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## Producing and sustaining field-configuring events: the role of prizes in a Swedish Book Fair

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### ABSTRACT

We approach field-configuring events (FCEs) as gatherings that engender formative moments in the trajectory of technologies, professions, or industries. Previous research has focused on the field-level consequences of FCEs, implying we still know little about how these events are produced and sustained. Our aim in this paper is concomitantly to theorize the particular role of prizes as elements that help produce and sustain FCEs. Drawing on a qualitative case study of awards allocated at the 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair, we show how prize givers arduously attempt to raise issues and celebrate accomplishments in ways that are packaged for dissemination through media outlets. And these awards generate occasional visibility for prize givers and – by extension – for event organizers. Our paper contributes by highlighting how FCEs and prizes co-construct each other, and how such co-construction regularly unfolds in relation to a media logic that favors simplification and standardization.

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Fields; events; prizes; awards; media

### Introduction: configuring events that configure fields

Despite increasing digitalization and growing polarization, there still seems to exist a quasi-perpetual need for physical gatherings in contemporary societies. Fairs, contests, festivals, and tradeshow are thus examples of gatherings that continue burgeoning. Such gatherings have been labeled field-configuring events (FCEs) in organization theory, and they are understood as particularly formative moments for the trajectory of technologies, professions, or industries (cf. Lampel 2011; Lampel and Meyer 2008; Meyer, Gaba, and Colwell 2005). By bringing various actors together within delimited physical settings and during circumscribed temporal periods, FCEs generate unique opportunities for information exchange that supports the emergence and maintenance of collective norms, values, and discourses among individuals and organizations engaged in related activities throughout social spaces known as fields (Schüßler and Sydow 2015; Schüßler, Grabher, and Müller-Seitz 2015).

Previous research has mainly focused on the field-level consequences of FCEs. While one stream of studies has centered on FCEs as formative events holding the capacity to alter and stabilize the trajectory of fields (Anand and Jones 2008; Anand and Watson 2004; Hardy and Maguire 2010; Nissilä 2015), another stream has concentrated on interactions, negotiations, and contestations that unfold during these events to examine the micro-dynamics underlying macro-changes throughout fields (Grabher and Thiel 2015; Gross and Zilber 2020; Zilber 2011). This previous research is certainly valuable, but – due to its focus on consequences – we still know little about how FCEs are

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actually produced, and how some of them are sustained. Such knowledge is clearly needed because the ways that FCEs are organized may explicate their long-term viability as events with large-scale implications in fields.

In this paper, we deviate from a focus on the consequences of FCEs, and instead join a nascent stream of studies that centers on the production and sustenance of FCEs (Leca, Rüling, and Puthod 2015; Mair and Hehenberger 2014; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011). Our particular aim is to theorize the function of prizes as elements in the organizing of FCEs. We thus pose the following research questions: How are FCEs organized? And – more specifically than that – what is the role of prizes for the production and sustenance of FCEs?

The relevance of these questions is not only theoretical. They also speak to the increasing media and political orientation of FCEs, and to the implications this orientation has on the organization of FCEs (Pallas and Raviola 2022). Mediatization and politicization are particularly important phenomena to understand in connection to cultural FCEs and prizes for at least two reasons. First, such FCEs can be seen not only as events to exchange cultural products, but also as media and political events in their own right. Organizations with clear mediatic and political affiliation are regularly active partners in – and sometimes even core organizers of – cultural fairs and festivals, with prizes that function as tools to express goals and agendas (Mirowski 2020). Second, the transformation of contemporary media and political landscapes influences how cultural fairs and festivals are created and marketized. Their creation and marketization, by extension, influences how they are attended and enacted. The links between cultural events and political and media developments are not new altogether. However, as media and politics (often jointly) shape debates and actions in public spaces, cultural fairs and festivals are increasingly being situated at the center of heated discussions about broader issues than the actual cultural products (Quinn et al. 2020).

To address the aim and questions guiding our paper, we approach the production and sustenance of FCEs with insights from communication scholarship that emphasizes how the organizing of events may be driven by efforts to generate wide dissemination through various media channels (Couldry 2012; Dayan and Katz 1994). We draw on such insights to examine how prizes were embedded in the production and sustenance of the 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair. This fair can clearly be classified as an FCE: arranged since 1985, it is Scandinavia's largest literary event, and, during four days in 2018, its organizers attracted almost 90,000 visitors and 700 exhibitors; hosted around 800 speakers and writers; and offered over 300 seminars. Numbers like these have not only transformed the Fair into Scandinavia's largest literary event, but they have also turned it into a highly mediatized FCE: the 2018 edition was attended by close to 1000 accredited journalists, who generated almost 7000 dedicated articles and TV/radio spots (Bokmässan 2018).

We develop a qualitative case study through interviews with prize givers, observations at award ceremonies, and documents connected to organizations allocating six serial and recurring prizes at the Fair. The findings from our study allow us to propose two contributions that advance extant literature on FCEs. In one contribution, we highlight the ways that FCEs and prizes co-construct each other. Awards have become taken-for-granted elements in the organizing of FCEs, but FCEs have also become taken-for-granted events among prize givers. In another contribution, we underscore how FCEs and prizes co-construct each other in ways that follow stylistic and dramaturgical aspects attuned to the routines and preferences of media organizations. Our two contributions, by extension, suggest that FCEs, prizes, and media organizations tend to be closely associated in the production and sustenance of events that can configure entire fields.

Our paper is arranged in the following manner. After this introduction, we develop the function of prizes for the production and sustenance of FCEs that unfold in a mediatized context. Then, we flesh out our methods to study prizes at the Fair as a relevant example of the ways that FCEs are produced and sustained. In a subsequent step, we present our findings that show how the six focal prizes were organized into the Fair, ultimately helping construct it, but also being constructed by it. Next, we

synthesize our findings as three organizing properties that make prizes flexible and adaptable building blocks for the production and sustenance of FCEs. Finally, we elaborate our contributions to previous research, and provide our suggestions for future research on FCEs, prizes, and the organizing of formative field moments.

### **Theory: organizing field-configuring events through mediatized prizes**

In this paper, we understand FCEs as ‘temporary social organizations ... that encapsulate and shape the development of professions, technologies, markets, and industries’ (Lampel and Meyer 2008, 1026). A wide range of physical gatherings have been approached as FCEs, including book fairs (Moeran 2010), music awards (Anand and Watson 2004), sports contests (Grabher and Thiel 2015), climate summits (Hardy and Maguire 2010), cinema festivals (Leca, Rüling, and Puthod 2015; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011; Rüling and Strandgaard Pedersen 2010), and technology conferences and tradeshows (Gross and Zilber 2020; Power and Jansson 2008; Raviola et al. 2019; Zilber 2011). Across these gatherings, FCEs are constituted as formative moments through which actors collectively configure the dominant norms, values, and discourses within fields.

