagreements in the case of the Cathedral Hill Project.

While the improved communication with the CAB was an important objective within the strategy of the project, there are additional practical expectations that were discerned in the interviews. In particular, the respondents wished for more tangible, on-site advice concerning the planned transformation of the Cathedral. One respondent argued that an on-site dialogue could make the two parties able to reach a mutual understanding, saying that:

“I need to be able to view your arguments and say that: I understand why we need to be aware of how the light here, that the way the light falls could be of cultural-historical interest.”<sup>38</sup> (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018)

Several project respondents said that a dialogue, where the CAB would provide tangible examples on how the legal requirements could be met, would have been a useful addition to the project (Strängnäs Parish respondent 2, 2018 & Strängnäs project respondent 1, 2019). According to this reasoning, the suggested transformations of the Cathedral can potentially be developed through on-site discussions and an active engagement from the CAB. One respondent additionally claimed that this type of procedure is being carried out by the CAB in another, nearby county (Strängnäs Parish respondent 2, 2018). This experience further strengthened the belief of the respondent that the CAB deliberately chose not to engage in the process to the full degree that they could.

The heritage officer from the Diocese of Strängnäs addressed these issues as well, but presented a slightly different picture of the situation. The respondent added that the large scale of the project was an important factor to take into consideration (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 2, 2019). According to the respondent, it would not be reasonable to expect the CAB to give detailed advice on this kind of project due to its' size and complexity. While the respondent underlined the difficulties in interpreting official CAB documents without proper training in the field, she also expressed an understanding of how the CAB had acted throughout the project. The heritage officer of the diocese

<sup>38</sup> ”Jag borde kunna se dina argument och säga: jag förstår att vi ska vara rädda om ljuset här nu, att ljuset är kulturhistoriskt intressant hur det faller in här.”

is also prevented by their formal role from providing the hands-on advice that the parish requested. This stance is mainly motivated by the formal duties of disseminating the State funding to the parishes, requiring the Diocese heritage officer to keep a distance to individual parishes. However, the heritage officer did provide a mediating approach by aiding the parish to interpret the decisions and assessments of the CAB.

### **The County Administrative Board – maintaining institutional boundaries**

Throughout the reviewed material, the CAB is defined in quite strict terms due to the role as a government heritage agency. Their role is delimited by their formal responsibilities of ensuring the legal requirements of the Swedish Heritage Act. The position as a government agency and the responsibilities of overseeing the condition and management of the ecclesiastical heritage, including permissions of transformation or renovation, are factors that were emphasized by the CAB. Their formal position also motivated the strict separation of roles in relation to the parish (Södermanland CAB respondent 2019).

The initial contact between the project group and the CAB was made at an early stage of the Cathedral Hill Project. While the CAB found the early engagement to be a positive strategy from the project, they also strived to create a clearly formalized process of communication where roles and responsibilities were defined and understood by both parties (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). The CAB-respondent also stated that the heritage division was aware of the aspiration from the project to have an extensive dialogue, but that the CAB had deliberately kept a certain distance and had been reluctant to join these discussions. Due to the role of the CAB as a supervisory government agency, it was considered as inappropriate to have an active involvement in the project under the conditions that the parish wished for (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). The governance model of ecclesiastical heritage in Sweden requires the CAB to review the final architectural proposal of the Cathedral Hill Project in order to decide whether it complies with the regulations of the Heritage Act, along with the other applicable legislation. According to the CAB respondent, the legislative position was decisive for the CAB when deciding to keep a distance to the project, in order to not risk being biased when doing the

future review and assessment of the material transformation at the site (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). Having conducted two early assessments and additional meetings with the project group, the CAB felt that they had contributed to the project according to the extent that their role allowed for, according to the same respondent.

From the perspective of the CAB they had met the expectations of the project according to their formal role and internal capacity. The main point of concern in the relationship to the Parish and the project group according to the CAB was the lack of understanding of the extent of the professional boundaries and responsibilities from the project representatives (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). According to the CAB respondent, they were surprised that the project group did not fully grasp the responsibilities and the limitations of the CAB. Additionally, the CAB raises some criticism concerning the set-up of the architectural competition, where the respondent believed that it was a failure by the project group to not include the cultural-historical legal limitations of the Cathedral Hill site (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). A consequence may have been that the architectural proposals do not meet the standards of heritage legislation as they have not been properly informed of the legislation.

The overall professional strategy constructed by the CAB is motivated through legal- and authority-based arguments. Although the CAB perceived the current communication with the project group to be satisfactory, the respondent agreed on dialogue being a key strategy for ecclesiastical heritage management in a wider context outside the project (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). The CAB respondent also admitted that there is a lack of arenas for a more general discussion on issues and responsibilities related to the ecclesiastical heritage (Södermanland CAB-respondent 2019). Although the regional consultation groups should be a forum for discussion on common issues on a general level, the respondent felt that there is a lack of continuous discussion between the heritage agencies, the parishes and the heritage officers of the dioceses. As discussed previously, the CAB has continuously called attention to the overall lack of resources that have made their principal tasks reactive rather than pro-active (Skr. 2018/19:122, p.21). It should be pointed out, however, that the regional consultation groups are specifically instructed not to discuss specific cases or details in this setting, as these cases can be the subject of future review for the CAB. Therefore, this context would not be a suitable arena for the type of discussions that the Cathedral Hill Project had envisioned.

### **Conclusion – a conflict of expectations**

The representatives of the Cathedral Hill Project and the CAB of Södermanland had conflicting ideas of the delimitations and responsibilities connected to the institutional roles of the ecclesiastical heritage management. The main issues are related to the expectations of the project group and the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö on the level and mode of engagement of the CAB throughout the process of the project. As this approach was central to the project from an early stage, it continued to shape the discourse on how the key actors were expected to interact. From the point of view of the CAB, the question of having an active dialogue to the degree that the project group expected was not included within the scope of their responsibilities.

The experiences can be summed up to there being a level of uncertainty within the project on how the CAB was expected to act and communicate in this context. It is difficult to find a definitive answer on how and when the different expectations of the two parties were formulated. While the project group found the CAB to be restrictive concerning dialogue and advice, the CAB believed that the project group should have a more thorough understanding of the institutional constraints of their role.

The preparatory studies that were carried out as the project was set up can be interpreted as a potential factor that influenced the future expectations of the project. As previous experiences from other counties of different types of transformation projects had included a close dialogue with the CAB, this was a central strategy in the current project. However, as a heritage officer of the Diocese of Strängnäs pointed out, context-specific factors such as the scale of the intervention made the collaboration difficult due to the CAB:s limited resources and additional responsibilities.

Another interesting detail in the context of the project is the role of the aforementioned Diocese heritage officer. Although not part of the Cathedral Hill Project, the heritage officer had a mediating role by assisting the Parish to interpret the reports and assessments of the CAB. The potential of the heritage expert of taking on a mediating or interpreting position in relation to other stakeholders is a role that has come to be a focus of recent research questioning an expert-centered approach (Smith 2006, Schofield 2014). However, given how the structure of the Church-State agreement is constructed, this role has

been interpreted as quite limited concerning the hands-on advice that was expected by the project group.

## The architecture of development

This section focuses on the architectural competition of the Cathedral Hill Project. Looking at the competition separately allows for a closer attention to how the key actors perceived the addition of a new building at the site and the potential additions to the Cathedral. This includes the arguments and objectives that were made when the competition was set up, and how the architectural proposals were judged by the project group and the CAB. The assessments of the architectural competition provides a tangible point of departure to analyze how the two parties perceived the aesthetic and spatial qualities of the Cathedral Hill site, and how these features interacted with the existing heritage values.

### Setting up the competition – motives and objectives

While the architectural competition was launched through an open call for submissions in 2017, preparatory work had been carried out already in 2015 – 2017. During the initial period, the project partnerships were also set up. Additionally, the CAB of Södermanland was informed of the project and released an early assessment in 2016 (Gillbrand 2016). The overall objective of the project and the competition is worded as follows:

“By carefully adapting parts of the Cathedral and its’ surroundings to the present and future needs of the parish, diocese and the city, we want to create an environment where the Cathedral Hill once more becomes a place that encompasses life in its’ entirety and where different actors converge.”<sup>39</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2017:3)

The statement clearly reflects the stance of the project concerning the construction of a new building on the Cathedral Hill. The new building is

<sup>39</sup> ”Genom att varsamt anpassa delar av domkyrkan med omgivning till nuvarande, och framtida, behov hos församling, stift och stad, vill vi skapa en miljö där kyrkbacken åter blir en plats som rymmer hela livet och olika aktörer strålar samman.”

described as an adaptation rather than a novel addition at the site. Furthermore, the quote also connects the past, present and future of the Cathedral through the architectural project, which goes in line with how the Parish considered the ecclesiastical heritage to be a continuous process. As demonstrated here, the objective is not to create a new site, but to return it to a former, more dynamic stage that was clearly perceived as positive for the local community and society as a whole. This can be interpreted as the overarching objective of the project, which will be considered in more detail in the following sections.

### The social objectives

The social values of the Cathedral Hill site characterizes several of the objectives behind the new multi-purpose building. These values include religious as well as secular functions, both of which are clearly emphasized by the project respondents. There was a strong conception among the project respondents that the social improvements that the project was envisioned to achieve were dependent on the construction of a new building and the adaptation of the existing spaces of the Cathedral. One tangible point of development was the potential of a new building to improve the accessibility of the entire site. As one respondent put it:

“To me, a core idea is to achieve the tangible conditions where people can’t avoid meeting. [...] This is where I feel like the Cathedral has a purpose and a potential that is not completely fulfilled at present.”<sup>40</sup> (Strängnäs Parish respondent 1, 2018)

As expressed in the quote, the new building is considered as a tangible tool to create physical meetings. According to the same respondents, the adjacency of a new building to the cathedral had the potential of creating a synergy between the various activities that would be located in the spaces of the cathedral or the multi-purpose building. A frequent metaphor used in the interviews, and in various public presentations of the project is that the new building should pass the “slipper-test”, meaning it ought to be placed close enough to the Cathedral that one could walk between the buildings only wearing slippers (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018).

<sup>40</sup> ”Att få till dom fysiska förutsättningarna så att människor inte kan låta bli att träffas, det tänker jag är en viktig grundidé. [...] Där tror jag katedralen har en uppgift, och en potential som inte nu är fullt använd.”

Having more people engaged in various activities at the Cathedral Hill was furthermore envisioned to enhance the psychological accessibility of the site. In the long run, one respondent hoped for the Cathedral Hill to become a “great public space”, where people naturally would gather for religious as well as secular activities (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018). This reasoning connects well to the previously covered statements on heritage, where a wish to return to a past stage of the history of the Cathedral without the boundaries between secular and religious life. Following these arguments, the construction of a new building on the Cathedral Hill is considered as a matter for the whole community of Strängnäs, rather than only an internal project for the benefit the Parish and the Diocese.

### The Cathedral Hill project – assessing the competition

The review of the final five proposals reflect how the aesthetic and practical demands on the new building interplay with ideological and legal perceptions of historical values and heritage protection. A total of 97 proposals were submitted to the competition during the first stage. Out of these 97 proposals, five were selected for further development in the second stage of the competition (Figure 13-18). The appointed jury consisting out of nine persons was ultimately responsible to select the most promising proposals. The jury consisted of representatives of the Parish and Diocese of Strängnäs, as well as architects specializing in restoration and landscape design and representatives from the Municipality of Strängnäs. Additionally, reference groups consisting of representatives from the Parish and Diocese of Strängnäs, the partners on the Cathedral Hill, and the Cathedral Hill Project Group were consulted to select the finalists (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:6). In June of 2020, the winner of the architectural competition was announced and a new stage of the project commenced.



Figure 13. “Kyrkoberget – där hela livet möts” by AndréFogelström, Land arkitektur & AEW.

*Illustration by: AndréFogelström, Land arkitektur & AEW.*



Figure 14. “Munkens örtagård” by petra gipp studio AB, Johan Paju and Tomas Gustavsson.

*Illustration by: petra gipp studio AB, Johan Paju and Tomas Gustavsson.*





Figure 15. “Möten vid muren” by Kjellgren Kaminsky Architecture AB and MARELD landskapsarkitekter AB.

*Illustration by: Kjellgren Kaminsky Architecture AB and MARELD landskapsarkitekter AB.*



Figure 16. “Folier” by Förstberg Ling.

