

RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

**Performing Arts and the City**  
Dutch municipal cultural policy in the  
Brave New World of *evidence-based policy*

**Proefschrift**

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## Preface

This research project was prompted by my experience as a city functionary for cultural policy with the Municipality of Groningen. Being the largest city in the northern part of the Netherlands the city has known an extended history of cultural production and consumption of various art forms, not in the least the performing arts. Since 1988, the city has developed a cultural-policy cycle in which the cultural sector in the city is evaluated integrally once every four years. In theory, the subsidies for cultural institutions are granted for a four-year period, allowing scope for long-term planning by the institutions. Once every four years, the city government can re-evaluate both the objectives of their cultural policy and the performance of the institutions themselves, and subsequently decide to continue or discontinue a particular subsidy. This presupposes an efficient method of evaluating the contribution of the cultural institutions to city objectives. This type of approach is of even greater importance in view of the fact that the policy documents of the city have shown a broadening of the city's cultural-policy objectives. In 1988, artistic quality was the central feature of the subsidy evaluations. In later years, the contribution to economic development of the city, the city image, and preventing or alleviating social exclusion have become explicit aims of the cultural policy.

In theory, cultural institutions should adapt to the changes in policy objectives. In practice, the institutions – and who can blame them for that – are primarily concerned with their own continuity and are only sporadically willing to support new objectives by adopting new activities which are then added to the existing repertoire of cultural activities in the city. The question concerning the way in which the 'regular' activities of cultural institutions contribute to policy goals that are frequently regarded as being external to the cultural sector itself is rarely answered. And where this type of claim is made, it usually comes in imprecise terms, which make it too elusive for thorough policy evaluation. The argument usually takes the following form: artistic activities contribute to the development of individuals in the city, therefore if there are artistic activities, the city's population will undergo development. The implicit assumption is that the higher the artistic quality of the activities, the greater the chance of development. Thus, cultural quality is once again made the central focus of cultural policy.

It is my opinion that cultural policy is not about generating as much cultural quality as possible. It is about the contribution that cultural activities in the city make to the city as a whole. Therefore we should have some cognizant account of how the arts contribute to a city's development, or the development of its inhabitants. On the one hand I agree with those who argue that it is unfair to assign objectives to cultural institutions which they cannot possibly meet. On the other hand, if the defenders of autonomous artistic quality look

to the government to provide public funds to attain this quality, they should be prepared to offer a satisfactory explanation of why this is important to society.

This brings me to the second reason for setting up the research project. In my experience as an official for cultural policy, I have witnessed a tendency to objectify government policy. In recent years the relationship between government, professional institutions and citizens has been reinvented. The neo-liberal policies of smaller and efficient government have led to a situation where governmental bodies see themselves as agents who 'buy' certain services from professional institutions and distribute them to their citizens. These citizens demand value for money. Although the privatization of the provision of services may have been successful in many cases, such as in the telecommunications industry, it remains to be seen whether or not this development has been salutary within the cultural sector. Obviously, the freedom of private initiatives in implementing cultural policies is crucial, as is their autonomous development. However, these developments also have led to an orientation of policy towards a certain accountability with respect to the effects that have been generated. For the cultural policy, this means that referring to the artistic quality that has been generated (and evaluated by specialists in independent advisory boards) is no longer enough. An account of the societal effects this quality has given (or will give) rise to is also needed.

In Dutch city politics, this tendency has been reinforced by the introduction of duality in local administration. Up to 2002, the board of mayor and alderman was part of the city council and voted on its own proposals to the city council. Since 2002 this has no longer been the case, and the board of mayor and aldermen has received greater executive responsibilities while the controlling instruments of the city council have been strengthened, thus promoting political debate on the evaluation of policies. Therefore the political importance of policy evaluation has dramatically increased. In several cases, including the city of Groningen, these changes have led to a reorganization of the city administrative bodies, with the introduction of specific departments for producing policy evaluation in order to cater efficiently to the politician's need for data on performance. The implicit assumption in staffing such departments is that youth policy or policies directed towards the elderly can be evaluated in the same way, as long as the indicators for evaluation have been chosen. This may well be the case, but it is my view that cultural-policy evaluation implies a thorough knowledge of the effects of cultural quality in and on society. Because of the fact that, in financial terms, cultural policy is usually a very small department when compared to education and health policy, this specific knowledge is not available in such dedicated policy-evaluation departments. This means that, in the future, impossible standards for cultural policy are likely to be generated, which may harm the cultural sector. Instead of making clear what the cultural sector's contribution to a city actually is, these departments may only indicate that the sector is constantly falling short of policy expectations. This may weaken the political support for cultural activities in the long run.

This is why I seized the opportunity to participate in a research project which was offered at the Department for Arts, Culture and Media Studies of the University of Groningen. Professor Hans van Maanen of the department kindly invited me to participate in a group of Ph.D. students convening regularly to discuss their research projects. He also introduced me to the Project on European Theatre Systems (STEP) which started in 2005 with the aim of comparing theatre systems in smaller European countries. The central theme of the project is the assumption that the diversity in European theatre systems also shows a diversity in the societal outcomes of these systems throughout Europe, thus generating very different positions for the theatre in European countries. This being the case, instruments need to be developed within STEP to describe theatre systems for the purpose of comparing them. But instruments to describe the *outcomes* of the theatre systems are also needed. My research project is a contribution to this last issue. Because of the fact that this research is part of STEP, this book has been written in English. Although the research primarily focuses on the Dutch policy system, I hope that this book will provide researchers, officials and managers within cultural institutions in other countries with helpful concepts and tools for dealing with these issues.

Writing a Ph.D. thesis has proven to be a challenging endeavour in which I have experienced that pushing forward in my investigations – as any Ph.D. candidate will have experienced – meant writing more and more about less and less. Empirically testing the model for evaluating cultural policy turned out to be unfeasible in this project. Further studies will be burdened with this task. None the less, I hope to have been able to make a valuable contribution to the field of cultural policy. It is a contribution which would not have been possible without the help of a number of people. First of all I thank my supervisor, Professor Hans van Maanen for his invitation to participate in his department's Ph.D. project and for his comments on the drafts of this book. These comments and his general stimulation have made this endeavour challenging and invigorating right up to the end. I should also thank Dr Miranda Boorsma who acted as co-supervisor during the largest part of the research. I have greatly benefited from her expertise in cultural economics and arts marketing. The professional contributions as well as the friendship of these two supervisors have helped bring this work to fruition. From the circle of Ph.D. candidates I am greatly indebted to Marlieke Wilders whose research subject touched mine so consummately. Collaborating with her and Kim Joostens brought continual inspiration. Their comments have steered me in many right directions. I should also express my gratitude towards the students in my Arts Policy course who provided the first empirical material for Chapter 11 of this book. From the circle of colleagues in public administration I should mention the stimulation offered by Tineke Bennema and Henk Hofstra who were so kind as to allow me time to do this research, and who also discussed the topics of various chapters at great length. Furthermore, I thank Erik Akkermans who was so kind as to read the drafts of this manuscript and comment on them. His assertion of the topicality of this research project was important to keep going.

The support and stimulation of numerous people in my personal surroundings cannot go unmentioned. I am especially grateful to Harold who provided the homes to do my research in. His constant love and admiration are the most powerful factors behind this book. I also am greatly indebted to my parents who raised me with a firm belief in my own capabilities, the greatest gift parents can bestow upon their children. Without such firm belief, endeavours such as writing a Ph.D. thesis are not possible.

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March 2010

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**IN THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF**  
*EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY*





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## Introduction

In March 2007 two youngsters were killed in Rotterdam. They had participated in rap battles in youth centres in the city. Such rap battles – popular amongst youngsters of Antillean, Surinamese and Cape-Verdian descent – consist of improvised raps in which youths ‘battle’ live. The improvised song texts involve glorifying oneself or disrespecting the opponent (‘dissing’). Two participants in such a battle had lost their lives because opponents took violent revenge after the rap battle was over. The *Telegraaf* (a Dutch national daily newspaper) added in a maliciously short aside that such battles are organized with subsidies from the city.<sup>1</sup> Though the article did not make clear whether or not the subsidies involved stem from cultural policy measures or are part of another policy area such as welfare or youth policies, the incident evokes concern for the effects that subsidized activities may have in society.

A second example: in the summer of 2001 the city of Groningen organized a large-scale cultural event called *Blue Moon*. The city has an established reputation for organizing events that take the arts to the streets, with architecture and the performing arts being combined to produce new public buildings, such as a bus stop by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas in which art videos can be shown, and a floating performance stage designed by Zaha Hadid. *Blue Moon* was intended to do two things: (1) the festival should give the city (inter)national exposure and (2) at its location, the citizens of Groningen should become acquainted with the site where an entire new city district was to be built – including a new football stadium. The festival programme included visual-art presentations in derelict industrial buildings on the site, the performance of a new play based on the legend of King Arthur by the Groningen-based theatre company *Noord Nederlands Toneel* (NNT) and a cornfield maze, designed by visual artist and theatre-maker Sjoerd Wagenaar. It was planted on the site of the new football field and was used for children to go treasure hunting. During the preparatory stages in city politics the festival costs were publicly defended by the alderman for spatial planning, while the department of spatial planning handled the organization. Though the individual projects met with favourable reviews and seats to the play and tickets for the maze were sold out, the general feeling after the festival was that it had failed to meet expectations, even though the opening of the festival had made the national news on television. International coverage of the festival was restricted to the architecture press and visits to the festival site by city residents were greatly disappointing, the ghastly summer weather of 2001 being only partially an explicatory factor. The political aftermath of the festival was handled by the alderman for cultural policy who took a different line of defence

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<sup>1</sup> See *De Telegraaf* of 29 July 2007 ([www.telegraaf.nl](http://www.telegraaf.nl) accessed on 30 July 2007.)

than his colleague for spatial planning. He argued in favour of the artistic quality of the productions realized and did not look at the wider intentions of the festival on which it clearly had not delivered. In a discussion with city officials, Koos Terpstra, the erstwhile artistic director of the *Noord Nederlands Toneel*, explained that he was not aware of the intention to encourage the citizens of Groningen to explore this new part of town. He even claimed that, if he had known this was the purpose of the festival, he would not have produced a theatre performance at all. He simply would have put an advertisement in the local paper claiming that he would bury a thousand guilders somewhere on the festival terrain each day. This would certainly have attracted flocks of citizens to the site, as the city politics wanted.<sup>2</sup>

The above two instances are taken from the world of cultural policy.<sup>3</sup> They are both instances of things going wrong, leading to concerns that public money was being spent with only negative or insignificantly positive results. On the one hand such concerns seem justified. When individuals spend money on a product or service they expect it to satisfy the intended purposes. A taxi should take one from A to B. A dry-cleaner should remove the stains from a suit. So why should a city administration not expect positive outcomes from the aesthetic activities it subsidizes?<sup>4</sup> On the other hand the question may be posed as to whether or not the expectations were justified with regard to the aesthetic activities in the examples above. One does not expect a dry-cleaner to bring one from A to B and a taxi driver to clean a suit. Can participation in a rap battle alleviate tensions rather than bringing them up to a boiling

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<sup>2</sup> The author here refers to his experience as an official for the city at that time.

<sup>3</sup> 'Cultural policy' usually refers to policies directed at the arts, cultural heritage (museums, monuments and archives), media and libraries. Hoefnagel rightfully claims that when adopting a broader concept of culture (see the anthropological meaning of the word as referred to in section 1.1) education policies and policies directed towards religious organizations are relevant as well. Government intervention covering religious organizations usually is very limited, and is most notably geared towards mental health issues (Hoefnagel, 1992, pp. 21-3). Note that Hoefnagel does not include international cultural policy in his broad concept). Thus cultural policy can extend well beyond the responsibilities of a Minister, State Secretary or alderman for culture. Such a broad definition of the term 'cultural policy' is not necessary for the present research, as it focuses on the performing arts. Therefore the term 'art policy' is more correct. The use of this term, however, does not imply that all outcomes of art policy are in fact artistic. This will be discussed at length in Chapter 6. Note that though the focus of this research is on art policy, the term 'cultural policy' will be used regularly as this is the most common term in academic and policy praxis.

Furthermore it is important to note that the term *policy* can give rise to misunderstandings. In this research policy shall refer to the measures taken by governmental bodies such as the state or city governments. The field of cultural policy also includes the measures cultural organizations implement themselves, such as elaborate marketing schemes or human resources management. In this research the policies of cultural institutions will be denoted by the term 'management'.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'aesthetic' in this research will refer to that which is perceptually discernable. This definition derives from Robinson (2006 [2005]) who writes in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*:

The term 'aesthetics' derives from the Greek word *aesthesis*, meaning 'perception'. The German rationalist philosopher Alexander Baumgarten coined the term in 1735 to mean the science of 'sensory perception', which was designed to contrast with logic, the science of 'intellect' (...) and ever since, the term 'aesthetic' has kept its connotation to the perceptually discernable (Robinson, 2005, p. 73).

point with devastating results? Can an arts festival produce exposure for a city and make citizens want to discover a new part of town? In other words, can aesthetic activities provide for non-aesthetic outcomes in society? These are questions that are hugely relevant in cultural policy and have been debated at length. Current policy trends make this debate more acute than ever.

### **New Public Management**

In public administration there is growing interest in policy evaluation and a subsequent interest in the measurement of performance of government organizations and subsidized institutions. This has resulted from a changed style in public administration, which Belfiore (2004) amalgamates under the name 'New Public Management' (NPM). It consists of a cluster of managerial principles and ideas that have been transferred from the administrative practice of the private sector to public management. The key features of NPM are cost control, financial transparency, the introduction of market mechanisms into the provision of public services (such as tendering or pitching)<sup>5</sup> and reliance on a contract culture. For the present research, a very important feature of NPM is the enhancement of accountability to customers for the quality of service through the use of performance indicators. Politicians increasingly rely on audits to legitimize public policy (De Bock et al., 1996, p. 9). Though one might expect that this type of trend is specific to the historically developed political systems of a nation, it appears to occur internationally.

Initiatives that would lead to NPM can be discerned in the UK as early as 1982. The Financial Management Initiative, instigated by the then new Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, 'required each spending department – as well as their subordinate agencies – to clearly identify their objectives and set targets against which their performance could be measured. Significantly, this practice was also extended to those spheres of activity where performance was not easily quantifiable (and the cultural sector undoubtedly belongs to this group)' (Belfiore, 2004, p. 191). Local governments were effected as well. In the mid-1980s the Compulsory Competitive Tender was introduced for a number of services previously provided by the local authorities themselves. This meant a fundamental shift in the role of the authorities, from *provider* to *enabler*. Under the New Labour government, the CCT was replaced by the scheme of Best Value. Local authorities were obliged to relate the quality of services to the values these services provide for clients. This meant setting standards and measurement procedures for the *quality* of public service provision. Furthermore local authorities were obliged to perform a general performance review every five years (*ibid*, p. 193).

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<sup>5</sup> Such techniques imply that a government agency asks private institutions to bid for a specified service to be delivered in much the same way as contractors are chosen to realize new buildings once they have been designed. Such techniques have also been applied in Dutch municipal cultural policies. In the city of Zwolle, the administration put out a tender for the organization of a cultural festival (see Chapter 11). In the city of Groningen, a pitch was organized for the programming of a multi-media exhibition space in the city centre in 2008.

In the United States, an important early initiative was the 'reinvention of government'. This initiative was led by Vice President Albert Gore and involved the publication of the National Performance Review (NPR). 'This document emphasizes the importance of a customer focus and performance measurement for governmental agencies' (Kaplan and Norton, 1996, p. 180). NPR's aim is to develop outcome measures, rather than the usual focus of public employees on the process. The four perspectives of the Balanced Score Card – a technique originally developed for the private sector (see section 11.2.3.) – are viewed as relevant for performance measurement, adding a fifth perspective: employee empowerment 'to emphasise the role that federal employees must play in the new, more customer-focused approach for government agencies' (*ibid.*, p. 181). In a book with the provocative title *Challenging the Performance Movement*, Radin describes further efforts of the federal government to improve performance through the use of performance measurement, amongst which the most notable was the adoption of a federal law, the *Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)* in 1993.

It is the basis for a process undertaken in 2001 in the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) called the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), which attempts to link executive branch budget recommendations to the performance of specific federal programs. Governors' offices and state-level agencies (particularly in the education sector) have adopted report cards that seek to rate the performance of specific program areas against other state, local or federal agencies. (...) In a 1998 study, 47 out of 50 states had adopted some form of performance budgeting. Quarterly reports of profit levels by corporations are actually required as a form of performance, accountability, and transparency. Through the World Bank and other international bodies, countries have been encouraged to devise methods of assessing performance of public sector activities. (Radin, 2006, p. 7)

Though she does not oppose the incentive behind the performance movement, which is fundamentally a desire for the government to be publicly accountable for its actions, Radin does discredit the assumptions behind the movement, most notably its mechanistic view of society. She argues for approaches to performance measurement that are multi-dimensional and thus are able to allow for differences in the pursued values between social groups and the complexities of contemporary society in which cause-and-effect relations are not straightforward. Evaluation should involve expert knowledge on these cause-and-effect relationships (Radin, 2006, pp. 236-7). However, she does not develop such approaches herself.

For the Dutch national government, the Netherlands witnessed abundant growth in policy areas in the 1970s. This raised questions as to the necessity of these policies and their contribution to problems in society (Bressers, 2003, p. 173). In contrast to the expectations of the 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s ushered in more moderate expectations as to what government can do to steer or influence society. The traditional view of social engineering with a government as central actor was mitigated. The complexities of society were taken into greater consideration. With this shift, interest in information on the effects of public policies and their efficiency grew (Janssen en Hellendoorn, 1999, p. 11). As a consequence, policy evaluation has risen strongly since the 1980s. On the national level, the *Algemene Rekenkamer* (Netherlands Court of Audit) systematically reports on the efficiency of policies



and is critical of policies that have no measurable targets. Whereas some decades ago these reports were used by the Ministries, the Prime Minister now is summoned to Parliament to debate the report. As of 2000, *Verantwoordingsdag* (Accountability Day, the third Tuesday of May) has become a fixed tradition within the parliamentary year. The Minister of Finance and the President of the *Algemene Rekenkamer* report on policy implementation.<sup>6</sup> In 1999 the national government initiated the project entitled *Van Beleidsbegroting tot Beleidsverantwoording* (VBTB, From Policy Budget to Policy Accountability). In January 2002 this resulted in a guideline for all Ministries that states that every policy objective will be evaluated at least once every five years (Ministerie van Financiën, 2003, p. 7). One of the main goals of the VBTB is to make budgeting in public administration result-oriented. Whereas the budgets and accounts in Dutch public administration were structured according to expenditures, the new scheme focuses on answering the questions:

- What do we want to achieve?
- What will be done to achieve this?
- What are the costs of these efforts?

At the end of the fiscal year, the accounts are structured to answer the questions:

- What did we want to achieve?
- What did we do to achieve this?
- Did these efforts cost what we expected?

This new scheme alone prompts interest in policy evaluation and quick and reliable performance indicators to include in the budgets and accounts. This type of budget was first introduced at national level and also on municipal level in 2004 (see Van der Knaap, 2000 and 2006). They will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.

New Public Management is also behind some major management changes that have occurred in local government in the Netherlands since 1985. The ambitious *Public Management Initiative* (in Dutch: *Project Beleids- en Beheersinstrumentarium*), which ran from 1987 tot 1995, aimed to make political and administrative decision-making more transparent, and to bridge the gap between authorities and citizens. It focused on the introduction of decentralized organization units and particularly on the development of product budgets and related annual reports including all kinds of performance information (Ter Bogt, 2006, p. 3). The PMI was followed by further initiatives at local level of which the introduction of programme budgets and accounts (see above) is the most recent development. The factors initiating these changes included budget cuts and more demanding citizens/voters, but also uncertainty amongst politicians, which was instigated by the increased political volatility amongst the electorate. 'This factor suggest that, now and in the near future, for politicians and professionals it could be "politically rational" to try to increase the (economic) performance of their organizations' (Ter Bogt, 2006, p. 1). As a result of these organizational changes within government bureaucracies, the responsibilities for policy formulation and implementation have been split up and much of the policy implementation has been privatized. This has led to tensions between policy devisors and executors. As the policy

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<sup>6</sup> See [www.verantwoordingsdag.nl](http://www.verantwoordingsdag.nl), accessed on 20 July 2009.

devisors regard themselves as responsible for 'steering' the executors, their interest in the results of policy execution is strengthened (see De Bock et al., 1996, pp. 9-11).

NPM has been introduced in other countries as well, see Lindqvist (2007 and 2008) for the Scandinavian countries and De Cea (2008) for Chile. Gray - though recognizing that NPM manifests itself differently in each country owing to the historic development of its democratic structures - argues that its underlying principles are generic. The shift 'originated in the perceived failure (...) of the post-WWII welfare state (...) in many Western societies during the economic turmoil of the 1970s' (Gray, 2007, p. 208, see also Belfiore, 2004). In the Netherlands this shift is known as the debate on the social engineering (*maakbaarheid van de samenleving*). Gray argues that this led to a systemic change in the structure and the financing of the entire public sector. The shift should be characterized as a redefinition of value, marked by a shift from intrinsic notions of use to extrinsic notions of exchange-value. 'In effect goods and services are redefined in terms of how they are to be understood, their social role is redesigned, and the management of them requires change for the most efficient and effective realization of their exchange status' (Gray, 2007, p. 208). He denotes this as the 'commodification thesis'. In practice, NPM comes down to a trend towards increased accountability of public policy through the use of management techniques from the private sector. Its general aim is to generate trust in, and legitimacy for, public decision-making by providing evidence of its transparency, effectiveness and efficiency. NPM leads to several consequences in public administration practices that are common to many Western countries. The first is the delegation of policy execution to decentralized 'business units' within the public administration but more frequently to privatized institutions. The subsidy agreements with these institutions also underwent changes. Whereas, up to the 1980s, these organizations were financed on the basis of their operational costs ('input' financing) the subsidies now are being related to the outputs and outcomes with the government acting as a contractor towards subsidized institutions. This is a trend that prompts questions on measures relevant for the capture of outputs and outcomes. Thus, as well as issues of efficiency and quality, policy evaluation also became important within the subsidized institutions themselves (De Bock et al., 1996, pp. 11-14). The second consequence is a growing political interest in policy evaluation which feeds into the need for data on policy execution. Such data should be provided through clear performance indicators, preferably quantitative ones. Ironically, though the NPM movement has been instigated by a general resentment of the possibilities of social engineering - which largely stems from a (post-modern) recognition of the complexities of society and the limited possibilities of government to actually 'steer' societal developments - its techniques mainly depend on very mechanistic (modern) views on society because they presume clear cause-and-effect relationships and the possibility of encapsulating intricate societal phenomena in quantitative performance measures. The NPM 'newspeak' suddenly recaptures the aura of modernistic engineering.

## New Public Management and Art Policy

Gray has developed his commodification thesis specifically to study culture and art policy. He writes:

The commodification thesis (...) serves to re-focus the attention of policy makers away from the internal detail of policy itself and towards the manner in which policy as a whole contributes towards commodified forms of exchange relationships and social behaviours. The instrumentalization of policy embodies this ideological change by ensuring that considerations that are external to the content of the policy sector itself receive much greater attention than had previously been the case, and become much more central to the consideration of what public policies are meant to achieve. (Gray, 2007, p. 210)

This means that NPM by its very nature leads to growing emphasis on instrumental legitimization of cultural and arts policies. Instrumental cultural policies are policies in which cultural ventures and cultural investments are used as a means or instrument to attain goals in areas other than cultural ones. The core of instrumental policies is that they emphasize culture and cultural ventures as a means and not as an end in themselves (Vestheim, 1994, p. 65). The structural weaknesses Gray observes in art policy – the fact that it receives limited political interest amongst the majority of policy makers and the general public, the fact that it receives little budget from governments compared to other sectors and a lack of political significance (Gray, 2007, p. 210) – make the art policy sector specifically vulnerable to instrumentalization, as the development or, in the worst case, the survival, of these policy sectors is dependent on its ability to address issues that are important to other policy areas. Gray denotes this as ‘attachment strategies’ (*ibid.*, p. 206). Regardless of the evidence base for such claims, the cultural and arts policies have been said to encourage economic growth, reduce public debt, engender urban regeneration, remedy social exclusion and create personal development and community empowerment (*ibid.*, p. 206). These developments have three consequences:

1. There will be increasing emphasis on the benefits of public policy for individual ‘consumers’ rather than social benefits.
2. Arising from this individualization of policy, public policies will become more selective in terms of their intended audiences and more directed in terms of their intended impact, which feeds into a need for new forms of management information.
3. The financial mechanisms involved can increasingly be expected to leave room for non-state funding mechanisms (*ibid.* p. 210-2).

Though in the Netherlands this third step is evident in the national policy document of 2003 (Ministerie van OCW, 2003), this has not led to a substantial redirection of cultural policies away from supply subsidies.

Belfiore likewise argues that NPM has enabled an instrumental turn in British cultural and arts policies. Since the 1980s, the instrumental element in the rhetoric of British public arts funding has become more explicit than ever before, overshadowing arguments based on ‘art for art’s sake’ (Belfiore, 2004, p. 188). In line with Gray’s first two consequences of the commodification thesis, Belfiore observes that the positive impact of the arts in society have been discussed in ever more precise terms in British policy discourse since around 2000.

Public 'investment' in the arts is advocated on the basis of what are expected to be concrete and *measurable* (italics original) economic and social impacts. Moreover, this shift has been accompanied by growing expectations that such beneficial impact *ought to be* (italics QLvdH) assessed and measured before demands on the public purse can be declared fully legitimate. (Belfiore, 2004, p. 189)

Note that in this quote the word 'investment' has apparently replaced 'subsidy'. As a result 'publicly funded arts organizations have (...) been involved in the data collection duties that evidence-based policy-making entails. As a consequence, the subsidized arts too (...) have found themselves forced to turn to the "rationalised rituals of inspection"' (Belfiore, 2004, p. 195). In Britain, the NPM movement in the 1980s was met with studies of the economic impact of the arts in Britain. A study by Myerscough (1988) is credited as the first study of the economic impact of the arts. Belfiore reports that despite well-founded criticisms of this and other reports, the economic impact studies resonated within the British art world and conservative politics (Belfiore, 2002, p. 95). The New Labour government initiated research into the social impact of the arts in conjunction with the Commedia think-tank.<sup>7</sup> Their report on the social impact of participatory arts projects (Matarasso, 1997) will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. Though she levels many criticisms at Matarasso's methodology, Belfiore (2002) credits the research for being the first attempt to systematically evaluate the social impact of the arts.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless she is somewhat uneasy with the report because the 'importance attributed to social outcomes overshadows aesthetic considerations' (*ibid.*, p. 100). Her main concern therefore seems to be that, in instrumental cultural policies, the arts are reduced to a mere tool and become a matter of 'value for money'. Thus, instrumental arts policies will not be sustainable in the long run (*ibid.*, p. 102).

Meeting the requirements of NPM in the UK is primarily a task for the country's *Arts Council*. Not only did the *Arts Council of England* (ACE) adopt the NPM 'newspeak', as Belfiore demonstrates (2002 and 2004), it also commissioned several reviews of the impact of the arts. In 2002 the research department of ACE published a document that reviewed literature on the measurement of the impact of the arts (Reeves, 2002). The document aims to provide an overview of art-impact research and to 'assess the comprehensiveness and quality of the existing evidence base [to the societal benefits of the arts]' (*ibid.*, p. 1). The review demonstrates how interest in, and recognition of, the impact of the arts has grown steadily from the 1980s onwards, but it concludes that this research is still in its infancy and that impact research has encountered formidable challenges.

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<sup>7</sup> Interestingly Belfiore indicates that New Labour's fascination with the social impact of the arts – rather than the economic impact which interested the preceding Conservative government – should not be regarded as a victory for proponents of the community arts movement which suddenly saw their primary concerns at the centre of political debate. She rather argues that, in the 1980s, the instrumental notion of the arts had affirmed itself within the political and arts community alike, because the arts community had embraced economic rationale as a strategy of survival. Under the new government, the instrumental rational was used with respect to social inclusion by the cultural sector (Belfiore, 2002, pp. 94-5).

<sup>8</sup> For further criticisms, see Merli, 2002, and also Matarasso's reaction to both Merli and Belfiore (Matarasso, 2003). Note that in 2009 these criticisms still have not been met with more elaborate methodologies (see Rimmer, 2009).

Furthermore, some specific documents on the impact of the arts have been commissioned. Hughes (2002) studied the impact of theatre projects on juvenile offenders, and Carpenter (2003) the impact of active participation in the arts on the social integration of ethnic youths. McDonnell and Shellard (2006) have studied the social impact of theatre in the UK through identifying ten factors that determine impact, both social and economic. Their study describes four case studies, all from theatre practices, which should be considered an exception rather than the rule as they already knew specifically targeted audiences (youth theatre in one case) in the socially motivated theatre practices directed to address issues such as domestic violence and female emancipation.<sup>9</sup> These documents record research into specific situations where art has been applied for the benefit of specifically targeted groups. No research on the general impact of receptive participation in the arts was commissioned, and the research remained vulnerable to charges of being only anecdotal and unsystematic, a remark already made by Reeves (2002).<sup>10</sup>

In 2006 the ACE apparently changed tactics by no longer relying on impact analysis. It started *The Arts Debate*, a project based upon the concept of Public Value (Holden, 2004) which aims to investigate the value of the arts in society in general. Public Value was hailed in as a method that could be used both as a management tool and a measuring instrument for the impact of the arts. It could deal with conflicting values and defines these on the basis of the inclusion of various stakeholders. Its most important feature was, however, that Public Value allowed for the inclusion of intrinsic values which are hard to quantify (see Keaney, 2006, and Bunting, 2006). The concept of Public Value will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 11. Bunting reported on the results of *The Arts Debate* in 2007. Unfortunately the concept has been toned down considerably in the final research design. It did not involve a systematic overview of the values created by aesthetic activities for different stakeholders – as is the main tenet of Holden’s argument – but rather consisted of a qualitative assessment of value creation by ACE staff and a large programme of qualitative assessments by the general public, comprising of 20 discussion groups across the country and in-depth interviews with a large number of members of the arts community and the wider stakeholders of the ACE.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This is not to suggest that such aesthetic activities lack certain artistic qualities or are less relevant. It is merely to suggest that they do not represent the mainstream of theatre production and reception in the UK.

<sup>10</sup> Incidentally Holden (2004) remarks, not entirely without merit, that the criticism about impact research only providing anecdotal evidence is unjustly levelled at arts advocacy studies, while such research methods in disciplines such as the management sciences are entirely justified. There they are called ‘case studies’. Van der Knaap (2006) also remarks that case studies can be valuable to test the hypotheses behind policy theories. However, Holden’s argument is not entirely convincing because when case studies do not provide information on the circumstances under which beneficial societal impact of the arts is created for a certain type of citizens, these case studies cannot be used to generalize the research findings, as he seems to be aiming at.

<sup>11</sup> Though the number of people included in the research is impressive, their selection did not occur at random. People who already had an interest in the arts tended to participate, though the public survey did specifically include respondents from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

Though the debate yielded insights into the values at stake in public funding of the arts and 'a better understanding of how different organizations within the arts ecology contribute to creating that value' (Bunting, 2007, p. 28), the question should be raised as to whether or not the results of the debate can be used for public accountability purposes. Gray analyses severe methodological and analytical drawbacks 'to raise questions about the extent to which it can effectively serve as an adequate – or even appropriate – basis for the generation of new approaches to managing and funding the arts' (Gray, 2008, p. 210). To Gray, the analytical weaknesses lie in the weak 'theory' of Public Value which, in his view, is not a theory at all but a normative set of assumptions about the role of politicians and public administrators in policy execution and evaluation. He argues that Public Value champions the role of the public manager over politicians who, in his view, are ultimately accountable for the actions of government as they have been elected by the general public.<sup>12</sup> The methodological weaknesses include a non-representative sample which was not sufficiently large to allow for statistical remedies to such a situation (*ibid.*, p. 212). Excluding the goals of public policy, as they are decided upon by politics, and entirely focusing on views expressed by stakeholders and a non-representative section of the general public should therefore be considered as the main weakness of the *Arts Debate*.

Belfiore and Gray's concerns may be right. When instrumental considerations take precedence over aesthetic considerations, art policy and arts practices will be in trouble. But matters may not be so gloomy. The above discussion should be complemented with two important questions:

- Is it not possible that – precisely because of the aesthetic considerations – the arts can contribute to policy goals such as social inclusion and economic performance? This involves an investigation into the specific nature of the arts, thus clarifying what the aesthetic values advocated by the authors actually bring about in society.
- Are the beneficial effects of the arts in society presented as the sole reason for subsidizing the arts or are they considered to be side-effects? This will be investigated on the basis of policy documents referring to Dutch cultural policy.

These questions are informed by an alternative view on the functioning of art in society with respect to its autonomy. Boorsma's writings on arts marketing are interesting in this context. She argues (see Boorsma, 2002) that arts marketing has gradually been accepted in the arts world after a situation in which it was considered a swearword as it was deemed fundamentally incompatible with notions of autonomy. A more generic view on marketing as facilitating and stimulating transactions – including the exchange of aesthetic values – has allowed for the concept's introduction into the art world. The question may rise as to

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Furthermore it is a matter of discussion why the Department for Culture, Media and Sports were not included among the Art Council's stakeholders.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that in his review he does not include Holden (2004) who has applied the idea behind Public Value specifically to the arts, though Gray is certainly right in stating that the idea of public value has been interpreted by different theorists in different ways. The concept will be examined to identify promising indicators for policy evaluation only (see section 11.2.4).

whether or not the principles of NPM could be construed in such a way as to facilitate and account for the *aesthetic* functioning of art in society as well as its instrumental value. Furthermore, in a recent article by Van Maanen on the importance of autonomy – in which he compares Marx's, Bourdieu's and Luhmann's theories on the subject – he remarks that:

It is fully clear that artistic utterances are necessarily autonomous to be artworks, or better to be able to function as artworks. For, their autonomy can only be realized in the act of consumption (...) and is for that reason a relative autonomy. (Van Maanen, 2008a, p. 294)

In other words: the autonomy of artworks can only be realized when they meet an audience. When conditions are right, they can function as art – aesthetically – in society. Van Maanen argues that it is up to cultural policy (here implying both public policy and institution management) to provide these conditions, for the autonomy of the artwork should be distinguished from the autonomy of the art field or system, which in itself can limit art's functioning in society by organizing aesthetic activities in such a way that they exclude large portions of the general population. This issue will be taken up in Chapter 5 where the autonomy of artworks, artists and the arts field are discussed in relation to art's functioning in society. Van Maanen's reasoning implies that artworks can function aesthetically in society as long as they are experienced under conditions that allow aesthetic functioning. It is a matter for debate whether NPM implies that these conditions can never be met. The present research aims to contribute to this debate.