### ***Places, ceremonies, and the viability of events***

We begin by noting that book fairs, music awards, sports contests, climate summits, cinema festivals, and technology conference and tradeshows all tend to unfold as serial and periodically recurring events, even if their frequency often displays considerable variation. Such seriality and periodicity typically requires extensive organizing before, between, and after events (Leca, Rüling, and Puthod 2015; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011).

Gross and Zilber (2020) suggest this more or less continuous organizing encompasses a number of efforts, often encompassing aspects connected to places and ceremonies. Events conducted in attractive areas, cities, or regions not only draw field actors for the intrinsic characteristics of certain places, but also for the networking possibilities these places typically provide as social hubs (Mazza and Strandgaard Pedersen 2017; Power and Jansson 2008; Rüling and Strandgaard Pedersen 2010). These places offer fruitful contexts within which field issues can be promptly raised and collectively handled by various actors that gather for serial and periodically recurring events (Schüßler and Sydow 2015). Perhaps most importantly for our paper, however, the more or less continuous organizing of FCEs also includes salient efforts associated with creating events that feature a continuous flow of different activities, including not only lectures, seminars, and workshops, but also prize allocations and similar types of ceremonies. Such ceremonies are organized to gather field actors for rituals during which worthy accomplishments are celebrated (Anand and Jones 2008; Anand and Watson 2004; Toraldo and Islam 2019). Prize allocations and similar types of ceremonies attempt to capture and enthrall actual and potential event participants through tokens and symbols as well as through speeches and demeanors that can engender memorable experiences during dynamic and bustling events in spatially and temporally compressed settings (Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011).

A nascent stream of studies (Leca, Rüling, and Puthod 2015; Mair and Hehenberger 2014; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011) indicates that the more or less continuous organizational efforts behind FCEs may largely be grounded in a production and sustenance perspective. That is, the seriality and periodicity of many FCEs suggests they are not solely – or maybe not even primarily – organized to generate discrete, radical, one-time field-configuring changes. Many FCEs instead appear to be organized as serial events where field actors can periodically gather to update one another about current issues and recent accomplishments. This speaks to the organizing of FCEs as recurring events that seek long-term viability to generate gradual field-configuring changes (cf. Toraldo and Islam 2019). One important way in which organizers strive to build the long-term viability of FCEs is by engaging media as a central component of these events.

### ***Mediatized events and prizes***

Communication scholarship has emphasized how media organizations can support the viability of events by capturing and covering places, ceremonies, and other aspects of physical gatherings through traditional channels as well as digital platforms (Couldry 2012; Couldry and Hepp 2016). However, media not only supports the viability of these events. Media organizations also rely on many events for the creation of content that can be broadcasted. Previous research on political elections (Strömbäck and Esser 2014), transnational summits (Painter, Kristiansen, and Schäfer 2018), and corporate press releases (Grünberg and Pallas 2013) depicts how such events are structured and disseminated following the style and dramaturgy of a media logic that favors simplification and standardization for mass and rapid broadcasting (Altheide and Snow 1979).

FCEs as serial and periodically recurring events that feature a constant flow of different activities fit well with the fast-paced routines and preferences of traditional and digital media organizations (Czarniawska 2011; Raviola and Norbäck 2013; Van Hout and Jacobs 2010). Among the various activities unfolding during FCEs, media seems to have found a particular affinity for ceremonies, such as prize allocations (cf. Pallas, Wedlin, and Grünberg 2016). Prizes can be understood as tools through which actors are evaluated on the basis of accomplishments that other actors deem to be worthy of approval and acclaim within fields (Best 2008; 2011; Edlund, Pallas, and Wedlin 2019). But prizes can, in addition, be approached as elements of FCEs that are influenced by media routines and preferences. Media organizations, in this sense, simplify and standardize the accomplishments that are being or have been evaluated for prizes so as to make them relevant and accessible across a broad range of audiences (Pallas, Wedlin, and Grünberg 2016). In competing for the limited attention of audiences, media tends to translate and package prizes along the lines of its own logic. Incorporating mediatized prizes into the organizing of FCEs thus involves formulating and portraying these prizes as parts of general phenomena that can engage a wide spectrum of audiences (Edlund, Pallas, and Wedlin 2019; Godart, Seong, and Phillips 2020).

The stylistic and dramaturgical aspects that envelope certain mediatized prizes ultimately make them appear newsworthy in their own right. Such prizes are structured and disseminated with the creation of media content as an explicit goal, and their newsworthiness may almost be disconnected from what accomplishments are being celebrated, and how these accomplishments are being or have been evaluated (Cottle 2006). This strive for content is perhaps only reinforced by the fact that many prizes are launched by or in collaboration with media organizations themselves (Pallas, Wedlin, and Grünberg 2016). Prizes as self-generated sources of media content can be found throughout different fields – such as sports, science, culture, or business – where significant resources are devoted by media to launch and cover its own prizes (English 2005; Frey and Gallus 2016). The Economist, for instance, allocates annual innovation awards; the Associated Press gives more than a dozen sports prizes each year; and the French Press Association gives its annual Globe de Cristal awards to acknowledge excellence in culture. This extensive strive to launch and cover prizes can be understood as cultural commodification designed for mass broadcasting and rapid consumption. Such broadcasting and consumption is further facilitated by prize givers that also seek to garner publicity for their awards and associated ceremonies (Pallas, Wedlin, and Grünberg 2016).

This general concatenation of FCEs, prize givers, and media organizations indicates that awards have become integral elements of fairs, contests, festivals, and tradeshowes. To date, however, we possess few concrete insights into how prizes are embedded in the organizing of FCEs. Such insights would seem central to augmenting our understanding of the ways that FCEs are produced and sustained in fields.

### **Methods: studying mediatized prizes at the Gothenburg Book Fair**

We approach our questions concerning the role of prizes in producing and sustaining FCEs through a qualitative case study of the Gothenburg Book Fair. This event can – like we mentioned earlier – clearly be classified as an FCE, and it is especially fitting for our case study because the Fair has been arranged

on a serial and periodically recurring basis since 1985. We suggest this seriality and periodicity partly relies on prizes considering how both event organizers and Swedish literary field actors tend to regard awards as taken-for-granted elements of the Fair. With more than 30 prizes currently being allocated at the Fair (Bokmässan 2018), we approach them as core to its production and sustenance.