*Illustration by: Förstberg Ling.*

### *Scale, material and existing qualities*

A central theme identified by the jury review was the issue of the scale of the new building at the Cathedral Hill. An openly stated demand of the competition, with partly historically based motives, was that the Cathedral remain the dominating building of the hill. Furthermore, the other historic buildings at the site needed to be taken into careful consideration in the architectural proposals, as they were described as: “relating to the Cathedral with balance and respect”<sup>41</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö, 2018:10). The competition brief demanded that the new building was adapted to blend in with the surrounding environment in a similar way as the existing buildings, while also adding: “new compositional qualities and aesthetic values”<sup>42</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö, 2018:10). As reflected in these statements the aesthetic demands placed on the new building provides the architects with a somewhat contradictory task. The expected result is a building that do not compete with or lessen the existing values, all while providing a novel addition to the site.

The statements in the competition brief relate to the project’s objective of preserving the existing qualities of the Cathedral Hill site. The considerations of the existing qualities of the site reveal a historic consciousness in the statements. As a tangible addition to the Cathedral Hill, the new building can be interpreted as a tool to connect the past, present and future of the site. The manner in which the new building is described suggest that the aesthetic values of the building needed to be adapted to the past of the site as well as the needs of the present.

Looking at the proposals selected by the jury for the second stage of the competition, a common feature is the relatively small scale of the building(s). A consequence of the smaller scale was that four out of five proposals have suggested the construction of two or more buildings at the site in order to house the needs set up by the project. Only one of the proposals suggested that existing buildings could be demolished to make way for new construction. The proposal “Kyrkobacken – där hela livet möts” wanted to construct a new building on the plot of Domkyrkobodarna, as these were considered to be of lesser value (Figure 13). However, the suggestion was heavily criticized by the

<sup>41</sup> ”Befintliga byggnader på domkyrkoberget förhåller sig idag med en välbalanserad respekt till domkyrkan.”

<sup>42</sup> ”nya gestaltningsmässiga kvalitéer och skönhetsvärden tillförs.”

jury (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:13). Despite their intentions, several of the proposals faced critique based on the scale of the new buildings and the interaction with the existing qualities of the site (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:10-11).

A number of themes can be identified in the jury review of the final proposals in the competition. The proposals that achieved a strengthened spatial effect on the space in front of the Cathedral's entrance, as well as the addition of several smaller buildings instead of one large, are preferred by the jury. Among the selected proposals, red brick was the dominating façade material, with some proposals also suggesting this material to be used in the interiors. The use of red brick was encouraged by the jury, while materials such as cement and copper were discouraged. The jury had a clear preference in the choice of material, which was motivated through the aesthetic connection to the existing buildings that mostly are constructed in brick. Concerning the character of the building, the proposals that had a solid and heavy character were positively received by the jury, who appreciated the similar features of the new building and the Cathedral (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018).

#### *Locating the new building*

A subject of discussion within the project was the exact location of the new building on the Cathedral Hill (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:9). One aspect that was emphasized by several respondents was that the new building should pass the “slipper-test” by being located close to the Cathedral. While the close proximity to the Cathedral is a clear preference in the reviewed material, it is also presented as a challenge as the location needed to be balanced with the legal requirements and limitations of the site. The scale of the building in relation to the Cathedral and the multi-layered heritage legislation of the site were particularly difficult to accommodate in the proposals.

The location and the scale of the building needed to be balanced in order to not have a negative effect on the character of the Cathedral Hill (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:7). Existing features such as the sight lines connecting the existing buildings of the site, and the position of the Cathedral Hill in relation to the city center of Strängnäs are described as particularly valuable to safeguard (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö

2018:10). The heritage legislation also limits the proximity of the new building in relation to the Cathedral due to both structural arguments and aesthetic considerations. In the final proposals, the suggested locations are found on diverse parts of the Cathedral Hill, however varying in size, angle and proximity to the Cathedral (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:9).

As the second stage of the competition was launched, two main nodes were identified at the Cathedral Hill which somewhat limited the previous options (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:7-9, and Figure 17). The nodes are located west and east of the Cathedral (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:7-9). The allocation of the new building to two different nodes demonstrate a division of religious and secular functions. The religious actors, namely the parish and the diocese, are primarily located at the west node, while the secular actors are planned to reside at the east node (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:7-9). While these locations can be understood in the light of the locations of the existing building, they also cause somewhat of a separation between the religious and secular activities. Furthermore, it was clearly articulated that the activities in the separate nodes “needed” new buildings in order to be developed to their full potential (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:7). These statements strengthens the conception that the absence of a new building will have negative effects on the activities at the Cathedral Hill.



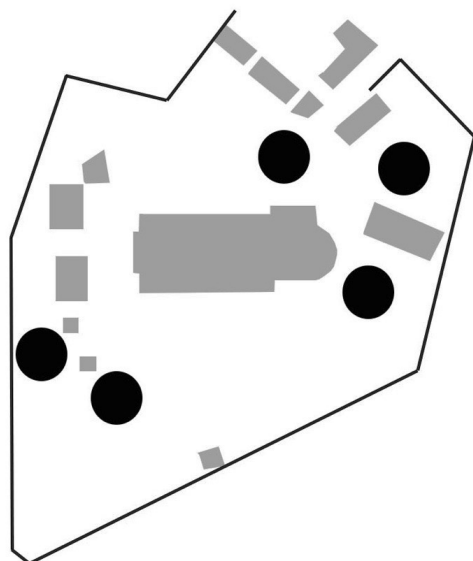


Figure 17. Potential locations for the new building in relation to the existing buildings on the Cathedral Hill.

The locations are indicated through the black circles. The Cathedral of Strängnäs is the largest grey structure in the figure. The three circles on the right indicate the “east node”, while the two on the left indicate the “west node”. (Figure adapted from: *Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:9*).

#### *Interior transformation*

Besides designing a new building, the competition included the development of underused spaces in the Cathedral. For this purpose, a use- and experience assessment was part of the preparatory material for the competition (A-sidan arkitekter et.al. 2017a, A-sidan arkitekter 2017, A-sidan arkitekter et. al. 2017b). The material included attic- and cellar spaces that are not accessible to the public at present. Concerning the possibilities of developing spaces for extended use in the Cathedral, the project respondents were divided in their statements. While some saw great possibilities of allocating office spaces to the currently underused attic, others held a more skeptical stance concerning the execution

and practical possibilities of these functions in the Cathedral (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, Strängnäs Parish respondent 1 & 2, 2018 ). Overall, the respondents agreed on that the extended use would mostly likely concern the activities the Parish and the Diocese to a large extent.

Although accessing some of the underused Cathedral spaces would require new openings to be made in the medieval building fabric, project respondents stated they wanted to include the possibility, would there be “compelling arguments” to motivate these measures (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018). The vision for interior developments of the Cathedral also includes currently accessible spaces that had been assessed as being less significant at present among visitors of the building.

As the competition entered the second stage, further instructions for the interior transformation were provided (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:10). As a general remark, the jury were concerned that few of the contestants had provided suggestions for how the Cathedral spaces could be developed. During the second stage of the jury assessment, the need of interior development is not only motivated through functional arguments, but should also “show how the beauty of the Cathedral’s interior can be elevated”<sup>43</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:10).

Furthermore, the currently inaccessible spaces are not explicitly mentioned as important to include in the updated architectural proposals. These spaces are described as “unused resources” which could easily be accessed with “the utmost respect for the masonry and vaults”<sup>44</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:10). The planned measures in combination with the potential of creating subterranean spaces in connection to the Cathedral illustrate a potential point of conflict for the project. It is mentioned that these measures may be “a challenge” to go forward with, as well as going against the advice of the cultural-historical assessment that was commissioned by the project (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2019:10, also see: Sjöström 2018). Considering how the development of the Cathedral spaces is described as essential to the functionality and the aesthetic experience of the building, the potential damage these measures could cause is mediated through the statements in the project.

<sup>43</sup> ”visa hur skönheten i katedralrummet kan höjas”

<sup>44</sup> ”med största respekt för murverk och valv”

Looking at the five selected proposals, they all present few tangible interventions in the Cathedral. Three of the proposals suggest subterranean spaces or passages, mainly intended to connect the Cathedral with existing or new buildings (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018). Additionally, one of the proposals suggests improving the access to the Cathedral tower, and one wants to recreate the historic bridge connecting the Cathedral sacristy and Roggeborgen. Although not specifically mentioned, the jury assessment clearly held a skeptical stance to interventions that would affect the outer walls of the Cathedral (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:10). On the other hand, new ways of accessing the tower is considered to be a particular quality as the jury stated that:

“To reach the tower and gain unique views of the city and lake Mälaren is an additional quality and can be a tourist attraction in itself”<sup>45</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö (2018:20)

Clearly, the ability to use the tower, whether it would be for visitors or staff of the parish and diocese, is a priority within the project. Neither the proposals, nor the jury assessment, goes into detail of how the attic spaces can be accessed with consideration to the cultural-historical values that were mentioned previously. The other suggestions mainly focus on improving use of the accessible spaces of the Cathedral, and adding glass sections to create more intimate rooms, and free-standing walls to create additional small spaces. While these measures are not specifically critiqued by the jury, they made the general statement that:

“At this stage, the proposals are lacking ideas of restoration that show how the beauty of the Cathedral can be strengthened and the functionality can be improved, as well as how the smaller rooms and spaces of the Cathedral can be improved and utilized aesthetically and functionally”<sup>46</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2018:11)

<sup>45</sup> ”Att nå tornet och få unika utblickar över staden och Mälaren är en extra kvalitet och kan i sig vara ett besöksmål.”

<sup>46</sup> ”I förslagen saknas än så länge restaureringsförslag som visar hur skönheten i katedralrummet kan höjas ytterligare och funktionerna förbättras liksom hur de mindre

Once more, the objective of the project to strengthen the existing qualities of the building is being verbalized. In this particular case though, it is the aesthetic notions of the Cathedral rather than the cultural-historical values that are the focus of the interior development of the building.

#### *Selecting the winner*

In June of 2020, the jury announced the winner of the competition: “Stora och små möten – för stora och små” by AART architects (Figure 18). The winning proposal suggests the new buildings to be located at two separate nodes on the Cathedral Hill (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:13). The west node is located by the Cathedral’s main entrance and consist of a multi-purpose souterrain building placed slightly south of the Cathedral. As the new building would be placed at an angle to the Cathedral and the existing buildings at the site, it creates an “entrance square” to the Cathedral Hill. The red brick and a simplistic square shape are intended to connect to the architecture of the Cathedral as well as surrounding historic buildings (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:4).

An additional new building is located at the west node containing the janitor’s office. With a red painted wooden panel and brick roof, the building is intended to reflect the traditional historic architecture of Strängnäs. At the east node, a new building would be constructed that connects to Djäknegården, where the School of Europe is currently residing (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:15). Similar to the multi-purpose entrance building, red brick is the preferred material and a glass corridor creates a tangible connection between the two buildings.

A number of spaces inside the Cathedral would be developed and re-designed to varying degrees according to the proposal. The most thorough interventions are planned in a space in the south-west corner of the Cathedral, in the so called “Bondkoret”. The earlier restoration by Ove Hidemark would be removed to make place for an elevator which connects to a space above the west church porch and to the cellar (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:15). Furthermore, an underground passage connects to the new multi-

rummen och utrymmena i domkyrkan kan förbättras och utnyttjas estetiskt och funktionellt.”

purpose building at the west node. Parish offices are housed in the upper and lower sacristy close to the choir. A new sacristy is instead planned to be placed behind the high altar, which blocks part of the ambulatory of the choir (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:15). The winner was introduced as follows by the jury:

“...(the proposal) has in a convincing and inspiring manner allowed for new and existing buildings to interplay in close proximity to the Cathedral, strengthening the identity of the Cathedral Hill as a place to meet and gather. (...)The jury values the proposal’s ability to develop and care for the existing cultural-historical values and the great aesthetic values of the Cathedral Hill.”<sup>47</sup> (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:13)



Figure 18. The winner of the architectural competition, “Stora och små möten – för stora och små” by AART architects.

*Illustration by AART architects.*

<sup>47</sup> ”...har på ett övertygande och inspirerande sätt låtit nya och befintliga byggnader skapa ett nära samspel runt Domkyrkan vilket stärker domkyrkobergets identitet som en samlade mötesplats. (...) Juryn värdesätter förslaget förmåga att både utveckla och visa inlevelse i och hänsyn till de befintliga kulturhistoriska värdena samt de höga skönhetsvärden som domkyrkoberget har.