### **Three Fundamental Issues**

The above-described New Public Management or performance movement raises fundamental issues for art policy because the movement in general assumes a direct relationship between policy instruments and policy outcomes and that these outcomes can be measured in order to inform policy proposals. Apart from the fact that this movement exhibits little tolerance regarding the complexities of society (as discussed above) it also raises the issue of instrumentality in art policy. This relates to the notion of the autonomy of arts. On the most general level, it is a matter for debate whether the arts are autonomous and thus an end in themselves, or whether art can be an agent of social change. Specifically for art policy, this leads to the issue of the instrumental use of art policy. Should the goals of art policy be purely aesthetic and thus aimed solely at the intrinsic development of the arts, or can and should social or economic developments be pursued? A last issue is whether or not the outcomes of art policy (either aesthetic or not) can and should be measured.

#### *Can art be an agent for social change?*

This question relates to views on the relationship between the arts and society. Belfiore and Bennett have recently conducted an investigation of the Western intellectual tradition to 'produce a classification of the "impacts of the arts"' (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008, p. 35). They explored the claims made about what the arts 'do' to individuals, how they can transform them and their role in society and in relation to the state. This encompasses research on notions of the *functions* of art and their *effects* on people (*ibid.*). The classification they developed will not be discussed in detail here. However, it is important to note that three

groups can be distinguished within the Western intellectual tradition with regard to the functions of the arts in society. The first group represents those who argue that the arts do have an impact on society. This can be called the *positive tradition* in which the arts are seen as a source of catharsis, personal well-being, they educate people (*'Bildung'*) and contribute to the moral improvement of society and civilization. The ability of the arts to be an instrument for social stratification and identity building also fall within the positive tradition (although it is disputable whether this occurs through aesthetic means or through the social conventions associated with the production and reception of the arts) and its political application which has a negative connotation as witnessed in the cultural politics of Fascism and Nazism, but has a more moderate variant for instance in political theatre. The second group, the *negative tradition*, represents those who argue that the arts have a negative impact on society and therefore should be combated. They see the arts as a source of corruption and distraction. Belfiore and Bennett remark that this tradition is as strong as the positive tradition. In fact, historically it has resounded stronger but in our time it is the positive tradition that reverberates in cultural policy debates (*ibid.*, p. 191). A third group claims that the arts have no impact at all. This can be called the *autonomous tradition* which holds that the arts are there for art's sake and have no impact on society. The autonomous tradition rejects the very notion of instrumentality of the arts and argues that the value and importance of works of art reside firmly within the aesthetic sphere itself. In current policy debates, the modern proponents of the positive and the autonomous traditions seem to clash most.

It should be noted that positive traditions when effectuated in public policy rely on the concept of social engineering, just as the NPM does. Boomkens describes how the concept of social engineering forms the fabric of the two dominant political traditions in Western societies during the last few decades: socialism and liberalism. Both have faith in the possibilities to engineer society (Boomkens, 2008, p. 8).<sup>13</sup> The idea that the arts can transform people – in Boomkens' article into participating citizens – at least borders on issues of bio-power being wielded which is a criticism that can certainly be levelled at totalitarian regimes but also at concepts of the 'creative city' (see Chapter 8), in which creative people flock together in urban – not city – surroundings to produce a creative but above all favourable economic climate. Boomkens questions the possibilities of present-day social engineering as it is a typical modernistic concept.<sup>14</sup> Other authors in the *OPEN* edition on the subject raise the same issues, though they see new forms of social engineering come to the fore. For instance, BAVO argue that present-day total engineering may have been abandoned in government rhetoric but governments still intervene in places that are important to particular objectives. They speak of 'relative engineering' (BAVO, 2008, p. 179). In an

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<sup>13</sup> Boomkens also argues – not without merit – that both traditions have taken up their opponents' strategies, with neo-socialists accepting market forces and neo-liberals government interventions (Boomkens, 2008, p. 8).

<sup>14</sup> Note that it is precisely this loss of the faith in social engineering that strengthens the autonomous position (see also Belfiore and Bennett, 2008, p. 185, where they contextualize E.M. Forster's rejection of instrumentality by pointing to the fact that, in the aftermath of the industrial revolution,



interview with Gielen, Laermans expresses the opinion that social engineering has shifted from the level of society to the level of organizations and individuals. It has become part of the management discourse in the private sector and from there has trickled down into the government sphere as hospitals and schools are now 'managed'. He observes that this has led to a focus on the performance of individuals and organizations, a concern which also triggered the present research.<sup>15</sup> On the macro-level, social engineering still occurs in specific sectors by means of limited interventions (Gielen, 2008, pp. 185-6). Thus the question as to whether or not the arts can transform society – and thus be the object of political interventions – turns into a more general question: can society in general be transformed on the basis of governmental intervention?

This is an important question for the present research. However, it will not be addressed directly. This research project departs from the stated objectives of Dutch cultural policy. It does not question these objectives – it investigates only to the point where the objectives *can be thought* to be achieved by subsidizing aesthetic activities (see Chapters 7 and 10). The next step is to devise methods to trace the effects of such policies. The application of such evaluation methods might yield few results regarding public cultural policy, which would support scepticism about the possibilities of social engineering *tout court*. This type of test, however, falls outside the scope of the present research.

#### *Can or should art policy be instrumental?*

In cultural policy, the inclusion of policy aims which are not directly linked to cultural production itself is controversial. On the one hand, there are those who consider such goals as constituting economic development, city image or marketing, and social inclusion as improper or dangerous. They emphasize that culture and cultural ventures should be an end in themselves and not a means to achieve other policy goals.<sup>16</sup> Such claims might be expected to be voiced by the art world as a defence mechanism. However, Belfiore claims that the addition of specific economic legitimization of cultural policy in the UK in the 1980s was *advocated* by the cultural sector, not because the sector felt it could deliver on such promises but as a strategy to cope with the declining income from subsidies during the Thatcherite era. Since the victory of New Labour in 1997, social inclusion has been promoted as an aim of

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intellectuals had lost their belief in the possibilities of science and technology to create a better society).

<sup>15</sup> Thus Laermans confirms the above discussion of NPM which entails the introduction of private management practices in public administration.

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that the term 'instrumental' is not precise, though it is often used in this type of discussion. Belfiore defines 'instrumental' as 'art as a means towards the achievement of a non-specifically artistic or aesthetic objective' (Belfiore, 2004, p. 196). In this respect, the cultural policy does not deviate from other policy areas such as the judicial policy or health policies. These also are geared towards achieving goals which may not be considered as specifically legal or medical. Such policies contribute to a just society with equal chances for all and a safeguard against domination by others. Therefore, in this research a distinction will be made between intrinsic and extrinsic policy aims (see section 1.3.). Furthermore the question can be posed as to whether or not all policy aims mentioned as instrumental are automatically non-artistic or non-aesthetic, as Belfiore seems to imply.

cultural policy. Belfiore speaks of 'evidence-based policies' (Belfiore, 2004, p. 189, see also Selwood, 2006, p. 36) which have been adopted by Labour and Tory governments alike.

The public sector must be guided by clear 'strategies', where 'aims' and 'objectives' are clearly stated. Consequently the 'performance' of the service providers must undergo regular 'monitoring' and provide 'quality assurances' so that the government can be reassured – on the basis of the 'evidence' gathered and of comparisons between policy 'inputs' and 'outcomes' – that the 'targets' are met and the 'customers' (formerly known as 'citizens') receive 'value for money'. (Belfiore, 2004, p. 189)

The bracketing of these new buzzwords in public management may be overstating the case, for it can be considered reasonable that some account should be given of the effects of spending public money. However, Belfiore has a point when she argues that such a development can be dangerous for cultural institutions when, at this moment, the challenge to provide, preferably quantitative, data of one's effectiveness has not been met at all. Thus 'policies of survival' can easily turn into 'policies of extinction' (Belfiore, 2002, p. 104). Local government has been affected by this trend as well (Belfiore, 2004, p. 193). Selwood (2006) reports that it is only recently that British politicians have begun to question the possibility of evaluating or describing art's ability to contribute to government objectives. However, the DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sports) has been reluctant to clarify the relationship between cultural policy and other policy areas. McCarthy et al. (2004) have reviewed a vast number of American and European studies on the effects of culture and art. They argue that arts advocacy is focusing on the wrong issues and that the New Public Management approaches to cultural policy are dangerous because it could very well be the case that the wrong effects are being measured. In other words, these (and other) authors question the evidence base of art's impact on society, which thus threatens the survival of cultural and art policy. Their arguments come down to three points:

- They argue that these studies are highly partial as they are mostly executed by consultants or hired academics and therefore have been greatly influenced by the interests of the paying parties: cultural institutions and/or cultural departments in government. The studies do not question whether the arts can indeed have an impact, but focus on coming up with evidence that they do (Belfiore and Bennet, 2009, p. 17). As a consequence, impact studies have been subject to severe criticism.<sup>17</sup> Belfiore and Bennet further argue that these advocacy studies focus on the performing and visual arts – unsurprisingly the most heavily subsidized art disciplines – or they focus on community arts which are in the centre of political attention at the moment (*ibid.*, p. 17-18, see also Guetzkow, 2002, and Reeves, 2002).
- The impact studies pay no attention to the negative and disruptive effects of the arts in society (see also Guetzkow, 2002).

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<sup>17</sup> These criticisms involve the lack of a robust theory of how the arts impact society, and thus suffer from problems of causation (McCarthy et al., 2004), a lack of robust statistical evidence (Reeves, 2002, McCarthy et al., 2004, and Selwood, 2006), poor survey quality of research (Guetzkow, 2002) and the anecdotal nature of research (Guetzkow, 2002).

- As it cannot be ascertained what the arts are, how can one research their impact on society is?<sup>18</sup> Delineation of what is meant by the arts (the subsidized sector or also privately produced arts? Should design be included or excluded?) is a fundamental problem.

However, they do not fundamentally disapprove of an instrumental use of cultural and art policy.

Others emphasize that the organization of cultural policy excludes the arts' functioning in society altogether, specifically in the social domain. For instance, Carey claims that the quality standards upheld by advisory boards executing cultural policies preclude any form of functioning other than for specific groups at whom specific participatory projects are aimed (such as creative courses for prisoners). Only literature in Carey's view can have any effect on society because it has the ability to convey concepts, and therefore literature allows for the formulation of critique on society. He is of the opinion that abstract art forms such as visual arts can not do the same, and therefore he maintains that literature is the only art form that does any good. His example is that of a visual arts piece consisting of a maze built out of cotton. In his view, an article on slave trade will be more suitable to convey the message of oppression (Carey, 2005, pp. 257-8). Here, Carey clearly equates the functioning of art in society with interpreting a work of art, which seems a very limited view on the possible ways art can affect people. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Kawashima has argued that there are inherent tensions in the use of cultural policy in the social domain. She points to the fact that the majority of the culture in official institutions is the culture of a privileged class that aims at distinguishing itself from larger groups in society. Moreover, the consumption skills for culture are not evenly distributed in society, and thus culture's function seems to be enhancing social inequality rather than relieving it (Kawashima, 2006, p. 66). Disregarding for the moment the question as to whether or not this rendition of institutional and distinction theories is right, she has a point in suggesting that it is a major challenge for cultural institutions to become truly inclusive (*ibid.*, p. 67). To Kawashima, however, such target-led approaches amount to adding specific non-aesthetic or non-artistic elements to a cultural institution's products (such as football matches on a museum's premises for youngsters who previously vandalized the museum). So she can avoid the question as to what a specific cultural or artistic contribution to social inclusion might be. The issue of whether or not the institutional setting of cultural policy prevents societal functioning of the arts will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

On the other hand there are those who greatly favour linking cultural policy to values other than aesthetic ones. Van Meggelen, the *intendant* of the Rotterdam Cultural Capital of Europe programme in 2001, comments:

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<sup>18</sup> See Belfiore and Bennett (2008, p. 30). They have used philosophical explorations and institutional art theories to establish the meaning of the word 'art' and admit that they have failed in this attempt. In this research therefore a different route will be taken. There is no research into what art is or might be; rather the experience of aesthetic forms and the resulting values for members of the audience take centre stage.

The significance of art and culture is entrenched as yeast in bread or pudding, to a greater extent than as a mere isolated sector. Art and culture give society colour, lead to insight into that society, are comments upon it. Accordingly, it is important that culture and the arts connect with other sectors and realms of life, in all possible ways, and with the retention of their language and grammar. They must connect to spatial planning, green politics, public space, the multicultural society, security issues, feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, education, metropolitan policies, etc. (...) Art and culture have something to say in places where matters are discussed that are governed by issues of what is decent and what isn't, what is beautiful and what isn't, what is worth pursuing and what isn't, what is truth and what isn't. The significance of art and culture is located exactly there. (Van Meggelen, 2003, pp. 493-4)

Many city politicians overtly express the opinion that there is a relationship between the development of culture and/or art in the city and the development of the city itself (see Utrecht, 2003b, pp. 17-18, for example), that art can be used as a means to spread knowledge, income and power more evenly in society (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 12), or as a *unique selling point* for city societies (Groningen, 1995, p. 7). Though he is critical of such statements – to him, the arts are not a means to create wealth – Matarasso thinks that the real purpose of art is 'to contribute to a stable, confident and creative society' (Matarasso, 1997, p. vi). Vuyk argues that, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the modernistic views on the autonomy of the arts fitted well with the political goals of the West. The autonomy of the arts coincided perfectly with the promotion of freedom in general. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, governments in the West started a trajectory of retrenchment and policies became instrumental through economics and social policy. Thus, cultural policy has always been instrumental. To Vuyk, this is not a bad thing, as long as the policies align with what the arts actually do in society (Vuyk, 2008).

*Can or should the outcomes of art policy be measured?*

The introduction of New Public Management and its emphasis on performance evaluation have met with criticism in the art policy world. In general there is a feeling that the arts represent intangible values and that these can not be expressed in quantitative performance indicators. Evans observes that modern state involvement in the arts has veered from a (benign) arms-length principle 'to a more prescriptive and overtly political promotion of cultural values and the externalities that the arts can generate: enhancing issues such as educating the workforce, notions of cultural identity, diversity and equity, to quality of life, and latterly, economic wealth creation' (Evans, 2000, p. 243). In the UK, performance indicators were used from 1990 onward at both national and local government levels. Arts organizations started using output indicators to meet the growing need to account and report to private financiers and sponsors. Evans observes that three tests were levelled at public services:

*Economy* is defined as the purchase and provision of services at the lowest possible costs consistent with a specified quality and quantity (...) *Efficiency* is frequently employed as a measure and an objective of programmes. Used as the former, efficiency is the ration of inputs (e.g., grant subsidy) to outputs (audience/attendees), or the rate at which inputs are converted into outputs (unit cost/subsidy). In practice this becomes an objective in itself (...) in the arts the lowest 'subsidy per seat'. (...) *Effectiveness* is the extent to which policy impacts meet policy aims, normally measured by the relationship between outputs and outcomes. Given the inherent conceptual and technical complexities of outcome measurement (...) it is not surprising

that arts organizations and agencies have concentrated on quantifiable input (resources, staff, buildings, equipment, materials) and outputs (seats sold, performances held) as their prime PI measures. (Evans, 2000, pp. 252-3).

Note that 'effectiveness' comes closest to the theme of the present research, namely outcomes. Evans argues that critics of the use of performance indicators have rightfully staked claims for other 'E's such as Equality, Excellence, Entitlement, Empowerment. He argues that the top-down imposition of PIs by arts-funding bodies has left little room for arts producers themselves to argue which PIs should be used. As a consequence, many current bottom-line indicators, such as subsidy per attendance, are gathered, but in fact these only serve benchmark purposes in which the arts are compared to other leisure facilities. Though such figures ignore relative cost differences (e.g., opera and orchestral music require far greater amounts of performers than dance and theatre), conflate a range of individual organizations and ignore audience capacities of different venues, art forms and production types, their emphasis on comparisons – certainly over time – enable debate on the redistribution of subsidies. Furthermore, output PIs, which Evans regards as cultural indicators, are also gathered. They address issues such as income and expenditure, audience and attendees, touring (performances per region), education (numbers of educational sessions), networking (commissions created) and cultural diversity (amount of money spent on initiatives to include migrant communities, diversity of boards of directors, staff and artists engaged). Evans does favour the use of such PIs though he argues that they miss outcomes such as cultural impact, audience satisfaction and contribution to the cultural capital or sustainable cultural development (*ibid.*, p. 256). Furthermore he argues that as a response to the use of quantitative PIs arts organizations will manipulate the data, and that it distracts attention from those things that are not measured.<sup>19</sup>

Schuster argues that the use of performance indicators should be regarded as a demonstration of the growing maturity and willingness to be held publicly accountable for the artistic field (Schuster, 1997, p. 267). He recognizes that the use of programme evaluation and performance indicators in the arts sector is highly controversial, stating that opponents make the claim

(...) that artistic activities, which are based fundamentally on aesthetic principles and subjective judgement, are not amenable to traditional forms of evaluation. Arts funding agencies may feel that the most important evaluation they do is *ex ante* when they determine which clients will receive how much money, though this approach emphasizes evaluation of the client rather than evaluation of the programme, or that because evaluation costs money, they are not willing to make the trade-off between evaluation research and direct support of artistic programmes. And, finally, conducting an evaluation indicates a willingness to receive bad news as well as good, but many in the arts funding system seem to feel that it is too fragile to withstand negative results. (Schuster, 1997, p. 259)

Nonetheless Schuster thinks that cultural policy will benefit from using performance indicators, though he cautions financiers, government officials and representatives of

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<sup>19</sup> He argues that in the UK between 1986 and 1996 theatres performed less for fewer audiences while demonstrating a growth in ticket yields or subsidy per seat ratio. These PIs clearly do not represent the functioning of theatre in society.

cultural institutions about how indicators should be used. They should be used to monitor overall levels and trends of cultural supply and demand (*ibid.*, p. 261-2). Although he advocates the development of specific indicators for the cultural or arts sector, he does not make clear which indicators he favours. Van der Knaap seems to welcome the new managerialism of public policy. He argues that the use of policy objectives and performance indicators in policy making has two important benefits: 'It gives focus and it provides a language for policy, management and even political debates.' (Van der Knaap, 2006, p. 282)

### **Starting Point for the Present Research**

The debate on the autonomy of art and the instrumental nature of art policy are essentially about the same thing. On a more abstract and moral level, it refers to art's position in society where claims are made for its absolute autonomy and for its ability to transform society. The present research demonstrates that this ability only exists as a result of art's – incomplete – autonomy in society (see Chapter 7). On a more pragmatic level regarding the inclusion of non-aesthetic goals in art policy and the necessity to develop indicators to demonstrate art's contribution to society, the discussion ranges from those who regard the inclusion of indicators based on advocacy considerations as dangerous to the continuation of cultural or art policy, to those who argue that the arts are organized in such a way that they exclude societal functioning, especially in the social domain, as reception practices deter those who are socially excluded. Furthermore there are those who argue that the aesthetic nature of the arts cannot be captured in appropriate indicators.

The present research takes no particular position within the debate on the instrumental nature of cultural or arts policies. Rather the research takes the current legitimizations of these policies (be they intrinsic or instrumental) and the current pressures to account for the execution of public policies as a given fact. It recognizes that such pressures are a direct result of the desire of both liberal and socialist political movements (Boomkens, 2008) aimed at the emancipation of individuals who have developed, through government intervention and retrenchment, into participating citizens who demand to be shown the usefulness of these policies, rather than being told by their leaders how society functions and consequently encouraged to support their policies. Thus, the current questioning of the legitimacy of public policy can be regarded as a success for both the liberal and socialist emancipation projects.

For the present research, art policy essentially means that public funds are given to individuals or institutions – subsidies – to allow them to produce works of art which allow aesthetic activities in society, and that these activities have certain outcomes. In the current policy environment, it is necessary that politicians articulate what they expect these outcomes to be and show the general public whether or not this is indeed the case. The first question therefore must refer to the expectations. What do policy makers expect to happen when they provide funding for aesthetic activities? However, when accounting for the spending of public money it should be born in mind that the expectations levelled at the

artists or the cultural field ought to be reasonable. This means that the outcomes which are expected to occur indeed relate to the activities of the cultural field and its own aesthetic principles. In Radin's terms, the evaluation of art policy should allow for professional expertise on aesthetic matters and it should allow for weighting conflicting values (e.g., revenue considerations versus aesthetic values). This means two things: the outcomes evaluated should 'fit' with the nature of aesthetic activities and the methods to measure the outcomes should be sensitive to the nature of these aesthetic activities as well.<sup>20</sup> This means that research should cover the issue of whether or not the expectations levelled at artists and cultural institutions are reasonable expectations, and whether or not they are assessed by means of appropriate instruments. The present research focuses on municipal policies directed at the performing arts.

### Research Objectives

The aim of this research is to develop a framework for describing the functioning of the performing arts in an urban society. The framework should focus on the specific aesthetic functioning of art, in other words, describe art's role in society *as art*. The second research objective is to find ways to measure and evaluate the outcomes of cultural policy based upon this framework. Thus the research can be seen as a contribution to the debate sketched in the introduction by describing the extent to which the challenges of *evidence-based policies* can be met in the field of cultural policy. Little research has been done to develop such a framework and evaluate the effectiveness of cultural or performing arts policies.

The word 'framework' is used because it can be expected that the performing arts have more than one function in society. These different functions can be expected to be linked to one another in a more or less coherent system. A description of the functioning of the performing arts in society should not only clarify the various functions that can be identified but also the mutual relationships of these functions. Such a framework can be of importance to develop evaluation criteria for city councils in drawing up cultural policies; in other words, this is a question about measuring the expected societal returns for city art policy. For cultural policy makers at a city level, this research can be of interest for two reasons. First, one can assume that better insight into the functioning of performing arts in urban society can lead to the formulation of better policy measures which are more accurate in enhancing the specific functions of the performing arts in society. Second, this framework and measurement instrument can aid policy makers in conforming to the pressures to objectify the art policy.

The research can also be of interest to performing arts institutions themselves. Better insight into the functioning of performing arts can help them in formulating the goals and objectives of their companies, herewith conforming to the pressure to objectify results, but in a way that concurs with their artistic aims. The research should generate a common vocabulary for city

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<sup>20</sup> Note that here the terms aesthetic *values* and *nature* of aesthetic activities are used rather than *artistic quality*. This is a deliberate use of terms that are more all-encompassing than *artistic quality* which is

officials, managers and artists within cultural institutions to communicate with each other about the outcomes of cultural activities in the city (see Van der Knaap, 2006, p. 282). The framework should help clarify the benefits that can be expected from cultural activities, the claims that can be made upon the cultural institutions, and the way in which the institutions themselves can 'report' the achievement of such objectives to the subsidizing governmental bodies.

As the framework should clarify the extent to which art's functioning in society is dependent on specific artistic and specific aesthetic qualities of the performing arts, it can also be used to describe the outcomes of theatre systems in different countries. Our research is limited to the effects of *professional* performing arts. Although some insight into the effects of amateur arts activities (active participation) may be useful, this is not the focus of the present research. This restriction is based on the fact that cultural policies of larger cities usually involve far more expenditure for professional art organizations (either production or reception facilities) than for amateur facilities. This however does not imply that the societal effects of amateur activities are far more limited than those of the professional performing arts. Unfortunately, such topics are beyond the scope of this present research.<sup>21</sup>

### **Research Questions**

The research questions addressed in this study are the following:

1. Which outcomes (or functions) are expected of performing arts in Dutch politics?
2. How can the functioning of the performing arts in an urban society be described in a coherent system of functions (framework)?
3. How do the specific artistic qualities of the performing arts influence this functioning? In other words: which types of functioning are dependent on the specific artistic qualities?
4. How do the expected outcomes from politics relate to the framework?
5. How can the functioning of the performing arts in urban society be measured and evaluated on the basis of this framework?
6. How can municipalities in the Netherlands improve the evaluation of art policy?

Part I of this book is devoted to the expected functions of performing arts in society as they currently exist in Dutch politics. These expectations will be inventoried by analysing the stated cultural policies of Dutch cities. But since the national government is a major subsidizing body in the Dutch theatre system, national cultural policy will also be taken into

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usually assessed by experts. The notion of artistic quality in relation to policy evaluation is discussed in section 5.5.

<sup>21</sup> It can even be suggested that the societal impact of amateur arts is far greater than of the professional arts because the amateur sector usually has a far more 'democratic' reach than subsidized professional performing arts. Also it is far more likely to find participatory arts projects in the amateur sector than in the professional sector. However, this research aims at clarifying the societal impact of the 'regular' performing arts activities.



account. The cultural policy documents of the national government and eight cities in the Netherlands that were published between 1992 and 2005 will be reviewed.

The review of the expected functions will be done with a theoretical background that is as restricted as possible, in order to allow the policy documents to 'speak for themselves'. However, a limited discussion of the terms cultural and art policy and functioning in society is needed. These definitions will be based upon the cultural policy debates in the Netherlands and relevant (art-)sociological theories. The discussion of the definitions (Chapter 1) precedes the discussion of the national and municipal policy documents in Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 4 the expected functions of performing arts in urban society are summarized. The discussion closes with specific research questions which can be formulated based upon the cultural policy documents. The first of these questions regards the discussion between the positive and the autonomous traditions as they have been identified by Belfiore and Bennett (2008): how can culture and art be expected to function in society when they hold an autonomous position in that society? This question can however also be turned around: is culture and art's position in contemporary society autonomous enough to exclude any type of functioning?

These questions will be investigated on the basis of current cultural sociological insights. This is necessary because it can be expected that cultural policy itself is based upon theoretical insights or discussion on the functioning of the (performing) arts. The research should cover whether or not the underlying assumptions regarding cultural policy are accurate. Second, it is not unlikely that cultural policy documents will not be precise enough to describe the functioning of performing arts in society. Because of the fact that these documents are written to facilitate democratic decision making, it can be assumed that aspects on which there is broad public consensus will not be elaborated in the documents themselves. Furthermore it can be assumed that functions of the performing arts which should be considered as negative will not appear in these documents as they are used to legitimize policies that foster aesthetic activities in society rather than refuting them. Therefore the views on the functioning of performing arts in society should be critically discussed on the basis of current theoretical insights. The specific nature of the functioning of the performing arts should be established in order to develop a descriptive framework of this functioning. This is done in Part II of this book. This part starts with a discussion on the autonomy of art in relation to its functioning in society (Chapter 5). Furthermore, a model of values and functions that can be associated with aesthetic experience will be developed in order to investigate how aesthetic and artistic functions of culture and art can generate outcomes in society. Chapter 6 contains a detailed description of aesthetic experience which allows a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic (or instrumental) types of functioning. Chapter 7 summarizes by presenting the possibilities for art's functioning in society under conditions of (incomplete) autonomy and comparing them to the expectations voiced in the policy documents.

Part III of this book is devoted to relating intrinsic functions of culture and art to extrinsic functions. Chapter 8 deals with economic functions and there is an investigation of how artistic quality and intrinsic functions influence the economic ramifications of culture and art, specifically on regional economy. Chapter 9 deals with social policy issues. The chapter focuses on how intrinsic functions such as personal growth and identity development relate to the collective level. In other words, the investigation deals with how the performing arts can also have an effect on those who do not attend performances. This part offers the answer to the third research question, which turns out to be the most fundamental one. This is for an apparent reason. When it cannot be established which types of functioning result from the specific artistic or aesthetic nature of cultural activities, there is no need to subsidize cultural activities at all, as these functions can be attained through other types of social activities, such as sports, which is an issue that corroborates Belfiore's remark on policies of extinction. It should be noted that although the present research clearly touches on the subject of the legitimacy of cultural subsidies appropriated by municipalities, it does not question the legitimacy of these policies altogether. Rather it takes the existence of such policies as a given. The point of departure for the research is the assumption that there are thorough grounds for city administrations to subsidize cultural activities as a result of two concepts: first, the value of art and aesthetic experience as such, and second, the conviction that this value will not be realized in society without government intervention (see Van Maanen, 2005b, p. 69).<sup>22</sup> In Chapter 10 the results of the second and third part are brought together by formulating the framework to describe the functioning of the performing arts in society.

To answer the last two research questions in Chapter 11, attention will be devoted to the current policy evaluation practices of the municipalities discussed in the research. These current practices will be compared to the framework presented in Chapter 10. Furthermore, theoretical models for evaluating cultural policy will also be discussed in this chapter. In Chapter 12, an ideal-typical model to evaluate cultural policy will be presented. The model systemizes the items that should be measured and demonstrates how this can be done. The research closes with some remarks on how municipalities can organize cultural policy evaluation.

### **Limitations to the Research**

As observed above, the scope of this research has some restrictions. It is limited to the Western intellectual tradition. The research conforms to the discussion of the relationship between the arts and society based on Western intellectual history as discussed by Belfiore and Bennett (2008). This means that the outcomes of the research only have value within this tradition and cannot be extrapolated to other traditions where the relationship between the arts and society takes on a different form. This becomes most apparent in policies directed towards ethnic minorities, see Chapter 5. The research also relates to Western political systems with state bureaucracies carrying out democratically developed policies and cannot

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<sup>22</sup> Though it should be noted that thorough policy evaluation should also include – as Belfiore and Bennett argue – the possibility to receive ‘bad news’.

be used in different settings. Furthermore, the research does not pose fundamental questions about the legitimacy of art policy as it occurs in (most notably) European nations. Rather it takes the existence of such policies as a given and merely aims at ameliorating the execution of performing arts policies by improving current practices of policy evaluation.

### **Framing the Research within the Scientific Discussion on Policy Evaluation**

Policy evaluation has received growing attention from academics, most markedly within public policy sciences. The present research should be viewed as a contribution to this debate, specifically in relation to art policy. The last section of the introduction discusses the terms 'policy' and 'policy evaluation', and the research will be positioned within this debate.

#### *(Public) Policy*

In Dutch literature on public policy sciences, several definitions of the term 'policy' have been voiced, such as 'Policy is a more or less well-considered aspiration to achieve certain goals with certain resources in a certain order of sequence in time' (Blommenstein et al., 1984, p. 20), or 'Policy is the aim to achieve certain goals with certain resources and certain time choices' (Hoogerwerf, 2003, p. 20). These definitions have as common features that they assume an actor who has specific intentions and deploys certain instruments within a certain time frame. Governmental policy is the answer to a certain problem in society which the government tries to solve, to mitigate or to prevent with specific and goal oriented actions (Blommenstein et al., 1984). De Bock et al. offer a more elaborate definition.

We define policy as a (number of) well-chosen specification(s) with a binding effect, directed toward a series of interventions with a more or less general character. The government makes use of instruments to implement these interventions. Policy may be directed toward citizens, groups of citizens and companies, and also toward other governmental instances. (De Bock et al., 1996, p. 15)

They add that as long as there are no indications how certain goals can be reached one cannot speak of policy. In other words, without a specification of the policy instruments used, there is no policy. A further feature of their definition is that policy is directed at citizens in general or groups of citizens, companies and other governmental bodies. Public policy thus assumes the focus of attention. Art policy now can be regarded as

a form of governmental action in which (...) different aims in the field of production, distribution and the take-up of art are pursued. (...) Art policy can be seen (...) as an attempt at central level to influence the social functioning of art. (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 10-11)

Policies are implemented through policy instruments such as subsidies, laws and regulations. The instruments cause effects in society. The effects can be intended, although they may also differ from the intentions of the policy maker (De Bock et al., 1996, pp. 15-17). Policy instruments are devised on the basis of a certain policy theory. A policy theory is a set of assumptions about the nature of the relationships between actors, institutions and phenomena in society and the effects certain policy instruments have on these (Hoogerwerf, 2003, p. 22) Van der Knaap uses a more technical definition: 'A policy theory expresses an expected causality between means, instruments and objectives' (Van der Knaap, 2006, p. 282). For instance, a policy theory can be the assumption that when the price of a certain

product rises, individuals will be inclined to use it less and when the price is lowered people will be inclined to use it more. This type of theory leads to policies in which the price of bio-fuels is lowered through subsidies and the price of fossil fuels is raised through taxes. In cultural policy, subsidies lower the prices of attendance at aesthetic activities in the assumption that more people will participate. These examples immediately make clear that such price-oriented policies only make sense when the policy theory comprises assumptions about the potential harmfulness or benefits to society of the phenomena in question. This means that policies aimed at promoting bio-fuels are substantiated by theories on the detrimental effect of fossil fuels to ecology. In cultural policy, subsidies to lower prices of attendance only are useful when there is a theory on the beneficial effects of aesthetic activity. Note that such theories may be implicit in policy formulation.