### Data collection

To collect empirical material, we selected six literary awards representing a balanced breadth in terms of different prize givers, rewards, and principles. Despite these differences, our six prizes are also bound together by having been allocated for nine or more consecutive years leading up to 2018. Such consecutiveness is an important aspect when studying the function of prizes in producing and sustaining FCEs. Table 1 contains further details about our selected prizes.

Our methods draw inspiration from other qualitative studies of FCEs, such as Moeran's (2010) work on the Berlin book fair; Hardy and Maguire's (2010) research on the Stockholm climate summit; and various queries on cinema festivals (Leca, Rüling, and Puthod 2015; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011; Rüling and Strandgaard Pedersen 2010). Studying the Fair to understand how prizes are embedded in its organizing comes with challenges, and they primarily encompass the density and intensity of overlapping and intertwined activities that run in parallel during this spatially and temporally compressed event. Attempting to overcome these challenges, our first and second author spent the entire 2018 Fair immersed on-site. Using *in situ* observations and interviews, and complementing them with *ex situ* documents, we sought to study various actors present at the Fair, and their motives for participating in various activities. Our data collection centered on the six selected prizes, and we gathered empirical material through observations at ceremonies, interviews with representatives from award givers, and documents containing insights into prize rewards and principles. In Table 2, we provide an overview of our data.

We use the observation and interview data to identify how our six focal prizes relate to various actors and activities at the Fair. And the document data offers us background perspectives on the

**Table 1.** Six prizes selected for case study of the 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair.

Prizes	Prize givers	Prize rewards	Prize principles
The Bloodhound (Swe. Spårhunden)	The Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction (Swe. Svenska deckarakademin)	Certificate and figurine	'The Bloodhound has been allocated since 2009 for commendable efforts in writing children and adolescent detective stories' (Deckarakademin 2018)
Peter Pan's Silver Stars (Swe. Peter Pans Silverstjärnor)	Book and Library (Swe. Bok och Bibliotek), and the International Board on Books for Young People	Diploma and trip to the Gothenburg Book Fair	'The prize will go to a translated book for children or adolescents that has distinct literary qualities' (IBBY 2018)
Cultural Journal of the Year (Swe. Årets kulturtidskrift)	The Association for Sweden's Cultural Journals (Swe. Föreningen för Sveriges kulturtidskrifter)	€3500 and artwork	'The aim is to show the breadth and quality that is found among Swedish cultural journals' (FSK 2018)
Book of the Year (Swe. Årets bok)	Bonniers' Book Clubs (Swe. Bonniers bokklubbar)	€2600 and figurine	'To celebrate the book, together with the Swedish people, was our ambition when we created the prize' (Bonniers 2018)
P.O. Enquist's Prize (Swe. PO Enquists pris)	Book and Library (Swe. Bok och Bibliotek), and Norstedts Publishing (Swe. Norstedts förlag)	€5000	'The prize shall go to a young author on his or her way out in Europe' (Norstedts 2018)
Radio Sweden's Short Story Prize (Swe. Sveriges Radios Novellpris)	Radio Sweden (Swe. Sveriges radio)	€2200 and figurine	'The prize was launched 2002 because the recital of literary texts, and especially that of short stories, fits so well for radio' (SR 2018)

**Table 2.** Data collected for case study of the 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair.

Prizes	Observations (hour/s)	Interviews (instance/s)	Documents (texts)	Sources (years)
The Bloodhound	The Bloodhound prize allocation (1) –	Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction board chair (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction newsletters, annual reports, and website screenshots (15)</li> <li>Swedish media articles (37)</li> <li>Gothenburg Book Fair programs (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations (2018)</li> <li>Interviews (2018)</li> <li>Documents (2016–2019)</li> </ul>
Peter Pan's Silver Stars	Peter Pan's Silver Stars prize allocation (1) –	International Board on Books for Young People Swedish branch founder (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Board on Books for Young People newsletters, annual reports, and website screenshots (16)</li> <li>Gothenburg Book Fair programs (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations (2018)</li> <li>Interviews (2018)</li> <li>Documents (2016–2019)</li> </ul>
Cultural Journal of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Journal of the Year nominee presentation (4)</li> <li>Cultural Journal of the Year prize allocation (2)</li> </ul>	Association for Sweden's Cultural Journals board chairs (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association for Sweden's Cultural Journal newsletters, annual reports, and website screenshots (23)</li> <li>Swedish media articles (39)</li> <li>Gothenburg Book Fair programs (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations (2018)</li> <li>Interviews (2018)</li> <li>Documents (2016–2019)</li> </ul>
Book of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book of the Year prize allocation (2)</li> <li>Bonnier Publishing mingle (4)</li> </ul>	Bonnier Publishing chief officer (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bonnier Publishing annual reports and website screenshots (12)</li> <li>Swedish media articles (96)</li> <li>Gothenburg Book Fair programs (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations (2018)</li> <li>Interviews (2018)</li> <li>Documents (2016–2019)</li> </ul>
P.O. Enquist's Prize	P.O. Enquist's Prize allocation (2)	Norstedts Publishing chief officer (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norstedts Publishing annual reports and website screenshots (10)</li> <li>Swedish media articles (55)</li> <li>Gothenburg Book Fair programs (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations (2018)</li> <li>Interviews (2018)</li> <li>Documents (2016–2019)</li> </ul>
Radio Sweden's Short Story Prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio Sweden's Short Story Prize allocation (2)</li> <li>Talk show before and after Radio Sweden's Short Story Prize allocation (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio Sweden talk show host (1)</li> <li>Radio Sweden talk show producer and coordinator (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swedish Radio website screenshots (9)</li> <li>Swedish media articles (144)</li> <li>Gothenburg Book Fair programs (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations (2018)</li> <li>Interviews (2018)</li> <li>Documents (2016–2019)</li> </ul>
Total	22 observation hours	8 interview instances	474 document texts	2016–2019

six prizes as well as information on their relevance for the Swedish literary field, their incorporation into the Fair, and their coverage in media.

### Data analysis

Our first analysis step was to convert all observation notes into narratives, and all interview recordings into transcripts. Then, we coded our document, interview, and observation data through an

abductive coding procedure that moved between theoretical and empirical material. We arranged our resulting codes along the lines of two general categories: the ‘field visibility’ and the ‘media visibility’ of our selected prizes. Field visibility encompasses how prizes are organized into the structure of FCEs in attempts at garnering visibility within particular fields. Throughout our data analysis, we developed specific codes to examine field visibility in terms of how prize givers motivate their participation at the Fair with justifications that suggest a desire to (a) mobilize and (b) direct the attention of actors within the Swedish literary field toward certain issues. Moreover, media visibility includes how prizes are organized into the structure of FCEs as well as into the logic of media organizations in efforts to garner visibility beyond particular fields. As such, throughout our continued analysis, we also developed specific codes to examine media visibility, and they were based on how prize givers motivate their participation at the Fair with justifications that indicate a striving to (a) disseminate works and (b) increase sales among actors beyond the Swedish literary field. Table 3 contains examples quotes from our codes.