Particularly highlighted aspects of the proposal are the interior developments of the Cathedral, which the jury had earlier remarked on was lacking in many other proposals, and the strengthening of existing values, as expressed in the quote above. According to the assessment of the winning proposal, the proposal particularly cares for the cultural-historical values of the Cathedral Hill, although the statement does not quite develop how this is achieved (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:13). However, seeing how the transformation of the Cathedral and the surrounding environment is described, the new additions are clearly conceived as strengthening the site (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:15). Describing the planned buildings as a “growth ring” (Strängnäs domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö 2020:13), reflects the broad definition of tangible heritage values that permeated the project.

The new buildings can be interpreted as an attempt of creating heritage in the present, and consciously adding a contemporary layer that is perceived as an important addition for the future. From the point of view of the project, heritage is not something deeply rooted in the past, but rather a concept to be actively created in the present and the future.

### **The County Administrative Board – the balance of protection and development**

As the competition proceeded, the CAB of Södermanland demanded that the project provide a cultural-historical report that assessed the selected architectural proposals departing from the demands of heritage legislation (Gillbrand 2019:5). The report was performed by an independent heritage officer, and is closely intertwined with the later CAB-assessment (see: Gillbrand 2019 & Sjöström 2018).

The purpose the cultural-historical report was to assess whether the five proposals were in accordance with the multiple layers of heritage legislation that cover the Cathedral Hill (Sjöström 2018:2). The cultural heritage of the Cathedral of Strängnäs was introduced through the following statement:

“Through its’ interior and exterior, the Cathedral is a unique and remarkable medieval cultural heritage. The 18th century pulpit and the choir fittings dating from the 1910’s restoration are markers of time that are well integrated

as a whole. The moveable altar as well as the pews are dating from our own time. It does not seem feasible to add more features without disturbing the balance of the interior.”<sup>48</sup> (Sjöström 2018:8)

This reflects the conception of the built ecclesiastical heritage as constructed through the tangible values of the past. Looking at the statement, any major new additions to the interior seem difficult to achieve. Additionally, the long-term organizational and social benefits of the building are questioned throughout the material. Despite the general stance reflected here, the arguments by the CAB of Södermanland, and the cultural-historical report made the issue slightly more complex, as is described below.

#### *Scale, material and existing qualities*

Nearly all of the five proposals were considered to have a scale that would be too imposing on the Cathedral Hill. Only the proposal “Folier”, suggesting a number of smaller building units, was considered as an acceptable solution (Sjöström 2018:13). Related to the conception of the new building being discreetly integrated at the Cathedral Hill, the preferred material was the red brick that can be found in the other buildings of the site. Materials such as copper, glass and concrete were considered as “foreign” and potentially unsuitable in relation to the existing buildings (Sjöström 2018:14 & 18). Some proposals were assessed as having a high architectural quality, but these qualities remain secondary to the Cathedral and the overall site (Sjöström 2018:15-16). The CAB-assessment makes the overall remark that:

“They [the new buildings] need to be neutral and subordinate in relation to the existing cultural-historical buildings, rather than being architecturally expressive ‘landmark buildings’.”<sup>49</sup> (Gillbrand 2019:1)

<sup>48</sup> ”Domkyrkan är till sin interiör och exteriör ett unikt och enastående kulturarv från medeltiden. Predikstolen från 1700-talet och inredning i koret från restaureringen kring 1910 är tidsmarkörer som smälter väl in i helheten. Från vår egen tid är det flyttbara altaret samt bänkar och bänkkvarter. Rummet torde inte tåla fler tillägg utan att balansen rubbas.”

<sup>49</sup> ”De behöver anpassas till och underordna sig befintliga kulturhistoriska byggnader på ett neutralt sätt, snarare än att utgöra arkitektoniskt expressiva ”märkesbyggnader”.

The statement clearly reflects the aesthetic demands made by the CAB on the new building. The extent to which the CAB should make aesthetic judgements when considering the cultural-historical values of a site is not quite clear (Génétay & Lindberg 2015). However, the cultural-historical values should not be judged according to their aesthetic qualities only (ibid). Looking at the above quote, the existing qualities of the site are presented as more significant than those of the potential new buildings. The preferable option from the point of view of the CAB in particular was that the existing buildings on the Cathedral Hill should be utilized and possibly transformed in order to meet the objectives of the project. The CAB-respondent also questioned the benefit of creating a new building from the point of view of the place-brand of the Cathedral Hill (Södermanland CAB-respondent, 2019). From the perspective of the respondent, the new building does not contribute in any considerable sense to the character of the site, but rather put the cultural-historical values at risk. The place-brand is thus constructed mainly through the tangible features of the site.

One central point that is made through these assessments are the extended considerations that needed to be made in relation to subterranean passages and spaces at the Cathedral Hill which are presented in some of the proposals. The arguments of the CAB against such a construction are based on the uncertain conditions of the site that consists out of bedrock and various archaeological layers. It was mentioned that heritage legislation also cover these subterranean layers, and that any interventions require extensive preparatory work (Gillbrand 2019:8). The benefits achieved through these passages and spaces can be achieved by other means using the existing site and buildings according to the cultural-historical report (Sjöström 2018:20).

#### *Interior transformation*

Throughout the reviewed material, the CAB has a mostly negative stance to the suggestions of interior transformations of the Cathedral. Some of the few transformations that could be considered as positive are the reorganization of underused spaces, and minor interventions to improve the physical accessibility to the building (Gillbrand 2019:6).

However, the CAB did not consider the development of currently inaccessible spaces, such as spaces in the tower and the attic, to be taking the protection of cultural-historical values into adequate consideration (CAB respondent 2019). It was questioned whether these interventions can be carried

out without causing considerable damage to the medieval building fabric of the Cathedral (Gillbrand 2019:6). Although installing elevators in certain parts of the Cathedral can improve accessibility, these are measures that need to be evaluated and specified in further detail in order to be properly assessed in relation to heritage legislation, according to the CAB. Accessing the tower through an elevator is described as “completely foreign” (Sjöström 2018:19).

It is further stated by the CAB that: “Any physical transformation need to be carefully considered in relation to the unique values of the Cathedral.”<sup>50</sup> (Gillbrand 2019:5). The particular wording of the statement, pointing out the “unique values”, assigns the Cathedral with exceptionally important features, which can create discursive barriers when discussing potential developments of the Cathedral.

Considering the overall made arguments by the CAB and the cultural-historical assessment, the age and historical values of the Cathedral are used to motivate minimal interventions to the building. In particular, the medieval features are emphasized as being particularly sensitive to any contemporary additions.

### **Conclusion – added values or tangible damage**

To conclude, major disagreements as well as consensus on the management and care of the ecclesiastical heritage is identified in the statements of the key actors. The assessments of the architectural proposals by the project group and the CAB illustrate different, and sometimes coinciding ideas of the care and management of the Cathedral of Strängnäs.

Certain tangible features of the new building are emphasized by both parties. The choice of material needed to relate to the existing buildings and the scale of the new building had to be adapted to character of the site. The overall stances of the two parties concerning the tangible features of the architectural proposals is related to the core values and objectives of their conceptions of heritage. Brick continuing to be a dominating material in the spatial context of the Cathedral Hill relates equally to the project’s objective of strengthening the character of the site as it did to the CAB:s intention to preserve the cultural-

historical values. The scale of the buildings in the proposals was met with criticism by both parties, although somewhat more sharply by the CAB.

The architectural proposals provide tangible references to support the different discursive stances of the two key actors. Considering the how the project group wished for on-site discussions and support by the CAB, the architectural competition provides this forum to some extent. However, the assessments of the CAB resulted in predominately negative remarks on the final proposals.

In order to better understand the possibilities for the parties to reach consensus, one also need to understand where and why their perceptions on heritage, development and proper management differ. Looking at the main points of conflict, the different stances of the actors are particularly pronounced. The conflicts mainly concern the balance between preservation and use of the cathedral. While the CAB stated that they support the objectives of the project in theory, their assessments on the architectural proposals clearly demonstrate that they do not agree on the strategies to achieve these objectives. As the project group praised proposals that affect the spatial design of the Cathedral Hill, and describes this as an added value, the same measures are considered as disruptive to the historical environment by the CAB. Additionally, locating the new building within close proximity to the cathedral was a central objective of the project that was considered to improve the use of the cathedral and the public atmosphere of the building. According to the preservation-centered approach by the CAB, a new building cannot improve the qualities of the site, but at most represent a neutral addition. The CAB furthermore doubted whether the practical needs of the Parish requires the kind of tangible interventions that the architectural competition suggests (Södermanland CAB-respondent 2019).

Lastly, the assessments of the interior transformations present the two parties almost as polar opposites. While the project was clearly critical of the proposals that had not presented thorough or clearly defined solutions for the extended use of the interior spaces of the Cathedral, the same proposals received the most praise by the CAB. Looking at how the proposals were perceived from the point of view of the project group, the additional use-values that the project providea were greater than the potential negative effects on the historic features of the Cathedral Hill. Although the CAB expressed their understanding of the potential benefits of transforming the Cathedral and the surrounding site, the heritage values of the building were considered as unique

<sup>50</sup> ”Varje fysisk förändring måste noga vägas mot domkyrkans unika värden.”

due to their age and relatively unaltered condition. Due to the cultural-historical values the CAB considered most tangible transformations of the Cathedral difficult to achieve.

While the parish considers the ecclesiastical heritage to be a continuous process that stretches into the present, the CAB focuses on the safeguarding of the existing tangible features of the site. The key differences on what measures could be considered as safeguarding of the ecclesiastical heritage makes it difficult to reach consensus regarding the addition of a new building at the Cathedral Hill.

## Chapter 9. Heritage management in transformation - Discourses and roles

The ecclesiastical heritage is used and defined for a variety of means by the different actors in contemporary public heritage management. The results of the case studies demonstrate the complex intertwinements of institutional roles and conceptions of ecclesiastical heritage. In this chapter, the statements, conceptions and strategies of the key actors are analyzed.

The first part of the analysis describes the parallel discourses on heritage that are identified in the case studies departing from the approaches of Janssen et al. (2017) and Ashworth (2011). In the second part, the interaction of the identified discourses is traced, with particular focus on how different values and strategies clashed or merged during the process of the project. The third part of the analysis concerns the formal and discursive construction of institutional and professional roles. Bauman's (1987) theory together with Smith's (2009) development, on the role of the intellectual function as a point of departure. The analysis traces how the key actors constructed their roles, and the different expectations on responsibilities and boundaries.

### Parallel discourses – heritage as sector, factor and vector

The first section of the analysis deals with the discourses on cultural heritage and management that appear through the statements and actions of the key actors in the case studies. It departs from the notion of parallel discourses on heritage according to how Ashworth (2011) and Janssen et al. (2017) presents the different general approaches to management and protection which can be identified in the professional heritage field. Using the concepts of Janssen et al. (2017), the discourses are called *sector*, *factor* and *vector* respectively. The identified discourses emerged and dominated the institutional practices at different stages in time, and remain in parallel in the contemporary context of heritage management.

The sector-discourse is constructed based on norms of heritage and its management and is originally established as part of the preservationist movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It favors the tangible expressions of heritage and assigns judgement and identification of heritage to an intellectual expertise guided by charters and legislation. The factor-discourse includes a wide range of values, including the intangible features of heritage. Rather than only being protected, heritage is included in contemporary processes of societal development. Lastly, the vector-discourse represents the newest approach to heritage. The vector discourse broadens the notion of heritage considerably, and includes an additional number of actors and stakeholders to take part in its' identification and management. Heritage is viewed as a resource for the present and future, and is not perceived as having an intrinsic value due to its' age.

In the case studies, the statements and strategies of the key actors concerning heritage and management practices are identified. Through the written and spoken statements, alongside the practical strategies of the projects, different discourses are discerned based on the categories of sector, factor and vector.

### **Ecclesiastical heritage as sector and factor**

Statements based on the tangible and historic values of the ecclesiastical heritage were identified in both case studies. The county administrative board and the National Heritage Board primarily express these values and advocate for their safeguarding. In certain contexts, their approach and statements forms a sector-discourse on heritage.

The architectural competition of the Cathedral Hill Project is a clear example of how a sector-discourse is constructed through the CAB's assessments on the value of existing structures and future additions to the site. The discourse is based on the intrinsic qualities of the heritage object. According to how the CAB responded to the architectural proposals, the competition is interpreted as a potential threat to the tangible heritage values that the cathedral's medieval building fabric constitutes. As the site and built fabric of the cathedral faced transformation, a sector-discourse on heritage was made visible through the approach of the CAB. Janssen et al. (2017:1660) states that heritage, as understood by a sector-discourse, is based on the intrinsic values of historic buildings, and the potential dangers these buildings face due to their scarcity. A similar reasoning was adopted by the CAB in relation to the Cathedral Hill

Project. Their statements are significant of a sector-discourse, where value is perceived through qualities related to age and uniqueness (Ashworth 2011:13).