### *Policy Evaluation*

Policy evaluation is about researching the effects generated by policy instruments.<sup>23</sup> Evaluation research can answer the question as to whether or not the intended goals have been attained and the extent to which goal attainment has been caused by the policy (Hoogerwerf, 2003, p. 21). De Bock et al. discern a classical approach to policy evaluation. A policy maker (P) has a set of goals ( $G_1, G_2, G_3$ ) and devises policy instruments ( $I_1, I_2, I_3$ ) to attain these goals. The policy instruments have certain effects in society ( $E_1, E_2, E_3$ ). Policy evaluation now entails comparing the effects ( $E_1, E_2, E_3$ ) to the goals ( $G_1, G_2, G_3$ ). This classical approach represents a quite mechanistic view on society. It indeed presumes that society can be engineered, as discussed above. The only problem for policy evaluation in this view is the problem of measurement. However, this simple situation for public policy hardly ever occurs. First, there are multiple actors in society of which the government is only one.<sup>24</sup> Each actor – including cultural institutions executing cultural policies – has its own set of goals. This entails that the effects of public policy will not be the result from the policy instruments alone but from the actions of the other actors as well. Administrators therefore need to relate to these other actors. Frequently policy evaluation is about the relationship between subsidizing governments and the subsidized institutions. Second, not all policy goals are stated clearly. When only stated in abstractions, these goals need to be ‘translated’ into concrete interventions by the executing institutions. This in itself can cause differences between the stated goals and the effects generated by the policy instruments. Third, policies or rather their goals and priorities, may change over time. This means that not all policies

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<sup>23</sup> Note that policy evaluation can also comprise evaluating the content of a policy and the process of a policy (Bressers and Hoogerwerf, 1995). For the present research, the content of arts policies and instruments used – subsidies to cultural institutions – are taken as a given. The effects of such subsidies in society are the theme of this research.

<sup>24</sup> Note that government itself cannot even be regarded as a single actor. Different departments within the government have different interests and thus strive for different – sometimes conflicting – goals. In cultural policy, such situations occur, for instance, when the cultural department of a city aims to diversify the subsidies to music festivals to encourage a diversity of aesthetic supply in the city while at the same time the economic department argues for concentrating subsidies to those festivals that attract large amounts of visitors. Incidentally their interests can also align when the superb artistic quality of a festival attracts large amounts of visitors from outside the city (see Chapter 8).

indeed need to be executed for goal attainment. Thus policy evaluation needs to reckon with the dynamics generated by the public policy environment (De Bock et al., 1996, p. 15-22). None the less, Van der Knaap (1995) argues that the classical approach (he defines it as 'rational-objectivistic') may complement the approach favoured by De Bock et al., which he denotes as 'subjective-argumentative'. In a later article he elaborates this assumption by suggesting that formal policy targets and performance indicators provide a 'working language' for government officials and institutions executing public policies. 'In a world that seems to become more dynamic and complicated all the time, it is often useful to temporarily freeze ambitions in terms of performance and effect targets' (Van der Knaap, 2006, p. 282).

Various forms of policy evaluation research can be distinguished:

A first distinction covers the policy field. Every field has its specific observation methods and evaluation criteria (Bressers, 2003, p. 178). This is important as policy evaluation in essence entails producing a value judgement based upon certain criteria (*ibid*, p. 173-4). This means that professional knowledge from the policy field under investigation is needed in order to conduct meaningful evaluations (see also Radin, 2006, as cited in the introduction).

Evaluations can be distinguished on the basis of their time of execution. *Ex ante* policy evaluation is conducted before the policy is implemented. It aims to gain insight into the effects of intended policies and instruments and allows the formulation of strategic decisions during the preparation of policies. Another important feature of *ex ante* policy research is that it can aid in developing ways to account systematically for policy execution as it can develop clear and attainable policy goals (Ministerie van Financiën, 2003, p. 6). Specifically this last point is of interest to the present research. *Ex post* policy evaluation is used to evaluate policies that are in place or that have ended. In *ex post* evaluation research, the effects of policy instruments are evaluated after the fact. Bressers notes that the differences between *ex ante* and *ex post* research are gradual because both types of research can be used to adjust policies that are in practice (Bressers, 2003, p. 179), which concurs with the definition the Ministry of Finance uses for *ex post* evaluation:

research in which, during the implementation of policy or subsequently, the policy or operational management is assessed and judged in terms of achievement of aims, effectiveness and efficiency, or: the study and assessment, in a systematic and methodologically responsible manner, of (1) the effects of existing policy in society or governmental organization, (2) the way in which policy is implemented and/or (3) the costs and quality of products and services delivered, in the framework of existing policy. (Ministerie van Financiën, 2003, p. 44)

This quote comprises yet another distinction for evaluation research. The research can regard the effects, the way in which the policy is executed (i.e., the instruments) and the efficiency of the policy. The present research focuses on the effects of cultural (or rather performing arts) policy.<sup>25</sup> Thus it mainly concerns *ex post* policy evaluation. Because the research focuses on accountability for policy execution it also comprises elements of *ex ante* evaluations, most

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<sup>25</sup> As will be demonstrated later, it is difficult to research the quality of the products delivered as a result of the cultural policy.

notably where agreements are reached between cultural institutions and public administrators on the data they provide to account for the spending of public funds. Most of the cultural policy execution is delegated to privatized cultural institutions, usually foundations, which receive a subsidy, or to decentralized business units within the public administration which adhere to maximum deficit agreements.<sup>26</sup> Therefore the present research focuses on the data that are collected and exchanged between these execution organizations and the city administration.

A further remark should be made about the effects of policies when conducting *ex post* evaluations. Effects can be intended or unintended and they can be foreseen and unforeseen (De Bock et al., 1996, p. 40). In *ex post* evaluations of policy effects it should be decided which to include in the research. Intended and foreseen effects corroborate the policy theory (or refute it when the effects are adverse to what was intended). Unforeseen effects may complement the policy theory, as the theory did not include these effects. For instance, food prices worldwide have risen as a result of the promotion of bio-fuels, causing poor countries to become even more dependent on development aid for their food provision. In cultural policy, the notion of social barriers to participation can complement the policy theory when low entrance prices do not lead to a rise in participation. Unintended but foreseen effects should be considered as side-effects of the policy instruments implemented. It is logical that intended and foreseen effects will be the focus of *ex post* policy evaluation as they should reflect the primary concerns for implementing the policies at all. None the less, the inclusion of unintended and unforeseen effects will make policy evaluation more sensitive to the dynamics of public policy (*ibid.*, p. 56). The present research focuses on the intended and foreseen effects. These are the effects mentioned in the policy documents. However, when unforeseen and unintended effects can be considered to occur, e.g., a negative impact of the arts on social structures, this will not be disregarded.

Maessen distinguishes between 'before-after' studies and 'with-without' policy evaluation studies.<sup>27</sup> Studies focusing on 'before-after' are based on a comparison of the situation before a policy has been implemented with the situation after its implementation. This is called 'goal-attainment research'. The causal link between the policy instruments and the change in the situation is not relevant in this type of research. 'With-without' research compares situations where the policy instruments have been implemented, with situations where they

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<sup>26</sup> Note that where this occurs it is usually the largest cultural distributional institutions for performing arts that have not been privatized, such as a city theatre and concert hall. This is the case in Arnhem, Groningen, Maastricht, Utrecht, and in Rotterdam (until 2008 when the city theatre and concert hall were privatised).

<sup>27</sup> A further distinction Maessen makes is between policies in which the intended effects have been specified and policies in which they have not. The latter entails that there is no criterion on which to base value judgements. The most recent literature on policy evaluation disregards this situation. As Bressers has stressed, policy evaluation must express a value judgement (Bressers, 2003, p. 173-4). Otherwise there is no question of policy evaluation at all. Furthermore the debate in cultural or art policy concerns precisely the point of inclusion of the pre-specified objectives of policy. Therefore this distinction is not relevant for the present research.

have not been implemented. This is called 'effectiveness research' (Maessen, 1984, p. 7). Both types of research are problematic as far as cultural or art policy is concerned. A 'before-after' comparison is hard to imagine, as public arts policies have been implemented for decades so there is no previous situation with which to compare it. Furthermore, these policies have been implemented in all of the Netherlands, which means that no comparison is possible between situations where instruments have been implemented and where they have not been implemented.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, a combination of goal attainment and effectiveness research seems in order for the present research.

Goal-attainment research investigates whether or not certain pre-specified goals have been attained. Usually this concerns the officially stated objectives of a public policy document. This type of research does not question causal relations between goal attainment and the policy instruments used. However, monitoring goal attainment and the implementation of policy instruments can consequently be considered a step up from no policy evaluation at all. This monitoring generates useful information on policy implementation and it can be considered a first step with regard to effectiveness. In effectiveness research, the causal links between policy instruments and goal attainment are also analysed (Bressers, 2003, p.180). The first step is to establish which goals will be evaluated. This is more difficult than it seems. In a situation where there are multiple goals, it is necessary to establish which will be evaluated and which will not. Usually the goals will be derived from policy documents. This is the approach favoured in the present research. However, such an approach is not without problems:<sup>29</sup>

- The formally written goals may not be the goals that are pursued in practice.
- The formally written goals may be described in vague or abstract terms.
- The formally written goals may have changed by the time of policy evaluation, leading to uncertainty as to which goals should be used in evaluation research.
- As multiple stakeholders are involved in policy execution, the choice of goals to include in the evaluation can be contested. As a result, policy evaluation can usually only be directed at specific aspects of the policy, and is only valid when the yardstick against which goal attainment is measured is accepted by all parties.
- Formally written goals may be only specified in qualitative terms. This entails that these goals in the policy evaluations are made operational in a measurable goal. These operationalizations may not reflect the original goal pursued.

All of these issues are relevant to the present research. Regarding the first point, this research takes a formal approach by focusing on policy documents that have been submitted to (and

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<sup>28</sup> The former State Secretary for Culture, Rick van der Ploeg, expressed this quite clearly at the expert meeting *The Social Effects of Culture* held by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on 13 February 2008. Because of democratic principles in cultural policy it is not possible to withhold subsidies to a certain part of the country and then compare the situation with the part that did receive the subsidies, although it should be mentioned that one could compare cities with many performing arts facilities to cities without. However, here city size and location will be hugely intervening variables.

in almost all cases approved by) parliament or city councils. It is the goals in these documents that should be evaluated. The other points are taken into account by studying current evaluation practices of municipalities (see Chapter 11).

A last distinction regards the focus of policy evaluation. Evaluations can regard the outputs as well as the outcomes of the policy. On the one hand, the execution of public policy involves concrete actions. In the case of (performing) art policy, this refers to the productions and performances that are realized by performing arts institutions. On the other hand, policy execution involves the public's reaction to such actions, which is the primary policy effect. The difference is important, as a subsidized organization can have a large output but limited outcome, or the other way around (Bressers, 2003, pp. 183-4). Measuring outputs is far easier than measuring outcomes. Measuring outcomes involves measuring effects in society that are not usually exclusively the result of the policy under investigation. Furthermore, the outcomes of a policy may only become apparent in the long run, such as is the case with the environmental gains by switching to bio-fuels. This research demonstrates that this situation also holds for art policy.

As the discussion at the beginning of this Introduction makes clear, the current debate on cultural or art policy is about the inclusion of non-aesthetic goals in cultural policy, such as economic and social development. This means that the causal links between aesthetic activities and economic and social development are being questioned. Therefore the present research includes effectiveness research, i.e., not only the extent to which goals are attained is relevant for cultural policy evaluation. The evaluation methods developed in this research also address the causal links between goal attainment and the policy instruments (i.e., subsidies for aesthetic activities). In other words, the research should focus on the effects or outcomes of (performing) art policy. Restricting the research to outputs would imply that the total amount of performances and attendance are reviewed. While these figures are interesting, they do not shed light on the nature of the aesthetic activities and the functions they create at a personal and societal level.

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<sup>29</sup> The list is based upon various sources: Blommenstein et al. (1984), Maessen (1984), Bressers and Hoogerwerf (1995), Jansen and Hellendoorn (1999), and Bressers (2003).



**PART I:**  
FUNCTIONING OF THE PERFORMING ARTS  
IN DUTCH CULTURAL POLICY



# 1. Performing Arts in Urban Society: Preliminary Definitions

## 1.1. Definitions of Culture and Art in Dutch Cultural Policy

In order to study the views on functioning of performing arts in urban society as they are present in Dutch cultural policy, it is necessary to have definitions of the terms 'culture', 'art' and 'functioning in society'. Although the research focuses on municipal policies, these definitions can be derived from national policy documents. There are two reasons for this. First, the responsibilities of national and local government differ with regard to the Dutch performing arts. Since 1985 the production of performing arts has been almost exclusively the responsibility of the national government (see Van Maanen, 1997, p. 234).<sup>1</sup> Second, as will be shown in more detail in Chapter 3, municipal governments nowadays closely follow the national cultural policy agenda, precisely as a result of these complementary responsibilities. In doing so, they adhere to the same definitions of culture and art. As the research focuses on the period between 1992 and 2005, the definitions of culture and art will be derived from the policy documents leading up to this period.

The *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* (Document on Cultural Policy) published in 1985 can be regarded as a common base for all cultural policy documents. This letter to parliament was drafted under the responsibility of Elco Brinkman (of the Christian Democratic Party). He did not aim to describe the cultural policy in detail but wished to express the starting points of Dutch cultural policy based on the broad political consensus on these starting points (Ministerie van WVC, 1985, p. 2). The document eventually led to the adoption of the *Wet op het Specifiek Cultuurbeleid* (Specific Cultural Policy Act) in 1993.

Two meanings of the word 'culture' can be found in the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid*. The first is culture in the sociological or anthropological sense. This refers to the norms and values that people share. These norms and values form the foundation of society. The second meaning refers to culture in a more specific sense, namely, the products of the expression of these values and beliefs through aesthetic means. Culture, in its specific meaning, is related to art. The following quote reflects both meanings.

For all kinds of values that people in a certain society share: their opinions about what is worth pursuing, the way they interact, the way they express themselves – all these matters are often

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of youth theatre and the major theatre companies in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.

experienced as being the way they are as the result of historical developments. (...) But within that more spacious domain of culture there are traditionally certain areas where culture reaches self-awareness, where it justifies its actions, where the process of culture forming is consciously anticipated, countered and reflected, in both a confirmatory and confronting manner. Besides religion, philosophy and science, cultural expression, one of these areas is art, the artistic and its corresponding cultural expression. This is the area where a culture is made sensorially perceptible and represented, albeit often in an indirect, symbolic sense, in human design. (Ministerie WVC, 1985, p. 5)

Although this quote does not give an exact definition of culture (in both meanings) or art, it is of interest. Culture is regarded as the result of a historic development. Within the broad domain of culture (in its anthropological meaning) there are systems that function to facilitate this development, 'where culture becomes aware of itself'. Religion, philosophy and science are such systems. The arts and cultural expression (in its specific meaning) are also such systems. Cultural artefacts function in a specific way as they are perceptually discernable and they are intentionally created, indirect, symbolic expressions. Brinkman uses the term 'culture to the second degree' (*cultuur tot de tweede macht, ibid., p. 6*) to denote artistic forms of expression which serve as commentator and pacesetter (*gangmaker*) within culture. A report by the *Harmonisatieraad Welzijnsbeleid* (Council for Harmonization of Welfare Policy) which had been used to formulate the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* contains a more specific description. The report concludes that, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the arts were used as expression of absolute values, of 'how things have always been' and was mainly concerned with expression of national identities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the focus shifted towards a more personal level. Art became a value in itself.<sup>2</sup> 'Art is the resource of the avant-garde *par excellence*, ousting beliefs such as "that's just the way it is"' (*Harmonisatieraad Welzijnsbeleid, 1985, p. 8*). It can be assumed that this is what is meant by 'pacesetter' within culture. This view on art and culture, though not very precise, forms the basis of the formulation of Dutch cultural policy. It is of particular importance that art is viewed as having a function at a personal or individual level as well as at the collective level. People derive 'sensory, emotional and intellectual' frames of reference (*ibid., p. 11*) from cultural expressions. Renewal of these expressions through experiment is needed for the common good (*ibid., p. 11*). Therefore the goal of cultural policy is the preservation *and* renewal of cultural values as well as making them accessible and promoting participation in cultural events (*ibid., p. 27*).

These conceptions of culture and art are reminiscent of the definitions of culture that can be found in a book which was published by Zijderfeld two years earlier.<sup>3</sup> He based his ideas on the work of sociologists such as Weber, De Tocqueville, Simmel and Mannheim, and defines culture as follows:

Culture consists of human aspirations, of ideas that reflect what people wish to be and to become, to experience and to do. The core of these aspirations consists of values, norms and meanings that largely existed before we were born and – although changed to a greater or lesser degree – will survive after we have passed away. (Zijderfeld, 1983, p. 43)

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<sup>2</sup> The view on art as a value in itself will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup> Zijderfeld is generally regarded as one of the party ideologists of the Christian Democratic Party in the Netherlands. It is therefore not unlikely that Brinkman based his political views on Zijderfeld's work.

Zijderveld points out that these values and norms are intangible. They are expressed in symbols which comprise the meaning of a culture (Zijderveld, 1983, p. 34). These symbols are not only of an aesthetic nature but also comprise social security systems or institutions in society. Culture (in its specific meaning) and art can be regarded as one of these systems where the culture (in its anthropological meaning) becomes apparent. Culture's essential function is to lend collective identity to groups of people (*ibid.*, p. 44). Zijderveld describes identity as everything that answers the question 'who am I?' (*ibid.*, p. 31).

## 1.2. Culture, Art and Identity: Views from Theory

In his introduction to sociological theory Newman describes culture in the same way as Zijderveld although he relates culture to the concept of society. 'Sociologists define *society* as a population living in the same geographic area that share a culture and a common identity and whose members are subject to the same political authority' (Newman, 2004, p. 19), thus adding a geographic notion to the idea of culture and identity. He stresses that society is not a fixed phenomenon, it can be modified by the actions of influential individuals but

sometimes the actions of ordinary individuals mobilize larger groups of people to collectively alter some aspect of social life (...) In sum, we live in a world in which our behaviours are largely a product of societal and historical processes. Society is an objective fact that coerces, even creates, us (...). At the same time, we are constantly creating, maintaining, reaffirming and transforming society. (Newman, 2004, p. 21)

What Newman denotes as society corresponds in essence with what has been called 'culture' in the anthropological sense in the policy documents. Newman reserves the term 'culture' for culture in a more specific meaning which he views as the mortar that holds the building blocks of society together (*ibid.*, p. 25).<sup>4</sup> Culture 'consists of the language, values, beliefs, rules, behaviours, and physical artefacts of a society. (...) Culture gives us codes of conduct – the proper, acceptable ways of doing things' (*ibid.*, p. 31). Although with the inclusion of artefacts in this definition Newman mixes both the connotation of culture as intangible and its condensation in tangible objects (or, in the case of the performing arts, as performances that can be experienced), the definition once again centres on the norms and values that govern people's everyday lives. Thus Newman essentially uses the same definition of culture as is present in the national policy documents, although he adds the geographical dimension.

Newman describes identity as follows:

Identity is our most essential and personal characteristic. It consists of our membership in various social groups (race, ethnicity, religion, gender and so on), the traits we show, and the traits others ascribe to us. (Newman, 2004, p. 128)

With this definition he points to the fact that people can have several identities at the same time, being a member of several specific social groups, or rather: the specific composition of the memberships of social groups of one person determines his or her identity. This point will be taken up in Section 9.2. It is useful to compare the notion of identity found in

Zijderveld's work to that in Fischer-Lichte's. She regards the history of European theatre as a history of identity. She uses a general definition of identity (as opposed to specific definitions used in philosophy and psychology) which denotes:

certain aspects and factors which allow someone to say 'I', which provide him with an awareness of his self and in this sense, a self-consciousness – whether as a member of a culture, a nation, an ethnic group, a family, or as an individual. (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 2).

Her definition incorporates both Zijderveld's notion of the term ('who am I') and the element that Newman stresses: identity relates a person to groups, be they defined through culture (in its anthropological meaning), ethnicity or nationality. This membership of a certain group provides persons with frames of reference (*Harmonisatieraad Welzijnsbeleid*, 1985, p. 11, referred to above). This level of definition of culture, art and identity should suffice for now. Culture is a term that refers to the norms and values that people share. They are at the basis of structuring society. The norms and values are not constant, they evolve. They are the result of an historic development which can be called tradition. The norms and values cannot be easily observed as they are intangible. However, they can become apparent in symbols. Cultural expression and art are such symbols. Although the concept of identity culture and art relate the individual to the collective level, this relationship is double-sided. Society as an objective fact coerces and even shapes an individual, thus determining his or her identity. The specific composition of memberships of specific social groups makes up one's personal identity. Membership of certain groups provides the individual with frames of reference. Cultural expression refers to all forms of symbolic expression which function to represent shared values and beliefs in society, representing the identity of members of that society and/or of specific groups within society. Art is regarded as a specific form of cultural expression. Artistic expressions are those in which existing values and beliefs are challenged, 'tegenstrevend' (counteracting) in the words of the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* (Ministerie van WVC, 1984, p. 6). As a result they aid the development of society.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.3. Functioning of Culture and Art in Urban Society

The term 'functioning' refers to the object of research in this study. In studying the policy documents, it is useful to determine the goals of the cultural policy in societal terms. This means that the goals of cultural policy should not be studied in terms of the output (numbers of cultural institutions that are being subsidized, the number of shows and exhibitions they produce, or the social and geographical characteristics of the audiences for these events) but in terms of the outcome. What are the effects that politicians expect from the arts in society?

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<sup>4</sup> Newman describes these building blocks as statuses, roles, groups and organizations. For the present discussion, however, it is not necessary to go into such detail; see Newman (2004), pp. 21-8.

<sup>5</sup> Note that a leap is made from cultural expressions to artistic expressions here. The quote clearly disregards the fact that there are also cultural expressions which are not symbolic expressions, i.e., they are not aesthetic in their nature. For instance, lectures and articles in newspapers are indeed cultural expressions and can be 'tegenstrevend' too. However, such cultural expressions do not function on the level of perception but on the level of cognition. But the policy document – and the present research – focuses on art policy, thus cultural expression, and the aesthetic are used interchangeably, whereas in fact they do not have the same meaning.

Chapters 2 and 3, which are based on cultural policy documents, cover the way Dutch policy-makers regard art's functioning in society; i.e., what are the societal processes they wish to encourage and where do these processes manifest themselves? Specifically this functioning should be at city level, for the research aims to develop methods for local politics to measure the effect of cultural policy.

To analyse the policy documents a simple model will be used. This model is based upon two questions. The first deals with whether or not the functioning is considered to be specific to the arts. The effects of the arts in society can either be specific to the arts – i.e., they concern functions that cannot be achieved through other means – or they can be side-effects. Such side-effects can also occur as a result of other than aesthetic activities. In the present research, the effects that are intimately bound to the nature of art will be called 'intrinsic', the other effects will be called 'extrinsic'.<sup>6</sup> These terms have been derived from aesthetic theory, although in aesthetic theory the common approach is to distinguish between intrinsic and *instrumental*. A work of art can either be valued as a contingent means to a particular end, i.e. instrumentally, or valued on the basis of the imaginative experience it affords, i.e. intrinsically (see Kieran, 2001). The intrinsic qualities of an artwork prescribe and guide active mental engagement and responses to the work.<sup>7</sup> To value a work instrumentally implies that it can be replaced by any other work or activity that satisfies the end realized. As Kieran demonstrates, this approach is not without flaws because, if artistic pleasure is defined as the end realized by participating in artistic activities, all artistic qualities are by definition of an instrumental rather than an intrinsic nature (*ibid.*, p. 216). This is why in this research the term extrinsic is preferred over instrumental as it does not concern the purpose audience members have in seeking out aesthetic experiences.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This distinction concurs with Abbing's description of *external effects* in cultural policy. External effects occur for other than the parties involved in an economic transaction and thus are external to the individual transactions. For instance, a consumer buying an old monument in order to take up residence there produces effects for others in addition to buying and maintaining the building: people passing by will experience the beauty or history of the building, a tourist agency may even organize tours passing by the monument. The owner of the monument receives no financial compensation for these effects. In economic theory this can warrant government support (see e.g. Abbing, 1989, p. 207). Abbing distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic external effects. Extrinsic external effects satisfy consumer needs that can also be satisfied through other than artistic means. According to Abbing, a strict distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic external effects is not possible for consumer needs ultimately cannot be described individually from one another. He argues that cultural consumption satisfies different mutually dependent consumer needs, both intrinsic and extrinsic (Abbing, 1992, pp. 172-3). Though the division between intrinsic and extrinsic effects may be problematic, as Abbing suggests, it is useful in structuring thinking on the functioning of culture and art in society.

<sup>7</sup> Carroll (1999) and Davies (2006) use the term 'aesthetic properties', see Chapter 6.

<sup>8</sup> In his introduction to the philosophy of the arts, Davies (2006) also distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic. However, he approaches the subject from the issue of the autonomy of the arts, which leads to the conclusion that art functions intrinsically when art is valued for its own sake. He proposes that there are two strands in art philosophy concerning the value of the experience which is evoked by the consumption of art. On the one hand, there are philosophers who think that the pleasure derived from the experience of art for its own sake (i.e., the artwork is contemplated not for any ulterior reasons) is the sole intrinsic effect of art consumption. On the other hand, 'it is plausible to think that art might have intrinsic *and* extrinsic value. It can be a source of pleasurable experience, which we

The second question covers the issue of for whom the functioning is considered to occur. The question can be clarified on the basis of the concept of the art world (Becker, 1982). Performing artists are part of an art world which aims at producing cultural events on stage. In turn, this art world is a part of society as a whole. From this society, the performing arts world draws an audience which participates in the productions. As theatre can be regarded as a two-way communication activity, the cultural activities have effect on the performing artists themselves and on their audiences. The effects on the artists themselves can be regarded as a feedback loop: through their work and the audience's reaction to it, they gain more experience in expressing themselves on stage. This can be regarded as artistic growth which will be the basis for new productions in the future. The effects on the audience can be divided according to the level at which they occur: individual or collective. The effects can occur for audience members individually and at collective level: that of society. Here, a feedback loop also exists, for the effects an individual spectator experiences (either of intrinsic or of extrinsic nature) will influence his or her perception of future performances. Furthermore, the effects on collective level influence the culture of a society as a whole and therefore influence both artists and audiences, which, in turn, affects the way they produce and experience plays.

Functioning from the perspective of:	Intrinsic Functioning	Extrinsic Functioning
Artists	A	B
Audience members individually	C	D
Audience collectively	E	F

**Table 1.1. Theoretical categorization of functions of performing arts in society**

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have accepted above as a form of intrinsic value, and it can provide information that is useful for helping us to navigate and comprehend the wider world' (Davies, 2006, p. 200, italics QLvdH). This suggests that when the experience of art provides us with information that is useful in everyday life, this should be regarded as an extrinsic function. However, Davies does not make clear why one cannot think of the apprehension of this information as an intrinsic function as well, when this information is inherently bound to how the artwork is conceived. This argument will be extended in Chapter 6 of the present research. Note that Davies uses the term 'value of the experience'. This suggests that there are certain values within the experience that have certain effects - or functions - for the individual audience member. The distinction between values and functions will be introduced in Chapter 6.



Theoretically, the functioning of performing arts in society can therefore be considered to occur in six different categories. The functioning of performing arts can occur for the performing artists themselves, for the individual spectator, and at collective level. The functioning can be either of an intrinsic or an extrinsic nature (see Table 1.1). It is not immediately apparent whether this table is entirely relevant. There are two problems with the model:

First, the question arises as to whether or not the extrinsic functions of performing arts should be included within a framework describing the functioning of performing arts in urban society. This seems unnecessary, for these functions are not related to the specific artistic qualities of the performing arts and therefore the societal effects of this type of functioning can be achieved with other publicly or privately funded activities. Leaving extrinsic functions out of the evaluation presupposes that the public funding of the performing arts is legitimized solely on the basis of the intrinsic functions. However, extrinsic functions may be a legitimization of cultural policy, or combinations of intrinsic and extrinsic arguments can be expected to exist. An investigation should be carried out, based on the policy documents of cities and the national government, as to whether or not this is the case.

Second, the question arises as to whether or not extrinsic functions are feasible with regard to the artists. It seems likely that in this simple model all effects in the 'feedback loop' through the artists are intrinsic, for they are defined as the professional experience of a given performing artist. This would mean that box 'B' is empty by definition. However, some extrinsic functions of performing arts for the artists can be conceived. For instance, the provision of a source of income for the artist and co-operation with other people as a meaningful form of social interaction can be seen as functions for the artists that are extrinsic. For the present research, the question as to whether or not governments use these extrinsic functions to legitimize cultural policy is a relevant one. Abbing suggests that there has always been a sharp distinction in Dutch cultural policy between policy measures aimed at cultural and artistic activities (and their functioning in society) and the artists themselves. Policy covering artists has always been the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare (see Abbing, 2002, p. 214, and Pots 2006, p. 258). Measures to influence the income of artists, such as the *Beeldende Kunstenaars Regeling* (Policy measure for the visual artists) and the *Wet Inkomensvoorziening Kunstenaars* (Act governing the income position of artists) have been brought into force by the Ministry of Social Welfare (*ibid.*, p. 315). It therefore follows that, in the cultural policy documents of the Dutch government, the income policy aimed at artists need not be discussed and therefore cell 'B' could prove to be of no relevance for the present research. It can also be assumed that politicians are not especially interested in the effects for the artists, either intrinsically or extrinsically. This would mean that cell 'A' is empty as well. Whether or not this is the case should be indicated by the policy documents.

These questions will be addressed in Chapter 4, which summarizes the results of the discussion of the policy documents from the period of 1992 to 2005.<sup>9</sup>

#### 1.4. Political Orientation and Cultural Policy in the Netherlands

A last issue that should be addressed before turning attention to the policy documents is the question as to whether or not views on culture, art and its functioning in society vary as a result of the political orientation of elected officials. This would present an obstacle for the research. Kassies is of the opinion that art policy in the Netherlands has not undergone much politicization. He argues that governments of different political orientations have adopted the same principles for art policy. Moreover, the programmes of political parties do not differ in a manner that leads to greatly different policy orientations (Kassies, 1983, p. 11). Winsemius (1999) researched the political debate on the art policy in 1992 and came to the same conclusion. In a research for the *Scientific Council for the Government Policy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, WRR)* Hoefnagel did find differences in the orientation of political parties towards cultural policy. His research is geared, however, towards cultural policy in a broader meaning that includes education policy as well as media policy. The differences between political parties have been most markedly present in these policy areas and not in the arts. Furthermore, Hoefnagel states that there is no causal link between the ideas of different parties and their behaviour in political decision making (Hoefnagel, 1992, p. 103). From 1980 onward, the essential values underlying cultural policy have been shared by the dominant political fractions (liberals, Christian-democrats, social-democrats and social-liberals) (*ibid.*, p. 105). However, slight differences still exist because the shared values underlying the cultural policy stem from different views on mankind and society. Therefore each party emphasizes different points within the value system underlying cultural policy. Different preferences also exist regarding the type of legislation and policy instruments that should be used. A different language even is used to verbalize the cultural policy: the liberals tend to use more economical and legal reasoning than the other parties do, for instance (*ibid.*, p. 105).

All three studies indicate that the Dutch national government's cultural policy in general and its art policy in particular can be studied while neglecting differences in political orientation of the government officials. The studies indicate that the legitimization of cultural policy has been under no serious political debate, and from 1980 onward the existing differences between political parties concerning the art policy have become less and less relevant. Moreover, by studying various consecutive policy documents, one can trace changes in the legitimization of cultural policy, so these, if they exist, should not impede the results of this research.

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<sup>9</sup> Note that, for the sake of clarity in the discussion of the policy documents, Chapters 2 and 3 will not refer to the distinction between the individual and collective level on the side of the audience. This distinction will be reintroduced in Chapter 4.

## 2. Political Statements about Culture, Art and Society in the Netherlands: the National Government

Dutch cultural policy can be regarded as a joint effort of the national, provincial and municipal governments. When researching the functioning of the performing arts in a city in the Netherlands, the national political agenda and local politics both have to be taken into account because the national government is largely responsible for subsidizing theatre groups, dance companies and symphony orchestras as well as jazz and classical music ensembles.<sup>1</sup> The theatres and concert halls in the Netherlands are exclusively paid for by municipalities. Provincial government is less crucial to this analysis because, being limited to youth theatre, it has a far smaller role in subsidizing the performing arts.<sup>2</sup> Even though the larger cities in the Netherlands developed a cultural policy concerning the performing arts before the national government did, the analysis of the cultural policy documents starts with the national government.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This division of responsibilities concerning the performing arts was introduced in 1983, from a situation where theatre companies and symphony orchestras could have up to twenty subsidizing governmental bodies. With the exception of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, all responsibility for subsidizing production in the performing arts has been transferred to the state.

<sup>2</sup> The Dutch manual for cultural policy concludes: '(The) pillars of the national system for subsidies (...) are founded on an intricate network of locally funded accommodations (...). Within this thorough framework of a national and local infrastructure the provincial government has free reign. (...) The only fixed responsibility for the provinces is the sustenance of youth theatre (which in the mean time is in most cases partly funded by the national government as well) (Slegers 2005, pp. I.12-13). The total expenditure of the Dutch provinces in the field of the performing arts in 2007 was € 17 million as opposed to € 243 million by the national government and € 325 million by the Dutch municipalities (this last figure includes € 265 million expenditure on venues (source: CBS statline, accessed on 4 December 2009).

<sup>3</sup> In his history of Dutch cultural policy, Pots (2006) describes how the national cultural policy evolved after 1795, the year the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands ended and a central national government was installed. Up to then, the cities were the most important governmental bodies that concerned themselves with cultural policy. The absence of a strong central government in the Republic left cultural activities to private initiative.

The fact that the initiators usually operated in urban settings and city administrations were often prepared to support their requirements contributed to the cities gaining experience with certain forms of 'cultural policy' long before the introduction of the central state, and thus developing as cultural centres (Pots, 2006, p. 420).