In the final analysis step, we positioned our general categories and specific codes within three temporal horizons: ‘the years’, ‘the four days’, and ‘the award ceremonies’. These three horizons illustrate how several Swedish literary prize givers continuously seek to organize their awards in relation to the Fair. But this illustration also shows how event organizers concomitantly attempt to accommodate prize givers by offering appropriate infrastructure for award ceremonies at the Fair. Such interactions between prize givers and event organizers are part of core processes that help produce and sustain the Fair as a serial and periodically recurring event.

**Table 3.** Example quotes for case study of the 2018 Gothenburg Book Fair.

General categories	Specific codes	Data excerpts
Field visibility as justification for organizing prizes in relation to field-configuring events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prizes as tools through which to mobilize actors within particular fields</li> <li>Prizes as tools through which to seek attention within particular fields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘My father was a wizard when it comes to lobbying ... He thought, “an award is a way to highlight an issue ...”. In Norway, there were a lot of women fiction writers. In Sweden, we had almost none, and we wanted to bring female writers together ... And then publishing of crime novels written by women exploded’ (Interview – Prize giver 1)</li> <li>‘There are a lot of great literature awards in Sweden. The Nobel Prize, the August Prize, and so on. But there was no “people’s award” ... I said that every other industry has one. Sport has one; music also has one; film has one too. But literature doesn’t have one, which was fascinating’ (Interview – Prize giver 4)</li> </ul>
Media visibility as justification for organizing prizes in relation to field-configuring events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prizes as tools through which to popularize works beyond particular fields</li> <li>Prizes as tools through which to generate sales beyond particular fields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Well, it’s true that the audience is big when a crime fiction awarded is presented. But it also has to do with [the fact that] she [the winner] is from Gothenburg, and she had a lot of friends here ... I don’t know how famous she is in the rest of the country. But she is also a person who is easy to recognize [beyond the literary field]’ (Interview – Prize giver 1)</li> <li>‘Despite the fierce competition, the chief officer feels that the award provides many other spin-offs. Not least in the form of media coverage, mentions at various seminars, and, of course, sales figures’ (Observation – Prize allocation 5)</li> </ul>



### Findings: allocating prizes through the Gothenburg Book Fair

Gothenburg is Sweden's second-largest city, and, since the 1980s, it has attempted to transition from an industrial town to a cultural hub. Launched in 1986, the Gothenburg Book Fair can be seen as an important part of the city's transition. The Fair takes place every year in a vast – yet centrally located – congress center marking one end of what is popularly known as 'the Gothenburg event walk' for its concentration of cinemas, museums, restaurants, sports arenas, and amusement parks (Wedel 2021).

Although competition for visitors is fierce among event organizers in Gothenburg, the Fair has steadily grown since its inception. Indeed, for the past two decades or so, the Fair has been filled to the brim with attendees. Several distinctive audiences attend the Fair. Its first two days are reserved for professional audiences. These audiences include exhibitors, speakers, and writers that represent core actors within the Swedish literary field: NGOs, libraries, universities, literary associations, cultural institutions, governmental agencies, and small and large publishing houses and media organizations (Bokmässan 2018). In this sense, the Fair provides a concrete instantiation and manifestation of actors within the field. After two days reserved for professional audiences, the next two days are dedicated to lay audiences that represent actors beyond the Swedish literary field. When the Fair opens to these latter audiences, the number of attendees markedly increases. The extensive presence of journalists – which create content from various booths and studios situated throughout the congress center – underscore the heavily mediatized features that run across the four Fair days.

As the Fair unfolds, it follows a dense and intense program that encompasses a constant flow of different activities, including panels, seminars, lectures, political talks, author interviews, book presentations, and also prize ceremonies. Most activities take place on or around the multiple stages that provide physical infrastructure for the Fair. Prominent exhibitors – such as large publishing houses and media organizations – often rent and command their own stages to avoid struggling for a highly limited number of slots on the main Fair stages. This infrastructure provides a backbone for the myriad, continuous, and – not seldom – parallel activities that unfold during the four Fair days. Our six focal prizes are situated in the midst of these hustling and bustling activities that constitute the Fair.

### Two visibility types of prizes at the Gothenburg Book Fair

There are a host of alleged motives for field actors to participate in the Fair, such as learning from and networking with other actors. Our data, however, suggest the overarching motives revolve around concerns for two types of visibility that field actors vigorously seek as they participate in the Fair. We label these field visibility and media visibility, and our analysis shows that actors view prizes as key tools with which to pursue the two visibility types. As we hinted at earlier, field visibility builds on organizational efforts to gain visibility within the Swedish literary field, while media visibility relies on efforts to garner visibility beyond this very same field. Although different in reach, both types of visibility initially build on 'some kind of interest group that wants to raise their issue by giving somebody an award' (Interview – Prize giver 1), as indicated by a representative from the Bloodhound prize. Actors thus seek field and media visibility by organizing prize allocations, and, in doing so, these actors also help produce and sustain the Fair.

When it comes to field visibility, our interviews regularly underscore the potential of mobilizing actors through prizes as a justification for devising, promoting, and allocating awards – among other activities – at the Fair. Mobilization as justification suggests prizes can rally and inspire actors working in literary niches that supposedly receive little – if any – recognition within the Swedish literary field. A representative from the International Board on Books for Young People – which co-awards the Peter Pan's Silver Stars prize during the Fair – succinctly justifies how

The [Peter Pan's Silver Stars] prize mobilizes and motivates those that work with translating books for children, rather than being a way of generating attention that would increase the selling figures. (Interview – Prize giver 2)

Although mobilization of field actors appears important, our interviewees commonly emphasize attention as the primary justification to devise, promote, and allocate prizes at the Fair. This attention could perhaps indirectly increase ‘selling figures’ – as suggested above. Renewed attention would, however, first and foremost highlight novel literary niches that lack the legitimacy they supposedly deserve within the field. To take an example, the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction claimed its Bloodhound prize derives from attempts to direct the attention of actors toward the value of crime fiction as a new literary genre within the field. In a similar example, the Association for Sweden’s Cultural Journals launched its Cultural Journal of the Year prize as part of efforts to steer the attention of field actors toward a new group of journals. A representative from this latter award claims that

This [allocating a prize at the Fair] is quite simply a great way to direct the spotlight toward the value of cultural journals as a new group ... I cannot think of any other way that is as effective as this. (Interview – Prize giver 3)

We interpret this firm belief in the efficacy of prizes allocated during the Fair as a salient dimension that transforms awards into tools through which attention can be sought from actors within the Swedish literary field.

