

## Threatened culture surveyed in the Nordic region - Summary

The Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis, Kulturanalys, has carried out a survey regarding the level of exposure to threats, violence and harassment among artists and authors. The results of the survey indicate that every third author and artist has confirmed that they at some time have been exposed to threats, harassment, theft, violence or damage related to their work. And every sixth respondent has been exposed to the above at least once during the past 12 months.

The purpose of the survey was to gain knowledge of the scope of such incidents, whether special groups are particularly exposed and the consequences of exposure. The survey was carried out in cooperation with KRO/KIF<sup>2</sup> and the Swedish Writers' Union (SFF), and a questionnaire was distributed to all of the members of these associations, numbering just over 6 000. In total, 2 926 persons (46 percent) responded to the questionnaire.

The level and type of exposure differs between artists and authors. It is more common for authors to suffer threats and harassment. 35 percent of the respondent authors have suffered threats and harassment during their professional career, and 19 percent during the past 12 months. On the other hand, it is more common for artists to experience damage and theft. 25 percent of the respondent artists have been exposed to damage or theft and 7 percent during the past 12 months. There does not appear to be any difference in exposure to violence among artists and authors. In total, just under five percent have been exposed at any time to violence when acting as an artist/author, and two percent have experienced a violent incident during the past 12 months.

A smaller group has much higher exposure and has suffered a higher number of incidents. A third of those exposed to threat and harassment have suffered 90 percent of the incidents. The most common type of incident is threats via social media and other digital channels. Authors who are mentioned in the media, who are active on social media and who claim they are publicly known figures run the highest risk of exposure. Among authors, there is also a clear link between ambitions for social criticism and an increased exposure to threats, harassment, violence, theft and damage. This link between exposure in the media and ambitions for social criticism and the risk of exposure to threats etc. is not prevalent among artists.

The survey also indicates that artists and authors with a foreign background are more exposed, particularly to violence. In terms of gender, the differences in exposure are relatively minor with regard to the number of women affected

<sup>2</sup> The Swedish Artists' National Organization and the Association of Swedish Craftsmen and Industrial Designers. As of year-end 2015, these two organisations have merged to form one association.

compared to the number of men in the two associations. However, the Swedish Artists' National Organization has a much higher ratio of female members to male members (70/30), implying that the number of female artists exposed is clearly higher than the number of male artists exposed. In the Swedish Writers' Union, there is a more equal ratio of men to women.

The perpetrators are often unknown, but many of the artists and authors who have suffered exposure still feel that they have a perception of the characteristics of the perpetrators and their motives. The attacks against authors are often stated as targeting their opinions, most often based on political beliefs. Artists are more commonly exposed to attacks by a "generally angry and dissatisfied person" when it comes to damage and theft. In response to the follow-up question about what type of political association the perpetrators are perceived to belong to, and their perceived political motives, the alternative for "right-wing extremist/racist" was much more prevalent than other alternatives for both artists and authors.

The majority of those exposed (around 80 percent) have not reported the incidents described in the survey to the police. The tendency to report incidents to the police is much higher when it comes to violence, damage and theft than incidents involving threats and harassment. In total, the most common reason stated for not reporting the incident to the police was that no result was expected from such a report. Among the respondents who had reported incidents to the police, their experiences varied – the survey contains statements indicating both good and not so good treatment. Given that the majority of artists and authors lack the support and protection provided to an employee by means of the employer's responsibility for the working environment, there is a requirement for support. Most of the respondents request organised support via colleagues.

Threats, violence and harassment have consequences. Artists and authors are mostly exposed to violence and less to theft and damage. Around a third of those who are worried and have suffered exposure state that they have withdrawn from the public domain to a certain extent and have considered abandoning commissions or themes due to fear or exposure. When questioned whether individual artistic freedom of expression is restricted, around one sixth of those who feel exposed and worried agree completely that their freedom is restricted. At the same time, many state that such incidents have resulted in a stronger commitment and will to express themselves artistically.