Values related to transformation and change, are perceived as incompatible with the safeguarding of the ecclesiastical heritage by the CAB. The selection of relevant values constructs a delimited discourse on heritage, where care and protection are favoured rather than use and development. The rationale of the CAB provides a distinct inclusion and exclusion of values that are considered as relevant to the definition and management of ecclesiastical heritage.

As Janssen et al. (2017) state, the preservation-driven sector-discourse has evolved through expert-centred institutional heritage practices. The CAB and the NHB both issue statements from a position of power within the public governance model of ecclesiastical heritage. The Heritage Act functions as a framework and an institutional support for the CAB as regional representatives of the Swedish State. In their statements, the CABs in both cases frequently refers to heritage legislation to support their stances on heritage.

Relying on an institutional framework to support value judgements is significant of a sector-discourse as well as an authorized heritage discourse (AHD) as described by Smith (2006:87). Cultural-historical values is a central concept to Swedish heritage legislation, which also appears repeatedly in the statements made by the CAB. Their approach is legitimized and given additional weight by references to legislative concepts. However, the sector-discourse is not reflected entirely through all statements made by the CAB in the case studies. Rather, a shift between discourses is observed throughout the process of the projects.

Depending on the context and the specific church being addressed, the CAB adopts an approach to ecclesiastical heritage that to a high degree reflects a factor-discourse. While sharing some common features with the sector-discourse, heritage as factor allows for the ecclesiastical heritage to be integrated into a broad and more complex context (Janssen et al. 2017:1661-1662).

The CAB-respondents in both cases state that contemporary and extended uses of the church can be taken into consideration and be approved under specific circumstances. Such considerations are not strictly considered in relation to the cultural-historical values of the church. The respondents stress that these adaptations are case-specific and cannot be applied to all churches. The contemporary use and transformation of the church is not necessarily defined as beneficial to the ecclesiastical heritage, but it is not considered as harming the cultural-historical values in every case.

The CAB also describes the ecclesiastical heritage from a resource-perspective, particularly focusing on tourism. As a resource, the built ecclesiastical heritage continues to be valued based on its tangible qualities. However, the perspective indicates that the tangible values not only has intrinsic value, but gains an additional purpose in a tourism-context. It should also be noted here that the tourism-approach is mainly intended to be implemented through intangible strategies rather than material transformation from the point of view of the CAB.

The statements reflect a general development among the Swedish county administrative boards. In the most recent government communication on ecclesiastical heritage, survey results and statements from CAB heritage officers demonstrate that they have become more accepting of tangible transformations of churches (Skr. 2018/19:122 p. 34). The wider trend suggests that the institutional framework of the CABs is not as constraining as the sector-discourse may imply. To a certain extent, the approach of the CAB is adapted to the specific circumstances of the case and the judgements made by the heritage officer in question.

The parallel and shifting discourses of the government heritage agencies reveal that their stance on the ecclesiastical heritage is not immutable. As shown by the statements of the government heritage agencies, different discourses are constructed and activated in particular contexts. Ashworth (2011) argues that the parallel stances can be associated with different roles in relation to heritage and management practices. The shift between the sector and factor-discourse in the statements and strategies of the CAB can be interpreted as an increasing integration of the ecclesiastical heritage into institutional processes of regeneration and development.

### **Ecclesiastical heritage as vector**

The discourse on heritage that appears through the statements and actions of the Church of Sweden and Hälsinglands Museum can be characterized as a vector-discourse. These actors' statements express a broad set of values and strategies to define and manage the ecclesiastical heritage. The religious and secular uses and the traditions of the churches are emphasized, in particular due to the continuity of these practices in the past and present. There is also an explicit ambition in both cases to create an open and inviting atmosphere in the church. As one respondent put it in the Cathedral Hill Project, the church

should be a place where you: "leave the key for your summer house in the reception for the neighbor to pick up" (Strängnäs Diocese respondent 1, 2018). The above statement is positioned in the present and focuses on the contemporary use of the church and the everyday needs of the local community. Through such statements, the respondents relates the everyday, contemporary activities of the church to the continuity of the tangible ecclesiastical heritage.

Janssen et al. (2017) characterizes heritage as a vector through the contemporary attachments, uses and values of different people. The human-centered approach, to use the wording of Wells & Stiefel (2019a), which is central to the vector-discourse is clearly visible in the statements and strategies of the parishes and Hälsinglands Museum. According to the respondents, the historical use of the church is defined beyond secular-religious boundaries. By emphasizing the notion of the church as a public space, the historical continuity of the building is intended to be reinforced. Rather than focusing on specific features of the building, intangible concepts and ideas are incorporated in the heritage of the church.

The vector-discourse includes an integration between the past and present, as well as the religious and secular. Seeing heritage as a continuous process, change in the past, present and future is considered as inevitable. Following this reasoning, the current tangible transformations of the built ecclesiastical heritage which are illustrated in the Cathedral Hill Project in particular, make up components of a discourse on heritage and management. The concept of change is integrated into the care and continuity of heritage, and is part of a continuous approach to the use and management of the church. As an essential part of a continuous process, the parishes claim a position as managers as well as practitioners of ecclesiastical heritage

A vector-discourse is not only formed through the statements of the case studies, but also by the activities and strategies of the parishes and Hälsinglands Museum. By the broad inclusion of values, the ecclesiastical heritage is merged into processes of place-branding and religious development in the Cathedral Hill Project, and of regional development in the Hamra Project. While the Cathedral Hill Project planned for the addition of a new building at the site, the Hamra Project did not include any tangible transformations. Still, the strategies of the projects reached beyond the borders of the activities of the Church and the regional museum. A common feature of the cases is the inclusion of secular, local stakeholders who supported the projects more or less actively. Through the networks of stakeholders, the key actors express broad ambitions for the



use of the church in contemporary processes of development and change that include diverse groups of people with different interests.

Narratives are emphasized in the vector-discourse as an important component of including heritage in broad societal processes (Janssen et. al. 2017:1664-1665). Incorporating the narratives of local stakeholders includes their practical involvement in the process of identifying heritage . The Hamra Project in particular incorporates the local community practically and symbolically during the course of the project. Hamra Church is used as a venue and backdrop for several events, and a number of the exhibitions features the people that live and work in Hamra, as well as their history. In addition, community members assisted in the hosting of the exhibitions and cultural activities.

The narratives attached to the church incorporates the ecclesiastical heritage in the past and the present of the region and the local community. The existing use and local relations to the church are emphasized, as well as the exploration of extended-use options. Using heritage in this manner allows for the needs of the present to be visible. In the projects, the ecclesiastical heritage is thus constructed within a discourse that featured the merging of secular and religious aspects.

### The interaction of discourses

A central point of departure is the assumption that the parallel discourses are not static in nature. Rather, the discourses shift, merge and sometimes clash in interaction with each other. Oevermann & Mieg (2014) argue that the interaction of discourses determine the outcome of a transformation process. In a successful project, the interaction can mediate conflicting values among actors. Clashes of discourses on the other hand, occur as actors fail to negotiate and identify common values and approaches.

The manner in which discourses interact can be determined by how they are perceived through statements and action, and how the actors navigate within, and between discourses. Departing from the notion that the parallel discourses are constructed by different values and priorities related to the ecclesiastical heritage, the values can be shared between discourses or represent conflicting interests. When actors are faced with multiple interests concerning the management and definition of ecclesiastical heritage, the values that guide their discourses need to be defined and negotiated. Core values represent the values

that define each discourse. As these values are challenged and faced with parallel core values within a context of transformation, conflicts may occur.

During a process of transformation, Oevermann & Mieg (2014:22-23) argue that conflicting objectives of different discourses can be mediated by using values as “bridges”. Bridging values signify the values which unite common interests and priorities of different actors. By introducing bridging values when faced with debated issues, they function as objects of negotiation to avoid conflict. A successful integration of bridging values allows the actors to reach consensus without having to compromise on their core values. In contrast, the interaction of discourses can lead to a clash if the core values of the actors are considered to hold unreconcilable differences.

This section analyses the interaction of discourses between the key actors. Bridging values, tensions and conflicts are identified in order to understand how actors negotiate core values within the discourses.

### Values as bridges

Bridging values are included in the process of both cases. The three themes presented in this section signifies values that have a mediating function between the key actors. Although the actors may have different definitions of the bridging values, they are established as central notions within the projects.

In both case studies, the key actors were aware of the different approaches they have to the definition and management of cultural heritage. The parishes have an ambiguous stance to what they perceived as a “general” conception of heritage. Despite the skepticism, they incorporate ecclesiastical heritage as a central notion of the projects. The emphasis on heritage can in itself be interpreted as a bridging value. From the point of view of the parishes, the definition of cultural heritage is argued to be problematic for the activities of the Church in the present. By including secular, religious, tangible and intangible heritage values, the parishes attempt to shift the focus of what they perceive as a generally accepted approach to heritage. Emphasizing heritage as a central component of the projects allow them to use heritage to their advantage and control how it is defined and used. The approach of the parishes demonstrate how the strategies that represent a vector-discourse mediates the obstacles posed by the concept of heritage to the Church.

The incorporation of local heritage as a strategy in the Hamra Project is another bridging value. Hälsinglands Museum created “novel stories” that

included identifying and exhibiting the local cultural heritage in Hamra and the surrounding region. Through the stories, the overlooked heritage and the local community of Hamra in the past and the present are emphasized as resources. The exhibitions of local heritage are intertwined with the Church in a tangible sense as Hamra Church functions as a venue for cultural events. The notion of the local heritage stories is related to a well-established theme in Swedish ecclesiastical heritage. The parish church as a symbol for local heritage and history is covered in research and remains as a surviving notion in many communities (Harding 2018, Grahn 2008).

As a bridging value, the Parish of Ljusnan willingly incorporates the local heritage stories in their conception the ecclesiastical heritage. From their point of view, the regional heritage helps strengthen the relevance of the Church in the local community. A core value of the discourse of the parish is the conception of the ecclesiastical heritage as continuous and “living”. Despite there being no openly religious features of the regional heritage as it is presented in the project, the parish interprets the relation to the local community as part of the continuous heritage practices of the Church. Due to the specific context and strategies of the project, I would argue that the intertwining of ecclesiastical and secular heritage in this case is successful through the incorporation of the bridging value of local heritage. By connecting to established notions of cultural heritage, Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan are able to collaborate without having to balance the openly religious values and practices of the Church, with the secular approach of the museum.

Another bridging value of the vector and factor-discourses is the perception of the ecclesiastical heritage as a resource. While the key actors all are able to consider heritage as a resource, they depart from different perspectives. In the Cathedral Hill Project, the CAB perceive the ecclesiastical heritage as a resource for tourism and place-branding due to the historic features of the churches. To the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö the ecclesiastical heritage is a resource for the re-branding of the Church in the present. Although their strategies differ, the resource-perspective is a common ground. Seeing how the heritage stories of the Hamra Project are used as resources to encourage local tourism, the approach of this project and the CAB coincide. The resource perspective relates to the core values of the factor-and vector-discourse respectively. Using heritage as a resource emphasizes the needs of the present, which is a central tenet to both discourses. The similarities have the potential of being used as

bridging values between the regional museum and the CAB. Such common values can be used as a basis for further collaboration between the actors.

### **Defining and balancing use-values**

A central theme that is identified in both case studies are “use-values” as a part of the ecclesiastical heritage. The concept of use-values is not easy to define in a concise way based on the statements of the actors. However, the concept is debated and used strategically in the projects. It functions as a bridging value or a source of tension depending on the context and actors. The use-values of the church are associated with the concept of a living heritage. From the point of view of the parishes, these values include an intertwining of the secular and religious activities of the church.

Use-values are frequently emphasized by the respondents from the parishes and Hälsinglands Museum. According to the actors, the use of the church represents intangible heritage values that include religious and secular practices. The parishes particularly stress the intertwining of the religious and secular uses as a central component of the ecclesiastical heritage. While Hälsinglands Museum encourage the contemporary use of the church, they focus on secular themes and activities. Respondents from Hälsinglands Museum express that the religious nature of the ecclesiastical heritage can be a potential issue when collaborating with the Church of Sweden. As a secular actor in the heritage field, they want to approach the church from a broad perspective on heritage that includes secular notions. Although the parishes and the regional museum have slightly different motivations, the emphasis on the contemporary use of the ecclesiastical heritage is a common feature of their statements. The bridging values do not need to have unanimously accepted definitions in order fulfil their purpose. While the use-values have a mediating function in this context, there is no shared definition of the concept by the actors.