While our interviews demonstrate the role of prizes for field visibility, these very same interviews also show that actors at the Fair are unsure about the function of awards for media visibility. Prizes allocated during the Fair seem to be noticed by actors within the Swedish literary field. But these prizes seldom appear to be noticed by non-field actors that would primarily be reached through media organizations. This generates a certain degree of frustration among field actors, especially considering the efforts involved in allocating awards. Most of our interviewees stress how their prizes only garner limited media visibility during the Fair, and we could corroborate this while observing various award ceremonies. Non-field actors are largely absent from these ceremonies. A representative from Norstedts Publishing – which allocated P.O. Enquist’s Prize – mentions that awards can generate certain media visibility among actors beyond the field when winners are revealed in various ceremonies before the Fair. However, we could observe that Norstedts Publishing’s P.O. Enquist’s Prize attracts little media visibility during the Fair (Observation – Prize allocation 5). The struggles faced by Norstedts Publishing – one of Sweden’s largest publishing houses – point to the general challenges faced by prizes at the Fair. In line with this limited visibility, Peter Pan’s Silver Stars uses ‘a mailing list to the press’ (Interview – Prize giver 2) that generates scant responses from media organizations. These organizations do not seem to regard translated books for children as particularly newsworthy when compared with myriad other activities unfolding during the Fair. As mentioned by a representative for the Bloodhound prize: ‘we are not spoiled [with media visibility] for this award’ (Interview – Prize giver 1).

There are exceptions to this limited media visibility, however. A few of our interviewees suggest that their prizes actually manage to garner considerable media visibility during the Fair. In terms of such visibility, the potential to popularize the works of certain field actors among various actors situated beyond the Swedish literary field is stressed as a justification for devising, promoting, and allocating awards at the Fair. Bonniers – another large Swedish publishing house – has early on been driven by a desire to disseminate particular literary works among actors beyond the field that may normally not discover and access these works. A representative for the Bonniers’ Book Clubs Book of the Year prize thus emphasizes ‘there was no people’s award’ (Interview – Prize giver 4) at the Fair that could support the dissemination of works with popular appeal. This Bonniers award is – as such – intended to spread the literary works of specific field actors among general non-field actors:

We want more attention for books that might not get the Nobel Prize in literature ... But they are still fantastic stories that appeal to a broad readership, and those books have not received so much attention earlier in terms of awards ... I don’t think it [the Book of the Year prize] will achieve so much more than perhaps getting them [popular literature books] a little more recognition ... I think that would be fantastic. (Interview – Prize giver 4)

The strive for popularization through media visibility is particularly noticeable in how Bonniers' Book Clubs deploys a proactive approach to craft credible stories and nurture public relations around its Book of the Year prize. This approach is detailed below:

- Interviewee: 'But we have also worked very actively in ... all our channels, using social media and so on ... We have also worked well with public relations, and managed to get in the news [on national TV] ... Their cultural panel talked about it [the Book of the Year prize] when our nominations were released'.
- Interviewer: 'Was it difficult?'
- Interviewee: 'It is a matter of getting them [media organizations] to understand that this is a fantastic award, and it is not just a funny thing that we did. Then, we build a story as the nominations are being released, and we held a press conference [during the Fair] focusing on the prize'. (Interview – Prize giver 4)

This striving for media visibility among certain prize givers is – by extension – associated with a perception that popularization can increase book sales. Here, media visibility is regarded by award givers as a way to unlock the marketability of works with popular appeal that – for various reasons – have not been discovered or made accessible to actors beyond the Swedish literary field yet. Prizes that achieve such visibility largely become marketing tools.

Regardless of whether prizes manage to garner media visibility, our interviewees perceive they cannot miss the Fair. Being there can potentially generate visibility, even as competition for it is fierce among prize givers that seek to reach actors beyond the Swedish literary field. This mere potential seems to provide sufficient justification for the arduous efforts that are expended on courting media organizations during the Fair.

### ***Three temporal horizons of prizes at the Gothenburg Book Fair***

Various actors pursue field and media visibility by allocating prizes at the Fair. This pursuit leads actors to organize their prizes in ways that are as synced as possible with the Fair program. The organizing of prizes is thus tightly intertwined with how the Fair is organized as a dense and intense event. Our analysis shows that such intertwining follows three distinct – yet interdependent – temporal horizons through which the Fair is organized: the years; the four days; and the award ceremonies. Each of these horizons features different organizational efforts: those that span between yearly events; those that center on the four Fair days; and those that revolve around the actual prize ceremonies. Such organizing horizons – by extension – help produce and sustain the Fair as a serial and periodically recurring event.

*The years.* In order to allocate prizes at the Fair, several preparations are required. These preparations typically include booking stages for prize ceremonies; finding and coordinating prize juries and moderators; and identifying prize nominees and notifying prize winners. Our interviewees assert that such preparations must begin early; in fact, prize givers often commence preparing for the next Fair long before the current one is over. This suggests any preparations for prize allocations at the Fair are part of ongoing, year-to-year organizational efforts.

Although many prize givers engage in similar efforts, their scale is determined by resource disposal. A crucial determinant for these efforts is the availability of funding to work proactively with prizes. To take an example, the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction raises funding by charging fees from publishing houses that submit books for consideration to the Bloodhound award. Such fees finance certain costs connected to juries, moderators, and ceremonies. But this funding does not cover all costs. In compensating for the lack of available funding, representatives from the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction ultimately resort to paying certain costs through personal means. Juries and moderators are, moreover, regularly engaged on a pro bono basis. The importance of pro bono engagements is underscored by a representative from the Association for Sweden's Cultural Journals:

As an association, it [allocating a prize] is quite cheap anyway ... The jury works voluntarily, and we usually offer a dinner as a 'thank you', but there have never been problems to get people to join in ... It seems as if people think this [allocating of the awards] is important to do. (Interview – Prize giver 3)

Our interviews suggest many prize givers draw on moral arguments to substitute funding for devotion: 'you have to be passionate about this [allocating awards]' (Interview – Prize giver 1). But our interviews also indicate awards with connections to large publishing houses and media organizations command a completely different funding situation than many other prizes. Consider, for example, how a representative for the Book of the Year prize describes the funding at hand for proactive work with this award:

Interviewee: 'I had a small team that did it [worked with the Book of the Year prize] ... The team had a site with the required technology to handle votes. ... Then, we worked with a designer for the award ceremony ... It needed to be planned'.