This situation continued until the Second World War. After the war, a cultural policy developed at state level and a process was started which gave the state a dominant role over local governments and private initiative in Dutch cultural policy (*ibid.*, p. 424), even though the expenditure of the national

In 2002 the *Ministerie van OCW* (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences) published a document describing Dutch cultural policy as part of a comparative project by the Council for Europe. The historic overview reveals that, before the Second World War, cultural policy in Holland was dominated by the political interests of the so-called 'pillar structure' (*zuilen*) which divided Dutch society into strictly separated groups based on their own school of thought: denominational, social democratic and liberal (*Ministerie OCW, 2002, p. 20, 21*).<sup>4</sup> The leaders of the different 'pillars' were in agreement that the main purpose of cultural policy was to prevent unwanted messages getting across to their own constituencies. The way they reacted to the advent of the mass media is an excellent example of this. Socialist leaders viewed the entertainment industry as one-sided. It was regarded as a threat to the emancipation of the working class. The leaders of the religious 'pillars' regarded the growing mass culture as tangible evidence for the secularization of society. This meant that there was a broad political agreement to fight mass culture through censorship and taxes, measures that were legitimized with an appeal to civic order and public decency (*ibid., p. 34*).

After World War II, a more elaborate system of government support for the arts developed which finally led to the adoption of the *Wet op het Specifieke Cultuurbeleid* (Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy) in 1993. Quality and diversity became the official aims of the cultural policy. This was possible because the 'pillars' increasingly lost their influence and people moved more freely between different social circles. The 1960s are a turning point in the development towards a more tolerant cultural policy.

Fear of stage performances, pictures or films having a deleterious effect on morality ebbed away. There were fewer prosecutions and the government stopped intervening preventively. Changes in the law played only a minor role. (...) Another area where moral, political and religious values are steadily losing ground is in the awarding of arts subsidies and prizes by municipal and central government: quality is now the criterion for deciding which artists, art works or institutions are eligible for support. To begin with, the criterion was only applied to museums and heritage sites; nowadays it plays a pivotal role across the entire cultural spectrum. (*Ministerie van OCW, 2002, p. 35*)

The Council for Europe report describes the different points of view that have been dominating cultural policy. In the sixties, free expression and creativity were the focal points. Tradition and acquired skills were viewed as restricting the natural creativity of people (*Ministerie OCW, 2002, p. 54*). The link between education policy and cultural policy had been severed. In the seventies, social relevance became a dominant concept. The focus shifted to activities and work forms that were aimed at reducing social deprivation. However, the writers of the report conclude that these principles did not influence actual

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government was still largely exceeded by the combined expenditure of municipalities and provinces. After 1992, many cities adopted the same four-year cycle in cultural policy and, in doing so, reinforced the dominance of the state. A discussion of contemporary policy documents in the Netherlands should therefore start at national level.

<sup>4</sup> Note that the report has since been updated, e.g. in 2006 (*Ministerie van OCW / Boekmanstichting, 2006*). However, the 2002 edition is the most elaborate and will be referred to here.

subsidy decisions (*ibid.*, p. 54).<sup>5</sup> The cultural policy and budget as well as the number of organizations subsidized by the government grew as a result to these different points of view. 'The primacy of "welfare" ideology in the seventies did not stand in the way of arts institutions gaining greater autonomy' (*ibid.*, p. 54). In the 1980s, quality became a policy aim in itself and much emphasis was placed on the deregulation and professionalization of cultural institutions (*ibid.*, p. 55). This change in policy orientation is crucial for the present study because it led to a growing gap between artists and their audiences. Oosterbaan Martinius states that the growing emphasis on quality legitimized a more autonomous position for artists.

One can describe the autonomization process in art as a development in which aesthetic standards for the production and assessment of art gain in importance, while ethical (moral and political) criteria lose influence. The representation and design of artworks are increasingly determined by artists and less and less by the church, the state and rich clients. The consequences of this development – which is in itself an aspect of the professionalization of the artistic vocation – are many and varied. As a result, art itself is becoming increasingly mobile and unpredictable. Styles and movements succeed one another rapidly and without direction. Artists consistently seek new avenues; art is increasingly becoming a medium for self-expression. (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 18)

This has led to a situation where only specialists are able to follow the ever-changing developments in the art world, with the general public no longer able to follow these. This leads to a paradox in legitimizing cultural policy, for the policy itself is directed toward furthering artistic quality, but this – unintentionally – strengthens the trend towards autonomization of the arts and therefore does not secure public support for the arts (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 18).<sup>6</sup> In the 1990s, one of the measures to counterbalance the effects of the autonomization process was to reinforce cultural education. The link between cultural and educational policy has been re-established, with cultural policy being made part of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Sciences (since 1994).

This short overview of Dutch cultural policy is somewhat shocking because there seem to be no guiding principles for Dutch cultural policy apart from quality and diversity. But these principles do not seem to be derived from a notion about the function of culture and art in society. It seems that the needs of the art world itself have been the overriding influence on the development of a cultural policy, instead of views on the functioning of culture in society. Oosterbaan Martinius's analysis confirms that the needs of the art world itself have

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<sup>5</sup> The report concludes that 'In practice all it amounted to in many cases was sloganizing. With hindsight, not a single grant was reviewed because of a supposed lack of social relevance' (Ministerie van OCW, 2002, p. 54). This seems to imply that the policies had no influence in the artistic practices of the time. However, when subsidy decisions do not change, this still leaves open the possibility that the art institutions did change their management decisions to comply with the new policy trends. Moreover, it is very likely that the policy makers based their changing focus on trends within the cultural institutions themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Note that Oosterbaan Martinius focuses on the visual arts as in his view this problem is most markedly present in the field of visual arts. He claims that his analysis can be extended to other art forms. As will be shown the discrepancy between audiences and artists is a recurring theme in the policy documents concerning the performing arts as well.

been a major contributing factor to the development of a cultural policy.<sup>7</sup> In itself, the process of autonomization is an aspect of the professionalization of the artists. Abbing (2002) and Van Klink (2005) claim that cultural policy first and foremost serves the needs of artists. However, this does not preclude the policy documents containing notions of art's functioning in society. It may be the case that artists were able to secure support from politicians for their own interests. But this does not exclude the possibility that politicians were susceptible to these interests because of the benefits they expect from the work of artists in society. Furthermore it is probable that expectations of art's functioning in society are present within the art world itself and, with the influence of the art world on policy development, such views have become part of the policy. In the following sections, the cultural policy documents themselves will be examined to establish which notions on the functioning of the (performing) arts in society are being expressed. The cultural policy documents have been produced in a four-year cycle since the adoption of the Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy.

#### *Method of examination*

The policy documents of the national government have been examined, starting in 1992. The texts have been checked for notions alluding to the functioning of art in (urban) society. Because this research aims at the functioning of art in urban society, the documents have also been checked for statements on cities and regions. Only the general chapters and the chapters on arts and performing arts (when existent) have been examined. In the following sections, the relevant quotes from the policy documents will be discussed briefly. The discussion of each document starts with the intrinsic effects of culture and art which can be found in the document. The autonomy of culture is a recurring issue.

### **2.1. 1993-1996: Investing in Culture**

The first document, *Investeren in Cultuur* (Investing in Culture), was published under the responsibility of Minister Hedy D'Ancona (social-democratic Labour Party) in 1992. As a former member of the European Parliament she stressed the international aspects of cultural policy. A second theme in the document is the trend of dwindling numbers of spectators for subsidized cultural activities. *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) is the first comprehensive policy document on national cultural policy. Until then, there had been separate documents on media, literature and libraries, cultural heritage and the arts. Therefore much attention is paid to the relation with the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* (1985).

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<sup>7</sup> From an economic perspective, Abbing (1989) and Van Klink (2005) have also come to the conclusion that the cultural policy caters particularly to the employment needs of artists themselves to. Abbing adds that the attention for dissemination of culture and art in cultural policy is only a rationalization of a policy that serves the purpose of safeguarding the economic feasibility of the consumption habits of a restricted proportion of society (Abbing, 1989, pp. 225-6). Though such pressures from artists and elite audiences are evident in Dutch cultural policy, the continued political attention to dissemination, through cultural education for instance, does suggest that the government has taken the functions of culture and art for each member of Dutch society seriously from the 1990s onwards.

### 2.1.1. Intrinsic Functions

A statement on the importance of culture in society can be found on the first pages of the policy document.

In addition to personal development, culture is *important* due to its binding effect. Culture is also the embodiment of the need of people, individually and collectively, to come to terms with the past and to express ideas and perceptions in an authentic way, time and again. And to share these with others. And exactly this last element, this common generation of experiences, is of the utmost *importance*. Culture, in its *function* of significance-assignment, forms a link between the individual and society. As a society, we cannot afford not to make full use of this link. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 1)

According to this extract, participating in cultural activities has effects on the personal and the societal level. Participating in cultural activities:

- (a) stimulates personal development,
- (b) brings people together ('binding effect'),
- (c) gives an opportunity to relate oneself to history,
- (d) is a way to express ideas and views in an authentic manner,
- (e) is a way to share these ideas and views with others, or make them into shared experiences.

The question arises as to whether or not all of these functions are intrinsic. Especially (b) and (e) could be regarded as objectives of social rather than cultural policies. There are two reasons to regard these functions as intrinsic. First, 'intrinsic' has not been defined in terms of the policy area to which the functioning belongs. Second, the definition of culture and art is closely linked to the concept of identity. Bringing people together on the basis of a shared identity and shared ideas and perceptions (through authentic aesthetic means) is a way of asserting or developing an identity.

The functioning of culture at an individual level is expressed in (a), (c) and (d). Culture is a means to achieve personal growth, to express one's views, and to relate oneself to history. On the collective level, culture serves to share individual ideas and experiences (e) and to relate oneself to others (b). These functions of culture are similar to the concept of identity as put forward by Fischer-Lichte (2002). The concept of identity is important in *Investeren in Cultuur* especially in relation to national cultural identity, as will be shown below. A further remark about function (b) should be made. One can argue – on the basis of more recent political developments in the Netherlands – that thinking cultural participation brings people together and furthers understanding between different social or ethnic groups is a somewhat naïve belief. The co-existence of different forms of cultural expression, i.e., the expression of different (ethnic) identities, can be the cause of friction in society as well as a source of mutual understanding and respect. A last remark should be made on function (e). As a link between the individual level and the collective level, this seems to be the most important function. But the way in which this function operates as a process in society is not made clear. This should be researched in more detail.

In *Investeren in Cultuur*, the efforts to promote participation in cultural activities are legitimized on the basis of the same functions found above.

With participation in cultural activities, apart from aspects such as enjoyment, personal experience and development, there is also mention of wider social effects. The distribution of culture (...) stimulates (...) the self-determination of citizens, the independent development of original thought. Many expressions of culture lend themselves ideally for familiarizing people with alternative visions of existence. By stimulating participation in cultural activities, one offers people the opportunity to assess their own opinions and notions against the points of view and experiences of others, to gain insight into a different realm of thought. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 41)

In this extract, culture is regarded as an important means to educate people. The functions mentioned in this quote seem to be largely the same as those in the previous quote. However, there are differences. In both quotes, a distinction is made between functions at personal level and functions at the level of society. At the personal level, three functions are mentioned: diversion, personal experience and personal development. The first two of these were not mentioned in the introduction. It is not clear what is exactly meant by 'personal experience'. Developing the self-determination of citizens and encouraging the ability to develop and express authentic trains of thought can be regarded as different phrasings for the function mentioned under (d) above. Learning about alternative visions of reality has been mentioned under (e), sharing ideas and perceptions, and the possibility to test one's own opinions and perceptions against those of others. Note that all these functions have been phrased as individual benefits, but these benefits can only occur through collective activity: participation in cultural activities. Thus personal development can be regarded as a container notion for all the functions mentioned in these quotes.

The document contains some remarks specifically on the performing arts. The influence of the development of audio-visual media on theatre, especially on live drama, is studied.

Due to the explicit presence of television, subsidised theatre, above all, has undergone drastic change. The vast majority of present-day theatre productions consist of 'artistic theatre' which tends to concentrate on the search for new methods of dramatic expression. Innovation and experiment have become important features of this theatre, even where people no longer explicitly propagate this. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 22)

A hesitant conclusion may be that a filtering of functions has taken place in the more traditional expressions of culture, largely as a result of competition from the audio-visual media. The enjoyment or entertainment function has been largely lost; the purely cultural function that refers to the 'artistic content' of the expression in question is becoming increasingly important. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 23)

These quotes are of interest because here a distinction is made between different functions of the performing arts. Entertainment is contrasted with artistic functions. The policy makers think that the audio-visual media fulfil the entertainment function, which is seen here as pure diversion, better than live theatre does. What remains in the theatres are 'artistic' productions which are supposed to have more of the other functions mentioned above. This is the cause of the dwindling number of visitors to the performing arts in the Netherlands. The question is whether or not this holds true for all of the performing arts. The rise of



musical theatre and cabaret in the Netherlands (produced without direct government grants) seems to contradict this statement. The question also arises as to whether or not the audio-visual media productions could also perform some of the intrinsic functions mentioned above. For instance, one could argue that a diversionary television play, set in eighteenth-century Amsterdam, might give an opportunity for the viewers to relate themselves to history as well as offering diversion. Furthermore, there is the question as to whether or not more 'artistic' types of performing arts may also offer diversionary elements. These issues will not be elaborated upon here. At this point, the distinction between artistic and amusement functions is relevant. It is a matter for further investigation as to whether or not the artistic and entertainment functions are mutually exclusive or whether they can coexist.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, attention should be turned to the question of whether or not 'artification' has also occurred in other cultural disciplines. The policy document maintains that a similar process has evolved in literature. The reading audience has become an 'in-crowd' of practised readers. But with regard to cultural heritage, the conclusion has been drawn that there is growing public interest in museums and the preservation of cultural heritage, and therefore there seems to be no 'artification' in this field (*ibid.*, pp. 22-4).<sup>9</sup> This suggests that different forms of culture serve different functions for their audiences. Here the term 'function' refers to the consumers' needs that are satisfied by participating in cultural events. In *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992), the term 'function' is used in various senses. This will be elaborated below.<sup>10</sup>

The writers of the policy document are consistently concerned with the fact that cultural participation is limited to an 'elite audience'. In their view, a flourishing cultural climate means that people outside the 'cultural elite' also participate in or take note of cultural activities. People should develop themselves culturally 'in their own way' (*ibid.*, p. 36).

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<sup>8</sup> In this research, this question will only be answered for the different types of performing arts (publicly funded versus commercial productions). A comparison between the functioning of live drama versus televised drama falls outside the scope of this research.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that the policy makers suggest that public interest in cultural heritage is mainly due to the 'artistic' functions of cultural heritage. However, one could argue that the rise in interest is also due to the fact that historic sites, exhibitions and art exhibitions on 19<sup>th</sup>-century paintings, for instance, are heavily marketed as unique 'events'. These marketing strategies seem to be based more on the entertainment function of the event than on the artistic functions.

<sup>10</sup> Another question is whether or not the 'artification' of Dutch theatre is caused by the rise of audio-visual media alone. The study by Oosterbaan Martinius (1990), which was mentioned earlier, suggests that 'artification' can also be a result of the policy shift towards artistic quality which, in turn, is a development that concurred with the professionalization of artists. It could be examined whether or not this 'artification' of live drama is a specific Dutch phenomenon. Because the influence of audio-visual media is a worldwide phenomenon, it can be expected that the same process has occurred in other countries. Therefore, if the 'artification' of live drama is not apparent in other countries - i.e., live drama functions differently - it can be concluded that other factors also influence the functioning of the performing arts. The specific way in which the context of the performing arts is organized can be expected to have implications. However, this question is beyond the scope of this research, for it warrants international comparison.

In cultural policy, it is of essential importance to do justice to the value of cultural processes as they (can) occur in all layers of society. (...) They should also take place in the knowledge that unexpected initiatives are often developed in the 'margin' – frequently disparaged as such – which later turn out to be of great significance for cultural development in broader circles. The aspect of these unexpected developments is even more important because the Netherlands is increasingly displaying features that are characteristic of a heterogeneous, multicultural society. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 36)

This suggests that cultural activities can perform different functions for different social or ethnic groups. It seems obvious that a framework for describing the functioning of performing arts in a given city should take the social composition of its population into account. Moreover, this type of framework should be able to indicate whether or not the needs of different social groups are being met (provided that this is an aim of the city's cultural policy). However, the question remains as to whether different social groups should participate in the same cultural events but for different purposes, or should participate in different cultural productions but for the same purposes, due to the differing background of social or ethnic groups in society?

This quote also suggests that different forms of cultural production serve different functions from the perspective of the cultural industry as a whole. Fringe activities are regarded as an experimental playground where forms of expression which have broader meaning in society are developed. It proposes that different art productions geared to specific social and ethnic groups can be viewed as such fringe activities.

### **2.1.2. International Dimension of Cultural Policy**

The unification of Europe is currently receiving comprehensive attention. Much discussion and speculation is taking place about the precise consequences for our country. In this, Dutch culture is a prominent topic of discussion. Worrying expectations about the survival of our own cultural identity alternate with optimistic reflections on cultural internationalization. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 1).

These first sentences of *Investeren in Cultuur* reflect the growing unification of the European Union. Growing international contacts have different outcomes for cultural policy.

The ongoing internationalization (...) is demonstrably linked to the 'generalization' of culture. In the discussion about culture in its specific meaning, there is even mention of a world cultural constellation. The observed generalization is largely based on the norms, values and external features of the Western style of life.

At the same time there is also mention of a countermovement, of particularization. It can be observed that (...) a revaluation of authentic local and regional traditions is taking place. This need for distinctiveness also occurs at national level, the rekindling of the discussion on Dutch identity is proof of this. In addition, countless people and groups within Dutch society are displaying an impulse toward the forming of all kinds of subcultures – on the basis of an outspoken need to present their own identity. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, pp. 18-19)

Here we encounter culture as a means to assert identity. The products of cultural activities can be regarded as manifestations of the norms and values of the society from which they stem. The influence of the international dimension of cultural policy is twofold. On the one hand, a trend towards representation of the dominant norms and values of the Western society is evident. On the other, this prompts a trend towards growing interest in the

particular, in regional differences. The policy document therefore devotes much attention to national cultural identity. But the conclusion is also drawn that different groups within (Dutch) society develop different subcultures. The document therefore introduces the term 'cultural identity'.

Inasmuch as our national cultural identity is expressed in policy, this occurs in culture in the broad sense of the term (i.e., anthropological, QLvdH); in other words, within the sectors that often have no direct relationship with cultural policy; public housing, the structure of our system of social security, the spatial layout of the Netherlands, the organization of club life, etc. The norms contain assumptions and agreements that form, mainly unconsciously, the fundament of our lifestyle and the way in which society is ordered in our country. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 43)

Spatial planning and systems of social security are ways in which these norms and presuppositions become apparent. The specific Dutch system for supporting the arts in itself is another example (*ibid.*, p. 4). When looking at the specific cultural policy one can think that the national cultural identity is expressed within the various products of cultural institutions, but the writers of the document go to great lengths to argue that this is mostly not the case.

To an extent, this domain of culture (culture in its specific sense, QLvdH) self-evidently forms a reflection of culture in the broadest sense. This applies especially to language-related cultural expression. In addition, culture is largely not national but actually international, even cosmopolitan in its character. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 43)

For the present research the most important conclusion is that cultural identities can be expressed through the performing arts, as was indicated above. In the policy document, this is not the central question concerning the topic of cultural identity. The main question is whether or not the government should gear its cultural policy to the extent to which the national identity is being expressed through cultural activities. The answer to this question is negative because the government should not interfere with the 'content and ethics of cultural activities' (*ibid.*, p. 44). This is a tradition in Dutch politics which is, in itself, a part of national identity. Another reason is the fact that national cultural identity is not a fixed phenomenon. It is subject to change and therefore unsuitable as a criterion for cultural policy (*ibid.*, p. 45). A last point to be made is that there is not one national cultural identity. 'It is of crucial importance to recognize that our national identity embodies a great diversity' (*ibid.*, p. 45). How the arts can function *as art* in the domain of cultural identity is not elaborated in the policy document. This is a matter for further investigation.

### 2.1.3. Quality and Diversity

Quality and diversity are the two guiding principles of Dutch cultural policy. They are stated in *de Wet op het Specifiek Cultuurbeleid* (1993) and *Investeren in Cultuur* uses them in anticipation of the adoption of the law (*ibid.*, p. 16). The document concludes that the strict use of quality as a criterion for cultural policy has a downside:

(...) the phenomenon of 'upward pressure' that appears to emanate from strict application of the quality principle in real-life practice may not lead to the feeling that the individual significance of the cultural functions to be distinguished and the often very specific value of the various levels are being lost. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 38)

'Upward pressure' refers to a trend towards more experimental structures and new cultural forms. This trend results from the practice where the advisory boards consist of specialists and artists who evaluate the quality of cultural institutions (a judgement which is at the basis of decisions on subsidizing institutions). They value experiment and development in art more than the general public does (*ibid.*, p. 37). The process of autonomization which was described by Oosterbaan Martinius (1990) is referred to in this context. In the policy document, a similar concern is expressed inasmuch as gearing policy decisions to the quality criterion exclusively disregards other functions of culture. It seems that culture has different functions on different levels. This quote does not allow a determination of which different functions are being referred to. Moreover, the writers of the document are not very specific in what they refer to when using the term 'level'. From the text directly preceding this quote, one can deduce that they are referring to national and international level as opposed to local and regional contexts. They express a concern that all attention is being drawn to (inter)national cultural developments, to the spectacular, and not to the smaller cultural events that function more locally. They make an analogy with sports:

Maintaining that the level of cultural developments and events that are interesting in a national and international context is sufficient to describe the thriving cultural life in our society (...) is just as valid as maintaining that only top sport can be regarded as the standard for the positive significance of sport in our society. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 37)

In other words, a thriving cultural climate is not only about spectacular 'premier league' productions but also about 'regular', more conventional or artistically less challenging productions as well as amateurs and grass-roots initiatives.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the writers of the policy document devote attention to the relationship between quality and diversity, the second principle for cultural policy. With the diversity criterion they try to balance a strong trend towards experiment and development. First, they conclude that the two principles should be weighted differently in different forms of culture. For instance, diversity is the most important principle in the press and library policy, as opposed to the visual arts where furthering artistic quality seems to be the most important (*ibid.*, p. 38). Second, they conclude that diversity is also important *within* a given form of culture. For instance, within literature, the document distinguishes prose, poetry, and children's and adolescent literature. Quality standards apply to each of these forms of literature. Some forms are supposed to function specifically to advance their reach in society (*ibid.*, p. 39). The term 'cultural function' is introduced to indicate the function of a cultural institution within the production system of a given cultural discipline. This is explained using museum policy as an example. The central goal of preserving and presenting cultural heritage is split up into specific tasks for specific museums: restoration, collecting, scientific research and presentation. Cultural institutions can also have specific tasks for specific groups in society or for a specific geographical region (*ibid.*, p. 39-40). At this point, the policy document reads as an analysis of specific branches of industry, namely, specific cultural industries. Within

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<sup>11</sup> It is also debatable whether or not the use of the term 'culture' in these quotes is correct. It seems that a specific part of cultural production is being referred to, namely the arts.

these industries, cultural institutions perform a specific function or task, such as youth theatre groups within the theatrical industry for instance. From a policy point of view, this method of analysis seems perfectly useful because it enables one to identify which functions should be present within the cultural field in order to speak of a flourishing infrastructure (cultural and societal) and to weigh the quality of the different institutions as well. Therefore:

The cultural function of institutions will be elucidated more precisely than before in the tasks to be distinguished. This is of great importance to enhance the diversity of activities and to guarantee that not only the spectacular aspects but also the essential aspects for cultural participation, such as cultural education, supporting activities or co-operation with other local or regional cultural facilities, are paid sufficient attention. (Ministerie van OCW, 1992, p. 53)

For the present research on the functioning of the performing arts in urban society, however, this poses a few problems because the term 'function' now is being used in various senses.

First, one can discern different functions of different cultural disciplines. The media and libraries are fields that should reflect the diversity of society (i.e. that is their function on societal level). Quality in these fields is something entirely different from that in the arts. Cultural heritage has a function in preserving the past, and the arts seem to function more as an area of research and development. So not every cultural or art form has the same function. This need not be a problem for this research because it is limited to the performing arts. However it should be determined whether or not these different ways of functioning (preserving the past, for instance) should also be present within this single discipline, as performing the classical repertoire in the performing arts can be thought of as a specific function.

Second, one can discern different functions within the specific industry of an art form. At least two different forms of functioning have been mentioned. Producing for specific audiences, as in the theatre for instance: theatre for toddlers, youth theatre and theatre for grown-ups, and also theatre for youngsters from higher and lower levels of education, and for specific ethnic groups. And producing specific specialist cultural forms, in authentic performance practices in music for instance, performing the predominant classical and romantic repertoire or music by contemporary composers, cross-overs, etc. Or in the theatre: staging classical drama or contemporary repertoire. For these different functions it may be best to use the term 'tasks' instead of 'functions'.

Third, the term 'functioning' has a social and geographical dimension. Different art forms can have different functions for different groups in society. Moreover culture and art can have a different function in different regions.

It should be noted that single productions can perform several of the functions mentioned above simultaneously. For the present research, particularly the last two types of functioning are relevant.

#### **2.1.4. Economic Functioning**

*Investeren in Cultuur* points to the economic effects of culture from the perspective of cities and regions in relation to the topic of internationalization:

(...) cultural amenities are being increasingly assigned a role in the economic competitive struggle between cities and regions in Europe. In the framework of the *Vierde nota over de ruimtelijke ordening* (Fourth Memo on Spatial Planning) culture is allocated an important task in, for example, the augmentation of the significance of the Randstad as an international location area. In this context, the preservation of historic buildings, or more precisely, the conscientious treatment of historical city centres, is regarded as an important trump card in the creation of an attractive location climate.

The cultural assortment is increasingly being seen as a factor of importance for the tourist industry. Dutch cultural heritage can make a major contribution to the national and local economy, and stimulate employment, certainly also in the cultural sector. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, pp. 20-1)

The way in which cultural institutions function on the economic level is not extensively elaborated in the policy document. For the so-called 'Rim City' (*Randstad*, the urban agglomeration comprising the major cities in the Netherlands: Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague and Utrecht), culture can serve as a means to develop a climate where international corporations are willing to open up branches. The tourist industry is also mentioned. The document is not clear whether or not the performing arts can play a role in this economic competition. This may be true for the West End theatres in London or Broadway in New York. These venues attract tourists as well as local visitors. But is this function relevant for any theatre in any city? This economic function of performing arts warrants further investigation (see Chapter 8).

### 2.1.5. Cities and Regions

At various points in the policy document the writers state that cultural life is bound to the city, 'not only in our time but also traditionally, the large cities in particular have formed the "focus of culture"' (*ibid.*, p. 41, see also p. 52). The Introduction states that 'Institutions such as museums, theatres, libraries should not only be seen as culture providers but also as the engine of artistic and culture life in a certain city or region.' (*ibid.*, p. 2) In the chapter on the performing arts, attention is paid to the regional distribution of shows and concerts, for

(...) the diversity of the assortment in the region can only be realized by sufficient distribution of performances. At the same time, I acknowledge that the settlement of large-scale performing arts facilities in the region can have exceptional allure for regional cultural life that is not achieved by an assortment that only consists of 'touring' performances. Especially when institutions are successful in taking root in regional cultural life, they are able to achieve a cultural added value *that cannot only be measured by the number of performances and the quality of these.* (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 147, italics QLvdH)

There seems to be recognition that large production facilities have specific significance in the region where they are based. Performing arts institutions that form relations with the cultural life in the region have an added value which can not be measured in terms of the artistic quality of the plays or concerts they produce. The document offers no description of this added value. Is it an added value for the regional public that can regard a theatre company or symphony orchestra as 'its own'? Does this give better opportunities for the functioning of the plays or concerts in the 'home region'? Or is there an added value for other cultural institutions based in the same city or region? Or does the fact that there is artistic production in a given city frame the productions of visiting companies in such a

manner that they function differently in society? These questions will be addressed in Chapter 3 when discussing the city documents.

## 2.2. 1997-2000: Armour or Backbone

In the political debate following the adoption of *Investeren in Cultuur*, the government proposed a different approach to producing cultural policy documents. Because of the fact that the document comprised the basic principles of cultural policy as well as the actual subsidy decisions concerning specific cultural organizations, Members of Parliament felt that the political debate about the cultural policy was not effective. They asked for a document on the basic principles themselves to discuss with the Minister before actual subsidy decisions were being made (see Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 1). D'Ancona's successor, Aad Nuis (liberal-democrats) therefore produced a so-called 'uitgangspuntenbrief', a letter to parliament concerning the basic principles underlying the cultural policy of the coming four year cycle. From that moment on these documents contain statements about the legitimization of cultural policy whereas the actual 'cultuurnota' (cultural memo) only consists of a series of subsidy decisions. Therefore these documents have been studied in this research.

Nuis, a former literary critic and poet, lived up to the expectations about the literary quality of his policy document. He uses imagery to convey the political message. The title, *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (*Armour or Backbone*, Ministerie van OCW, 1995) refers to its key question which is whether people use their cultural identity as armour to ward off influences and ideas from other (sub)cultures, or as a backbone in order to communicate with others who do not share their beliefs and views.

Anyone using culture as a distinguishing feature, anyone who propagates cultural identity to mark the difference between one's own group and the others, can easily end up in an infertile defensive. Culture then becomes armour against an outside world that is experienced as hostile. One seems to be able to shelter safely behind this shield, but it closes one off from the outside world and thus impedes any further development. In contrast, anyone who carries his or her cultural attainments with him or her as inner security, a support that enables sympathetic interaction with people who think differently without anxiety for loss of identity, will remain decisive and capable of change. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

Here, culture is used in its anthropological meaning. The function of culture is related to the subject of identity, as was the case in the previous policy document. But the imagery also applies to cultural institutions themselves because state sponsorships for the arts can never be used as armour to ward off societal and economic developments (*ibid.*, p. 9). This will lead to a growing gap between cultural institutions and society. The theme of autonomy of culture which was also present in the previous policy document is of importance. It will be discussed below.

In general *Pantser of Ruggegraat* reflects the reuniting of cultural and educational policy. With the advent of the new government (a coalition of Social Democrats, Liberals and Liberal Democrats, barring the Christian Democrats from government for the first time since the

Second World War), cultural policy has moved from the Ministry of Welfare and Health to the Ministry of Education. In the policy document, much attention is given to the processes of handing down cultural values from one generation to another. Cultural heritage is a major theme, as is cultural education, and there are sections on the relationship between the cultural industry and vocational education in the fields of the arts (which is – as all forms of higher education – part of the Department of Higher Education and Sciences of the Ministry). The humanities are regarded as part of our cultural heritage (*ibid.*, p. 8).

### 2.2.1. Intrinsic Functions

A first quote refers to the reshuffling of culture between ministries.

It is self-evident that the unravelling of the former Department of WVC (Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture) should not lead to the overlap between culture policy and the socio-cultural dimensions of government policy disappearing from sight altogether; especially because cultural dissemination and cultural participation can reinforce social coherence, and certainly because of *the capability of certain cultural expressions* to illustrate social problems in a forceful way and to put them up for discussion. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 2, italics QvdH)

The social dimension of cultural policy must not be disregarded as a result of the split between welfare and cultural policy. This social dimension of culture is related to two characteristics. Culture can strengthen social structures and it can visualize problems in society. This first function is similar to the function that was encountered in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992): that of bringing people together. The metaphor of armour and backbone reflects the fact that Nuis is more aware of the fact that culture can also have disruptive effects inasmuch as it prevents integration when used as a shield. The second societal function is new to this analysis. Specific cultural activities are able to direct attention to problems in society. It can be assumed that art is being referred to. Art is a means to formulate critique on society.

The document also gives a description of the term ‘culture’. The notions found earlier in the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* (Ministerie WVC, 1985) are being elaborated upon.

What does culture mean to a person? In a broad sense, everything that people make, think, know or believe they know, the way in which they become aware of their feelings and give shape to their actions, belongs to culture. To be able filter this ceaseless flow of impressions and to arrange them in an order experienced as meaningful, every person requires systems that that give meaning. (...) Large systems of meaning-assignment (...) not only bring coherence into the world view of the individual but also bind people together into groups – and distinguish them to a greater or lesser extent from other groups. The entirety of often-unspoken regulations by means of which people play the serious, endlessly varying play of imagination is such a system which forms the foundation of the arts in particular. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

In its broad (anthropological) sense, culture refers to a system that allows people to give meaning to the constant stream of impressions they encounter in life. Religion and sciences are such systems. They not only structure one’s view on life but also serve to divide people into groups. The ‘serious and endlessly varying play of imagination’ is such a system as well. It can only be understood that ‘culture’ is being used in its specific meaning here. The play of imagination is at the basis of art. Because this document is so differently phrased it is hard to pinpoint exactly the differences between *Investeren in Cultuur* and *Pantser of Ruggegraat*. First,



it is evident is that art is being referred to more explicitly in *Pantser of Ruggegraat*. Second, the process of giving meaning to impressions and events in life is mentioned. This function of culture and art is not stated in the previous document. It can be related to the sharing of ideas and experiences which was mentioned in *Investeren in Cultuur*. However, it does not seem to be exactly the same because here this function seems to be bound more to the individual level, whereas the collective level is stressed in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). This could reflect the difference between a Socialist and a Liberal Democrat. Third, the writers of *Pantser of Ruggegraat* seem to be more aware of the process of handing down culture from one generation to another.

Although people are handed down these cultural systems of meaning-assignment from predecessors and contemporaries, they enjoy relative freedom in their appraisal of these, certainly in our society. They can undergo extra education and forswear, renew and rediscover, introduce their own variables on the familiar theme. In the arts and sciences, which are geared to growth and change *par excellence*, such individual adventures are even essential for the ongoing elasticity of the system. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

Here, culture is a means to relate oneself to history, although people nowadays are free to choose whether to accept or reject the systems of meaning which their predecessors hand down to them. The systems can be altered more easily than was the case several decades ago. This quote pinpoints the function of art in society. It is about personal exploration and about the renewal of the cultural system itself. To make another analogy: art is the R&D department of the ways people can express themselves. Culture is important to personal and group identity, and through this identity, culture influences the communication between groups in a society. Art is about finding new ways of communicating with each other. On the personal level, culture is about development and finding one's place in the world. This is of special importance in our society which is changing at an increasing rate. These functions are similar to those found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). In *Pantser of Ruggegraat* culture and art are distinguished yet further:

To every person, culture is the instrument to mentally find a recognizable place in the world, even if it rapidly and unexpectedly changes. Not everyone is allocated an instrument with the same reach, precision and applicability to the situations in which he or she lands. Although a relatively meagre cultural baggage, as long as its structure in firm, is completely sufficient for a worthwhile existence, but in general a comprehensive and varied cultural forming will enable people to cope better with what the world has on offer and to react to setbacks in a more resilient way.