From the point of view of the CAB, use-values are perceived as problematic in relation to their role as a government agency. The hesitation of the CAB is based on how they associate use values with the religious function of the church. One of the CAB-respondents describes how these values often represents the liturgical needs of the parish. In the assessments made by the CAB, the respondent explains that such values cannot be compared to the cultural-historical values according to the Heritage Act. However, the CAB

respondents rarely specifies how the cultural-historical values differs from other values which are present in the cases. The inclusion and exclusion of heritage values by the CAB is strictly governed by the Heritage Act. While the CAB agrees on the importance of the living ecclesiastical heritage, they do not perceive the “living” features as relevant within their responsibilities as a government agency. The parishes and Hälsinglands Museum in contrast are not restricted by the same legislative responsibilities.

The manner in which the actors relate to the use-values indicates that the concept has a bridging function but that it also can be incompatible with other values. The boundaries between the secular and religious use of the church are particularly difficult to delimit. The governing structures of the heritage government agencies are not adapted to incorporate the intricate connections between religion and cultural-historical values. While not an outright “clash” of values, to use the wording of Oevermann & Mieg (2014), the reasoning of the CAB in relation to the parish reveals a tension between values.

### **Tangible values and continuity**

The tangible values of the ecclesiastical heritage is another debated theme which reveals different approaches among the key actors. In the Cathedral Hill Project, the differing approaches to the tangible ecclesiastical of the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö and the CAB is clearly illustrated. A major part of the project consists of the architectural competition, that aims to construct a multi-purpose building and regenerate the interior spaces of the cathedral. The strategies and means of constructing a new building and adapting the cathedral reveals conflicting values among the two parties.

From the point of view of the parish, the new building is not only a neutral addition, but also strengthens the heritage values of the site. A number of restorations and changes have taken place in the Cathedral of Strängnäs since its’ medieval construction, and the parish intends for the contemporary additions to be a new “growth ring” in the history of the cathedral. By emphasizing the historical continuity of the architectural competition, it is perceived as a link between the tangible past of the cathedral and the intangible heritage practices of the parish. Their approach to the competition allows them to incorporate contemporary tangible transformation as part of a continuous ecclesiastical heritage.

The CAB interprets the suggested architectural additions differently. Rather than being beneficial to the historical environment of the cathedral, the CAB perceive most of the architectural proposals to be harmful. At best, they stated that the new building can be a neutral addition to the site. The medieval building fabric as well as the newer historical restorations of the cathedral has a higher value than a new building is able to contribute with to the site, according to the CAB.

The conflicting statements of the actors shed light on their interpretations of age and continuity. The parish and the CAB depart from different assumptions on tangible heritage. As the parish approach the change of tangible heritage as a continuous practice, it clashes with the CAB’s focus on safeguarding the medieval building fabric of the cathedral. The value of the tangible fabric of the cathedral is firmly rooted in its’ historical past according to the CAB. New additions to the fabric are thus interpreted as foreign additions to the site rather than part of a continuous heritage. The particular context of the Cathedral Hill Project exposes how certain core values of the sector- and vector-discourse of heritage are difficult to merge. Furthermore, the clash of discourses show how tangible heritage values are separated from the intangible values and present uses of ecclesiastical heritage within the sector-discourse.

Another example of the difficulty of balancing tangible and intangible values is illustrated through the ambiguity of the Church to the concept of cultural heritage. Several respondents from the Church of Sweden from both case studies states that cultural heritage can be “restrictive”, or state that they would rather use the word culture instead. The skepticism mainly stems from the fear that the intangible values and use of the churches are disregarded in relation to the protection of tangible features. Here, the parish respondents themselves identifies a potential clash of values.

One aspect that makes the disagreement between the two parties particularly evident is how the statements and actions of the CAB reflect a shift between different discourses on heritage. Depending on the context and the specific church, different levels of tangible transformation are permitted by the CAB. In the case of the Cathedral of Strängnäs however, the specific tangible features and age of the building makes most physical transformations difficult. Although the CAB see their arguments as clearly defined, the Parish of Strängnäs-Aspö perceives them as unpredictable. The context-dependent factors that guided the decisions of the CAB are seemingly difficult to communicate properly to the

parish. Due to the issues of communication, the approach that the CAB describes as flexible is also interpreted as uncertain.

### Institutional roles in theory and practice

The analysis of the institutional roles of the key actors departs from Bauman's (1987) notions on the roles of the intellectual in modern and post-modern societies. He presents the legislator and interpreter as two types of expertise, dependent on how they define and value knowledge and their relation to other actors. Smith (2009) uses Bauman's roles as a point of departure as she introduces the facilitator as a contemporary role for heritage practitioners.

The legislator is characterized by the access to, and superior position of intellectual knowledge. The knowledge of the legislator is situated within a system that gives the legislator an authorized position to make superior judgements on relevant matters concerning their expertise within society (Bauman 1987:4-5). According to Bauman, the legislator bases their perception of knowledge on the existence of universal truths.

While the legislator is based on a model of a modern world view, the intellectual in post-modern society is represented by the interpreter. The post-modern notion of the expert allows for multiple interpretations of reality which are accepted as legitimate (Bauman 1987:127). The interpreter uses their position to make the ideas and perceptions of different groups visible and understandable to others.

The facilitator as presented by Smith (2009), departs from Bauman's notions of the intellectual in modern and post-modern society. According to Smith, the facilitator holds a position as a support to various groups of people, and coordinator between institutional frameworks, actors and stakeholders (Smith 2009:128-129).

While the individual respondents of the case studies represent different and sometimes overlapping professional roles, the purpose of this section is to analyze their institutional affiliation. The analysis identifies and describes how, and if the boundaries and responsibilities of the relevant institutions affect the actions and statements by the professional actors.

### The County Administrative Board as legislator and facilitator

The legislative framework of the Heritage Act constitutes the structure that governs the responsibilities of the CAB. The Swedish Heritage Act is based on the safeguarding of cultural-historical values, in particular concerning the legislation on ecclesiastical heritage. The CAB furthermore functions as the regional representative of the Swedish state in the joint Church-State model of heritage management.

The approach that the CAB-respondents represent is defined by the State-Church agreement on the management of the ecclesiastical heritage. In the 1998 Government Bill on the State and the Religious Communities, the responsibilities of the State are described as:

“The government heritage agencies, the NHB and the county administrative boards, have essential functions by providing expert knowledge and ensuring the application of the protective measures of the Heritage Act.”<sup>51</sup> (Prop. 1998/99:38, p. 150)

Here, the “essential functions” of the government heritage agencies are emphasized. The focus of the CAB is to ensure expert knowledge and to maintain the procedures of the Heritage Act. The Church-State agreements thus provides the CAB with a controlling and safeguarding function within the governance model. As a government agency assigned with these tasks, their institutional role is strictly formalized with clear boundaries defined through legislation.

Within the field of public heritage management, the CAB is defined as an institution of heritage expertise. As a regional representative of the State, they also hold an authorized position. The knowledge of the CAB is formalized through assessments and the granting of permits, which legitimizes certain approaches to the ecclesiastical heritage through the Heritage Act. Although their knowledge can only be applied within the legislative boundaries, it constitutes an authorized discourse on heritage.

The formal framework of the CAB is the point of departure in many of their statements. The CAB respondents frequently returns to their role as representatives of a government agency, and the requirements of the heritage act. The Gävleborg CAB-respondent describes the approach to assessments on

<sup>51</sup> “De antikvariska myndigheterna, RAÄ och länsstyrelserna, har väsentliga funktioner genom att tillhandahålla expertkunskap och att svara för tillämpningen av skyddsbestämmelserna i kulturminneslagen.”

ecclesiastical heritage as: “The legislation does not state that we should consider values in relation to each other, we are supposed to judge if the cultural-historical values are affected.”<sup>52</sup> (Gävleborg CAB-respondent, 2018). The statement clearly defines the heritage legislation as the governing structure of the CAB’s assessments. Additionally, the weight of the cultural-historical values to their operations is emphasized.

Considering the formal and legislative position of the CAB, it resembles Bauman’s (1987) notion of the “legislator”. Although the respondents did not claim to make statements on any universal truths, the knowledge that they represent and express is defined through law and government control. The structure of the Swedish governance model assigns them with an authorized, albeit somewhat restricted role.

The position of the CAB places them at “arms-length” in relation to other actors and stakeholders in the field. The distance to other actors is reflected in their formal role as well as the statements of the CAB respondents. The CAB-respondents in both cases perceives their institutional positions as straightforward, often with reference to legislation. Concerning the application of the legislative approach of the CAB, the 2015 platform on heritage evaluation on behalf of the NHB, provides the following reasoning:

“If different areas of expertise are merged fully or in part, and this is done in a unplanned manner, this will give rise to difficulties to understand which judgements and considerations have served as a basis for decisions concerning decisions on the management of cultural heritage in the long run.”<sup>53</sup> (Génetay & Lindberg 2015:29).

As reflected in the quote, the expert-judgements by the CAB are positioned within the long-term management of cultural heritage. In order for the governance model to be transparent and uphold to legal scrutiny, the assessments need to be firmly grounded in heritage legislation. The authorized position of the CAB provides great responsibilities, while also having firm boundaries. While the CAB has a powerful position within the public management of heritage, their role is somewhat isolated in relation to other actors within, and outside of the field.

<sup>52</sup> “Så lagstiftningen är ju inte formulerad så att vi ska väga värden mot varandra, utan vi ska ju titta på, påverkas de kulturhistoriska värdena?”

<sup>53</sup> “Om flera sakområden helt eller delvis sammanblandas och detta sker på ett oreflekterat sätt, blir det svårt att i förlängningen förklara och förstå vilka bedömningar och avvägningar som legat till grund för beslut kring kulturarvets förvaltning.”

### *A shift to the interpreter*

The legislator does not quite suffice as a model to grasp the extent of the role of the CAB within the governance model of the ecclesiastical heritage. Although the legislative framework provides as strong governing structure for the government heritage agencies, respondents from the CAB and the NHB said that assessments on ecclesiastical heritage has become more flexible over time. According to the respondents, there has been a gradual development since the Church-State split. At present, they state that the CAB is more adaptive to the present needs of the parish and at times allows for physical transformations of churches to accommodate for these needs. The recent Government Communication on Ecclesiastical Heritage suggests that the statements of the heritage agencies in the case studies reflect a general development (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 34).

The NHB presents the approach of the government heritage agencies to the ecclesiastical heritage as: “fostering a living heritage that is protected, used and developed”<sup>54</sup> (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014:12). These objectives are not part of the Swedish Heritage Act, but reflect the general policy objectives and strategies on cultural heritage. Besides legislation, the CAB has to take the approaches presented in heritage policy into consideration. The policy objectives provide a more fluid framework, and suggests approaches to heritage management that are more broadly defined than legislation.

The Cathedral Hill Project demonstrates how the CAB included place-branding and tourism objectives in their approach to heritage. Increasing the accessibility and information to tourists at the site is one of the notions of the project that the CAB encourages. Introducing heritage as a resource in a wider societal context suggest that they incorporate additional objectives besides preservation in the management of the ecclesiastical heritage.

The policy objectives clearly support the role of the CAB as interpreter. The shift to a interpretive approach indicate that the heritage agencies depart from slightly different governing frameworks depending on the context. The somewhat conflicting objectives of the Heritage Act on the one hand, and contemporary heritage policy on the other, cause the CAB to shift between different positions.

<sup>54</sup> “främja ett levande kulturarv som bevaras, används och utvecklas”

### **The regional museum as interpreter and facilitator**

The role of the regional museum in relation to the ecclesiastical heritage has transformed considerably during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although the museum is considered as an important actor in the public heritage field, their position remain uncertain. Recent government policies emphasizes the potential of the regional museum, and encourages them to take on a more active stance concerning the management of the ecclesiastical heritage, and in heritage management in general (Skr. 2018/19:122 p.31-32, Prop. 2016/17:116 p.88). While the policy framework supports a closer engagement with the ecclesiastical heritage, it does not provide tangible advice on how this should be achieved.