Interviewer: 'It sure wasn't free?'

Interviewee: 'Well, it costs money'. (Interview – Prize giver 4)

Nonetheless, over and above funding availability, prize givers strategically strive to link their awards with issues of relevance within and beyond the Swedish literary field. Such issues generate the potential for prizes to garner both field and media visibility. Prizes may thus be organized along the lines of specific Fair themes that are launched as catchy and marketable slogans (e.g. media, respect, and visualization in connection to the 2018 event). These themes are primarily framed as relevant for actors within the field. But prizes can also be organized along the lines of more general issues than specific Fair themes. Such issues may include declining readership, increasing digitalization, or growing polarization that are portrayed as relevant for actors within as well as beyond the Swedish literary field. These portrayals open up for a potentially broad audience. An example comes from our observations at a ceremony for the Cultural Journal of the Year prize. During this ceremony, a representative from the Association for Sweden's Cultural Journals skillfully connected its award to several cultural and societal challenges brought about by new media platforms, readership patterns, and digitalization developments (Observation – Prize allocation 3). Such challenges not only connect to the Fair, but also to the Association for Sweden's Cultural Journals. Similarly, a representative from the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction sees its Bloodhound prize as a reflection of how crime fiction engages with contemporary societal challenges:

Right now, it [crime fiction] is about Daesh and terror ... Crime novels are really good at reflecting our age. They really pick up a lot, and there is also social criticism ... That is needed today. (Interview – Prize giver 1)

Prizes organized on the basis of general issues can often be planned well in advance because such issues typically transcend any particular Fair. The transcendence of these issues also helps position prize givers as significant actors within and beyond the Swedish literary field. As the specific themes for any given Fair are presented rather late, the ongoing, year-to-year efforts through which many prizes are organized risk becoming quite detached from these Fair themes. Such efforts often render prizes that follow a generic format for award allocations to transcend any particular Fair. This transcendence secures the continuity of prizes, and also the continuity of award ceremonies as instances in the flow of activities that unfold during the Fair. Both prize givers and event organizers benefit from such continuity. Awards allocated at the Fair connect actors and resources in ways that are not only interesting for prize givers seeking field and media visibility. Such connections – by extension – also provide core conditions that make the Fair possible. Prize givers and event organizers thus hold mutual interests in upholding awards that contribute to producing and sustaining the Fair as a serial and periodically recurring event. Such interests are core to the co-construction of prize and events.

*The four days.* An immense concentration of actors and resources takes place during the four Fair days. This concentration facilitates the allocation of prizes by providing both physical infrastructure (e.g. access to stages with light and sound systems) and social infrastructure (e.g. presence of

moderators, audiences, nominees, and winners). Our interviewees describe that prize allocations during the Fair are economical as well as alluring because most field actors will be concentrated in a delimited space during a circumscribed period. For a representative from the Book of the Year prize, it is 'self-evident' (Interview – Prize giver 4) to allocate this award at Scandinavia's largest literary event:

There is no better occasion [than the Fair]. The authors are here during the week, and we did not have to work for them to come ... Everyone else concerned with books and reading in Sweden is here, so it felt natural that it [allocating the Book of the Year Prize] should happen here at the Fair. (Interview – Prize giver 4)

Other prize givers see few options:

We have thoughts of doing the [Peter Pan's Silver Star] prize differently ... Maybe we could try to have the ceremony outside the context of the Fair ... But we are not sure. It's possible that next year you will find us here again because it's easy and convenient. We know how to do it [allocate the prize] here, instead of finding new ways. (Interview – Prize giver 2)

Such thoughts are difficult to enact as prize givers do not see what optional events offer a potential similar to the Fair in terms of concentrating actors and resources

To maximize the potential of connecting with these actors and resources, prize givers strive to integrate their awards into the Fair program. This program follows a script with an explicit rationale to make the four Fair days resemble one another. The panels, seminars, lectures, political talks, author interviews, and book presentations are not randomly distributed. And neither are prize ceremonies. Our documents show that most ceremonies are scheduled so as to avoid overlaps with potentially competing activities on and around the main Fair stages. Again, there are exceptions, and large publishing houses – such as Norstedts Publishing – tend to schedule their prize ceremonies on one of the main stages with little – if any – regard for parallel activities.

However, in general, our analysis suggests the organizing and executing of prize ceremonies is significantly influenced by how the main Fair stages – and the activities unfolding on and around these stages – are scheduled. The stages function as drivers that fuel prize ceremonies (i.e. event organizers demand a constant flow of activities), and also as barriers that structure such ceremonies (i.e. award givers attempt to avoid overlaps with potentially competing activities). In this latter function, the main stages circumscribe and delimit where, when, and how prizes can be allocated across the four Fair days. Even large publishing houses and media organizations that rent and command their own stages regularly appear to be influenced by how the main Fair stages are scheduled. For instance, the Bonniers' Book Clubs have their own stage where the Book of the Year prize is allocated, among other activities. Radio Sweden also has its own stage where the Short Story Prize is evaluated as well as allocated. And we could quite clearly observe how these two prizes unfold as activities when there are no potentially competing activities on the main stages.

*The award ceremonies.* Prize givers not only organize their awards along the lines of Fair themes and stages. Prize givers also help make the four Fair days resemble one another by organizing ceremonies that resemble one another. There are – as such – few differences among the ways that prize givers interpret and perform their award ceremonies. They all appear to reflect a shared frame for how prize ceremonies should be conducted. Our observations of ceremonies at the Fair indicate that actual differences are primarily found in material conditions, and rarely in fundamental notions. That is, although material conditions – such as available funding – differ, they do not seem to generate any remarkable differences in fundamental notions about how prize ceremonies should be organized. Most – if not all – prize ceremonies present awards as important elements that accurately identify and rightfully celebrate accomplishments worthy of approval and acclaim. Among prize givers, there appear to be few doubts about the importance of awards.