Moreover, culture in its more artistic aspects is an exercise in the power of imaginative thought that has the capacity to raise people above the restrictions of everyday existence. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

Art functions through imagination and allows one to rise above the limitations of daily life. One could argue that this is an entertainment function, albeit of a very specific nature, namely, intellectual entertainment as opposed to relaxation. However this is not elaborated in the policy document. The power of imagination and its relationship to entertainment and relaxation therefore should be studied in more detail. In the discussion on *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) a question on entertainment was also raised. This policy document expands the question.

As mentioned above, an 'open attitude' in which culture is used as a backbone is being promoted. A strong sense of one's own culture helps one face and respect the cultures of other groups. This is elaborated upon at various points in the document. This next paragraph enumerates some functions of culture again:

The advocated self-aware tolerance (referring to the attitude where culture is used as a backbone, QLH) must not be confused with the neutralization of all cultural values. Culture chooses; it is essentially a means to discern what has greater and lesser value, and what should be regarded as worthless. Shared cultural starting points enable the recognition and appreciation of exceptional achievements by others. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 4-5).

Culture is a means to determine what is of value. Shared cultural backgrounds also enable one to see the exceptional achievements of others, again determining what is of value, but at the collective level here. Therefore one ought to respect people belonging to other groups.

A solid cultural awareness is almost a precondition for an open approach to others. This applies to Dutch people in their attitude toward new cultures around them. And certainly to migrants, who can only partly take their culture with them in a physical sense, but can never completely leave their cultural luggage behind. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 17).

Here we see an example of the way 'cultural identity' is being used in *Pantser of Ruggegraat*. It is not very different from *Investeren in Cultuur*, although through the armour-backbone metaphor *Pantser of Ruggegraat* is more explicit on how cultural encounters can work. A strong sense of one's own culture is important for a tolerant attitude towards others.

A final quote which is of interest focuses on the role of individuals who operate in the cultural domain: artists, writers, journalists and scientists.

It is often individuals who manage, by means of a strong personality, to give expression to the cultural solidarity of a society, even if this is not always directly experienced as such by everyone. Every culture has its culture-bearers, often artists, writers, journalists and practitioners of the humanities in particular. Without their occasionally recalcitrant input, a culture can become dormant; it loses its antennae for extraordinary circumstances and for the significance and value of other cultures, and it may also lose its own character. In this respect, present-day art plays an exceptional role in offering a new view of the world by drawing upon communal tradition and making use of existing opportunities. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 21-2).

Culture is described as a dynamic phenomenon. The recalcitrant input of artists (among others) keeps a culture alert.<sup>12</sup> This enables one to recognize special circumstances, to recognize the meaning and value of other cultures, to recognize quality, and to be aware of one's own character. Art has a specific role in this respect for it formulates new visions on the world based on existing tradition and means of expression, a function related to fringe activities in *Investing in Culture*.

In *Pantser of Ruggegraat* much attention is devoted to the fact that culture is handed down from one generation to another. As a result, many statements can be found on cultural heritage which are mostly linked to museums. Museums are crucial to establish a sense of where different cultural groups come from (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 17). The document

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<sup>12</sup> 'Tegenstrevend' in the words of the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* (1985), see Chapter 1.

here specifically refers to migrant groups. Though most remarks on cultural heritage in the document relate to museums, one should question whether or not there is such a 'heritage' function for the performing arts as well. Performing plays by important playwrights from the past or the use of authentic musical instruments may constitute a similar function to preserving monuments or historic artefacts, a function also found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992).<sup>13</sup> An important issue in preserving monuments is to give them a new economic or societal function. The policy document states that preserving monuments can have positive effects on employment, and improve a climate where companies want to set up branches and tourism (*ibid.*, p. 24).

### 2.2.2. Autonomy of Culture

As in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992), a concern is also expressed in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* about the autonomous development of subsidized art producers without recognition of developments in society. The gap between subsidized and free producers should be bridged, indicating that non-subsidized productions can display performing functions that legitimize state-sponsorship as well. Therefore one should examine the functions that are performed as a criterion for subsidy decisions and not the cultural institutions themselves (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 9). The growing autonomy of cultural production is especially worrying, for younger generations do not have the same regard for the 'official' culture as sponsored by the government:

Also many young people – born here or elsewhere, that is of little importance in this context – who are well educated, turn out to have little affinity with and interest in 'official' culture. The result of this is that they not only remain deprived of important ingredients for their further individual and social development, but also that our cultural life is deprived of essential impulses. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 15)

This quote is of interest to the present research because, apart from the developmental function on the personal level, it states that the relationship is reciprocal. Not only are youngsters deprived of crucial inputs in their development, the cultural world itself is deprived of impulses from this younger generation and therefore cannot develop as it should.

Apart from the younger generation, the official culture also does not represent new ethnic groups. *Pantser of Ruggegraat* articulates a conviction that confrontation with cultural products of other (ethnic) groups comprises more than just taking note of each other's cultural products and heritage or the views they represent. There is another big difference:

In cultures whose core has remained beyond the sphere of influence of the dominant Western pattern, the place that culture continues to occupy in everyday life is self-evidently conspicuous. The particularization of cultural activities into a specialized and professionalized

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<sup>13</sup> This concern still is topical. For instance, in the 2009 *Staat van het Theater* (State of the Theatre), Pierre Audi, artistic director of De Nederlandse Opera (Dutch Opera Company), was critical of Dutch field of drama in his opening speech for the annual Dutch Theatre Festival. He argued that the refusal of current companies to perform classical repertoire and focus on bringing novels and film scripts to the stage may weaken the theatre in the long run (see <http://www.tf.nl/Assets/Uploads/Documents/StaatvanhetTheater2009.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2009).

cultural business sector is usually limited to traditional art forms. Culture has retained its function of meaning-assignment in a clearer, or at least more easily demonstrable way, with a broader perspective. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 17)

The conclusion is that there is more contact between culture and society in non-Western cultures. Only traditional forms have developed to a very specific branch of industry. The writers of the document suggest that cultural production that forms more a part of everyday life has a greater role to play as a system of meaning-assignment. This means that culture which is more in touch with society functions differently from culture which has developed into a specialist branch. This is a confirmation of the supposition that different ways of organizing cultural activities have an impact on how culture functions in society.

### 2.2.3. Cities and Economic Functions

*Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) contains more statements about cities and regions than *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). This could reflect the growing practice of consultations between the state and regionally grouped provinces and cities. Up to 1996 there had only been consultations between the state and the three largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague). Nuis also recognized the importance of smaller cities and therefore started consultations with all parts of the Netherlands, the so called 'convenantenoverleg' (covenant consultations). For:

The overwhelming cultural assortment at home can be a stimulus to visit performances and shows, but can also displace these. Nevertheless, direct confrontation with expressions of art and culture are always the most satisfying form of interactivity. Jointly experiencing and discussing art and culture is essential for a flourishing, versatile and open cultural life. This life takes place in cities, large and small. The significance of these cities as regional centres and breeding grounds of art and culture will be assigned more attention in the policy (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 6-7).

This quote mentions the importance of cities as breeding places for art and culture. The cities also set the scene for the shared experience of art and culture. Sharing and jointly discussing culture is essential for a flourishing cultural climate. A same notion was expressed in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) where cultural institutions are regarded as the motor of cultural life in a city. This live character of cultural experiences in cities is once again promoted on page 18.

Cities with a solid infrastructure of galleries, museums, cinemas, theatres, concert halls and other accommodations where interested citizens live and active artists are part of society traditionally form centres of culture. That is where direct confrontations take place between artists and the public, and where fertile soil is available for budding artists to develop their profession. Now that it is possible to listen to the highest peaks of international musical practice in the living room at any desired moment, or to display the highlights of film history on the TV screen, it is even more important that there are places where it is possible, in conjunction with others, to become acquainted with artistic expressions and to share the emotions evoked by art and culture. Art and culture that do not have the opportunity to occupy a place at the centre of society in this way eventually become hollow. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 18)

The policy makers here express a concern that, in a society where technological means have enabled us to experience works of great quality in the privacy of our homes, the city-based cultural institutions have an important role in bringing people together to share and debate

cultural experiences. This, in turn, enables art and culture to develop. The quote raises two questions. One concerns how experience generated by technologically reproduced culture at home differs from 'live' experiences. The second question concerns whether or not the rise in home entertainment automatically means a weakening of social ties, as the policy makers seem to imply. It could be the case that new forms of social contacts have developed through the internet to replace face-to-face contact. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 9. As in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) a flourishing cultural life is considered to be of crucial importance for cities:

There is, after all, no mention of a unilateral relationship in which only the art and culture sector would profit from solid entrenchment (in the city). A flourishing art and cultural life, with participation by many and multifarious groups among the urban population, is also indispensable to the cities themselves. This is not only because art and culture have turned out to be practical ingredients for attracting companies and tourists, but primarily because they help generate an open urban living climate, in which sufficient tolerance and elasticity are present to allow different cultural expressions a position in the whole, and to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the varied urban cultural life that thus arises. This kind of cultural climate links people together – regardless of how much they may differ from one another. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 18)

Though this quote in no way makes clear how a vibrant arts and cultural scene realizes these effects, it enumerates functions of culture at city level: attracting businesses, inviting tourists, encouraging an open living climate in the city in order to accommodate different ways of cultural expression and (once again) bringing people together despite their differences. All these functions have been encountered before although attention should be turned to what exactly is meant by an open living climate.

Another paragraph on the cultural life in a city can be found on the same page.

On the basis of an understandable need for counterbalance, the culture of cities and their surroundings is increasingly becoming a matter of interest, partly because of boundaries becoming blurred and supra-national connections becoming more pronounced. The attention being paid to 'small-scale history' is growing. People wish to know who they are and where they come from. (...) Contact with the past nourishes the feeling of cultural identity of people and the community of which they are a part. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 18)

Here, the effects of growing internationalization are studied. This development prompts a rise in interest in local history. This refers to culture in its function as lending identity and relating oneself to the past. This function is once again related to cultural heritage. In relation to the performing arts a different concern is expressed:

In the meantime, several cities in our country have developed into cultural meeting places of allure, which has decreased the unilateral cultural accent on the Randstad (conurbation of Western Holland). However, it remains to be seen if the cultural institutions have properly adjusted to this change. (...) Drama companies, orchestras and museums often have strong national or even international orientation. In itself, there is nothing wrong with that. But a development in which these institutions enter into competition in an artistic domain – albeit much talked-about, but increasingly limited – implies an inherent risk of monotony. (...) The fear of being regarded as 'provincial' seems to prevent many regional cultural institutions focusing on the development of urban and regional cultural life with sufficient élan. A recent study points out that regional orchestras are hardly aware of a regional role. (...) Therefore, the

identification of the culture-loving public that does recognize the cultural traditions of a city or a region is often rather meagre. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 18-19)

The assumption is that cultural institutions in the Netherlands have a tendency to aspire to the same national quality ideal. Artistically this leads to monomorphous productions and exhibitions. By relating more to the local environment, more variation in the cultural production will ensue. It is also assumed that, as a result, the local audiences will identify themselves more with the cultural institutions.<sup>14</sup> Therefore more variation in the assignment of the cultural institutions should be introduced. The assumption that institutions for the performing arts should have a relationship with their immediate environment seems logical because of the fact that cultural production plays a part in the affirmation and formation of identities, and it also can be assumed that such a thing as local identity exists. A local identity, however, only exists in relation to other identities, such as a national identity or the regional identity of a neighbouring province for instance. The question as to how the relationship between the cultural institutions and their environment is constructed is therefore very complicated. It can be assumed that there are effects on other cultural institutions in the region, therefore on cultural life in a city as a whole, and on the audience for the performing arts in that city. It can be assumed that, to some extent, subject matter and specific (regional) forms also play a part, as well as dialect or language. This is a matter for further research.

### 2.3. 2001-2004: Culture as Confrontation

Perhaps the most fiercely debated document on cultural policy in the Netherlands has been *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (*Culture as Confrontation*, Ministerie van OCW, 2000), which was published by Nuis's successor, Rick van der Ploeg (social-democratic Labour Party). In hindsight, this seems peculiar because Van der Ploeg does not deviate from his predecessors. His policy document reads as an analysis of an industry and perhaps this somewhat economic approach to the cultural sector was to a large extent the cause of the vehemence of the debate. The main concern in the document – again – is the growing autonomy of the subsidized cultural sector. However, Van der Ploeg was the first to actually introduce evaluation criteria besides quality when subsidizing cultural institutions. In comparison to the other documents, *Cultuur als Confrontatie* seems to be more exclusively about the arts, the main concern being the growing autonomy of the subsidized art producers.

#### 2.3.1. Intrinsic Functions

The document discusses the distinction between amusement and the artistic functions of the performing arts, specifically spoken drama. As a result of the advent of electronic media, its 'playing field' has shrunk:

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<sup>14</sup> Note that the researched mentioned in the quote (Goossens and Driessen, 1994) did not evaluate the programmes of the orchestras and their appeal to local audiences, but pertained to the activities of individual orchestra members outside their orchestra, such as playing in small ensembles or teaching at music schools.

Owing to the artistic renewals in the seventies, the ample availability of subsidized drama productions in the fifties and sixties, which largely aimed at amusing the masses, gradually made way for 'artistic drama'. The broad public for subsidized drama shifted to an audience consisting predominantly of highly educated and well-informed theatre buffs. The ten per cent of the population that occasionally visited a performance of the subsidized professional drama sector in the early sixties has now dwindled to three per cent. The number of visitors has halved. Yet, there is an abundance of new productions that could reach a bigger audience, simply by increasing the number of reprises and extending the playing period. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 7)

This statement is very much the same as was found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) but here the narrowing of the scope of functions performed by Dutch subsidised theatre is related to the dwindling number of spectators in Dutch subsidized theatre as well as to the homogenization of the audiences. The functioning of the performing arts in society is directly linked to the number of spectators and the social and geographical composition of the audiences. This is logical, of course, though the question remains as to whether or not this is the only measuring criterion for the functioning of the performing arts in society. At this point of the research, the distinction between artistic and amusement functions of the performing arts is most relevant.<sup>15</sup>

Though quality remains the leading criterion for subsidy appropriation (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 25), measures were introduced in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* to take the societal impact of cultural institutions into consideration. This prompts the writers of the document to make some remarks on artistic quality which are of specific interest for this research.

It may be hard, or even impossible to give an exact definition of 'quality', but it can be recognized by various aspects, such as the appeal to emotions, the extent to which an experience becomes embedded, the charisma, uniqueness and international prestige. (...) These aspects may be best described in terms of still beauty, mental titillation, amazement, breaking the traditional pattern of watching, listening and other forms of perception, arousing curiosity, for the history of other cultures for example. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 25)

Here, quality is not being described as a property of the work of art in question, but as an aspect of the experience that it affords. This is an important notion which will be taken up in Chapter 6 of this research. From the quote it can be concluded that artistic consumption serves various purposes for a consumer which can be regarded as functions of the performing arts at personal level: being addressed on the emotional level, amusement, experiencing something unique, experiencing beauty, stimulation of the mind, being bewildered by an experience, experiencing new ways of looking at things, satisfying curiosity, the need to learn something unknown (for instance the history of other cultures).

A paragraph much later in the policy document, when the importance of reaching young people for the arts is being discussed, also points out benefits like these:

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<sup>15</sup> The document observes a similar concern for the Dutch film industry which has been reduced to the small niche of artistic film with its small audiences, despite the recent Oscar winners. The amusement function of film has been taken over by the American productions (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 7-8).

Art stimulates the fantasy and curiosity of young people. Children have to be taught and familiarized with the beauty of life in general, and that of art in particular. Curiosity, bewilderment, surprise, being impressed and reflection are nourished by the cultural treasures of past, present and future, and serve as a counterbalance to our increasingly businesslike, pragmatic and commercialized society. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 49)

Some of these functions can also be found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) and *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995). Curiously these aspects of the experience are linked to both experience of art and or heritage. This leads to the question which of these aspects are artistic and which are cultural.

In the policy document, the goal of reaching the largest possible number of spectators is put forward quite strongly, but not every cultural institution has the obligation to reach as many spectators as possible:

Likewise, institutions that are more engaged in research and experiment and to which the public factor is not of crucial importance should be able to specify the role they intend to play in society in the long term. That role could also be an intention to participate in the social, cultural or intellectual debate. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 26)

In this view, experiment and research are specific functions of the (performing) arts.<sup>16</sup> Institutions aiming at this function should formulate their role in society in this manner and not in terms of public interest for their productions. Being a factor in the societal, cultural or intellectual debate can constitute such a role. This is a function that was not mentioned in the previous documents. The public debate on art (or on other issues but then fuelled by artistic productions) is a place where the functioning of the performing arts in society can become apparent.

In contrast to this last quote, reaching new audiences is regarded as another function of cultural institutions. Therefore a new criterion is being introduced which stipulates that at least three per cent of the subsidy should be spent to reach new audiences. This is a form of 'function financing' with which the policy makers want to influence the orientation of managers in the cultural institutions (*ibid.*, p. 28). In their view, reaching new audiences should be an integral part of the company strategy of cultural institutions. However, in this research, it is questionable whether or not reaching new audiences should be regarded as a function of culture. It seems logical to say that it is only a function at the level of the theatrical industry as a whole. These are tasks rather than functions.

A last quote is on the influence of commercialization on cultural life.

It is to be regretted that commerce plays a dominant role when it comes to establishing values, as it leads to deterioration and impoverishment of cultural life. In this era of globalization and

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<sup>16</sup> Note that the description of research and development in the document is not very precise. It is not clear for whom the research and development is being implemented. Is it for the public or for the artists themselves? It seems that, in the document, the term 'research and development' is used whereas in the other documents the terms 'development of forms of expression', 'avant-garde' or 'renewal of the cultural system' are used. Therefore this function is regarded as a function from the perspective of the artists.



digitization, a rich cultural life serves as an essential and desirable counterweight to our increasingly commercialized and businesslike society. A country's cultural image is not only established by a strong cultural audiovisual sector, but also by a flourishing cultural climate and a rich cultural heritage. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 68)

This quote seems to hold a new legitimization for cultural policy: counterbalancing the forces of commerce. In *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) a similar concern for cultural generalization has been expressed. For the present research, however, it is debatable whether or not this quote holds a new function for the performing arts in society. Investigation should be carried out into why exactly the politicians want to counter the effect of the growing commercial production of culture. Two concerns can be distinguished. First, there is growing generalization in cultural activities based on modern Western culture, as mentioned in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992, p. 18-19). A completely commercial cultural production will therefore not be able to represent norms and values of different groups in society, for some groups are not economically interesting in terms of profitability. This argument also holds for small ethnically or nationally based cultures. Therefore the diversity of cultural forms becomes a policy aim. Here, culture has the function of representing specific subgroup identities. Second, from the discussion in the policy documents on the 'artification' of theatre and the relationship between subsidized and free producers, it can be deduced that the general assumption in politics is that subsidized cultural activities perform the artistic functions better than non-subsidized events. As mentioned previously, this assumption is questionable. Which artistic functions are at stake is not elaborated.

### 2.3.2. Growing Autonomy of the Cultural Sector

As indicated above, the most important concern in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* is the growing autonomy of the subsidized cultural institutions in the Netherlands.

Especially after World War II, the national government began to play an essential role in the conservation, production and innovation, mainly by granting subsidies. These subsidies were nearly always directed (...) at the wishes and requirements of the specialists (...) and to the preferences of other insiders, and not, at least not primarily, at a broad audience. This partial approach of what was on offer has doubtlessly been conducive to the creation of a richly variegated subsidized culture, with an unprecedented diversity of theatre, music, dance and museums (...). In my opinion, these are achievements that should not be treated carelessly. (...) Yet, it must be stated here that the dominance of these specialists and the safe haven created by the system of subsidies have also impeded the dynamics of subsidized culture. It cannot be denied that the wide variety of subsidized cultural on offer is counterbalanced by a demand, strikingly homogenous in its nature, (from) (...) well-educated, affluent, middle-aged people. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 3-4)

The autonomy of the cultural sector is a result of the influence of specialists on cultural policy. The quote implies, however, that the real value of culture in society is realized in the confrontation with the general public, not a public of specialists. The legitimization of a cultural policy apparently lies outside the field of culture itself. This concern is not limited to the performing arts. In the field of cultural heritage, there has also been a trend towards

autonomy based on the decisions made by specialists who have a one-sided focus on quality.<sup>17</sup>

The focus on quality as an autonomous phenomenon since the 1980s is considered to be a major contributing factor to the growing autonomy of culture.

In the eighties, (cultural) policy became increasingly governed by the concept of quality as an autonomous starting point. (...) In that view, art is not subservient to social objectives, the well-being of citizens or the emancipation of neglected classes. Art is mainly subservient to itself. That thought establishes the final cultural-political conclusion of the process of autonomization and professionalization. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 12-13)<sup>18</sup>

The autonomous position of cultural institutions in Dutch society has led to a flourishing cultural scene. The policy makers seem convinced, however, that there is too little attention for the participation in (subsidized) cultural activities as a result.

It is exactly in the confrontation with the public that art comes to life. This requires an integral corporate philosophy from the institutions concerning *what* they want to convey, with *which* performances or exhibitions, to *what* audience. Preservation and public function, artistic and commercial interests, or production and marketing are not independent entities, but should be an integral part of an institute's conception of its cultural mission. This also implies that in the cultural policy a greater importance should be attributed to the accommodation, as that is where cultural demand and supply actually meet. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 14-15)

Here, a very different approach to cultural policy from the point of view of the cultural institutions themselves is being promoted. The fact that the institutions are judged on the basis of their own ambitions is not questioned. However, the point being made is that these ambitions should include a vision on the public and the way this public should be reached, in addition to an opinion on the artistic level of the productions. Three scenarios for cultural policy are formulated.

In the first scenario, the emphasis is on artistic autonomy, in which quality judgement by professional experts plays a decisive role. The focus of attention is on the vulnerable; everything worth anything is defenceless. State interference is legitimized by its function in the research and development of art and in the intrinsic significance of our heritage. (...) This scenario leads to needless marginalization, as it inflates one particular function, the preservation of cultural heritage and research within the arts, to form the basis of the entire subsidized system. However, preservation and research should not be goals in themselves, their importance being directly related to the social functions of culture. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 19)

Research and development in art and culture are regarded as a function, but not as a function in societal terms. Of course, the development of ways of expression is vital for a flourishing cultural scene but the function of that cultural scene in societal terms is not expressed by this developmental function itself. The significance of art in society should be

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<sup>17</sup> The same problem seems to apply to cultural heritage where specialists decide on what should be preserved and shown to the public. Artefacts from the past are considered to influence cultural production in the present (*ibid.*, p. 10). In the field of cultural heritage reviewed in *Cultuur als Confrontatie*, a somewhat 'economic' approach is advocated in which the value of artefacts that are eligible for acquisition by a museum in economic terms (i.e., money value) is contrasted with 'societal returns', such as the expected value for the public or their value for scientific research (*ibid.*, p. 11). These concerns point to the same type of functioning for the performing arts as encountered in the previous documents: playing repertoire and research of authentic performance practices.

<sup>18</sup> This view is similar to the remark made by Oosterbaan Martinius where aesthetic values gain dominance in the production and evaluation of art (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 18).

defined outside art itself. The second scenario – that of full consumer sovereignty and therefore entailing the abolition of all subsidies for art – is not advocated. This will either result in culture not being accessible to large numbers of people because of the price of participating, or cultural activities not being produced at all because of the grave economic risks involved. The preference is for a third scenario in which the legitimization of cultural policy lies in the confrontation with the public.

Quality and cultural value cannot be established in advance, let alone be based on sales and box-office figures, but only becomes apparent after a confrontation of opinions and ideas, not only from professionals, but in particular from the general public. So, contrary to the saying, there *is* accounting for taste. In that respect, arts and cultural heritage are not the binding agents of society, but rather the catalysts of unarmed conflict between many different cultural views and values. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 20)

In this view, the intrinsic and other values of culture will best be realized in contact with society. It seems that stimulating unarmed confrontation, i.e. public debate, is one of the most important functions of art and cultural heritage. This implies that, though experiment and artistic research are necessary, the other functions in the cultural system should be guaranteed as well: producing for specific segments of the public, educational activities, co-operation with amateurs and international activities (*ibid.*, p. 31).<sup>19</sup> These are tasks rather than functions.

These quotes from *Cultuur als Confrontatie* clearly demonstrate the political view that cultural policy is legitimised because of its functioning in society, and that it is not only based upon the demands of the cultural sector itself. Although it remains to be seen whether or not the measures advocated in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* have had the effect of actually changing practices in the cultural sector, the assumption by Oosterbaan Martinius (1990), Abbing (1989 and 2002) and Van Klink (2005) that cultural policy mainly aims at satisfying the needs of the art world are forcefully contradicted here, at least in political rhetoric.

### 2.3.3. Economic Functions

Many museums (and theatres and concert halls) have been built in the Netherlands in the last few decades. These museums form a considerable stimulus to the architecture of public space, similar to churches and cathedrals in the past. It is typical that these buildings are usually reviewed as works of art, while considerations regarding position, significance and functions of the building remain underexposed. Building activity in this sector arises from considerations of a governmental, political, economic and urban development nature rather than intrinsically cultural motives. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 11)

The construction of museums, theatres and concert halls has various backgrounds. In this quote, a concern is expressed that the economic, urban-planning and political functions of these building projects have been more prominent than the cultural significance and function of the buildings. Therefore the buildings are being viewed as works of art themselves and not as the places where a social process is facilitated. For the present research it is of interest that, apart from cultural functions, there seem to be economic functions as well as

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<sup>19</sup> The Dutch word 'bestel' (system) used here refers to the part of the art world in which production, distribution and consumption of the subsidized arts are organized (see Van Maanen, 1997, p. 7).

considerations in the field of urban planning and politics themselves. Obviously these are extrinsic functions on a collective level.

#### 2.4. 2005-2008: More than the Sum

Van der Ploeg's immediate successor, Cees van Leeuwen, was a representative of the right-wing political party Lijst Pim Fortuyn which won the 2002 elections. However, the new government was short-lived owing to the unstable political climate. New elections were held and a new government led by the Christian Democratic Party took office. Its state secretary for culture, Medy van der Laan (Liberal Democratic Party), lacked the time to write a full 'uitgangspuntenbrief' (memo on points of departure). She therefore wrote a short 'uitgangspuntenbrief' which served to start up formally the procedure for a new cultural policy document in July 2003. In November 2003 she published a policy letter to parliament entitled *Meer dan de som* (More than the Sum). This policy letter contains the legitimization of the cultural policy and, as such, is therefore examined here. The policy letter refers to the coalition agreement of which deregulation and economic recovery are crucial themes.

The policy letter contains a remarkable change from its predecessor:

(...) it is time for a new approach to culture. In the past few years, the classic ideal of spreading culture was increasingly interpreted as a plea for its socialization. (...) This has led to an instrumentalistic policy, predominantly aimed at the institutions. The government chooses a different approach: it is not social awareness in culture that should be increased, but cultural awareness in society. (...) This implies that attention should be paid to culture in education, the quality of public space, the urban investment climate, and leisure facilities. The strength of culture lies not only in its innovative and creative power, in its ability to embody our country's 'prestige', in its cohesive power, and in the achievements of our past, but also in other ways of looking, in questioning matters we have always taken for granted, and in repeated benchmarking of values. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 2)

In other words, the central problem of cultural policy is not the fact that the cultural field has developed too autonomously from society and that it should be stimulated to take note of developments in society. Society should be more aware of the strengths of cultural activities and accomplishments. Therefore no remarks on the autonomy of culture can be found in the policy letter. The emphasis is placed on deregulation of the cultural field.

##### 2.4.1. Intrinsic Functions

The quote mentioned above contains three intrinsic functions of culture. Culture alters how we look at things, culture brings perceived certainties up for discussion and is pivotal in re-evaluating values. Here, these functions are related to culture. In the discussion of definitions of culture and art used in the policy documents, however, these functions have been identified as being specific to art.

The policy letter starts by referring to the 'uitgangspuntenbrief' of July 2003.

Increasing the autonomy (of the cultural sector, QLvdH) is based on the conviction that the quality of art can only come to full bloom in complete freedom. Only then can art fulfil its

## 2. The National Government

special purpose, not only as an immaterial enrichment for those who actively take part in it, but also to increase the flexibility of society as a whole. Hence, the 'Hoofdlijnenakkoord' (Coalition Agreement, QLVdH) stresses the importance of high-quality cultural life. It is the government's task to safeguard freedom of art and, equally important, to see to it that this freedom is put to the best possible use in society. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 1)

In other words: the autonomy of the cultural sector should be strengthened in order to maximize the specific relevance of art in society. This relevance relates to 'immaterial enrichment' of those taking part in cultural activities. The text is not clear about what this immaterial enrichment actually is, but refers most likely to personal development. It also relates to an effect on societal level: art enhances the elasticity of society. From this quote it is not exactly clear what is meant by this, but one could argue that both social and economic effects are being referred to. The social effects have been mentioned in earlier policy documents where tolerance, relating oneself to others, and shared cultural experiences have been mentioned as starting points for recognizing the extraordinary achievements of others. The economic effects are a somewhat more difficult matter. On several occasions (see below) the policy letter stresses the importance of cultural creativity for the economic sector. Therefore one could argue that, besides the social effect involving the elasticity of society, the creativity involved in developing new products and services is also being referred to. Both types of functioning are present in the next quote which is also a reference to the 'uitgangspuntenbrief'.

For a thriving culture not only contributes to the creative and innovative powers of a society, to entrepreneurship and the prestige of our country, it also works as a social binding agent as well. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 2)

This quote contains several functions of art and culture: a contribution to the creative and innovative abilities of society, a contribution to entrepreneurial spirit, the outlook of the country and bringing people together. Most of these functions are also present in the previous documents, except the outlook of the country. This function refers to the design of the public space and is specific to the fields of the visual arts, design and architecture, and therefore not relevant to the performing arts. Only the last function, bringing people together, is of an intrinsic nature. The quote elaborates on this function specifically with regard to cultural heritage. A same reasoning as in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) can be found: knowledge of one's own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others. This reasoning can also be found in the paragraphs where the emphasis of *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) on cultural diversity is criticized.

The new government faced the tasks of formulating an answer to the rising ethnic tensions in the Netherlands.

Knowledge of our cultural heritage contributes to cultural self-awareness, which is essential in the intercultural debate as well as for a strong position of Dutch culture in an international context. A debate on culture is impossible without knowledge of the previous debates. The question is how far the government should go, in its culture policy, to provoke or even force this binding power upon subsidized artists or cultural institutions. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 14)

In *Meer dan de Som* (2003) the generic policy measures of *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), such as the obligation to spend at least two per cent of the total budget on reaching new (more diverse) audiences, have been abolished. The document advocates a more selective approach in which not all cultural institutions are obliged to reach new audiences. Rather, cultural production should be geared towards the diversity of subcultures in society. One of the measures advocated consists of appointing members of different ethnic groups or age groups in the boards and in the management of cultural institutions (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, pp. 14-15).

Cultural education is seen as crucial in cultural policy. In spite of a cut in the cultural policy budget, more money is devoted to cultural education.

It need not be argued here that cultural education is an indispensable part of the cultural policy. Culture belongs to the heart of education. Cultural baggage is essential for the personal development of children, young people, and young adults. Cultural education contributes to the fulfilment of one of the main goals in the Coalition Agreement: Promotion of Participation of the People. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 16)

Personal development is mentioned as a function here. Remarkably, personal development is seen as a means to achieve goals outside of cultural policy, namely, furthering participation in society as a whole. This suggests that the extrinsic functioning could be dependant on intrinsic functions, at least in the social domain.

#### 2.4.2. Economic Functions

In *Meer dan de Som* (2003) attention is devoted to the relationship between culture and economy.

Creativity, being an essential production factor in the knowledge economy, is of vital importance to the development 'from a generic policy on technology into an active policy on innovation'. After all, the latter not only relies on technology as such, but is becoming increasingly dependent on smart combinations of technology and the application of non-technical factors such as artistic design and creativity in the way information is structured. Cultural innovation is often the secret behind the commercial success of many products and services. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 12)

Creativity is seen as a source of income and necessary for economic development, which is a major aim of the coalition agreement. The creative industry is put in the spotlight. This term refers to a cluster of economic activities in which creativity is key to economic success. The cultural sector as a whole is part of the creative industry, but advertising companies, design and bio-technological companies and the IT sector also fall within the definition. The policy letter refers to research on the creative industry of the city of Eindhoven. This sector provides 8% of regional employment, whereas building companies only provide 7% and the educational facilities 5.5% (*ibid.*, p. 12).<sup>20</sup> Because the creative industry requires low capital, is knowledge-intensive, requires intensive human labour and is environmentally friendly, European cities and regions have begun programmes to intensify the creative sector. The cultural sector is comprised in these strategies, as is the case in Rotterdam for instance, where

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<sup>20</sup> The policy document here refers to R. Kerste et al. (2003).

a film commissioner promotes Rotterdam as a filming location in order to establish a dynamic image of the city (*ibid.*, p. 12). Image-building therefore can be regarded as an economic function of culture.

Besides the role of the cultural sector in the creative industry, other economic effects of culture are being mentioned.