The Hamra Project is the only case study that features a regional museum as an active part of the process. Hälsinglands Museum is the initiator of the project, and holds a central role throughout. The museum has a long experience of engaging with the ecclesiastical heritage through different perspectives. Their collections host historical ecclesiastical objects, which are also exhibited permanently in the museum. In addition, they work with a range of activities aimed at schools that focuses on religion and integration, often with a church as a venue (Hälsinglands Museum 2018b).

As the project was initiated, it was positioned as part of the continuous work with the ecclesiastical heritage of Hälsinglands Museum. Their strategies within the project includes the integration of secular and ecclesiastical local heritage in Hamra and the surrounding region. A central notion is the creation of “novel stories”. Exhibitions and cultural events were hosted in Hamra Church and in other venues, where the stories and people of the local community were made visible. The novel stories can be regarded as heritage resources provided by the museum. Cultural events and exhibitions demonstrate how the museum uses some of the more conventional tools at their disposal to engage with the local, and ecclesiastical heritage. The activities hosted by Hälsinglands Museum visualizes the heritage of the region and positions it as a resource for the brand of the village and for local tourism.

The overall approach of the museum is similar to the role of the interpreter. Through the activities of the project, the stories of the local community and by extension – the parish, are emphasized. The museum also integrates the stories in a new context of regional development. As an interpreter, they use their position as a regional museum to promote and legitimize the project.

At an early stage, the museum expressed the ambitions of renewing the role and the responsibilities of the regional museum. In that sense, the Hamra Project functions as an arena where the museum explores new approaches to engage with the ecclesiastical heritage, in addition to the interpretative role. One strategy of the museum is to adopt a coordinating role in relation to other local actors, including the Parish of Ljusnan. In the role of coordinator, the museum would approach local cultural- and tourism actors to include these in a regional tourism network. The purpose of the network is to offer a more cohesive cultural tourism package in the region. Being included in the tourism network is envisioned to benefit the local actors as well as the community of Hamra. The brand of the village of Hamra was to improve, and the cultural actors have stronger marketing opportunities through the network.

The role and responsibilities as a regional tourism coordinator are not traditionally associated with a Swedish regional museum. The approach of Hälsinglands Museum suggest that they are venturing beyond their established activities. Adopting a coordinating role in relation to other actors and local stakeholders positions them close to the role of the facilitator. A central role in the project allows the museum to benefit the community and the regional cultural actors. In addition, the facilitating role is relevant in the context of regional development. A recent NHB report emphasizes the potential of the regional museum to engage in areas beyond the traditional cultural field (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2021:69). Although the project predates the report, it shows how Hälsinglands Museum incorporates contemporary ideas from cultural- and heritage policy in their approach. Rather than being the only responsible party of the project, the museum facilitates the inclusion of the parish and the local community.

To conclude, Hälsinglands Museum adopts the role of the interpreter and the facilitator to different extents within the project. While the interpreter draws closer to the established role of the museum, the facilitator shows a potential direction for an expanded role and range of responsibilities. As heritage- and cultural policy has requested an updated role for the regional museum, the strategy that Hälsinglands Museum adopts can be interpreted as a response.

### **The Church of Sweden – a dual position**

The Church of Sweden holds a unique position in the context of ecclesiastical heritage management. They are not only the owner and manager of a vast

amount of built heritage, but has come to play a central part in public heritage management. While the Church of Sweden is primarily a religious congregation, the shared responsibility between Church and State requires them to have the knowledge and tools to manage and safeguard the ecclesiastical heritage (Ku2000/470/Ka).

Although the Church of Sweden has a formal role within the public management of ecclesiastical heritage, they are first and foremost a religious denomination. According to the Church regulations, the main tasks of the parishes is to: "...celebrate mass, conduct education, diaconical activities and missionary work."<sup>55</sup> (Svenska kyrkan 2021, Chapter 4, 1§). The heritage-based strategies and objectives of the parishes also need to be viewed through this lens.

It has been argued that the shared Church-State responsibility gives the Church of Sweden the properties of a Government agency in practice (Beckman 2017:114). As the Church and State were separated in the year 2000, the ownership and management of the ecclesiastical heritage of the Church of Sweden are among the few formal tasks that remain in relation to the Swedish State. At present, the Church of Sweden is considered by the Government to have the appropriate professional knowledge to be able to fulfil the duties of the Church-State agreement (Skr. 2018/19:122 p. 23).

The formal position within public heritage management positions the Church at the national- and diocese level close to the role as legislator. Naturally, the religious activities are the most prioritized by the Church of Sweden. However, they also need to fulfill their part of the Church-State agreement on ecclesiastical heritage. In that sense, one level of their heritage approach is strictly regulated by the framework of the heritage act.

The heritage officers of the Church of Sweden work mainly at the national- and diocese levels of the Church. One of their central tasks is to decide on the division on heritage funding for the parishes that have applied. The role of the heritage officer is strictly separated from the parishes in this context. While the heritage officers also conduct strategic activities within heritage management, these activities are not regulated and depend on the individual practitioner. Within the Church of Sweden, the diocese heritage officer partly holds a legislative role.

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<sup>55</sup> "...föra gudstjänst, bedriva undervisning samt utöva diakoni och mission."

### *A local facilitator?*

The case studies show how the parishes, despite a certain reluctance towards cultural heritage as a concept, embraces the role as managers of the ecclesiastical heritage. The parish respondents states that their objectives in the projects partly aims to transform how people view the Church of Sweden in contemporary society. By claiming the role as managers, they frame the projects through heritage rather than religion. At the same time, their role is integrated into the history of the Church of Sweden. Through a heritage discourse that is constructed through the focus on the use and intangible values of churches, the parishes aim to obtain a prominent position in civil society.

Isnart & Cerezales (2020) argue that the historical consciousness of the Christian Church is part of a continuous practice and relationship to the past. Through the "religious heritage complex" the authors connect the practices of the Church with the secular notions of caring for the past. Although in a slightly different guise than Isnart & Cerezales, the relation between the present use of the church, and the management and practices of the past is invoked by the parishes. The statements and strategies of the parish reflect a close intertwining of the care of the past with the ecclesiastical heritage. The practices of management are in this sense a component of the intangible aspects of heritage.

In the Hamra project, Hamra Church is used as an asset to create a tangible space for cultural events where Hälsinglands Museum and the local community are present. The collaboration with secular actors gives the parishes the opportunity to claim a role that is less dependent on the explicitly religious function of the Church. The parishes use their access to the built ecclesiastical heritage to create relationships with other heritage actors and the local community. The approach that is demonstrated by the parishes is to a certain extent similar to the facilitator (Smith 2009). As owners of churches, the parishes hold an asset that is considered to be a common cultural heritage to all Swedish citizens. By using their local knowledge and the tangible spaces of the church, the parish can function as a facilitator to gather different stakeholder groups and provide a public space for various activities. In remote and sparsely populated areas of Sweden, the Church of Sweden represents one of the few (semi)-public actors that remain today.

Although they play minor parts in the projects, the role of the heritage officers of the dioceses are essential. While having the interests of the Church in mind, the heritage officers do not have an inherently religious role. The

position of the diocese heritage officers is to a large degree defined through their role in the dissemination of the state funding of the ecclesiastical heritage. As demonstrated in the Cathedral Hill Project, the heritage officer of the Diocese of Strängnäs perceives their position as governed by these responsibilities. In spite of these boundaries, the diocese heritage officers have the potential of adopting a facilitating role. A reoccurring issue identified in the case studies is the different expectations on the level and nature of communication between the parishes and the CABs. As a practitioner, the heritage officer often holds a similar professional background as the heritage officers of the CAB. The similar methods of the professional roles may bridge the institutional differences of the actors. The Cathedral Hill Project shows how the heritage officer had a facilitating position by aiding the parish in the communication with the CAB. In this context, the heritage officer can offer a mediating and facilitating approach.

### **Governing frameworks and shifting boundaries**

The institutional roles of the key actors provide them with different governing frameworks and responsibilities. While the actors have authorized positions within public heritage management, the positions provide certain boundaries that affect communication and strategic decisions. In this section, the responsibilities and capacities of the key actors are described. Their dependence on legislation and heritage policy is covered, as well as the relationships to other actors in the field.

#### *The county administrative board*

In the context of Swedish heritage management, the government heritage agencies have central roles. The Heritage Act provides the CAB with the power of legitimizing certain practices in relation to the ecclesiastical heritage, and to make authorized decisions based on knowledge connecting to heritage legislation. The legislative role provides them with the privilege of making authorized statements on the tangible and intangible past of the Church of Sweden.

However, the position of the CAB comes with the boundaries of having to take an objective and passive role in relation to other actors in the field. A majority of the CAB's resources in relation to the ecclesiastical heritage are at

present allocated to make assessments for permits in accordance to the Heritage Act. Assessing planned projects requires the CAB to be unbiased and adopt a legislative stance towards the parishes. According to the CAB respondents and the Government Communications, the lack of resources leads to a reactive approach rather than a proactive (Skr. 2018/19:122, p. 21-22). Although the CAB has the potential to engage with the ecclesiastical heritage and communicate with parishes as part of their role, the limited resources largely confines them to a legislative position at present.

To the individual heritage officer, the dual position of the CAB may be difficult to navigate within. Connecting back to the somewhat uncertain priorities between the Heritage Act and the policy heritage objectives, there seem to be a lack of institutional capacity within the CAB to engage fully in both given frameworks. Wells & Stiefel (2019b:319) argue that the legislative and political structure of heritage management prevent the institutional roles of heritage agencies to evolve. The institutional capacity may need to be expanded through further resources such as a higher number of staff or updated guidelines. Either way, the practitioners of the CAB are faced with an ambiguous, albeit authorized, position at present.

#### *The regional museum*

In the Hamra Project, the role and strategies of Hälsinglands Museum is perceived as successful by the respondents. Despite the success of the project, the case reflects some of the difficulties of implementing new roles and policy objectives in practice.

The regional museums have an essential role in regards to the management and development of the ecclesiastical heritage according to the Swedish government (Skr. 2018/19:122 p.31-32). The Hamra Project illustrates an attempt to explore the boundaries of the role of the museum. The approach taken by Hälsinglands Museum is a potential direction for regional museums concerning collaboration and engagement in the ecclesiastical heritage.

Despite the support in heritage- and cultural policy, the transformation of established roles and boundaries may not be easily achieved. The museum respondents states that initially, their ambitions of expanding the role of the regional museum were met with little support from other actors within the field. In particular, the collaboration with the Parish of Ljusnan was looked at with skepticism.



The religious associations of the project are described as a potentially sensitive factor by museum respondents. The perception of the parish-collaboration from other actors and partly from the museum internally suggest an unfamiliarity of engaging with the Church in this manner. Venturing outside the established role of the regional museum made the secular-religious boundaries of the project more sensitive. There is a clear assumption made that the museum, as an actor in the public heritage field, need to keep a distance to the more overtly religious aspects of the ecclesiastical heritage. While Swedish heritage legislation downplays the religious factors in ecclesiastical heritage management, these need to be taken into consideration by secular heritage actors in practice.

Although the project succeeds in facilitating the dissemination of the regional heritage, religious and secular, the tourism-network that was envisioned initially is not fully achieved within the boundaries of the project. Although the cultural events arranged within the project are part of the museum's established tools within the public heritage field, the structure for heritage-led regional development strategies are not. The museum strives to gain a role as facilitator of regional development processes, but it is unclear whether they have the proper capacity of doing so.

The facilitating approach of Hälsinglands Museum also includes the creation of heritage "assets" in the local community. However, the actual impact of heritage-centered development has been questioned in previous research. It also remains uncertain whether or not heritage practitioners have the appropriate skills to accommodate for processes of economic development (Burtenshaw & Gould 2019:6-7). While the events arranged in Hamra might empower the local community, the potential economic impact was neither part of the initial plans for the project, nor the final reports. If the facilitating approach is to be developed as a potential role for the regional museum, the structure and expected results need to be clearly defined and followed up on.

The independent role of the regional museum is emphasized in the governance model of ecclesiastical heritage at present. Still, the independence is relative and dependent on the formal structure and roles of the field, as well as cultural policy objectives. To a certain extent, the issues that the regional museum is facing are similar to those of the CAB. Albeit an independent public heritage actor, the freedom of the regional museum adds an ambiguity to their role and responsibilities. Concerning the ecclesiastical heritage in particular, new

approaches to heritage have been implemented in policy, but institutional boundaries prevent the objectives from being fulfilled to their full extent.