Available funding, nonetheless, affects how prize givers approach audiences during prize ceremonies. Small prize givers – such as the International Board on Books for Young People, which allocates Peter Pan's Silver Stars – attempt to cultivate auras of inclusion and community among

audiences and winners during award ceremonies. We also noticed this throughout our observations from the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction's Bloodhound prize ceremony:

The Bloodhound ceremony begins immediately after Peter Pan's Silver Stars, so the audience is basically the same. The level of planning and staging is also similar, as it projects an image of considerable improvisation and informality. (Observation – Prize allocation 1)

Large prize givers – such as Bonniers' Book Clubs, which allocated the Book of the Year award – offer much more elaborate ceremonies than small givers. These large prize givers use well-known moderators, professional photographers, and light and sound technicians, creating substantial distinctions between audiences and winners. Driven by a desire for media visibility, large prize givers attempt to infuse their award ceremonies with stylistic and dramaturgical aspects that highlight the mediatized dimensions of such ceremonies. The dramaturgical aspects become particularly evident when a representative from Bonniers' Book Clubs describes how winners are presented in ways that attempt to generate suspense:

It's a pretty important part of the [Book of the Year] award that those who win don't know about it until we announce it on the stage ... All the nominees are actually there, and they should wait, be a little nervous, and wonder who will finally win. (Interview – Prize giver 4)

Nordstedts Publishing also draws on similar dramaturgical aspects to engender suspense on stage. After winners are announced, however, Nordstedts Publishing's P.O. Enquist's Prize ceremony switches from suspense to calmness. The stylistic aspects of award ceremonies organized by large prize givers can here be seen in how Nordstedts Publishing attempts to emulate a TV studio. Our observations from the P.O. Enquist's Prize ceremony highlight that

After some acknowledgments, a rather long conversation unfolds between the winner and a journalist, both sitting on the stage in a talk show-like setting with several sofas ... Before the ceremony concludes, the winner is greeted by top managers from Nordstedts Publishing. (Observation – Prize allocation 5)

Large prize givers tend to end their award ceremonies with photo opportunities. This underscores the mediatized dimensions of such ceremonies, as large prize givers seem deeply concerned with reaching audiences that are not physically present.

### **Synthesis: approaching prizes as building blocks of field-configuring events**

Our analysis shows that prize givers allocate awards at the Gothenburg Book Fair in order to garner field and media visibility. Attempting to garner these two types of visibility, prize givers regularly organize their awards along three temporal horizons that largely sync with how the Fair itself is organized. More generally, in organizing awards along the lines of FCEs – such as the Fair – it may appear as if prize givers should face severe restrictions and limitations. Although those restrictions and limitations do not seem irrelevant, we argue that prizes can still provide flexible and adaptable building blocks through which FCEs may be produced and sustained. Our following synthesis will demonstrate that the building block-like aspects of prizes can largely be derived from three particular properties. These properties include the scalability, dockability, and connectivity of prizes.

#### **Scalability**

The six awards we studied display considerable variation in terms of resource disposal that determines the extent to which prize givers can expend proactive work through ongoing, year-to-year organizational efforts. While variation in terms of resource disposal demonstrates that large prize givers may have much funding available for their awards, and that small prize givers may have little funding available for their respective awards, scalability focuses on how prizes can easily be expanded or contracted, without losing relevance as integral elements of FCEs.

When it comes to prizes, scalability primarily deals with the format as well as the content of awards. In terms of format, our analysis demonstrates that prize ceremonies may reflect a shared frame for how such ceremonies should be conducted (i.e. their fundamental notions), at the same time as they can display substantial differences when placed on a continuum ranging between simplicity and elaborateness (i.e. their material conditions). These differences suggest prizes can be allocated through simple ceremonies that attempt to create informal and improvised settings (e.g. the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction Bloodhound award), or through elaborate ceremonies that seek to provide stylistic and dramaturgic experiences (e.g. the Bonniers' Book Clubs Book of the Year award). As for content, our analysis showed that prizes can be allocated to push specific organization-level concerns, including book sales (e.g. the Book of the Year award being allocated to literary works with popular appeal that Bonniers' Book Clubs sells), or to advance general field-level issues, encompassing the legitimacy of niches (e.g. the Bloodhound award being allocated by the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction to shed light on crime fiction as new genre that engages with contemporary societal challenges). Besides format and content, scalability also deals with the ways that organizational efforts in connection to prizes can be ramped up or slowed down. This holds true across our three temporal horizons. That is, we note how prize givers scale up and scale down their efforts as awards are organized along the lines of the years, the four days, and the award ceremonies (e.g. the Bonniers' Book Clubs devoting low-paced, year-round, field-spanning efforts to gather nominees with popular appeal, before expending high-paced, stage-, program-, and ceremony-focused efforts during the four Fair days).

### **Dockability**

Due to scalability, prizes can be inserted with relative smoothness into the constant flow of different activities at FCEs. This is, for example, clear in our analysis of how prize givers manage to incorporate their awards and ceremonies into the dense and intense Fair program, which unfolds on and around a few main stages. The organizational efforts expended by prize givers means their awards and ceremonies can be inserted into the Fair program regardless of whether these givers are housed on the main stages (e.g. Norstedts Publishing with its P.O. Enquist's Prize), or around the main stages (e.g. the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction with its Bloodhound award). Prize givers housed on their own stages certainly manage to incorporate into the Fair program as well (e.g. Radio Sweden with its Short Story Prize, whose entire evaluation and allocation procedure is inserted into said program). We suggest these organizational efforts highlight the dockability of prizes that may be variously integrated as central or ancillary activities during FCEs.

As is also clear in our analysis, the dockability of awards becomes further exemplified by how givers attempt to align prizes with the routines and preferences of media organizations. Prize givers compete with other field actors for media visibility at FCEs, and awards provide numerous occasions to capture such visibility through dockages. For instance, in approaching the Fair, prize givers strive to capture media visibility by docking their awards through organizational efforts that span between yearly events; that center on the four Fair days; and that revolve around the actual award ceremonies. Although givers hint at the limited media visibility of awards allocated during the Fair, prizes hold the potential to be aligned with a media logic that favors simplification and standardization (cf. Altheide and Snow 1979). This potential becomes evident when we consider how media coverage of large events, such as FCEs, often follows well-structured routines and preferences that – by extension – make them fairly predictable (Couldry, Hepp, and Krotz 2009). Awards and ceremonies can – with the support of media organizations – be organized as activities that become newsworthy in their own right (Cottle 2006; Pallas, Wedlin, and Grünberg 2016). These activities, nonetheless, seem to require considerable funding before they can garner media visibility. Witness, for example, the substantial funding presumably required by Bonniers' Book Clubs when conducting proactive work toward media organizations in order to garner visibility for the Book of the Year prize. Again, resource disposal seems crucial.



### Connectivity

Closely associated with the dockability of prizes is their potential to connect various actors by raising issues and identifying accomplishments. While dockability underscores the integration of prizes into FCEs, connectivity describes the ways that prizes shape relationships among actors within and beyond fields.