Culture contributes to a country's national prestige and its reputation of creativity, entrepreneurship and civilization. Businesses *do* consider the cultural climate of a city to decide whether or not to settle there.<sup>21</sup> In turn, employees find it important that the city in which they work boasts high-quality cultural services. Moreover, the cultural sector has a considerable influence on adjacent sectors such as tourism, the catering business, and the trade sector. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 13)

Developing national prestige is a new function of culture in the economic domain. In this quote, it seems to be linked to developing an image of creativity, presumably for a city or a region or a nation as a whole. These are interesting functions and research should be carried out to establish how they are linked to the intrinsic qualities of culture and art. Above, the development of an entrepreneurial spirit was encountered as a function of culture. The role of culture in civilization is a new element; however this role is not elaborated upon. The policy letter stresses the idea of a climate for attracting businesses as the most crucial economic function of culture, next to the role it plays in the creative industry.

The policy letter mentions a third domain in which culture and art function economically. Attention is turned to author's rights in the digital world. The policy letter signals tension between the application of these rights and the free flow of information and creativity. The policy letter does not offer solutions for this tension (*ibid.*, p. 13). In the terms of the present research, this points to the function of generating income for artists themselves, a function which falls in cell 'B' of Table 1.1. This is the first national cultural policy document to mention a function of art and culture in this cell. This is not surprising, as intellectual ownership has become an economic growth sector due to the growth of the creative sector propelled by IT developments. But this type of function only seems to apply to the performing arts inasmuch as they are virtually recorded (on film, television or DVD). However, the present research is concerned with the functioning of live performing arts.

### 2.4.3. Cities and Regions

In *Meer dan de Som* (2003) much attention is paid to the position of cities and regions. For instance, subsidies in the field of the visual arts will be geared more towards initiatives in cities in order to enlarge their potential for regional functioning, as opposed to the situation where resources were split up over numerous small initiatives that only functioned locally (*ibid.*, p. 7). For the performing arts, the budget cut leads to sharp choices. Even though the

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<sup>21</sup> The policy document here refers to Florida (2002). His thesis is that nowadays companies tend to follow the settlement decisions of their employees whereas in the 'classic' economic practice this was always the other way around. This is especially true for knowledge-based industries such as the IT sector. Cities with diverse recreational facilities - of which cultural and artistic activities form an important part - thus have an advantage in economic development, as these sectors of the economy tend to be highly profitable.

artistic quality of institutions remains the principal criterion for subsidy decisions, an approach is advocated where deviations from artistic judgements can be allowed, recognizing that facilities should be spread over the country evenly (*ibid.*, p. 8) and that production facilities have an added value for the region where they are based (*ibid.*, p. 19). These notions are also present in previous policy documents. No new functions for cities and regions are mentioned in *Meer dan de Som* (2003).

## 2.5. Functions of the (Performing) Arts in the State Policy Documents

A number of functions of the (performing) arts can now be identified. In order to compare the functions in the various documents, they have been categorized in Tables 2.1 to 2.5. Similar functions in each document have been put together in one box, corresponding functions between documents have been aligned horizontally. For some functions, it is not quite clear whether they are exactly the same between one document and the other. In these cases, the functions may be mentioned more than once. When a function has been specifically linked to art or fringe activities, this is indicated. The tables are discussed below.

Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)
Personal experience	Personal experience		Being addressed at emotional level Being surprised Experiencing something unique Experiencing beauty Being bewildered by an experience Being impressed	
Entertainment, relaxation	Diversion	'Intellectual' entertainment	Amusement	
Imagination / fantasy		Lifting one above the limitations of daily life through imagination (specifically for the arts)	Stimulating fantasy	

**Table 2.1 A first categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Personal Experience**



### 2.5.1. Functions from the Perspective of the Audience

Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 list the functions found in the policy documents as seen from the perspective of the audience. These are all functions that are linked to the intrinsic (artistic) nature of the performing arts, possibly with the exception of the entertainment function and cultural education.

A first set of functions centres on **personal experience** (Table 2.1). The immediate effect on spectators of participating in cultural activities is described as 'emotional'. This has been elaborated upon to the greatest extent in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000). The experiences of beauty, of unicity, surprise and bewilderment have all been associated with aesthetic experiences. The question can be raised as to whether or not these are specific to art and which further effects these experiences have for individual spectators, other than the pleasure they bring. Another specific question regards entertainment. In *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) and *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), the term 'entertainment' seems to be used in the sense of 'relaxation' and is opposed to the artistic functioning of performing arts. However, *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) refers to a form of intellectual stimulation which, in turn, can have a relaxing effect. This should be clarified. *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) also introduces 'the power of imagination' which seems to be a function on the emotional level, for 'it lifts one above the limitations of daily life'. It is not clear what is meant by this. Therefore the specific nature of the aesthetic experience should be studied to discover the functions that do exist for spectators, and how they are linked to the specific artistic qualities of the performing arts. This should result in a more precise definition of art as well as of entertainment. This theme will be researched in Part II (Chapter 6).

A second set of functions can be regarded as **personal development** (Table 2.2). These functions centre on personal growth through exploration, reflection, curiosity, and learning about alternative visions on reality (in one's own culture or beyond). Personal development seems to refer to the *mental* development of the spectator. But it is not clear from the policy documents how personal development relates to personal experience through the arts. A simple reasoning could be that mental development is achieved through experiencing emotions in the case of culture and art, whereas mental development in science is achieved through a purely rational process. But this would disregard the fact that developing new insights can also give rise to pleasure, i.e., can have an effect on emotional level. This would turn the argument around. Theories on the specific nature of the aesthetic experience could shed light on this subject and are therefore studied in Part II. In the documents, at least three different aspects have been referred to:

1. A form of intellectual pleasure can be involved by stimulation of the mind. This is most markedly present in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000).
2. A function of cultural activities is to make acquaintance with alternative visions on reality. Culture and art can thus alter the way people look at things and bring perceived certainties up for discussion. One can broaden one's own mental scope through learning or experiencing the world view of others.

3. A very specific function has been mentioned in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995), which can best be described as rendering significance or meaning to impressions and events in life. This function seems to relate to the functions mentioned under identity, as rendering meaning lends identity on a personal level. This personal identity, of course, plays a part in the interaction with others.

In *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) cultural education has been mentioned as a function. This function seems to be out of place here because it is an activity of the cultural institutions themselves, whereas all the other functions have been expressed as (mental) activities on the part of the audience. But cultural education does not fit anywhere else in Tables 2.1 to 2.5. It can be regarded as a task within the artworld itself, but it is the only task encountered that focuses on personal development of the audience rather than of the artists. Therefore cultural education has been placed under personal development.

Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)
Mental development of spectators	Personal development Furthering people's maturity	Personal exploration	Reflection Stimulation of the mind	Personal development (as a means to further participation in society) Re-evaluating values
Broadening the mental scope of spectators	Learning about alternative visions on reality	Recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures	Experiencing new ways of looking at things Satisfying curiosity	Altering the way we look at things Bringing perceived certainties up for discussion
Rendering significance		Giving meaning to impressions and events in life Finding a secure place in the world mentally		
Cultural education			Educational activities	

**Table 2.2 A first categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Personal Development**

Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)
Historical identity	Relating oneself to history	Relating oneself to history		
Social interaction/ establishing social structures	Sharing experiences Bringing people together Relating oneself to others Sharing ideas and perceptions Representing (dominant or subgroup) norms and values	Strengthening social structures Dividing people into groups A strong sense of one's own culture is important for a tolerant attitude towards others Sharing cultural starting points allows us to recognize extraordinary achievements of others		Bringing people together Elasticity of society Knowledge of one's own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others
Debate, clash of ideas	Testing one's ideas and perceptions against those of others	A means to determine what is of value / recognize quality Recognizing special circumstances Recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures Being aware of one's own character	Stimulating debate about ideas and perceptions (specifically for the arts) Being a factor in the societal, cultural or intellectual debate	Elasticity of society Knowledge of one's own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others

**Table 2.3 A first categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Identity and Social Interaction**

A third set of functions deals with **identity and social interaction** (Table 2.3), either historically formed identities or social identities. Identity is important for the functioning of (performing) art. However it is not clear what the relationship between art and identity is exactly. Furthermore, the question has been raised as to how institutions for the performing arts should relate to their immediate surroundings. It is noteworthy that the documents do not refer to anything such as geographical (regional) identity. In *Cultuur als Confrontatie*

(2000) the concept of identity has been mentioned in its 'confrontational' aspects. The arts are seen specifically as a means to stimulate debate, as a playground for (safe) confrontation between different identities. This perception of art as a form of social debate is also present in the other documents. Identity has at least two aspects. First, it refers to personal identity, 'who am I?' in relation to history or to other people. The second aspect refers to the collective level, for it is about confrontation between personal views or identities. In *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) and *Meer dan de Som* (2003) the confrontational aspects of identity are expressed differently than in the other two documents. They are expressed from the level of an individual (determining what is of value, recognizing special circumstances, recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures, being aware of one's own character, knowledge of one's own culture). However, these individual qualities are used in confrontation with others. Therefore these functions can be regarded as the same as those mentioned in the other two documents.

	Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)
Functions	Expressing ideas and views	Expressing ideas and views authentically	Formulating critique on society (art specifically)		
	Artistic development	Developing new forms of expression (specifically fringe activities)	Renewal of cultural system itself (art specifically)	Experiment and research / laboratory  Preserving/researching authentic performance practices	
Tasks	Producing for specific audiences	Producing for specific audiences, e.g. theatre for toddlers and youth theatre		Reaching new audiences Producing for target groups International activities	
	Producing with amateurs			Co-operation with amateurs	

**Table 2.4 A first categorization of the functions and tasks of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): Intrinsic Functions and Tasks from the perspective of the artists (and cultural industry)**

### 2.5.2. Functions from the Perspective of the Artists

Table 2.4 lists the functions found in the policy documents from the perspective of the performing artists. It should be noted that, in *Meer dan de Som* (2003), no functions or tasks from the perspective of the artist are mentioned. This indicates that, in this last policy document, the legitimization of the cultural policy lies exclusively outside the arts.

The first function is **expressing ideas and views**. This function seems to be the cornerstone of the artistic enterprise from a cultural policy point of view. This function is linked to the functions from the perspective of the spectators. It is the active counterpart of functions such as experiencing alternative visions on reality. Expressing ideas and views is the only concept in Table 2.4 that refers to the relationship between the artworld and society, and therefore will be regarded as a function in this research. This function is intrinsic because it is linked to the artistic qualities of cultural activities. It is the only function in Table 2.4 that can be linked to the functions from the perspective of the audience.

**Artistic development** seems to be about finding new metaphors for expressing ideas and views. From *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) it can be deduced that some cultural institutions should gear themselves to experiment with cultural forms. Others should aim at dispersing these new metaphors. The question can be raised as to whether or not this is a viable option for theatre companies, orchestras and music ensembles. In the other policy documents, the view seems to be that developing new ways of expression is a function of art in society itself, for it enables people to communicate with each other in new ways and express new circumstances. In this view, the development of new ways of expression also is a function in terms of the present research, and seems to be linked closely to the previous function of expressing ideas and views. Because new ways of expression can be (or some would argue should be) developed from older forms, the study of authentic performance practices is listed here as well.

**Producing for specific audiences** and **producing with amateurs** are specific tasks mentioned in the policy documents. International activities can be listed here as well because this can be regarded as producing for a specific audience, namely, the international market. It seems obvious that from the perspective of the national government these tasks are relevant. However, this does not automatically mean they are relevant to cities as well. First, it seems obvious that these tasks are relevant when the cultural policy of a city declares these tasks to be a specific goal; for instance, a city which aims at reaching all toddlers with theatrical activities should incorporate these tasks when evaluating the outcome of cultural policy. However, it seems likely that this city will have other aims in formulating such a policy. Even though these tasks seem first and foremost to be related to the 'internal' development of the cultural system (and they are therefore intrinsic in nature), they can relate to specific extrinsic functions listed in Table 2.5, such as economic functions (producing specifically for international visitors to the city) or social policy aims (producing for specific groups that are in danger of social exclusion).

Table 2.4 provokes two questions which are of importance for the present research. The first concerns whether or not the full 'scope' of functions and tasks listed here should be present in the city itself. Do the performing arts function differently in a city where there is a stage specifically geared to productions that can be characterized as 'experimental' than they do in a city where this type of stage does not exist? The second question concerns whether or not performing-arts activities in a city should be sufficiently diverse to cater for all the different groups of the city's population. In other words: do the performing arts function differently in a city where there are no productions for toddlers at all? Theoretically these questions are very interesting. However, they are only of importance for the present research when a city's policy states that all kinds of performing arts activities should be present in the city and when the aim of the cultural policy is to reach all different groups in the city's society. In other words, these are political questions rather than research questions.

### 2.5.3. Extrinsic Functions

The extrinsic functions have been listed in Table 2.5. They can be considered as functions on a collective level and therefore fall in cell F of Table 1. However, it is debatable whether or not some of the economic functions and functions for a city or region may be linked to the intrinsic artistic quality of the performing arts, i.e., they can also fall in cell E of Table 1.1. This will be elaborated below.

The first set of functions in this table, the **added value of production facilities**, is problematic. In *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) cities are viewed as the breeding grounds of culture. In the other policy documents, the assumption has been made that the presence of (large) performing-arts production facilities is of value for a city. However, this value has not been stated clearly in the documents. The word 'value' is used here because it is not yet clear at this point in the research whether or not this is a kind of functioning of the performing arts in a city. Moreover, it is not exactly clear whether this type of functioning is intrinsic or extrinsic. Inclusion in this table and in cell F is therefore provisional. In addition, it has not been clearly stated who actually allots value to the production facilities. It can be assumed that the presence of performing arts production facilities in a city:

- has a value for the (regional) public in that city;
- has a value for other cultural institutions in that city;
- influences the functioning of plays or concerts in the 'home town' of the theatre company or orchestra;
- Frames the productions of 'visiting' companies, bands or orchestras in a different way so that they function differently.

In addition, the question has been raised as to how performing-arts institutions should relate to their immediate surroundings. Does the (regional) audience in their 'home town' have specific preferences that they should take into account? Or has the growing internationalization eradicated these regional differences in taste? And if such differences do exist, at what level do they become apparent to a performing-arts institution: at the level of language (both spoken and symbolic language), the themes addressed in productions, or the

choice of repertoire? Of course, this question is linked to the concept of identity which is also predominant in the intrinsic functioning of the performing arts.

The state policy documents do not elaborate much upon the **economic functioning** of the (performing) arts, although it is assumed that cultural activities in a city or region have an economic effect. A first function in the economic domain is to attract visitors to a city. In the policy documents, this function is mostly linked to cultural heritage but it also should be studied in relation to the performing arts. The theatre culture in London certainly attracts visitors from abroad. However, in the Dutch case, travelling theatre companies and ensembles tend to be the rule, which means that many mainstream productions can be viewed in almost all Dutch cities and that the theatre public is not obliged to travel to another city. But many productions are not spread over the country so generously. For example, (commercially produced) musicals are limited to a few venues in the country. International productions also visit just one or a few cities, as do international pop stars. The same can be said of avant-garde productions. The value of the performing arts for attracting visitors to a city therefore is a relevant topic to study in more detail.

Second, the arts play a role in attracting businesses to cities. The assumption is that cities offering a vibrant cultural scene are attractive to businesses. This holds especially true for companies that rely on knowledge workers. This is stressed to the greatest extent in *Meer dan de Som* (2003). This document also links the cultural scene of a city to creativity as a source of economic success and to developing entrepreneurial spirit. The concept of the creative class is relevant here. Research should be carried out into whether or not cities try to influence economic performance through their cultural policy. This is done in the next chapter, where the policy documents of a selection of Dutch cities will be studied.

A third set of functions refers to **social policy**. Social cohesion and tolerance have been mentioned in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995), and civilization in *Meer dan de Som* (2003). At this point, it is not clear what exactly is meant by an 'open living climate'. This should be studied in more detail. Some other extrinsic functions have been mentioned in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) and *Meer dan de Som* (2003) as well: spatial planning, political issues, image building and prestige. Research should be performed into whether or not these functions are also mentioned in policy documents of cities; otherwise they are not relevant for this research.

For all functions described in Table 2.5 – though they do not seem to be linked directly to the intrinsic nature of the performing arts – examination should be carried out as to whether or not they are linked. In other words: can the economic and social functioning of the performing arts occur without the artistic functioning of the performing arts? Or rather, is the artistic functioning of performing arts likely to generate specific contributions in the economic and social domains? This has been suggested in *More than the Sum* (2003), regarding the relationship between creativity and economic performance. These questions

	Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)
Added value	Added value	Added value of production facilities for a region or city		Added value of a coherent system of production and consumption facilities comprising all functions in the art industry	Added value of production facilities for a region or city
	Cultural life	Motor for artistic and cultural life	Breeding places for culture and art		
Economic Functions	Attracting visitors	Tourism	Attracting tourists		
	Business climate	Attracting businesses	Added value for attracting businesses		Climate for attracting businesses, specifically by providing viable living conditions for knowledge workers
	Creative climate				Contribution to the creative and innovative abilities of society Developing entrepreneurial spirit Creativity as a source of income and economic development
Social Policy	Social cohesion		Scene for shared experience Bringing people together despite their differences		



Social Policy	Tolerance		Encourage an open living climate to accommodate different ways of cultural expression (tolerance)		Civilization
Other	Other issues			Spatial planning Political issues	Image-building (National) prestige

**Table 2.5 A first categorization of the functions and tasks of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): Extrinsic Functions**

will be studied in Chapters 8 and 9. The functions mentioned in Table 2.5 have been described only superficially in the state policy documents. It seems logical to presume that the policy documents of cities elaborate upon these functions to a greater degree. Therefore these questions will be studied in more detail on the basis of the discussion of the policy documents of several larger cities in the Netherlands in the next chapter. At this point it is possible to fill in the empty cells of Table 1 on the basis of the discussion of the policy documents of the state. This is done in table 2.6.

Some preliminary answers to the questions that terminated Chapter 1 can now be formulated. Extrinsic functions for the performing artists have not been mentioned in the national policy documents.<sup>22</sup> This is consistent with the assumption that the income policy for artists falls outside the scope of cultural policy in the Netherlands. However several functions in cell A have been identified. These functions seem to be very important to the cultural policy and are linked to the functions in cells C and E.

The distinction between the individual level and collective level on the part of the audience does seem to be relevant, as was questioned in Chapter 1. A specific research question concerns whether or not personal experience can indeed be categorized on the intrinsic and non-intrinsic side. This will be investigated in Chapter 6, where the specific nature of aesthetic experience is examined. A further question involves the specific contributions of aesthetic activities to the economic and social domains. This will be investigated in Chapters 8 and 9. The added value of production facilities for a city is a complex matter. It is not clear whether or not they have been placed correctly in the Table. This will be researched on the basis of the city policy documents covered in Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> Except from providing income through the exploitation of author's rights, but this function does not pertain to the live performing arts.

Functioning from the perspective of:	Intrinsic Functioning	Extrinsic Functioning
Artists	Expressing ideas and perceptions Artistic development (A)	(B)
Audience members individually	Personal Experience Personal Development Identity (C)	Personal Experience (relaxation) (D)
Audience collectively	Identity and Debate (E)	Added value of production facilities Economic functions Social Policy Issues Other issues (F)

**Table 2.6 Categorization of the functions of the performing arts in society, based on state policy documents.**

## 2.6. Developments in Dutch Cultural Policy

In section 1.4 it was established that the political orientation of elected officials has little influence on Dutch cultural policy. The discussion of the policy documents in this chapter makes clear that differences between social-democratic and liberal-democratic elected officials can be found in the documents, although they do not lead to drastic policy changes. Differences become apparent specifically at the level of identity and social interaction. The documents drawn up under a socialist politician (D'Ancona and Van der Ploeg) reflect a world view that centres on collectives. Thus they are prone to defining art's functioning in terms of interaction and debate. The liberal-democratic politicians (Nuis and Van der Laan) approach art's functioning from the perspective of the individual and thus stress the contribution that aesthetic experience has for individuals in navigating the social arena. Rather than pointing out different functions, the documents reflect the same type of functions from a different angle. A second difference regards the attention that is paid to the diversity of the subsidized cultural sector. While the socialists regard this issue from the perspective of the diversity of audiences, arguing for those who do not have access to cultural facilities, the liberal-democrats tend to regard it as a question of artistic quality

which should reflect the diversity in society.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Van der Ploeg's efforts to steer cultural production through specific measures, e.g. minimum percentages of subsidies that should be devoted to attracting new audiences, were immediately abolished by Van der Laan as she represented a government that was concerned with reducing bureaucracy. Though this shift does coincide with the differences between a socialist and liberal-democratic view regarding the extent to which society can be engineered, the shift rather seems to be a demonstration of a more general trend in Dutch politics. Van der Laan's successor, the socialist Ronald Plasterk, has not yet demonstrated a tendency to reinstitute some of these measures. His policies faithfully execute the agenda set into motion by Van der Laan regarding systemic change, most notably through functional decentralization of cultural policy.

Furthermore, it has become clear that the legitimization of Dutch cultural policy in the documents lies squarely outside the artworld. The tendency to introduce extrinsic arguments is most markedly present in the last two documents where *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) introduces social policy issues such as equity in stressing cultural diversity (i.e., ethnic diversity) and *Meer dan de Som* (2003) takes an economic perspective stressing the contribution of creativity to economic performance. Specifically the last two documents thus contradict the claim of Oosterbaan Martinius, Abbing and Van Klink that cultural policy in fact serves the needs of cultural professionals and elite audiences. This issue relates to the most important question regarding the developments in Dutch cultural policy: the question of art's autonomy, which is a recurring theme in the policy documents. In studying the documents, it has become clear that the Dutch art world seems to enjoy relative autonomy rather than absolute autonomy. None the less, concerns for the restricted reach in society and the perceived 'artification' of Dutch theatre are expressed in the documents. These issues are considered to restrict art's functioning in society. Around the year 2000, the stress on cultural education as a means to advance the reach and the advent of cultural diversity – which here should be understood as ethnic diversity – are indicators that the national government was trying to mitigate the autonomy of the subsidized arts. On the other hand, the emphasis on the artistic quality of productions is one of the official aims of the Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy. Furthermore, specifically in *Meer dan de Som* (2003), the assumption has been made that the arts function in society *as art*. And extrinsic functioning may even ensue from this specific artistic quality. This line of reasoning clearly underpins the creative class argument that is advanced in this document. The question of art's autonomy in relation to its functioning in society therefore needs to be researched in more detail. This is the topic of Chapter 5. We remark that national cultural policy evidently displays a trend towards the 'social relevance' after the stress on artistic quality in the 1980s, although with the shift to

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<sup>23</sup> The same difference occurs in the documents of the city of Groningen from 1995, for example, which were drawn up under a liberal-democratic alderman, and from 2000, drawn up under a socialist alderman. The latter document stresses access to authentic cultural expression for youngsters (see section 3.4).

art's functioning *as art* in *Meer dan de Som* (2003), a common ground for artistic quality and societal relevance may have been reached.

### 3. Political Statements about Culture, Art and Society in the Netherlands: City Government

This chapter examines the policy documents of a selection of Dutch cities. The cities have been selected in such a way that they are spread evenly across the country. This means that at least two cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (in 2005) have been selected from each region: one city where performing arts companies with a national subsidy are based, and one where there is not the case (with the exception of the western region). It can be expected that cultural policy of cities where nationally sponsored performing arts institutions produce the performances will differ from that of cities where performing arts institutions only visit on tour.

It should be noted that no cities in the province of Friesland have been selected, as this province is the only region in the Netherlands where the nation's second language is an official language. The cultural policy of cities in Friesland can be expected to be geared more towards expression of the Frisian identity and to language-based art forms. The inclusion of Frisian cities in the research could therefore bias the findings. In the northern region, the exclusion of Friesland leaves only Zwolle as an alternative for a city where no performing arts companies are based, apart from Groningen, which is the largest northern city with performing arts companies.<sup>1</sup> In the southern region, Breda has been chosen because the city is a major centre of vocational education in the region. Maastricht has been chosen as a city with performing arts companies. In the eastern region, Apeldoorn and Arnhem are both major centres for vocational education. In the research, Arnhem is the only city with performing arts companies and without a university. However, a university is located nearby, in Arnhem's 'twin city' of Nijmegen. The largest Dutch cities are located in the western region (Rim City, *Randstad*). Amsterdam has been excluded from the research. The nation's capital is the cultural capital with an unprecedented cultural scene. This influences the functioning of the performing arts in urban society. The cultural policies of Rotterdam and Utrecht have been researched. Table 3.1 lists the cities included in the research.

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<sup>1</sup> Emmen (108,662 inhabitants on 1 January 2005) could have been chosen, but this municipality was formed by adding some of the surrounding rural villages to the municipality in 1992. Emmen therefore cannot be considered as a city of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

	West	'region'		
	(Randstad)	North	South	East
Performing art companies are based in the city	Rotterdam (596,407)  Utrecht (275,258)	Groningen (180,604)	Maastricht (121,456)	Arnhem (141,321)
No performing art companies in the city		Zwolle (111,900)	Breda (168,054)	Apeldoorn (156,064)

(between brackets: number of inhabitants on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, source: CBS Statline, [www.statline.cbs.nl](http://www.statline.cbs.nl))

### Table 3.1 Cities in the research sample

The following sections will discuss the cultural policy documents of the selected cities from 1992 to 2005. Each city has its own 'rhythm' in producing cultural policy documents, although a tendency to follow the national four-year cycle is evident. The cities with performing art companies proved to have elaborate cultural policy documents. Therefore a section will be devoted to each of these cities. Zwolle, Breda and Apeldoorn yielded far less material for the present research. Their cultural policies also turned out to be comparable. Therefore one section will be devoted to these three cities. Each section is structured as follows. First, general remarks are made on the role of the city government and urbanity in relation to cultural policy. Then the intrinsic functions as found in the city policy documents will be discussed, followed by subsections on economic functions, city image, the social domain and city development. Each section closes with subsections on issues that are specific to the city, such as Rotterdam Cultural Capital of Europe and the cultural heritage for Maastricht for example. The policy documents will be referred to by the city name and year of publication of the document. The chapter closes with a summary (section 3.7.) which contains some general remarks that can be made on the basis of an analysis of the cultural policy of these cities.

### 3.1. Rotterdam

Rotterdam is the largest city in the research. It is exceptional in the Netherlands for two reasons: it is the largest harbour of Europe and one of the largest in the world. Its inner city was almost entirely destroyed during the German invasion of 1940. These two issues have coloured the city's history markedly. The fact that the city is a large harbour lends the city an international orientation. Accordingly, Rotterdam is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> Cultural policy has been greatly influenced by the post-war reconstruction of the inner city, as most cultural institutions had been destroyed in the bombardment of 1940. In 2001, Rotterdam was Cultural Capital of Europe.

<sup>2</sup> In 2002, 46% of the population of Rotterdam could be classified as immigrant groups (Bik and Stolk, 2002).

Since 1997 Rotterdam has used the same four-year cycle for evaluating and formulating cultural policy as the national government. The policy documents spanning four cycles have been studied (1997 to 2000, 2001 to 2004, and 2005 to 2008). However these documents do not contain detailed legitimization of cultural policy. The document of 1993, *De Kunst en de Stad (The Arts and the City)*, seems to be a common base for all cultural policy documents and has therefore been included in the research. In addition to these city documents, the programme and evaluation of the Cultural Capital of Europe project have been studied. These will be discussed in a separate section.

#### 3.1.1. The Role of City Government

City governments have to certify their role in relation to the private production of culture, usually large scale production of mass culture. This is a recurring theme in various policy documents. The city expresses a concern that the interests of private sponsors differ from those of the government (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 4). Without subsidies, risk-free productions and prestigious events will prevail over regular cultural activities. Therefore city cultural policy is aimed at supporting 'economically weak' cultural activities (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 33).

For a flourishing and dynamic cultural climate, great diversity is essential. (...) We feel that Rotterdam gains benefit by an art policy that starts from a multiform cultural scene and a wide spectrum of audiences in the city. To some extent the market is self-regulating in this respect, and furthermore the government has to do its part. (...) In any event, the government has to make sure that the varicoloured aspects of the artistic landscape as well as the autonomy of art are guaranteed. (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 9)

Guaranteeing a diverse supply of cultural activities for different groups in society is a major concern for the municipality. It is not immediately clear what is meant by 'diversity'. On the one hand, it can be understood as a diverse range of cultural activities in various art forms. The addition of 'a broad spectrum of target audiences' indicates that the passage is referring to 'diversity' in the sense of an assortment that either appeals to various groups in the city's society or various specific productions for specific audience groups. Ethnic diversity can also be designated by the term 'diversity', as is the case in most cultural policy documents around the turn of the century (see *Cultuur als Confrontatie*, 2000, for example). In this case, however, it seems that 'diversity' is being used in a more general sense (encompassing ethnic diversity). In some cases, no government intervention is necessary, for the market can supply the activities needed. The municipality should safeguard the diversity of cultural activities *and* the autonomy of culture.

A second issue is the international context, which was also a concern in the national documents. The growing interlock of nations and economies influences the position of cities. This is especially important for Rotterdam, with its international connections through its harbour. This offers opportunities to absorb these international influences in the city's cultural policy and to develop a distinct identity. For this reason, the city's cultural policy should not only be aimed at realizing a basic supply for everybody, but should also specialize in certain areas in order to play a role in the international cultural field (Rotterdam, 1993, pp. 33-4). Rotterdam has chosen to specialize in festivals, international

activities and the applied arts, e.g., architecture and design (Rotterdam, 1994, p. 4). Cultural institutions should define their role and position in the international intercultural communities that large cities have become. Rotterdam envisages more direct international contact between cities in the cultural field (Rotterdam, 1994, p. 5), perhaps surpassing the national government.

A last general issue is very crucial to the present research: the relationship between the intrinsic functions of art and culture and other policy aims 'outside' cultural policy.

Art and cultural products have an intrinsic significance and represent a value in themselves. However, they can also contribute to the aims of other policy areas. In this context, examples are the contribution of the arts to a favourable business establishment climate, the contribution of art education to the socio-cultural training of young people, and the contribution of art to the quality of the spatial environment. It is at this interface of culture and other policy areas that the government and the market could come to terms over the support to art and cultural expressions. (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 10)

What is of interest is that the city policy document juxtaposes intrinsic functions with extrinsic functions. This quote suggests that both can be present at the same time but there is no indication that one is dependent on the other. The quote lists a few areas in which culture and art can have functions: developing a climate for attracting businesses (Table 2.5) and inhabitants to the city, the formation of the youth and the quality of the spatial environment (Table 2.5). Attracting inhabitants to the city is new to this research and should be added to Table 2.5. It is not immediately clear what is meant by 'forming of youth'. This can be regarded as mental development (Table 2.2), but it can also be regarded as producing for specific audiences (Table 2.4).

In the 1999 policy document, the question is posed as to whether or not cultural institutions should develop specific activities to enrich the wellbeing of senior citizens or (mentally) challenged people by bringing art to care centres and homes for the elderly; perhaps they can also be applied to prevent the nuisance caused by recalcitrant youngsters.

The heart of the problem is whether or not experiencing art represents a social value *per se*. Wherever this value can make a positive contribution towards realizing aims of other policy areas, e.g., through cultural education and small-scale activities on a decentralized level, the art sector should not ignore questions from that direction, provided addressing them does not result in an adverse effect on the aims of the institutions themselves. In our view, a situation where instruments such as art policy and experiencing art are placed second to other priorities in municipal policies may never arise. (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 12)

This quote suggests that contributing to other than artistic aims (i.e., extrinsic functioning) should be encouraged, although not at the expense of the artistic goals of the cultural institutions. The cultural policy should never be instrumental for other city priorities. In the policy document of 2003, the city government seems to have fewer reservations about an instrumental use of cultural policy:

Nevertheless we are formulating some points of departure for the next four years that we consider vital to the further development of the artistic and cultural sector, for their significance to the city's cultural climate and its development as regards economic and town planning



aspects, and – last but not least – the realization of the Council's priorities. (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 2)

However, in this quote, the development of the cultural sector itself still is mentioned as the first priority. Cultural policy is linked to city development, which is an interesting trait in the cultural policy of Rotterdam. Urban development is expressed in terms of economic development, city planning and cultural climate. The quote is not clear, however, about what is meant by this and how the cultural policy can contribute to these various fields. Last but not least, the cultural policy is geared towards the priorities of the new board of the mayor and aldermen. It is noteworthy that, in Rotterdam, the political trend of radicalization with regard to immigrant issues in the Netherlands (which was also referred to in the last chapter) has been very prominent. The leader of the new political party proclaiming these issues, Pim Fortuyn, lived in Rotterdam and his party became the largest party in the city in the 2002 municipal elections. For the first time in the city's history, the Social Democrats were forced out of office.

#### 3.1.2. Intrinsic Functions

In comparison to the extrinsic functions of art and culture, very few remarks can be found on the intrinsic functions in the policy documents of Rotterdam. It seems that the city legislators regard the intrinsic functioning of art and culture as a given fact. The document of 1993 offers some intrinsic legitimization for cultural policy. The later documents are less 'philosophical' in their orientation.<sup>3</sup> A first quote from this document points to the fact that there is vocational value to art and culture.

In these days, of all times, when the growing supply of easily digestible entertainment offers a tempting way of spending one's leisure time, attention must once again be drawn to art education and the educational value of art and experiencing art. (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 16)

The quote is not clear on what this vocational value of art and aesthetic experience exactly is. However an explanation is offered on the same page:

Art contributes to the ability to make autonomous choices. Anyone who has learned to recognize and handle emotions evoked by art will be better able to live in individual freedom, to think and choose independently, and to arrive at a well-considered opinion.<sup>4</sup> Experiencing or practising art gives meaning to one's life, offers people something to hold on to in trying times, or simply allows of untroubled enjoyment. (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 16)

Art contributes – by experiencing emotions which are evoked by the art work – to the ability to make independent choices and to develop independent ways of thinking. This appears to be the principal legitimization of cultural policy. The document refers to the concept of 'positive freedom' as introduced by Blokland (1990). This is discussed in Chapter 9. The argument is very much the same as what was called 'mental development of the spectators' (Table 2.2). However, the argument here stresses the independence of individuals more than the national policy documents do. This quote also mentions the rendering of meaning as a function (rendering significance, Table 2.2) and entertainment or enjoyment. As was seen in

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<sup>3</sup> The document of 1996 concludes that is a tradition in Rotterdam for large-scale policy documents describing the goals of the cultural policy to be produced only occasionally (see Rotterdam, 1996, p. 1).