#### *The Church of Sweden*

The dual role of the Church as owner and heritage manager differentiates them from the other key actors. The Church of Sweden has an intricate connection to the built ecclesiastical heritage that is discursively expressed in the case studies. In relation to the CAB and the regional museum, the Church has duties that go beyond the management of the ecclesiastical heritage.

The Church of Sweden is an authorized actor in the field of heritage management today. Their position in the governance model of ecclesiastical heritage provides the Church with a prominent role and influence on ecclesiastical heritage practice. During the 20 years that have passed since the Church-State split, they have also gained an increased presence in the government communications on ecclesiastical heritage.

The case studies show that the awareness of heritage management is not limited to the national- or diocese-level of the Church. In both case studies, the parishes adopt active roles in relation to the management and development of the ecclesiastical heritage. The incorporation of heritage in the contemporary activities of the parish demonstrates the intertwinement between the past and present of the Church. Previous research on Christian denominations as heritage managers has shown that they can accommodate for liturgical needs and secular visitors simultaneously (Muskett 2016 & Coleman 2019). However, these results mainly focus on how religious and secular, heritage-based needs can be balanced. In the cases studies, the parishes incorporates heritage in the religious objectives, while also connecting to the overarching objectives of Swedish heritage policy (Prop. 2016/17:116).

As a heritage actor and a religious denomination, the relation to, and collaboration with secular heritage actors is somewhat complicated. The Swedish governance model is founded on the shared responsibility of State and Church. Collaboration and dialogue is a key component for the model to be successful. Although the ecclesiastical heritage is considered as a secular as well as religious heritage, the complexity of the dual role of the Church is not taken into full account. As demonstrated in the case studies, there is an uncertainty regarding the extent of active collaboration between parishes and actors within the public heritage field. The interpretation of the ecclesiastical heritage, and by

extension the Church of Sweden, through a post-Christian lens (Harding 2019) may be a reason for the difficulty of other actors to handle the religious aspects of collaborating with the Church.

## Chapter 10. Policy, governance and institutional roles

The objectives and strategies of contemporary Swedish heritage policy reflect a number of emerging themes. The themes include an increasingly human-centered approach, a higher degree of involvement of stakeholders and a resource-perspective on heritage to mention a few. The policy developments also reflect the paradigms within heritage theory that have evolved during the last decades. This chapter starts by considering the emerging paradigm(s) in Swedish heritage policy in relation to the discourses on heritage and the institutional roles of the thesis. Through their institutional affiliations, the actors have different capacities to engage in the governing frameworks of public heritage management. Coinciding themes and practices are described, and possibilities and obstacles to implement new objectives and strategies identified.

Rose & Miller's "technologies of government" (2010) is used as a framework to understand the functions and boundaries of the institutional roles. Technologies of government include the various policies, programmes, models etc. that are being mobilized in order to carry out government control of populations (Rose & Miller 2010:273). Government control in this case should not be interpreted as an authoritarian measure, but rather as setting up the framework and objectives of the Government's interests. The technologies of government are used to analyze how the actors used their available tools to navigate within sometimes conflicting frameworks and push the boundaries of their institutional roles.

### Governing structures and institutional capacities

The Government Communications on Ecclesiastical Heritage from 2008 to 2019 demonstrates how a human- and resource-centered perspective has entered the government strategies during the 20 years that have passed since the Church-State split. While the communications do not have a formally governing function, they contain the government's recommendations and intended direction for contemporary and future management practices. The

reviewed communications reflect values and strategies in policy which are identified in practice in the cases.

The human-centred approach is characterized by a closer attention to the values and opinions of different stakeholders in the process of identification and management of heritage. A greater acceptance of multiple voices and ideas, and contemporary uses of heritage are emphasized. In recent heritage policy as well as the government communication on ecclesiastical heritage, the “living” aspects of heritage have a central position.

The resource-perspective relates to the contemporary use and valuation of heritage. Seeing heritage as a resource for several means in the present is accentuated in heritage policy and theory. In many cases, the resource-perspective emphasizes the potential of heritage to benefit local communities economically, socially or culturally. As a resource, heritage is integrated into new areas of societal development beyond those traditionally associated with cultural heritage.

International charters and conventions support the themes that are identified in Swedish heritage policy. However, it has been noted that the approach reflected in recent policy sets a broader framework and new demands for practitioners in the heritage field. The role and responsibilities of the heritage “expert” has also been increasingly scrutinized in research and critical heritage theory (i. e. Schofield 2014, Smith 2006). As a whole, the emerging themes in policy reflect a new paradigm on heritage and management which adopts a broad outlook on heritage regarding its selection, use and management.

The approaches to the development and management of ecclesiastical heritage that are identified in the case studies have similarities to the emerging themes in policy. The key actors belong to the public heritage field, and thus need to take new directions in policy into consideration. In the Hamra Project, Hälsinglands Museum and the Parish of Ljusnan use their positions within public heritage management to integrate themes of recent heritage policy in their internal objectives. In the other case study, the Cathedral Hill Project, the interpretations and expectations on the responsibilities of the institutional actors were a cause of tension. Similar directions taken in both cases include a resource-perspective on heritage management and development, and the integration into processes of broad societal development. In the Hamra Project, the regional development of Hamra was a central objective, and in the Cathedral Hill Project the project aimed to regenerate the position of the Church and the city center of Strängnäs. However, the experiences of the key actors indicate

that the implementation of policy objectives is difficult to balance with the institutional boundaries and governing frameworks of the public heritage field.

Alongside legislation, heritage policy and related government recommendations have a governing function on the public heritage actors. Depending on their role, the governing frameworks control the activities and strategies that the actors can engage in to a certain degree. The government agencies have formal responsibilities in relation to legislation, while actors such as the regional museum have less formalized boundaries that control their operations. Some of the institutional differences are reflected in heritage policy and the government communications, as the regional museums are encouraged to use their independent position in the governance model to claim a more central role in relation to ecclesiastical heritage management.

While Swedish heritage policy has integrated themes that connect to contemporary critical theory, the legal and formal structure of the heritage field remain relatively unaltered. The institutional roles have developed during a long period of time, in relation to each other and to the governing structures of legislation. The obstacles that are encountered in the case studies firstly demonstrate the differences in institutional boundaries among the actors, and secondly the conflicting interpretations of policy implementation.

Wells & Stiefel (2019a) address the gap between the critical theories that has emerged within academia, and the policies and practices that heritage practitioners are faced with in the field. In contrast to the gap observed by Wells & Stiefel between theory and policy/practice, the situation in Swedish ecclesiastical heritage management shows that obstacles emerge as policy objectives and strategies are interpreted and implemented by practitioners.

There is a duality in the governing structure of ecclesiastical heritage management which has consequences in practice. The duality is based on the discrepancies between legislation and approaches in policy. Kaufman addresses the problem of practitioners, describing it as: “The lack of institutional capacity to absorb new knowledge.” (2019:309). Kaufman’s description is somewhat drastic, but sheds light the different types of institutional capacity of the actors, which allows for various degrees of integration of new knowledge. The capacity of the CAB is closely tied to their role as government agency, which to a high degree is dependent on the slow changing framework of heritage legislation. By comparison, the regional museums and the parishes of the Church of Sweden have a broad institutional capacity that aids the integration of the rapidly transforming policy objectives.

## Expanding roles from within

The institutional capacity of the public heritage actors can be understood by how they perceive and use the technologies of government at their disposal (Rose & Miller 2010). At present, the public management of ecclesiastical heritage is divided between authorized heritage actors – the government heritage agencies, the regional museums and the Church of Sweden (alongside other actors outside the scope of the thesis). Rather than making radical changes within the organizational structure of public heritage management, the actors use the technologies of government at their disposal to negotiate what constitutes the responsibilities and knowledge of the ecclesiastical heritage expert.

Hälsinglands Museum demonstrate how they use their technologies of government as a regional museum to incorporate the project in a cultural-tourism context. The museum has a certain set of skills and a position within the field of regional heritage and culture, which benefits the other actors of the project. Rather than adopting a radically new approach to adapt to the new context of regional development, using the available technologies of government allows for a gradual transformation of roles from within.

The Church of Sweden also utilizes their position as heritage managers to adopt a more central role in society, going beyond the religious aspects of the congregation. Emphasizing the role as managers provides them with the tools and authority to include notions of ecclesiastical heritage that relate to the themes in recent heritage policy. Due to the Church-State agreement, they can access technologies of government that are not available to many other actors of the heritage field or to other religious congregations.

While remaining within boundaries of the governing structure of ecclesiastical heritage management, the actors find strategies to adapt their roles to the emerging themes in policy. The strategies are affected by, and reflect the different paces of the slowly transforming institutional roles and legislative framework, and the rapidly emerging themes of heritage policy. Although a number of obstacles arose due to the approaches to the somewhat conflicting governing frameworks of legislation and policy, the actors attempt to use their established roles to slightly shift or broaden their focus. The strategies of the key actors show how authorized roles in management can be used to include new approaches to heritage.

## Concluding remarks

In this concluding section, the results are summarized and suggestions given on subjects for further development in practice and research. Lastly, some concluding remarks are made regarding the relevance for the results of the field of public heritage management in Sweden and elsewhere.

The shared management model of the Swedish ecclesiastical heritage is well established today. Government heritage agencies and the Church of Sweden are generally satisfied with the structure, roles and responsibilities that they are assigned through heritage legislation. The knowledge on different professional and institutional roles and the boundaries of legislation and policy is also extensive within the Church and the government agencies.

The results demonstrate that roles, heritage discourses and governing frameworks provide a complex structure when applied in practice. The challenges that practitioners face today are multi-faceted and are identified through the situations and obstacles that occur in practice rather than by observing the organizational frameworks of heritage management.

### Identified obstacles and future development

The implementation of new approaches requires a process of negotiation between the involved parties. While compromises may be needed, the discourses of different institutional actors are also partly coinciding. Maintaining communication during a development process is important to create a mutual understanding between actors. The results reflect possibilities and obstacles which occur in practice as multiple governing frameworks and objectives are merged. Institutional capacities and boundaries create problems that limit dialogue and collaborative processes. The experiences of practitioners show that governing frameworks are interpreted differently depending on the institutional affiliation and heritage discourse of the actor. Different priorities and conceptions of relevant knowledge on heritage affect how actors set up strategies to manage and develop the ecclesiastical heritage.

There are two already existing contexts that present possibilities for more extensive collaboration and understanding. Firstly, a forum for discussion between key actors of the ecclesiastical heritage field, that has not played a major part in the thesis, is the nation-wide network of regional consultation groups. The consultation groups assemble a number of regional heritage actors, although the exact composition has been the subject of some debate. The

participation of regional museums is somewhat questioned as it can be interpreted as an unfair advantage in relation to private practitioners in the field. However, the consultation groups are an arena where the boundaries and capacities of the different actors can be discussed, including the regional museums, which are encouraged through policy to participate in heritage management to a higher degree. The discussions of the consultation groups cover general subjects rather than specific cases. Governing frameworks and institutional responsibilities are relevant themes to raise in a structured way through the groups. The structural and organizational boundaries of the key actors need to be mutually understood in order to maintain dialogue and collaboration.

Secondly, the shared responsibility of State and Church has introduced a new category of practitioners within the heritage field – the heritage officers employed by the dioceses of the Church of Sweden. The results show that the daily operations of the heritage officer are mainly defined by their legislative responsibilities. Beyond the distribution of state heritage funding to the parishes, the role of the heritage officer is not clearly delimited. As their role limits the participation in parish-led development projects, they mainly work with strategic questions connected to the ecclesiastical heritage. However, the heritage officers have the potential to adopt a mediating approach in relation to the communication between parishes and the CAB. The different approaches of these two actors have proved to be an issue when interpreting their mutual perspectives.

The heritage officer has a thorough understanding of the relevant heritage legislation and new directions in policy. In addition, they have a unique insight into the needs and conditions of the Church of Sweden. As a heritage practitioner, they can arguably be interpreted as an integral part of the remaining government responsibilities of the Church. The dual understanding of the diocese heritage officer is central to clarify the institutional boundaries and responsibilities of the Church and the CAB. While a mediating approach is adopted by the diocese heritage officer to some extent at present, it is unclear whether it is established nation-wide as there are no common guidelines for this professional group. Additionally, the diocese heritage officers are lacking a nation-wide forum for dialogue on themes related to the management of ecclesiastical heritage. The knowledge held by this group has the potential to be used more strategically in order to be incorporated in new management approaches.