Our analysis demonstrates how prize ceremonies during the Fair aspire to become meeting points where different actors can discuss issues and celebrate accomplishments that generate broad interest. Take, for instance, the Book of the Year prize again, and how it is organized by the Bonniers' Book Clubs to feature elaborate ceremonies that may engender interest for popular works within and beyond the Swedish literary field. Ceremonies like these offer occasions for large prize givers to gather multiple field actors – including moderators, audiences, nominees, and winners – through activities that can become central to producing and sustaining FCEs (Anand and Jones 2008; Anand and Watson 2004; Toraldo and Islam 2019). This range of participants is organized along the lines of stylistic and dramaturgical aspects – such as when winners are announced, and how prizes are allocated – that certain givers exploit to package their awards for media visibility. But our analysis also hinted at the potential for small prize givers to offer ceremonies that nurture inclusion, community, and – by extension – a sense of belonging among actors that may enhance the connectivity of awards (Best 2008; 2011). These latter ceremonies are clearly exemplified by the Swedish Academy of Crime Fiction's Bloodhound award. The momentum of prizes to provide meeting points should only grow further with awards that succeed in shaping relationships among actors over expanded temporal horizons, such as between events and throughout entire FCEs.

In sum, the scalability, dockability, and connectivity of prizes suggests they may provide flexible and adaptable building blocks that can absorb and resolve several organizational challenges in the production and sustenance of FCEs.

### Discussion: co-constructing events and prizes within and beyond fields

Our aim in this paper has been to theorize the role of prizes as elements for the production and sustenance of FCEs. In approaching our aim, we drew on literature addressing the organizing of FCEs, before we developed a qualitative case study with data pertaining to six prizes allocated at Sweden's largest literary event. Our findings demonstrate that prize givers strive to garner field visibility and media visibility for their issues, and we show how givers regularly pursue these two types of visibility by allocating awards during FCEs. But our findings also highlight how prize givers do more than allocating awards at FCEs. We demonstrate that prize givers organize their awards into the very structure of FCEs. This organizing is constantly directed at FCEs, and it unfolds across various temporal horizons. Our findings thus show that FCEs and prizes co-construct each other, and that the scalability, dockability, and connectivity of awards may be central to such co-construction.

We propose our findings can make two contributions to the literature on FCEs. Our first contribution concerns how prizes have become a central aspect in the production and sustenance of FCEs. Past literature (Anand and Jones 2008; Anand and Watson 2004; English 2005) has shown how prizes allocated during FCEs can generate extensive material and symbolic consequences for winners, nominees, and audiences within and beyond fields. We took this literature into consideration, but our particular focus was on the ways that prizes may help produce and sustain FCEs. The nascent literature on the production and sustenance of FCEs (Leca, Rüling, and Puthod 2015; Mair and Hehenberger 2014; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011) was helpful here, albeit we sought to develop it by emphasizing how prizes not only can help produce and sustain FCEs, but how FCEs also may help produce and sustain awards. This is core to the ways that FCEs and prizes co-construct each other. Our analysis supports the notion that prizes have almost become taken-for-granted elements of FCEs, and that these events can be bolstered by



awards through which different actors may gather for discussions of issues and celebrations of accomplishments (cf. Toraldo and Islam 2019). But our analysis also supports the converse notion that FCEs have almost become taken-for-granted events, and that these can be events during which prize givers assume they should allocate their awards. And FCEs could certainly be regarded as relevant occasions for prize givers to allocate their awards. Our findings demonstrate how the allocation of awards during these events can confer substantial visibility on prize givers among actors within fields.

Our second contribution concerns how FCEs and prizes co-construct each other in ways that follow stylistic and dramaturgical aspects attuned to the routines and preferences of media organizations. FCEs rely on participants to engage in activities that, during events, can be presented and packaged as parts of general and important phenomena (Cottle 2006). Such activities may be provided by prize givers that organize awards and ceremonies along the lines of a media logic (cf. Altheide and Snow 1979). The scalability, dockability, and connectivity of prizes suggests they can be used at FCEs as flexible and adaptable building blocks to generate newsworthy content for media organizations. At FCEs, prizes can be expanded or contracted depending on resource disposal; integrated as central or ancillary parts depending on event programming; and allocated through simple or elaborate ceremonies depending on target audience. Elaborate prize ceremonies that create suspense through stylized and dramatized announcements and allocations may perhaps hold particular potential to attract media organizations. That said, prize givers also rely on FCEs to provide proper physical infrastructure through which newsworthy award ceremonies can be organized. Again, the scalability, dockability, and connectivity of prizes indicates they constitute flexible and adaptable building blocks that may be organized in relation to various stages, schedules, and other types of physical infrastructure. This flexibility and adaptability ensures prizes can be continuously transformed into news by media organizations that follow the stages at and schedules of FCEs. Nonetheless, despite considerable efforts to align with a media logic, our findings indicate that most prize givers only garnered limited media visibility by allocating awards during FCEs. Such limited visibility did not seem to discourage prize givers, however. Most prize givers appeared to believe that media visibility could be achieved by allocating awards during FCEs. By extension, the reliance of FCEs on prizes, and the reliance of prizes on FCEs, shares the commonality that both FCEs and prizes regularly attempt to align with the preferences and routines of media organizations, over and above any resulting visibility. FCEs and prizes thus co-construct each other, and – to do so – they partly become co-reliant on media organizations.

As any research, our paper features limitations. These limitations, however, present fruitful avenues for future research. We highlight two avenues that seem particularly fruitful. One of these avenues would consist of conducting longitudinal studies to explicitly examine how prizes help produce and sustain FCEs over time. We showed that prize givers sought to organize their awards in relation to the Gothenburg Book Fair through efforts associated with three temporal horizons. Although these three horizons varied in terms of temporal distance/proximity to the Fair, each of those horizons featured organizational efforts directed at a single edition of an otherwise serial and periodically recurring event. Future research could thus follow how prize givers seek to organize their awards into the structures of FCEs across multiple editions of such events. An explicitly longitudinal approach like this would further expand our understanding of how FCEs are produced and sustained over time. Another fruitful avenue for future research would consist of conducting comparative studies to analyze how prizes help produce and sustain various types of FCEs, such as summits, contests, festivals, tradeshow, and conferences. We examined how prizes supported the production and sustenance of a book fair in the Swedish literary field. But how do prizes affect the production and sustenance of other FCEs than book fairs? What similarities and differences can be found in the function of prizes among various types of FCEs? Comparative studies like these would augment our understanding of the role played by prizes during physical gatherings that generate wide-ranging consequences for actors within and beyond their fields.

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