<sup>4</sup> The policy document here refers to Blokland (1990).

Chapter 2, entertainment is a complex matter because it can mean both diversion and intellectual stimulation. Based upon this quote, a notion can be added to this issue: here, entertainment is contrasted with 'offering a stronghold in difficult times'. The quote suggests that for some, art offers an escape from the events of everyday life, merely as a diversion, whereas for others it can offer something to hold on to in difficult circumstances (as a backbone). This last function is akin to what was called 'finding a secure place in the world' (Table 2.2).

The document of 1993 clearly shows that cultural policy is part of the city development in which the main aim is to bring about a diverse package of facilities in the city of high quality.

It is obvious that in an integral urban development (...) the art sector plays an important role. On the one hand, by providing a supply and a quality befitting a big city, on the other by asking questions and placing emphasis in a critical and contrary fashion, from an independent position, as is typical of art. (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 20)

This quote shows that the concern of the city council is to bring about a package of artistic facilities that is fitting for a city of the size and aspirations of Rotterdam, and to relate to the specific role the arts ought to play in the city.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, the development of the arts belongs to the development of the city, while, on the other, the arts should be independent of the city's development and ought to reflect upon the city's trajectory. This function of art in formulating critique on society was also encountered in the national policy documents (Table 2.4). However, here this function is geared towards formulating critique on city development. A last point can be made on the basis of the 1993 document. It is stated explicitly that the emphasis on city development and the attractiveness of the city to inhabitants, visitors and business enterprises does not mean that there should not be room for renewal and experiment in the arts (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 22). This function was also found in the national documents (Table 2.4, artistic development). The document of 2003 contains some remarks on the intrinsic functions of culture and art as well. The function of making independent choices in life is repeated, and is of special relevance to youngsters.

Young people (...) are the audience of the future and this argument is enough in itself to consider it vital that they are brought into contact with cultural values and traditions, and learn to understand what art can mean. And incidentally, for this group in all its diversity and with its variety of preferences, the same fact is true that art contributes to the ability to make choices independently, stimulates creative thought processes and leads to surprising insights. (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 5)

Note that in this quote no clear distinction is made between '*cultural* values and traditions' and the functioning of *art* for youngsters. Stimulating creative thinking processes seems to be a function of art (see also Rotterdam, 2003, p. 3) that has not been encountered before. It is not clear what is meant by this exactly; developing unexpected insights can be categorized as mental development of the spectator (Table 2.2). This suggests that stimulating creative processes is merely a rephrasing of a function which has been encountered previously. It can

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<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy that the document refers to the *art* sector and not to the *cultural* sector. However, from the text it can not be deduced whether this is a precise use of terminology or whether 'the art sector' was a term interchangeable with 'the cultural sector' at that point in time.

also be interpreted as stimulating imagination or fantasy (Table 2.1). Furthermore, the document stresses that it is important that youngsters become acquainted with traditional artistic and cultural practices (and not only with popular culture) because traditional art and culture embody the history and development of the culture of today (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 5).<sup>6</sup> A concern is expressed that youngsters do not identify with culture as it has developed, and will therefore be alienated from society. In *More than the Sum* (2003), cultural participation was also viewed as a means for personal development in order to stimulate participation in society. The same line of thinking is present in the earlier document of 1999.

A historical consciousness is (...) a prerequisite for a further realization of the development and creation of new ideas on the one hand, and for the recognition that these new developments deserve on the other. (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 8)

This quote is of interest because it reflects the notions found in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) on being able to recognize the (cultural) achievements of others (Table 2.3). Also it points out that new insights and ideas can only be developed on the basis of existing views (Table 2.2, developing new insights, and Table 2.4, expressing new ideas and views). The policy document explicitly mentions the cultural heritage of immigrants in Rotterdam (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 8) which should receive due attention, a theme that was also present in the national policy document of 2000, *Cultuur als Confrontatie*.

#### 3.1.3. Economic Functions

There is a tendency to view art, if not as the motor, then as the fuel for an upturn in city economics (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 31). Economic legitimization for cultural policy is present in almost every document on the city's cultural policy. In Chapter 2, a categorization of the functioning in the economic domain was made: attract visitors, create a business climate and stimulate a creative climate. These functions are also present in the cultural policy documents of Rotterdam (see e.g. Rotterdam, 2000b, p. 6, and 2003, p. 6). To these functions can be added: attract inhabitants with higher education (Rotterdam, 2003, p.6) and stimulate employment (Rotterdam, 2000c). In the policy documents of Rotterdam, the economic functioning is sometimes specifically related to art institutions but mostly to art and culture in general (see e.g. Rotterdam, 2000c, 2000b, pp. 6-7, and 2003, p. 7). On other occasions, art institutions are mentioned specifically (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1993, p. 18). With the possible exception of the quote from the 1999 document (p. 12), there seems to be no precision involved in the use of either specifically art or culture and art (or cultural institutions or climate). It seems that the functioning of the performing arts in the economic domain is therefore not dependent on the specific artistic qualities of the activities involved. This suggests that the economic functioning of art and culture is related to the diversity of the cultural supply in a city in general. This will be demonstrated below.

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<sup>6</sup> In the policy documents of Rotterdam, the word 'traditioneel' is used in relation to culture and art. This does not translate as 'traditional' exactly, for the term is contrasted with 'popular' (and not with 'modern'). The term refers to cultural and artistic products by the 'traditional' and established – usually state-funded – cultural institutions. In this section, the term 'traditional' will be used in this institutional meaning.

*Attracting visitors and city image*

Cultural activities are key in attracting visitors to the city. The growth of the cultural infrastructure in Rotterdam has contributed to the attractiveness for tourism and recreation in the city. What is economically interesting is the direct and indirect expenditure of visitors to the city (Rotterdam, 2000c). It is essential to developing an attractive image for the city. Art and culture are important for this image (*ibid.*). Developing a city image is a very specific point in the policy documents of Rotterdam.

A flourishing art sector also has a considerable promotional value. A city that cherishes its arts and is proud of them will find that its prestige and allure will rise in other domains as well. (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 20)

One explanation for this importance seems to be the one-sided image of Rotterdam as a 'working city' (Rotterdam, 1996, pp. 1-2). Another explanation can be found in the international aspirations of the city. Cultural activities with international appeal are stimulated, such as festivals like The International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Rotterdam Philharmonic Gergiev Festival and Poetry International (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 4). However, gearing the cultural policy exclusively towards international activities tends to leave the city's 'own' public unsatisfied. Therefore most of the budget should be spent on 'regular' activities (Rotterdam, 1996, p. 4) and other policy sectors should co-finance cultural activities for their promotional value. The cultural budget should be geared towards 'intrinsic artistic value' (*ibid.*, p. 5). What is evident here is that the international image of Rotterdam is related to activities that are explicitly artistic in nature. This is repeated in the document of 2003:

(...) in our view it (...) concerns developments in art that constitute an intrinsic quality; a supply that may not appeal to a broad public, but does contribute - on the basis of its quality - to the artistic climate and Rotterdam's position on the cultural map of this country and surrounding countries, e.g., an opera festival. (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 9)

This is of specific interest for the present research, as it suggests that the extrinsic functioning of culture and art (generating an attractive image) is dependent on the intrinsic qualities of art.

*Business climate*

(...) in a time when people and companies feel less tied to their place of residence or business, the attraction of adequate educational facilities, recreational amenities and, indeed, an increasingly good infrastructure of cultural facilities plays a decisive role when determining the location of a business. (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 18)

The policy document of 1993 states the importance of cultural facilities for attracting businesses to the city. The argument is repeated in the ensuing documents (see Rotterdam 2000b, pp. 6-7, and 2000c, for example). The document of 2003 points to the fact that cities are competing more intensely to attract businesses because corporations not only take into account 'classic' settlement factors such as mobility but also the cultural climate in a city, especially the performing arts (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 7). The policy document refers to the NYFER report published in 2002 (see Marlet, G.A. and I.M. Tames, 2002). The economic effect of culture here is indirect: by influencing the settlement decisions of corporations, a city can boost its employment and therefore expenditure in the city. As was seen in the

discussion of the national policy documents, the concept of creativity in relation to economics and culture is a more recent trend. However, Rotterdam already mentions this in the document of 1999:

Usually, the pursuit of an innovative climate in the city is central when it comes to the co-operation between the art sector and the economy: how, and to what extent, does the creative sector influence the economic processes in the city, not only as a stimulating factor determining the location of a business, but also as an inducement to innovative thought and production processes? (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 12)

Such creative thinking processes have already been mentioned and identified as intrinsic functions. A more detailed discussion should be held on the mutual relationship of intrinsic and extrinsic functions of the performing arts in the city in the economic domain. This is the topic of Chapter 8.

#### 3.1.4. Social Domain

The issue of ethnic diversity was already prominent in the policy document of Rotterdam in 1993. It is noteworthy that the issue is being presented as part of the city development, in this case the demographic development of the city (Rotterdam, 1993, pp. 28-30, see also Rotterdam, 1999, p. 8). Cultural institutions should react to the growing diversity of the city.

In this context, one starting point in particular is of vital importance: the question should not/not only be answered from the assumption that there is 'a problem'. The challenge to enrich our own culture with valuable elements from elsewhere should be at least as strong. This cultural integration will, in turn, create the prerequisites of further social integration of immigrants. After all, when people recognize their own cultural background and identity, they will find it easier to accept 'different' cultural values, and this will hopefully lead to an increasingly successful integration. (Rotterdam, 1993, pp. 28-30)

Three things are conspicuous in this quote. First, the issue of cultural diversity is formulated in terms of opportunity rather than threat. The enriching effect on the culture as a whole is put forward strongly (as was evident in *Investeren in Cultuur*, Ministerie WVC, 1992). Second, the issue of ethnic diversity is linked to the integration of newcomers in society. Through recognizing one's own cultural background and identity, one can accept those of others more easily. This argument is also stated in most national documents (see Table 2.3). Third, it is noteworthy that the quote refers to the 'cultural' values of different cultures and not to the 'artistic' values. Apparently the assumption is that the artistic qualities are not at stake in the clash between different cultures, or are less relevant. This raises the question as to whether or not the functioning of cultural activities in the social domain is dependent on specific artistic qualities.

In the 1999 document, the problem of non-participation by ethnic groups in the activities of art institutions is linked to the Western orientation of the art institutions. Ethnic minorities experience art in different contexts, such as religion, weddings and feasts, whereas Western art seems to function separately from other social activities. However, according to the document, this difference of opinion on the functioning of art in society is not the most important explanation for non-participation. The most important factor is the difference in income and education between the groups (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 8). This may be true, but

such an assumption stimulates the question as to whether or not ethnic minorities will relate to the general cultural facilities just as easily as non-migrant citizens once they have 'caught up' in terms of education and income.

Apart from the issue of ethnic diversity, the policy documents contain more remarks on the relationship between culture and art and social policy issues. The 1999 document mentions that the importance of cultural facilities in boroughs will increase with regard to social-cultural policy because the line between cultural policy and social-cultural policy is blurring (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 14). However, the document offers no indication as to how culture and art can function in the social domain. The 2003 document is more enlightening in this respect:

In the social domain, art and culture can make a contribution towards enhancing the social cohesion in the city and encouraging the integration of communities of different ethnicities (...).

- They can present all possible aspects of the history of the city and its inhabitants, so that the present residents of Rotterdam can become acquainted with their own and each other's history and culture, and consequently show more mutual understanding and sympathy.
- In the boroughs, they can contribute to an improved cultural climate (...) [and consequently] to integration.
- They can contribute to more lively public space. (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 7)

This quote suggests that the functioning of culture and art in the social domain is indirect. First, the awareness of one's own history and that of one's city can lead to mutual understanding. Second, activities in boroughs can lead to integration of different groups when they are geared to the needs and interests of groups in society. Third, the quality of the public space can be improved with culture and art and this can lead to involvement with one's borough or street. This last form of functioning seems to be linked to the visual arts and architecture. The social goals are reached through identity building (both the city's identity and the identity of groups), through developing a local (borough) cultural climate and through improving public space. Identity building is linked to cultural heritage in particular. For the present research, investigation must be carried out into whether or not extrinsic functioning in the social domain is dependent on intrinsic functions. The document suggests that functioning in the social domain is dependent on an intrinsic function such as identity building (Table 2.3). The question should also be posed as to whether this type of functioning of culture and art can be linked to individual cultural activities, or are a result of the total cultural infrastructure in a city as a whole. For the present research, it seems that not only different levels of aggregation on the side of the spectators are relevant but also different levels of aggregation on the side of the cultural activities themselves. Some functions can be linked to individual spectators visiting single performances, others are linked to the broader public and the total offer of cultural activities in a city. A last remark can be made about the quote. By using the term 'art and culture' (as opposed to art or culture individually) the writers of the policy document avoid the question as to whether or not specific artistic qualities are needed for their functioning in the social domain.

### 3.1.5. City development

Art policy is urban development policy, and a good art sector is of vital importance to the position of the city. A city such as Rotterdam, which is international in scope, should never fail to emphasize those very dimensions in its art policy. Likewise, it ought to ensure that art institutions can continue to play a role in the establishment policy of the city and that the arts are an essential factor in its social and demographic processes. (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 2)

Cultural policy is city development policy (see also Rotterdam, 1993, p. 21, and 1996, pp. 2-3). In most documents on cultural policy in Rotterdam, the cultural policy is linked to the development of the city. This is logical since most cultural facilities in the city were destroyed in the bombardment of 1940. Until 1996, the focus was on the realization of cultural facilities that were lacking in the city. From 1996 onwards, a trend towards consolidation of the existing infrastructure is evident (see Rotterdam, 1996, p. 2). Nevertheless, new facilities have been added to the cultural infrastructure of the city since that date, such as the large theatre Het Nieuwe Luxor, The Dutch Architecture Institute and the National Institute for Photography and Film. The fact that Rotterdam was Cultural Capital of Europe in 2001 is viewed as confirming the cultural achievements of the city (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 17). For the present research, it is important to establish exactly what is meant by city development and the role of culture and art in city development. From the various documents it can be deduced that – apart from economic and social development – the term ‘city development’ also refers to spatial planning and the quality of life or the living climate.

Art develops the quality of life in the city (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 15). The cultural policy documents are not very specific on the way art relates to the quality of life. The most important aspect seems to be that a diversity of cultural and artistic facilities is needed in order to cater to various audiences in the city, (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1993 pp. 15, 22). Ten years later the cultural amenities still are an instrument to attract citizens:

We feel that the level (of facilities) that has been achieved so far should be raised wherever possible in order to make the city even more attractive to its present residents, but more particularly to the groups we seek to tempt to settle here. To achieve this, it is necessary that the art sector should continue to develop (both in terms of quantity and quality) and innovate. (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 8)

The document does not state which specific groups should be attracted to the city. It can be assumed that high-income and highly educated groups are being referred to.

It is not surprising that spatial planning is a recurring theme in city policy documents.

The role of the cultural sector in the processes regarding the city’s layout is twofold: autonomous and consequential. Autonomous, where art develops in an individual and independent manner and thus helps determine the allure of (part of) the city. Consequential, where the attractiveness of the city as a place of residence or business and as a tourist draw is increased in the wake of economic, urban planning and demographic developments. (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 30)

This quote clearly states the autonomous role of the arts sector in the development of the city. The autonomous development of the arts determines the outlook of the city. However,

the development of the arts sector should also follow the economic, spatial planning and demographic development of the city. From this quote it can be deduced that the arts play a role in the appearance of the city. This type of functioning points to the visual arts and architecture and does not seem very relevant for the performing arts. Furthermore cultural facilities such as a library, a centre for cultural activities and courses can influence the attractiveness and quality of life, and should therefore be included in spatial planning strategies in order to develop new boroughs (Rotterdam, 2003, p.8, see also Rotterdam, 1999, p.12). However, one aspect is specific to the performing arts: developing the liveliness of the city during after-office hours. The performing arts influence the amount of people on the streets in the evenings, which also has an economic impact, for the visitors to performing arts venues also visit restaurants, cafés and other outdoor recreational facilities (Rotterdam, 2003, p. 7). But the performing arts can also play a role in the attractiveness of the city during the holiday season. Theatres should adapt their programming in order to offer a recreational supply during the evenings in the summer (*ibid.*) Theatres should be planned in the centre of city to profit to the maximum from these effects, but also because city centres usually have good transport facilities to bring in public (and income) from outside the city centre itself (Langeveld & Kievits, 2005, p.5).

A last quote from the policy document of 2003 is of interest here:

Since the eighties, Rotterdam has been busy catching up with other Dutch and European cities when it comes to the domain of the arts. (...) This has certainly helped to increase Rotterdam's attractiveness to young artists and art organizations, but also to enhance the city's liveliness. (Rotterdam 2003, p. 8)

As encountered before, the role of the cultural sector in city development is linked to the sector as a whole, not to single institutions. This also holds true for the attractiveness and liveliness of a city. However, it also holds true for the attractiveness of a city to young artists and artists' organizations. This aspect - young artists in the city - seems to be of specific interest for the liveliness of a city. This could be a partial answer to the question regarding the effect of production facilities in a city. It seems logical to hypothesize that the existence of production facilities in a city will attract young artists.

### **3.1.6. National versus Local Functions of Theatre Institutions**

The policy document of Rotterdam of 2000 deals with the functioning of performing arts institutions in relation to national cultural policy. In 2000, three performing arts institutions in the city had received a negative assessment by the national *Raad voor Cultuur* but were appraised positively by the local advisory board. This led to a dilemma for the local policy makers for they had to decide whether or not to compensate the institutions for the decline in funding. The local policy makers turned to the local function of the institutions which, in their view, should be the basis for deciding whether or not to compensate (Rotterdam, 2000a, p. 3, and Rotterdam, 2000b, p. 4). Local functioning was explicitly elaborated only in the case of the theatre group Bonheur. The company had its own theatre venue in Rotterdam and organized festivals. This it was considered to have a specific function in Rotterdam which warranted the city to compensate the loss of state funding (Rotterdam, 2000a, p. 4). This line



of reasoning is of interest for the present research, as it suggests that resident companies function differently from 'visiting' companies, e.g., through exploitation of their own venue.

#### 3.1.7. Rotterdam Cultural Capital of Europe

In 2001, Rotterdam was Cultural Capital of Europe. The dummy which was made for the programme of the event and the evaluation of the event contain remarks that are of interest for the present research. The event can be regarded as part of the cultural 'renaissance' of Rotterdam (Van Meggelen, 1999, p. IIc). However, the city council also formulated goals which were aimed at the future development of the city. Culture and art were regarded 'as means to investigate the problems and possibilities of the development of the city' (Van Meggelen, 1999, p. IIIb). This reflects the general view on cultural policy as part of the city development - both following the city's development and criticizing it - as mentioned above. The city council also formulated starting points for the event:

- It should be a festival with activities geared to the city as a whole, thus to a broad, general public as well as to the lovers of art and culture.
- It should imply a structural strengthening of the infrastructure of art and culture in terms of participation, activities and facilities.
- The year should be a contribution to the improvement of the international cultural image of Rotterdam.
- In addition, the year should generate long-term economic spin-off, e.g., in the form of an increase in the number of tourists. (Van Meggelen, 1999, p. IIIe)

These starting points reflect the functioning of culture and arts for city image and the economic functions which have been mentioned above. In the evaluation document, Van Meggelen concludes that Rotterdam Cultural Capital indeed contributed to a more cultural image of Rotterdam, both for the self-image of the inhabitants and for the image that visitors have of the city (Van Meggelen, 2003, p. 478). Developing a city identity is therefore a function of culture and art, to develop an identity for the inhabitants and to develop an image to attract visitors. This should be added to Table 2.5. More importantly, the city council has expressed a concern that the event should cater to large audiences but also to the specialist audiences for cultural and artistic activities. Van Meggelen points to the fact that a heterogeneous city such as Rotterdam should be constantly looking for opportunities for cohesion:

A city that is heterogeneous to the core should ask itself time and again what its chances and opportunities are when it comes to cohesion, what its binding elements are and its centripetal forces, what it is that unites what is diverse. (...) On the one hand, culture articulates what is different, divergent, unusual; on the other, it creates a common space for that difference. Only when it does both does it come into its own. (Van Meggelen, 1999, p. IV c)

In this way, culture can function very specifically in the social domain, by expressing differences but also by offering a 'free space' to experience these differences. This quote suggests that the social functioning of art and culture is very much linked to the intrinsic functioning of culture and art as identified in Table 2.3. This is a matter for further research in Chapter 9. Offering a common free space for experiencing differences should be added to Table 2.3 as an elaboration of debate, clash of ideas.

### 3.2. Utrecht

The city of Utrecht lies at the heart of the Netherlands. The city is the major crossroads for the national railway and has large conference facilities. Although the city itself is relatively small (230,000 population) its centre function means that it caters to an area with more than a million inhabitants (Utrecht, 1995a). Utrecht is the smallest of the large cities in the Rim City (*Randstad*) but it has been nominated as one of the major growth centres of the country; from 230,000 population in 2002 the city will grow to 330,000 in 2015. Apart from a symphony orchestra, the city has not been a major centre for production in the field of the performing arts.<sup>7</sup> However, down through the years it has hosted festivals of national importance (*Festival Oude Muziek, Springdance, Festival aan de Werf*, and the *Nederlands Filmfestival*) which have led to a growth in production facilities (*ibid.*, p. 3). The city's ambition has been to become a centre for (performing) arts production as well.<sup>8</sup> The *Raad voor Cultuur* (Culture Council) has described the climate for the performing arts as vital, dynamic and of national importance (Utrecht, 2005, p. 11). In the view of the policy makers, this is fitting for one of the largest cities in the country and a population that comprises many young people, students and highly educated people belonging to the creative class (Utrecht, 2005, p. 2).

Culture works like a magnet, both inside and outside the city borders. (...) Art and culture contribute to the attractive allure and strong economic position of our city, but also to the vitality of districts and neighbourhoods where people live together in a pleasant way. Thanks to the rich cultural scene – and other factors – Utrecht and Amsterdam are the two most attractive cities of the country. We are keen to maintain and strengthen that position and to ensure that it also gains in international prominence. (Utrecht, 2005, p. 2)

This quote seems to suggest that the city council legitimizes the cultural policy extrinsically. However, some remarks on the intrinsic functions of culture and art can be found in the city's policy documents as well. But the discussion of the city's cultural policy documents will start with the legitimization based on the recognition that art is part of the city, which is an important trait of the cultural policy of Utrecht.

The cultural policy of the city of Utrecht has been formulated on the basis of documents describing the ambitions of the city and of documents which are an elaboration of those ambitions. The ambition documents of 1995, describing the aspirations for the period 1997-2000, have been included in the research document entitled *Cultureel Profiel en Schets van Ambitieniveau van de gemeente Utrecht* (*Cultural Profile and Sketch of the Cultural Ambitions*, 1995a) and *KunstACTIEplan 1997-2000 gemeente Utrecht* (*ArtACTIONplan 1997-2000, City of Utrecht*, 1995b). The following document, *Van ambitie tot actie* (*From Ambition towards Action*,

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<sup>7</sup> The list of state-supported theatre companies in Van Maanen (1997, pp. 385-422) shows that before 1992 Utrecht was home to one nationally subsidized theatre company during one season (1979/1980). From 1981 onward, some state-supported companies for youth theatre have been located in the city.

<sup>8</sup> The policy document of 2000 describes this strategy: production facilities have been stimulated through major festivals of this type (see Utrecht, 2000, p. 17). A long-term effect has been that Utrecht has been labelled one of the 'brandpungemeenten' (spearhead municipalities) within the national cultural infrastructure since 2009. As shown in Chapter 11, the city regards the presence of nationally subsidized performing arts producers as a performance indicator for the success of its cultural policy.

1996) comprises the actual subsidy decisions. The next policy cycles for the years 2001-2004 and 2005-2008 started with cultural profiles for the city: *Cultureel Profiel gemeente Utrecht* (Cultural Profile city of Utrecht, 1999) and *Cultuurbeeld 2003 Gemeente Utrecht*, (Cultural Profile, 2003a). A policy document was also drafted for both policy cycles. Both have been included in the research (Utrecht, 2000, and Utrecht, 2003b). An ambition document entitled *Jonge Ruimte, cultuurprofiel midden Nederland* (Young Space, cultural profile central region, published in 2003), drafted in co-operation with the provinces of Utrecht and Flevoland and the cities of Amersfoort and Almere, has also been included in the research. This document was the basis for the negotiations with the national government concerning the cultural policy. The last document is *Cultuur is Kapitaal, cultuurvisie 2005-2008* (Culture is Capital, visionary document 2005-2008) published in 2005.

#### 3.2.1. Intrinsic Functions

The policy documents contain surprisingly few remarks on the intrinsic functions of culture. It seems that the intrinsic functions of art and culture are treated as a given. However, the latest document of 2005 is titled *Culture is Capital*. This title not only refers to the economic and social functions of culture and art.

*'Culture is Capital'* also calls forth other associations: of art and culture as essential parts of every person's life, and as indispensable sources of inspiration for the expression of individual emotions and the development of new insights. (Utrecht, 2005, p. 3)

Art and culture are considered as essential parts of human life. They are a source of inspiration for the expression of emotions and for the development of new insights. These functions refer to the concept of personal experience and personal development (Tables 2.1 and 2.2) and expression of ideas (in this case emotions, Table 2.4). On the one hand, the description here is very general and therefore the quote gives no new insights. On the other, the notion of culture as a source of inspiration is new to this research. Inspiration can be thought of as something that stimulates new insights and therefore can be placed under personal development. This means that this function can be added to Table 2.2, personal development (more precisely under the broadening of the mental scope of spectators). But then the question is why both are formulated in the quote above. It seems that culture as a source of inspiration is broader than the generation of new ideas and insights. Perhaps it can also mean that culture and art generate new feelings and emotions, and therefore the function of inspiration can be placed in Table 2.1, under personal experience. In either case, no new function for the present research has been identified.

#### 3.2.2. Economic Functions

The document of 1999 lists the results from a study executed in 1994 which aimed at describing the economic impact of the arts and culture. The study shows the major effects as a result of direct employment in the arts, the sector is estimated to be equal to the building industry, catering and graphic industry in the city. The additional expenditures of visitors to cultural activities and tourists are also quantified. It is estimated that visitors spend half of the amount of money they spend in the cultural institutions in other facilities in the city. This

leads to considerable indirect employment effects (Utrecht, 1999, p. 22). Therefore, attracting visitors to cultural activities in the city is an important aspect of stimulating the city economy (see also Utrecht 2003, p. 22). The museum sector is very important in attracting visitors. However, the policy makers feel that the appeal of the museum quarter in the city can be enhanced by organizing other cultural activities in the quarter. The performing arts (music in churches and performances on city squares, for instance) are thought to be especially important for this (Utrecht, 1999, p. 16). A study referred to in the policy document of 2000 shows that the expenditures of visitors to dance and musical events are higher than to other events in Utrecht. It is not clear which events have been compared in the study, but once again this shows that, in the Netherlands, even though museums seem to be of greater relevance to attract visitors from outside the city, the performing arts also can be a very effective way to generate turnover in the city (Utrecht, 2000, p. 19). The historic (medieval) inner city is also a strong point in attracting visitors (Utrecht, 2005, p. 4).

Furthermore, the documents of 2000 and 2003 mention the importance of a cultural infrastructure in the city for the settlement decisions of companies (Utrecht, 2000, p. 19, and 2003a, p. 16). The 2003 document refers to a study by Nyfer, performed in Utrecht (Marlet and Tames, 2002). This study was aimed at validating the decision to renovate and enlarge the concert halls of Vredenburg and Tivoli in Utrecht. The study will be discussed in Chapter 8. The most recent document stresses the growing interest in the concept of the 'creative city'.

A high degree of local cultural activity (is) increasingly important for the economy (...). This is connected with the dynamics of 'the new economy' and the development of 'the electronic culture'. In the context of these developments, a rising demand for creative and knowledge-intensive contributions can be noticed. The cultural sector is expected to make a significant contribution in this respect, also in view of the increasing importance of the image-related value of products and services. (Utrecht, 2000, p. 18)

### **3.2.3. City Image**

City image is a very important aspect of the cultural policy of Utrecht. The most obvious aspect is the ambition to promote the city as a city of art producers (Utrecht, 2000, p. 17). The document of 1999 concludes that

Increasingly, art and culture function as vital elements when it comes to city image, and this makes them more and more important for urban societies. Every city in Europe has a water supply, a waste-disposal service, a network of streets and squares and a bus company; but what makes one city different from another is the conscious creation of opportunities to meet and have a good time, and the presence of people, buildings and activities that add something to the commonplace occurrences of everyday life and work. This increases the importance of cultural expressions and activities that are original and unique. (Utrecht, 1999, p. 5)

Art and culture are means for cities to make a difference, to distinguish themselves from other cities in the international context, because art and culture offer authentic and unique activities. However, one might say that, just as every city has water services, every city has a city theatre and a concert hall. Nevertheless the programme of each theatre or concert hall may differ. Moreover specific festivals can give the city 'colour'. In the Dutch case, the

performing arts offer little opportunity for distinction because of the touring system of theatre companies.<sup>9</sup> The city's museums seem to be more prone to distinction. Nevertheless a very distinct signature in theatre company productions can become a source of distinction. The question must be raised as to whether or not such 'signatures' are dependant on a city's (historic) identity. It seems likely that, in a small country such as the Netherlands, this is not the case. City theatres and theatre companies can develop a 'signature' in their programming or productions. This need not be linked to the city's particular history or cultural identity, it may merely be a trademark for the theatre or company. In the international context, performing arts such as music and dance perhaps offer most opportunities for distinction. Dutch orchestras and dance companies frequently tour abroad and can thus promote their city of origin. Text-based forms of performing arts, such as drama, are hindered by the fact that Dutch is not an international language.

Utrecht has an age-old image as a city of festivals. Subsidizing festivals such as *Huis aan de Werf* and *Springdance* is legitimized – among other things – by reference to their value for city promotion (Utrecht, 2000, p. 23). The city wants to promote itself as a cultural city in the international context. The ambition to become cultural Capital of Europe in 2013 is evidence of this (Utrecht, 2003a, p. 17). This is not possible without performing arts production facilities, for without art institutions a city is not urban. The cultural policy should be in accordance with a position as the fourth city of the country (Utrecht, 2000, p. 13, and Utrecht, 2003a, p. 11). This has implications for both the artistic quality and the diversity of the cultural sector.

(...) **artistic quality** and **multiformity** (remain) important starting points (...). Art and culture have their own artistic meaning. Therefore the artistic quality remains an important cornerstone of art policy and constitutes the basic principle when it comes to the spending of funds. In addition, the position of the city of Utrecht as the fourth city of this country makes great demands upon the diversity of the art supply. In our view, multiformity should be regarded as an independent quality of art and cultural policy. Indeed, by presenting multiformity – which, in Utrecht, implies a broad and particularly multi-cultural supply – as a *sine qua non*, the conditions are formulated for an art and cultural policy that represents a cross-section of contemporary developments and initiatives. (Utrecht, 2000, p. 13; see also Utrecht 1999, p. 12)

The policy document of 2003 states that because Utrecht is the fourth city in the country, a further strengthening of the production climate should have priority (Utrecht, 2003a, p. 11). These notions are relevant to the present research. They suggest that a city can choose to have a 'full' cultural ambition, including production facilities, and can cater to diverse audiences. This choice is dependent on city size (and the size of the area around the city to which it also has to offer facilities). A function of the performing arts – specifically production facilities – therefore seems to be to project an 'urban' image. This should be added to Table 2.5.

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<sup>9</sup> In the case of Frisian theatre companies, of course, the Frisian language can be a source of distinction.

### 3.2.4. Social Domain

Art and culture are also important as means to enhance social cohesion and reflect and strengthen the individual identity of the local community. Artistic expressions show us where we come from, where we stand and where we are going. In a period when the relationship between the individual and his environment is increasingly standardized and anonymized, it is all the more important for people to come in contact with cultural expressions. Anyone who has to go without this contact will lose a major hold in our society. The significance of culture for encounters and involvement must be seen as being in line with this argument. Not only are cultural facilities the places *par excellence* where people can meet and exchange views, cultural activity also contributes to mutual contact and understanding. This is vital to a city like Utrecht, which is becoming more and more multi-cultural in its nature. (Utrecht, 1999, p. 18, see also Utrecht, 2000, pp. 13-14)

The quote above reflects the function of finding a mentally secure place in the world (Table 2.2). Apart from this, cultural activities are seen as a means for social contact, and cultural activities contribute to mutual understanding (Table 2.3). These are intrinsic functions that have been encountered previously. However, in this quote, they are related to the growing multi-ethnicity of the city. It seems that the intrinsic qualities of culture and art are important goals that belong to the field of social policy. This raises the question concerning the extent to which the extrinsic functioning of culture and art is dependent on the intrinsic qualities.

In the earlier policy documents of Utrecht, the social functioning of culture and art are related to activities in boroughs specifically. The city is striving to realize cultural buildings in the boroughs that will serve as meeting places for amateur and professional artists. These buildings include work and rehearsal spaces for artists (Utrecht, 1995a, p. 5). The document also stresses the importance of professional institutions presenting cultural activities in boroughs. This can broaden their audience base as well as improve the living climate in the borough (Utrecht, 1995b, p. 13).