### **Navigating the field of public heritage management**

In 2014, the Swedish National Heritage Board argued for the ratification of the Faro Convention while also stating that the current organizational structure of the public heritage field was not sufficiently equipped to incorporate the broad societal objectives of the convention (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2014b:68-69). Looking at the results of the thesis, the governing frameworks of public heritage management still reflect the situation outlined by the NHB. Despite this, the resource-centred objectives which the NHB describes as “somewhat naive” in their 2014 report are increasingly incorporated in policy and practice at present.

Swedish heritage legislation has evolved through slow processes during an extended period of time. In relation to heritage policy, the law can be interpreted as static in nature. The framework of heritage policy on the other hand incorporates contemporary developments in theory. Fast-paced changes can be accommodated within policy to a much higher degree than legislation. Actors are thus faced with the challenge to balance the complex frameworks and parallel heritage discourses of legislation and policy. While one framework is pushing for the incorporation of new ideas, the other has a restrictive function.

Pendlebury (2008:221) suggests that the organizational frameworks and policies of institutionalized heritage management may not have to be overturned in order for new approaches to be incorporated in practice. Rather, the institutional practitioners need to expand their methods and actively engage in a broader societal context. The restrictive nature of legislation he claims, can have a regulating function that not only excludes stakeholders in processes of management, but also ensures that their voices are being heard.

The approaches presented by Pendlebury are implemented in practice to a certain degree at present. Institutional actors are increasingly aware of their authorized position and strive to adopt inclusive and broad approaches to heritage management. But as the results of the thesis reflect, obstacles arise due to conflicting objectives of governing frameworks. The supporting structures to explore new management practices are also lacking. While there is no apparent opposition to implement new practices among the public heritage institutions, there are many remaining uncertainties regarding the necessary skills and tools of practitioners. Weijmer (2019) makes similar observations regarding the implementation of participation and inclusion as notions in Swedish heritage management practices. She notes the gap between an

ideological consensus on participation as a central objective, and the actual possibilities of practitioners to include such objectives in practice.

Public heritage management also need to balance government control and regional independence. The decentralized model of governance of Swedish heritage management gives regional actors a relative freedom to draw out strategies and decide on priorities that are adapted to the local context. Not only do the governing frameworks offer different objectives, but the freedom that is provided to certain actors can be restrictive. The balance between control, freedom and guidance is not achieved at present.

Contemporary heritage management contains multiple approaches, values and objectives. The results points to an ambition among practitioners to incorporate multiple views on heritage and management, albeit using different strategies. The motivations of the care of the past varies depending on the context, object and the people involved. From the context of heritage planning Fredholm (2017) addresses the issues that arise in processes of planning as “wicked problems”. Such problems need to be continuously assessed by practitioners as to avoid pre-conceived solutions to complex situations. Allowing processes of heritage management and development to move slowly and include a continuous negotiation of discourses gives beneficial conditions to achieve consensus and find context-dependent solutions.

To conclude, the evolving role of the practitioner has been central to this study. Wells & Stiefel (2019a) shed light on the tendency in critical heritage research of excluding the experiences of practitioners when raising critique on the expert-centred notions of institutional approaches to heritage. They call for an inclusive approach to the study of contemporary heritage management, where practitioners are included as co-creators of research rather than only being an object of study. The results of the thesis demonstrate the slow processes of transforming established roles and frameworks of public heritage management. Including practitioners and stakeholders in the production of research lowers the barriers between research and the implementation of new research in practice.

## Sammanfattning på svenska

Det kyrkliga kulturarvet står i dagsläget inför en rad utmaningar. I Sverige såväl som i ett internationellt perspektiv förändras förutsättningarna för majoritetssamfunden på grund av sekularisering och förändrade religiösa mönster, vilket för med sig färre medlemmar och besökare. Den negativa utvecklingen för kyrkan medför konsekvenser för det kyrkliga kulturarvet, vilket redan syns i många europeiska länder där allt fler kyrkor avställs, säljs eller rivs. Färre medlemmar och besök leder ofta till en försämrad ekonomisk situation. Samtidigt värderas det kyrkliga kulturarvet högt i många sammanhang och anses representera sekulära såväl som religiösa värden. Kulturarvssektorn och de kristna samfunden har båda reagerat på den negativa utvecklingen för det kyrkliga kulturarvet. Initiativ och samarbeten för att förnya förvaltningen och användningen av kyrkobyggnader förekommer både i Sverige och andra länder idag.

Samtidigt har en bredare kulturarvsdiskurs fått ett allt större genomslag inom både teori och kulturarvspolicy. Kulturarv har till högre grad börjat värderas som en resurs i en rad olika sammanhang. Ett mer demokratiskt perspektiv på identifiering och värdering, där fler röster får utrymme i kulturarvsförvaltningen, har också introducerats. Med de nya perspektiven har också expertrollen och ansvarsfördelningen inom kulturmiljövården börjat ifrågasättas. Vilken roll bör den professionella kulturmiljövården inta när allt fler värden och grupper inkluderas i kulturarvsskapande och förvaltning?

Förvaltningen av det kyrkliga kulturarvet i Sverige berör en rad olika aktörer inom det offentliga kulturarvsfältet, från myndigheter och museum till Svenska kyrkan. Utifrån sina institutionella förutsättningar och ansvarsområden har aktörerna olika prioriteringar och strategier för att förvalta och utveckla det kyrkliga kulturarvet. De förändrade omständigheterna för Svenska kyrkan och kulturmiljövården positionerar aktörerna i ett komplext sammanhang, där mål, strategier och värden måste balanseras och förhandlas mot förändrade strukturer och förutsättningar.

Avhandlingens syfte är att beskriva och analysera hur diskurser om det kyrkliga kulturarvet konstrueras av offentliga kulturarvsaktörer och Svenska kyrkan. Dessutom syftar avhandlingen till att förstå hur föreställningar om

institutionella roller och ansvarsfördelning samspelar med varandra och med olika kulturarvsdiskurser. Avhandlingen utgår från två fallstudier av samtida utvecklingsprojekt med koppling till det kyrkliga kulturarvet, där aktörer från den offentliga kulturmiljövården och Svenska kyrkan möts. Den första fallstudien rör projekt Domkyrkoberget i Strängnäs. Projektet drivs av Strängnäs Domkyrkoförsamling med Aspö och syftar till att utveckla verksamheten och de fysiska förutsättningar i och runt Strängnäs domkyrka. En central strategi är att skapa en ny multifunktionsbyggnad på Domkyrkoberget, samt förändra underutnyttjade ytor i domkyrkan. Den andra fallstudien gäller Hälsinglands Museums samarbete med Ljusnans pastorat i ett regionalt utvecklingsprojekt. Projektet var förlagt till byn Hamra i Ljusdals kommun, där Hamra kyrka fick en central roll. Under namnet ”Natur-och kulturvården som grund för turistisk utveckling” syftade projektet till att skapa regionala nätverk inom kulturturism och skapa ”nya berättelser” utifrån lokalt kulturarv.

Materialet har analyserats med utgångspunkt i synkron diskursanalys. Ashworth (2011) och Janssen et al. (2017) menar att olika perspektiv på kulturarv inte har avlöst varandra kronologiskt, utan snarare överlappar varandra i samtida kulturmiljövård. Med hjälp av Baumans (1987) teori om intellektuellas roller och uppgifter i samhället har nyckelaktörernas institutionella positioner identifierats och analyserats. Parallella kulturarvsdiskurser har identifierats utifrån utsagor och handlingar hos aktörerna i fallstudierna.

Resultaten pekar på både likheter och skillnader i kulturarvsdiskurserna hos aktörerna. De parallella diskurserna stöds av kulturmiljölagstiftning och kulturarvspolicy, men avspeglar samtidigt svårigheterna att uppnå målen inom båda dessa ramverk. Interaktionen mellan diskurser och aktörer visar på konflikter såväl som samförstånd. Konflikterna rör främst balansen mellan materiella och immateriella värden samt religiösa och sekulära värden. Samförstånd kan däremot nås gällandes det kyrkliga kulturarvets betydelse för lokalsamhället och som en resurs för turism och regional utveckling.

Nyckelaktörerna i avhandlingen kan även kopplas till olika institutionella roller. Rollerna påverkar aktörernas möjligheter att tillgodogöra sig olika typer av mål och strategier från kulturarvspolicy. Till viss del har rollerna också inverkan på möjligheterna till samverkan mellan aktörer inom fältet. Då samtida kulturarvsteori ifrågasätter kulturarvsexpertisens roll och auktoritet alltmer, behövs en större förståelse för de institutionella strukturer som styr aktörernas handlingsutrymme. I nuläget har aktörerna inom det offentliga kulturmiljöfältet

vissa strukturella begränsningar, men också möjligheter att utforska nya roller. De förändringar som samtida kulturarvsteori uppmanar till har inte gett upphov till en radikal omställning av den offentliga kulturmiljövården. Däremot pågår stegvisa förhandlingar och interna förändringsprocesser om de institutionella rollernas gränsdragningar och ansvar.

Dessa förändringsprocesser är inte specifikt knutna till det kyrkliga kulturarvet. Snarare avspeglar processerna de möjligheter och begränsningar som kulturarvspolicy, lagstiftning och institutionella strukturer ger upphov till. Kulturmiljölagen är som styrande ramverk statiskt, vilket medför en institutionell tröghet när aktörer försöker implementera nya strategier och mål. Förändringar på policynivå avspeglar till större utsträckning samtida tendenser i kulturarvsteori och har en snabbare utvecklingstakt. I mötet med aktörer kan de två ramverken upplevas som svåra att förena. Svårigheterna att balansera interna mål och motsägelsefulla styrande ramverk kan antas vara gemensamma för den offentliga kulturmiljövården. För att skapa större förståelse för de olika parternas ståndpunkter och utmaningar krävs att utövarna inom kulturmiljövården får en aktiv roll i sökandet efter lösningar på de problem som uppstår inom fältet idag.

## Abbreviations

AHD: Authorized Heritage Discourse

CAB: County Administration Board

HM: Hälsinglands Museum

NHB: National Heritage Board

NCG: National Consultation Group

NPB: National Property Board

RCG: Regional Consultation Group



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## Appendix 1

### Interview protocol 1 – project respondents (Hälsinglands Museum, Parish of Ljusnan and Parish of Strängnäs Aspö)

(All questions have been translated from Swedish by the author)

- Can you tell me about your professional role and primary tasks?
- What is your involvement/role in the project?
- What are the most important measures and activities that have been taken so far? Why?
- How would you describe the role of [respondent's institution/employer] in the project?
- What actors are you collaborating with on management of the ecclesiastical heritage?
- Is there a potential of extended use of the Church? What use and actors would be possible?
- What are the pros and cons of collaborating with different actors from the Church and the heritage field?
- Do you think that the results of the project will affect future ecclesiastical heritage management? How?
- What do you think is the greatest challenge for the management of the ecclesiastical heritage today?

- Are there any particular measures or tools that you would need to meet these challenges?
- What particular challenges, if any, do you see in the church of the project?
- How would you describe cultural heritage?
- What does the ecclesiastical heritage mean to you? How would you describe it?
- Is there anything else you think I should know?

### Interview protocol 2 – CAB-respondents

- Can you tell me about your professional role and primary tasks?
- What are the greatest challenges of working with the ecclesiastical heritage at present?
- How would you describe the contact and collaboration with the Church of Sweden?
- What professional heritage actors do you collaborate with on questions related to the ecclesiastical heritage?
- To what degree do you think that contemporary regeneration projects will affect the management of the ecclesiastical heritage?
- Are there any additional tools, methods or collaboration that you think would improve the way you work with heritage in general, and ecclesiastical heritage in particular?

- In what way do you think that heritage officers will work with the ecclesiastical heritage in the future?
- How would you describe cultural heritage?
- What does the ecclesiastical heritage mean to you? How would you describe it?
- Is there anything else you think I should know?

### Interview protocol 3 – Diocese heritage-respondents

- Can you tell me about your professional role and primary tasks?
- What are the greatest challenges of working with the ecclesiastical heritage at present?
- How did you come into contact with the Hamra Project/Cathedral Hill Project?
- To what degree do you think that contemporary regeneration projects will affect the management of the ecclesiastical heritage?
- What professional heritage actors do you collaborate with on questions related to the ecclesiastical heritage?
- Are there any additional tools, methods or collaboration that you think would improve the way you work with heritage in general, and ecclesiastical heritage in particular?
- In what way do you think that the Church of Sweden will engage in cultural heritage in the future?
- How would you describe cultural heritage?

- What does the ecclesiastical heritage mean to you? How would you describe it?
- Is there anything else you think I should know?

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