The policy document of 1999 stresses the importance of cultural education. Cultural education should not be limited to schools. Activities in boroughs can strengthen social cohesion and participation, especially in more deprived areas (Utrecht, 1999, pp. 21-2). This argument is repeated in the 2003 policy document:

Our society has become heterogeneous and shows a danger of crumbling. Culture and cultural participation are indispensable to effect social cohesion and create a sense of collectivism and togetherness on the basis of the very recognition of differences. Participation – essentially social cohesion – can be stimulated by a target-oriented cultural supply for various groups in society. (Utrecht, 2003b, p. 13)

Society is becoming more and more heterogeneous. Therefore, culture is an increasingly important means to bring about social cohesion. A new sense of community can arise by recognizing the differences between groups. This reflects the concepts listed under social interaction and debate in Table 2.3.

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However, this is uncommon for other parts of the Netherlands.

### 3.2.5. City Development

Utrecht is one of the fastest growing cities in the Netherlands. It is not surprising that the relationship between cultural policy and spatial planning is prominent in the cultural policy documents, especially those from more recent years.

In metropolitan (...) developments, efforts to effect social cohesion are highly important. In this context art and culture have their own, individual role. Wherever large numbers of new residents, without a local past, come to live and work, culture is an essential and positive binding element. (Utrecht, 2003b, p. 6; see also pp. 17-18).

In Utrecht, completely new districts – comparable in size to smaller Dutch cities – are currently being developed. Culture can be used as a means for social integration of the new inhabitants of the boroughs. They lack a shared history (either with the place of their homes or with each other). The growth of the city should be matched by a growth of breeding places for culture. This is of specific importance in the development of the inner city. Cultural facilities can get crowded out by other city functions, such as space for houses and commercial activities. New facilities and working spaces for young artists are of particular importance to the city. City development should incorporate such spaces (Utrecht, 2003b, pp. 20-1). However, the document offers no new insights into the functioning of the performing arts in this respect.

### 3.2.6. Added Value of Production Facilities

Because, from 1997 onward, it has been a major ambition to become a centre for cultural production, one could expect that the cultural policy documents of Utrecht will contain clues about what (performing-art) production facilities add to a city. A first quote connects the production infrastructure to the living climate.

The City Council wants Utrecht to be an attractive place to live, work and stay. In this context, art can make a valuable contribution. For this reason, it is important that a variety of art forms is shown in the city; likewise the city should offer opportunities to create art. (Utrecht, 1996, p. 1)

The quote suggests that a city with (professional) production facilities offers a better living climate and working climate. This means that the economic functioning of the arts is linked to production facilities as well as to reception facilities. However, the quote offers no explanation why this is the case.

The policy documents of 1999 and 2000 contain legitimization for the ambition to become a city of producers.

We consider it important that art is actually created in the city itself. This is vital to the continuity and liveliness of the art climate in the city and the development of an individual identity. An individual production climate is equally important with a view to the presence of vocational art education in the city. (Utrecht, 2000, p. 17; see also Utrecht, 1999, pp. 13-14)

This suggests that production facilities strengthen the cultural infrastructure in order to guarantee continuity and dynamics in the cultural climate.<sup>10</sup> But production facilities are also important to develop a distinct identity. It is not clear whether or not the identity of the

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<sup>10</sup> The dynamics of the cultural infrastructure is also mentioned in the policy document of 2005 (p. 7).

entire city is being referred to, but this does seem likely. The identity of individual cultural institutions is certainly not being referred to. The production facilities are also linked to the presence of vocational training in the arts. It can be assumed that the municipal government is concerned with the situation of young artists graduating from their art schools, hoping that they can find opportunities for work and development. This is especially true with regard to talented youth theatre makers. Because of the fact that the infrastructure for the production of youth theatre has grown substantially in Utrecht since the 1990s, the development of talent in this area is of specific interest to the city (see Utrecht, 2000, p. 24). The development of young talented performing artists can be added as a task to Table 2.4.

The policy document of 2000 also contains several arguments outside the art world itself in favour of developing the city as a city of producers.

A 'creative city' requires the permanent presence of both young and very experienced 'producers', individuals who can put their own stamp on the ways a city can be lived in and experienced. (Utrecht, 2000, p. 19)

The assumption seems to be that a city of the importance of Utrecht is not complete without art producers being active in the city. The concept of the creative city also stipulates the presence of art producers, both young and experienced. Once again this suggests that the economic functions of art and culture are dependent on the presence of producers in the city. The producers influence the living climate in the city. However, the policy document is not clear about the nature of the relationship between the presence of production facilities and the economic functioning or living climate. A last legitimization consists of the fact that Utrecht wants to be cultural Capital of Europe in 2013. This type of event is not possible without the presence of art producers in the city (Utrecht, 2000, p. 19). The presence of art producers thus has promotional value for the city, but it seems that the relationship between the presence of performing-art producers in the city and the economic functioning of the performing arts in that city is more complicated. This relationship will be discussed in the second part of this book (Chapter 8).

### **3.3. Maastricht**

Maastricht is the most southern of the Dutch cities in the research. It is situated in the most international environment of the Netherlands, bordering directly on Belgium. Germany and Luxembourg are nearby. The city is the centre of a Euregion which includes centres such as Aachen (Germany), Leuven, Hasselt and Liege (Belgium). Maastricht has one of the nation's most beautiful historic inner cities but also has a very conservative and traditional image. The city administration has tried to redirect this image towards a modern and international centre for services and trade (Maastricht, 1992, p. 6, and 2001, p. 23). This is a focal point in the city's cultural policy.

The cultural policy document of the city of Maastricht, which was published in 1992, contains no legitimization of its cultural policy. The focus of the document is to provide a full



supply of professional artistic activities for the city and the (Eu)region. The document refers to an earlier document published in 1988, entitled *Gemeentelijk beleid op het terrein van kunst en cultuur; Dank u wel, gewoon applaus is voldoende* (*Municipal policy for the arts and culture; Thank you, normal applause will suffice*), for the legitimization of this policy. This earlier document has therefore been included in the research. Furthermore *Cultuurprogramma 1999-2002* (*Cultural Programma 1999-2002*, published in 1998) and the *Cultuurvisie 2002-2010 Onorthodox en Flexibel* (*Vision on Culture 2002-2010, Unorthodox and Flexible*, published in 2001) have also been studied.

#### 3.3.1. Role of the City Government

The various policy documents of Maastricht describe the role of the city government in the cultural field. The concern of the city government is twofold. On the one hand, the creation of (semi-)professional high-quality cultural activities should be promoted; on the other, one should ensure that the public can experience this quality (Maastricht, 1988, p. 5). Amateur activities, cultural education and folk culture are viewed as activities with their own merits and as a base for professional artists (Maastricht, 1988, p. 5). The emphasis on folk culture is striking. Maastricht is the only city that mentions folk culture as meriting attention from the government.<sup>11</sup>

Until 1998 much attention was devoted to realizing the infrastructure for cultural activities, such as the renovation of the concert hall (*Theater aan het Vrijthof*), the city theatre, a new museum for the visual arts as part of the development of a new city district, and the new library and historic museum (*Centre Céramique*). From 1998 onward, attention was also paid turned to the activities in these buildings. The intrinsic value of culture, its vocational value and economic value were taken as starting points for cultural policy (Maastricht, 1998 p. 6). Some performing arts production facilities have also been renovated and or added (for the orchestra in *Theater aan het Vrijthof*, an opera production unit is located in an old church, and a theatre company is located in an old factory next to the *Centre Céramique*).<sup>12</sup> Improving the production climate is a major goal of the cultural policy, besides enlarging the public for culture (Maastricht, 2001, p. 18). The document of 2001 concludes that the cultural policy of Maastricht has focused on the same issues as other Dutch cities:

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<sup>11</sup> The term 'folk culture' here refers to traditional cultural activities such as folk dancing and traditional music. It does not refer to specific musical genres such as 'folk music'. Note that since 2008 folk culture has become a focal point in the national cultural policy and cities are being urged through the *Actieplan Cultuurbereik* to develop policies for folk culture. Folk culture is nowadays defined as 'the total of cultural expressions that is considered essential for specific groups, referring to tradition, past and national, regional or local identities. Folk culture is a dynamic concept as each generation makes its own choices' (OCW/IPO/VNG administrative agreements on the topic of the Programme Fund for Cultural Participation, see <http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/5716a.pdf>, accessed on 24 July 2009). Folk culture is largely to do with immaterial heritage.

<sup>12</sup> Maastricht has known – as a consequence of the theatre academy in the city – an extensive history of small production units set up in the city, such as *Het Vervolg* (1982-1995), and facilities like the avant-garde production house *Huis van Bourgondië*. The facilities mentioned above are the city's large-scale investments in the cultural infrastructure.

apart from the improvement of the production climate and the extension of the cultural range, attention was paid to the reinforcement of cultural identity, the stimulation of participation of (multi-)cultural forms of expression, the increase of the attractiveness of the city for businesses and tourists and the advancement of social cohesion. (Maastricht, 2001, p. 9)

As is evident in the other cities, the cultural policy of Maastricht should contribute to the general development of the city. The cultural climate in the city is an important prerequisite for the vitality of the city (Maastricht, 1998, p. 6). This way of formulating resembles the focus of Rotterdam on cultural policy as an integral part of city development policy. The city development has three dimensions: social development, economic development and physical development (spatial planning) (Maastricht, 2001, p. 10; see also p. 21). One specific point in the document of 2001 is the focus on the changing market circumstances for art and culture, recognizing that it is the role of the government to defend values that will not be realized in the free market (Maastricht, 2001, p. 8). The trends in the market for leisure activities are studied.

In the past ten years, there has been a tremendous expansion in the leisure industry. Television, cinema, newspapers, going out, sports, events, amusement and theme parks, winter, summer and in-between holidays, shopping, individual hobbies and mass(ive) 'experience' events (...)

As the majority of these products aims at the same consumer as culture and art do, both sides have to compete heavily to attract the attention of the same target group. Due to its sales techniques and stronger financial position, the leisure industry has gained a considerable advantage over the cultural sector in this competition. (Maastricht, 2001, p. 12)

The cultural sector should develop strategies in order to engage in the intensified battle for the attention of the public without disregarding 'its natural goals: stimulating quality and experiment, supporting the identity of groups in the population; stimulating participation' (Maastricht, 2001, p. 13). In the policy maker's view, this can be done by developing product chains on a temporary basis, by enabling co-operation between cultural institutions and developing networks of culture consumers who seek cultural quality. Furthermore, alliances are necessary with institutions outside the cultural sector itself. As a consequence, the cultural sector can no longer be described in terms of fixed cultural institutions and organizations, the organizational structure of the sector will become more fluent. Artists and public will become increasingly oriented towards interactive processes as opposed to the fixed (and finished) products of artistic activities. Consumers need to be involved in the creation processes themselves (Maastricht, 2001, p. 14). The document at this point can be regarded as an appeal to the subsidized cultural institutions to adopt more flexible strategies. The role of the city government is to safeguard the diversity of cultural activities and to ensure that all inhabitants have access to these activities. This reasoning does not contain specific notions on the functioning of performing arts in society other than the realization that production facilities are specifically capable of engaging in these strategies. Theatre venues and concert halls concern themselves with the fixed end products rather than the creation process, and therefore are at a disadvantage.

### 3.3.2. Intrinsic Functions

Even though the city council seems to feel no specific urge to legitimize the cultural policy (Maastricht, 2001, p.8) the documents do contain specific remarks on the intrinsic functions of culture and art. An important quote comes from the document of 1998.

The development of artistic and creative skills not only generates qualities that enable man to lead a fulfilling life, but also to relate in a positive and open manner to what is already present within one's own culture and that of others, including present-day art. Adequate education and guidance in this area can prevent discrimination of other cultures and take away the allegedly snobbish character that surrounds our historical and contemporary cultural heritage. (Maastricht, 1988, p. 9)

This quote suggests that mankind cannot function properly without artistic and creative training. However, it is not made clear why this is the case. The second point is that art and creativity contribute to an open attitude towards other cultures and thus contribute to prevent discrimination. This is akin to the notions found in the national policy documents, especially 'recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures' (Table 2.2) and 'knowledge of one's own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others' (Table 2.3). But it is interesting that these notions are combined with contemporary art. This suggests that the contemporary art world is similar to an unknown culture to large parts of society. The contemporary art world is described as a 'subculture' within society, towards which an open attitude is needed. Therefore cultural and creative education is necessary.<sup>13</sup>

The 1998 document also contains a remark on autonomy.

Art and culture are autonomous AND have a social function. Aspects that could be considered here are, for example, the purely aesthetic design: the embellishment of one's living surroundings, commenting and signalling, the formative element, the recreational and the promotional (aspect). (Maastricht, 1988, p. 10)

Here, both intrinsic and extrinsic functions are mentioned. The intrinsic functions are: formulating critique on society (Table 2.4), an educational value (Table 2.2: personal development), and commenting and signalling. This last function seems to be new to the present research, but it is not elaborated upon. It can be understood that it is referring to art as a means to signal and exemplify developments in society. This seems to be slightly different from formulating critique on society (Table 2.4). It seems that artists can use artistic events to signal certain developments in society to the public. This does not necessarily qualify as formulating critique. They can merely warn the public or try to explain what is happening in their view. But it can also be argued that signalling a development in society is only relevant when one is critical of this trend. Therefore this will not be considered as a separate function of art. Furthermore, art and culture can improve the living environment. This has been encountered before, but it is not clear whether or not the quote is referring solely to the use of the visual arts in city planning and architecture. It can also be argued that

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<sup>13</sup> Note that the term 'creatieve vorming' is being used. This term has been replaced by 'cultural education' in more recent documents. The change of terms is not without meaning. It reflects the shift in the view on mankind from the seventies (where education and social structures were viewed as hindering the natural creativity of people) towards a view in which artistic quality is predominant (see Chapter 2).

the influence on the social living environment is meant, by means of cultural activities in boroughs for instance. This will be discussed in the following sections. Recreation is also mentioned as a function. This was also present in the national documents and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Furthermore the 1988 document states:

Art and culture derive their intrinsic value mainly from the importance that is attributed to the characteristic way in which they give content to our society and the way we experience it. (...) Art and culture make visible, audible, concrete and emotionally understandable in a way that is completely different from our usual, cognitive approach, where matters are generally discussed in mainly economic terms. (Maastricht, 1998, p. 6)

The quote suggests that art and culture influence society and the way we experience society in a very specific manner. They allow us to express views and feelings (expressing ideas and views authentically, Table 2.4) in a specific way. In art and culture, communication seems to be above all on the emotional level, and the idiom used is not economic in its nature. The specific nature of the aesthetic experience therefore should be researched in more detail. This is the topic of Chapter 6. The policy document continues by enumerating the resulting functions which have already been found in the national policy documents: personal development, rendering meaning (Table 2.2), social interaction, tolerance, social cohesion and identity (Table 2.3), in this case identity related to geography. What is of interest is the notion that, because of the specific emotional manner in which culture and art function, they are able to transcend social, economic and ethnic boundaries.

### **3.3.3. Economic Functioning**

The policy documents of Maastricht devote much attention to the economic legitimization of cultural policy. One explanation for this may be the fact that it is hard to convince people of the intrinsic functions of culture and art, and the economic argument seems to be politically more effective (Maastricht, 1988, enclosure II, p. 7). The policy document of 1988 refers to research in cities such as New York, Amsterdam and Vienna that demonstrates the economic impact of the cultural sector. A number of conclusions from a study of the economic impact of the cultural sector in Amsterdam are mentioned. These conclusions include attracting tourists and visitors to the city, which was encountered previously as a function of culture and art in the economic domain; but they also include job creation outside the cultural sector, the fact that the costs of subsidies are recovered through taxes, and the fact that the amount of subsidies allocated by the municipal government is doubled by other governmental bodies (Maastricht, 1988, p. 8). However, referring to studies in other cities of very different size and international prestige, such as New York, Amsterdam and Vienna, cannot be qualified as strong legitimization of the cultural policy in Maastricht itself. One can easily argue that the effects for Maastricht will be of a very different scale than those for these cities. However, the notion of job creation outside the cultural sector itself is relevant for this research. The policy document offers several examples from the performing arts, specifically music.

### 3. City Government

As pop music relies heavily on technology, it requires substantial investments in instruments, equipment and suitable accommodation. Recently, these investments were calculated to be around HFL 1.75 billion (€ 0.8 billion) per annum. Apart from this, the pop music industry collectively generates an annual turnover of HFL 0.5 billion (€ 0.2 billion) in box office receipts, record sales, royalties, etc. This is not surprising, bearing in mind that an estimated number of 420,000 people (i.e. 70,000 bands) are actively involved in making pop music. (Maastricht, 1988, enclosure II, p. 43)

This line of reasoning is akin to the concept of art worlds as advanced by Becker (1982), in which several circles of 'supplying' industries exist around a core of the artists themselves. These can be considered as indirect employment effects. The direct employment effects of culture and art fall in cell B of Table 1, the indirect employment effects can best be placed in cell F.

One further quote from the document of 1998 is of specific interest.

The Municipality of Maastricht bases the assessment of the intrinsic value on cultural infrastructure and cultural heritage, the educational value on cultural education and cultural heritage, and the economic value on cultural events and cultural heritage. (Maastricht, 1998, p. 8)

This quote seems to suggest that the intrinsic qualities of art and culture are not relevant for economic functioning. Only the event-oriented character and the specific historic qualities matter in the economic domain. It is not clear why. More importantly, this quote seems to contradict the document of 1992 which refers to the importance of a high-quality cultural infrastructure for attracting businesses to the city (Maastricht, 1992, p. 11). It is more than likely that 'high-quality' is referring to artistic quality and therefore a reference to intrinsic functioning is being made. The question as to whether or not the economic functioning depends on intrinsic qualities is therefore open to discussion.

#### 3.3.4. City Image

The image of the city of Maastricht is a specific point in the documents on cultural policy. The city image is connected to the economic functioning of culture and art.

Apart from the fact that culture has an inherent intrinsic value as well as an educational one, it is also important for the economic development of a city. Here, it should be pointed out that the city's 'intangible product', which is a mixture of history, cultural heritage and living culture, is a major factor in determining the city's image. (Maastricht, 1998, p. 8)

Although the policy document states that the city administration should preserve and develop the city image and exploit it in economic terms, it is not clear how this can be done. The document states that the cultural institutions and artists located in the city should be promoted as well as the city itself as a cultural centre (Maastricht, 1988, p. 8). One specific aspect of the city image is that the policy makers state that Maastricht has a conservative image which should be remedied (Maastricht, 1992, p. 6)

#### *Attracting businesses to the city*

The policy document of 1992 describes the transition from an industrial economy towards a service-oriented one (Maastricht, 1992, p. 10). However, the city lacks a coherent and high-

quality cultural sector which proliferates itself, thus diminishing its image as an economically feasible site for business activities (Maastricht, 1992, p. 11; see also Maastricht, 1998, p. 14). Apparently, the cultural sector is important for attracting businesses, which is an argument often heard in other cities as well. Cultural activities can also be concentrated on places in the city where other developments are not optimal, in order to strengthen urban development (Maastricht, 1998, p. 29).

#### *Attracting visitors*

In order to attract visitors to the city (both tourists and convention visitors), the city actively promotes events that project a cultural image (*ibid.*, p. 14).

For, apart from the artistic quality of art, there are also other factors to be considered. Art and culture work as a motive for tourists and businesses to visit or settle in a city, which has a direct effect on the local economy. In the past, several local councils have investigated the 'revenues' of culture for the city. Beside revenues, culture evidently also generates jobs. Here is an example of the proportions as they are found in Maastricht: the local council subsidizes a number of large-scale promotional events with a sum of € 200,000.00. The events generate a total turnover of around € 11,000,000.00 and provide jobs for 105 people. It need not be argued here that culture is an economic factor to be reckoned with. As this 'side effect' is not to be neglected, Maastricht intends to commit itself to it more strongly. (Maastricht, 2001, p. 17)

The economic impact here is regarded as a pure side-effect. Although the quote mentions artistic quality, it clearly does not suggest a link between artistic quality and economic impact.

#### **3.3.5. Social Domain**

In the policy document of 1988, attention is turned to the use of cultural expressions for the purpose of emancipation (Maastricht, 1998, enclosure II, p. 69). The document clearly regards this as an instrumental use of culture. Its example is the women's movement which argued for the inclusion of feminist literature in library collections. Clearly this concerns the issue of representation. It is debatable whether emancipation itself is a function of culture or whether emancipation is a result of processes in society (mainly power struggles) and cultural activities only relate indirectly to these processes through their function of representing a minority culture and commenting on society, for instance. This does suggest a link between intrinsic and extrinsic functioning. This issue will be taken up in Chapter 9.

The same page of the document discusses the importance of culture for ethnic minorities. In the policy makers' view, cultural activities are mostly of importance to preserve ethnically based cultural practices and to strengthen individual communities. This is of specific importance for immigrants who plan to return to their country of origin, but also those who plan to stay in the Netherlands can benefit from strong links to their ethnic community (Maastricht, 1988, enclosure II, p. 69). For this reason, ethnic cultural activities are referred to in welfare policy. This view on the function of cultural activities reflects functions such as mentally finding a secure place in the world (Table 2.2) and strengthening social structures (Table 2.3). The notion of an ethnic identity can be added to the historical identity as mentioned in Table 2.3. However, this is not a truly different concept because an ethnic

identity is built up through the historic trajectory of the specific ethnic group. Furthermore, the document of 1988 stresses the importance of cultural activities for youngsters in order to develop an open attitude towards other cultures (*ibid.*, p. 70), which is also listed in Table 2.2 (recognize the meaning and value of other cultures).

The document of 1998 also relates the social functioning of culture and art to amateur activities.

Many amateurs take great pleasure in performing non-professional art, as shown by the large number of clubs that cater for these activities. This goes to show how art serves as a strong social bonding agent in this particular context. (Maastricht, 1988, p. 12)

It is noteworthy that in this quote, art is specifically referred to. It is not clear why this is done; it seems that the word 'culture' could have been used just as easily. Once again this poses the question as to whether the functioning of art and culture in the social domain is related to specific intrinsic qualities or to artistic qualities (see also Maastricht, 1998, p. 25).<sup>14</sup>

#### **3.3.6. The City as the Centre of the Region**

As mentioned above, Maastricht is the centre of a region that comprises parts of Belgium and Germany. At various points in the document of 1988, it is stated that the cultural facilities, especially those for the performing arts, should correspond with this status. Performing arts facilities are also important for the conference facilities in the city, presumably because of the fact that performing arts venues are usually also employed as conference halls. Moreover, the performing arts provide evening activities that can serve as side-programme for conferences (see Maastricht, 1998, enclosure II, p. 21 and 24, enclosure III, p. 7). The presence of institutes for higher vocational training in the arts is also a factor in the centre function of the city. Their presence is also of economic significance, not in the least because they provide jobs for teachers and staff members (Maastricht, 1988, enclosure II, p. 52). The document of 2001 repeats the notion of Maastricht as a centre of the (Eu)region. The cultural policy is oriented towards the (Eu)region and therefore a dynamic cultural infrastructure is needed (Maastricht, 2001, p. 18). However, it is not clear how this relates to the functioning of the performing arts in the city.

#### **3.3.7. Cultural Heritage**

Maastricht has a very beautiful historic inner city. In the Netherlands, Maastricht is among the cities with the largest number of monuments. The city image is closely linked to its cultural heritage, which should function as a base for the living, modern culture (Maastricht, 1988, enclosure II, p. 43). The historic inner city is the 'natural décor' for cultural events (Maastricht, 1992, p. 16). An important aspect is also that a large number of the original population still lives in Maastricht and therefore the original culture (the folk culture which was mentioned above) is still present and should be taken into account (Maastricht, 2001,

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<sup>14</sup> Note that in the document of 2001 Maastricht (see e.g. pages 26 and 37) uses the word function to denote what in the previous chapter has been called 'tasks'. The document distinguishes between

p. 16). In the policy document of 1998, much attention is paid to the fact that cultural heritage is important for the identity of the inhabitants of Maastricht and their open attitude towards others.

The intrinsic value of cultural heritage has a distinct historical dimension. After all, it establishes to a considerable extent Maastricht's cultural identity, as it has developed over the centuries. It is crucial that the city's inhabitants feel that they are part of that heritage. The recognition of the value of one's own personality being part of a greater cultural community that itself is recognized as valuable stimulates greater understanding of other cultures and greater tolerance toward them. In this respect, it can serve as an instrument to increase social cohesion in the city. Our cultural heritage is preserved by a careful transference in particular. (Maastricht, 1998, p. 11)<sup>15</sup>

This quote reflects the functions of historical identity (Table 2.3; see also Maastricht, 1998, p. 36) and social cohesion (Table 2.3: establishing social structures).

### 3.4. Groningen

Groningen is the largest city in the north of the Netherlands. The city has approximately 180,000 inhabitants and is the youngest city in the Netherlands: a third of its population is aged between 15 and 30. The percentage of single households (58%) is also remarkable. The city's student population of approximately 38,000 students is a major factor in the explanation of these peculiar demographics (Groningen, 2005, p. 63). The city is the seat of one of the oldest universities in the country, and has a large variety of faculties. Groningen is also the major centre for higher vocational education in the north of the country. Because of the fact that a conservatory of music and art academy are located in the city, a large number of musicians and visual artists make the city's cultural climate special (Groningen, 2005, p. 111). The facilities for the performing arts in the city have been the focus of considerable debate as a result of the advent of a large-scale musical theatre venue (1600 seats) and renovations to the old city theatre hall (founded in 1883) and concert hall (see Groningen, 2005, p. 72).

As of 1988, the cultural policy in Groningen has been formulated in four-year cycles. The cultural policy documents from 1991, *Het Pamflet, cultuurbeleid 1992-1995* (*The Pamphlet, cultural policy 1992-1995*), 1995, *Alles voor de Kunst, cultuurbeleid 1996-1999* (*All for the Arts, cultural policy 1996-1999*), 2000, *De Kunst van Groningen, cultuurbeleid 2000-2003* (*The Art of Groningen, cultural policy 2000-2003*) and 2005, *In het oog in het hart, cultuurbeleid 2005-2008* (*In sight, in mind, cultural policy 2005-2008*) have been included in the present research, spanning four policy cycles.<sup>16</sup> For each period, a discussion paper was drafted, preceding the actual policy document. These discussion papers have not been included in the research for they have been summarized in the actual policy documents.

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production and distribution as specific tasks. As this does not lead to new insights, the issue will not be discussed in detail here.

<sup>15</sup> See also Maastricht, 1998, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> The cycle for the years 2000 to 2003 was extended for one year to include 2004 as well. Since then Groningen uses the same policy cycle as the national government.



### 3.4.1. The Role of the City Government

The document of 2000 contains a remark on the role of the city government which is of interest here.

What worries us is that, among the public (especially that of subsidized art), people of higher education are overrepresented. This is contrary to our conception of what the role of art should be in society. Art should not only be there for the art temples and the 'happy few'. Art should be universal: accessible everywhere and to everyone. (Groningen, 2000a, presentation letter)

The quote is remarkable because the functioning of art in society is considered to be related to the diversity of the public of (subsidized) artistic activities. The quote seems to preclude indirect ways of functioning. However, from a policy point of view, it cannot be denied that the diversity of the audiences for artistic events is a determining factor in the functioning of art in society. Therefore a policy aim to reach diverse groups in society seems relevant. The document of 2005 also stresses this point (Groningen, 2005, p. 23), although in this document various functions on personal and societal level are distinguished. These functions will be discussed in the following subsections. By combining both documents one can conclude that art can have different functions for different groups in society.

One example of this can be found in the document of 2000. The document stresses the importance of youth culture, not only based on the recognition that youngsters are seldom present among the public attending subsidised cultural activities but also based on the same analysis of the cultural industries that appeared in the policy document of Maastricht (see Maastricht, 2001).

Among other things, this Culture Memo, (...) accentuates the need to create opportunities for young, new talents, expressly including immigrants. In the last few decades, youth culture has been seized by commerce. The original youngsters' art forms, such as graffiti, rap and break dance are being increasingly exploited for commercial reasons. (...) Young talent is almost automatically forced to develop in the direction where commerce pulls strongest. That is rather unfortunate, the more so because it is from the youth culture that new developments in art are to be expected. (Groningen, 2000a, presentation letter)

The argument seems to be that youngsters are not able to develop their own 'authentic' forms of expression because of the pressure of commercial cultural productions. This is an extension of the argument in the policy document of Maastricht. The government should counterbalance the effects of commercial cultural producers and safeguard the possibility of authentic forms of expression. This is a function of art or culture in society. This function could be categorized in Table 2.4, under expressing ideas and perceptions. However, here the authenticity of the ways of expression is stressed, as was the case in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). This links the function to functions mentioned in Table 2.2 (mental development of the spectators, rendering significance, and in Table 2.3 (social interaction and debate). The link between the functions in these two tables should be described in more detail.

In the policy document of 2005, the policy makers in Groningen return to the developments in the cultural industry. Whereas the document of 2000 limits this analysis to the effects on youth culture, the 2005 document broadens the argument to the public as a whole. The document refers to the study by Van den Broek and De Haan (2000) which predicts that the

arts will become a niche activity for small audiences. This will restrict their functioning in society (Groningen, 2005, p. 13).<sup>17</sup> The diversity of the repertoire of cultural symbols is under threat (Groningen, 2005, p. 14).

Therefore, art policy is - more than ever - a rectification of the way the market operates. It is the government's task to create the (pre-)conditions for the development and distribution of a sufficiently diverse range of cultural values, and to safeguard accessibility of those cultural values to all layers in society. (Groningen, 2005, p. 14)

In conclusion, one can say that the documents of Groningen and Maastricht contain the same analysis of developments in the cultural industry and therefore offer new legitimization for the cultural policy of city governments. The document of Groningen elaborates on the functioning of performing arts in society with respect to the expression of ideas and views, by adding the concept of 'authentic' ways of expression, though it is not immediately clear what the term exactly means.

A last introductory remark should be made about the policy document of 2005. The following quote is of interest:

In our considerations, priority is given to artistic quality, as we *believe* that the so-called 'external effects' of art - in social and economic respect - can only be realized in the long term, if these cultural activities indeed have a strong content value. (Groningen, 2005, p. 23, italics QLvdH)

The quote suggests that there is a link between the intrinsic and extrinsic functioning of culture and art. This is a question that has been encountered before in the present research. However, the policy makers in Groningen overtly express this link. They *believe* that in the long run there will be no extrinsic effects without artistic quality. Therefore they base their decisions primarily on the artistic quality. This point will be elaborated below, in the discussion of the various functions present in the policy documents.

### 3.4.2. Intrinsic Functions

The policy document of 1991 contains only one remark on the intrinsic functions of culture and art.

We see culture as a phenomenon that poses challenges to people, that encourages and stimulates, or sometimes merely entertains or distracts them. Culture can work as a mirror, confronting people with themselves and with all sorts of questions about themselves or others. Culture can bring about debate, it can kick up dust and loosen tongues. (Groningen, 1991a, pp. 6-7)

This quote lists some functions of culture on the individual level: challenging people, stimulating them and diverting them. It is not clear what is meant by challenging exactly. One could argue that this is the same as surprising, impressing or even bewildering spectators (see Table 2.1: personal experience). But one could also argue that the beliefs and opinions of spectators are challenged (see Table 2.2: broadening the mental scope of

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<sup>17</sup> The question should be raised as to whether or not the policy makers present the argument of Van den Broek and De Haan correctly here. Their study contained three scenarios of which they presume that the niche scenario is the most likely, which is not the same as predicting that it will come true.

spectators). The same can be said about stimulating people. Diversion has been encountered as a function before (Table 2.1: entertainment, relaxation). The second sentence of the quote refers to culture as a mirror to confront spectators with questions about themselves and others. This can be understood as broadening the mental scope of spectators (Table 2.2) but it can also be understood as identity and social interaction (Table 2.3) because these questions are not only raised with regard to the spectators' own position but also in relation to others. The last sentence of this quote refers to the function of debate (Table 2.3). Therefore it seems that this quote does not hold new functions of culture or art. A last remark on this quote should be made, however. It is noteworthy that the word 'culture' is used, as opposed to 'culture and art' or 'art'. It is not clear whether the authors are specifically referring to art or to culture in general, or whether this may be an example of haphazard vocabulary.

The later documents contain many more remarks on the intrinsic functions of art. It seems that the city feels a specific need to legitimize the cultural policy intrinsically more than the other cities do. Of course, this is very interesting for the present research. A first quote is from the document of 1995.

People share art and culture, regard them as a means to reach one another, to communicate, to exchange information, to shock or to convey emotion. In this way, art and culture serve as a connection for people, not only amongst themselves but with their social environment as well. However, art is more than just a force that brings people together. Art is the representation of the ideas, the dreams, the fears and the imagination(s) of a society. Art is an intrinsic part of the heritage of collective thoughts of our society. (Groningen, 1995, p. 7)

This quote reflects several concepts that have been encountered before. First, culture and art are a means to express one's opinions and to share them with others (Table 2.4: expressing ideas and perceptions). Cultural experiences can be moving (Table 2.1: being addressed at emotional level) and can be shocking (Table 2.1: being surprised). Second, culture and art can link people to their social environment (Table 2.3: social interaction). The arts are a more complex matter however. The arts are viewed as the embodiment of ideas, dreams, fears and imagination of society. This can be regarded as expressing ideas and views. However, the quote suggests that this function is not only at the personal level (of the artist) but also at the level of society as a whole. This is a broadening of the concept in Table 2.4. This broader concept is not entirely new to the present research because, when the arts are viewed as the embodiment of the views, hopes and ideas of a society, they can also be viewed as forming part of the cultural heritage of that society. This enables members of society to use aesthetic experiences to relate themselves to society (Table 2.2: finding a secure place in the world mentally, Table 2.3: relating oneself to history and relating oneself to others). This suggests that there is a link between the function in Table 2.4 (expressing ideas and perceptions) and the functions in Table 2.3 (identity and social interaction). This is not surprising because the identity of groups (or members of a group) is not only expressed in terms of specific use of (visual) language or style, but also by the ideas and history the group members share.

The 1995 document addresses the issue of globalization which limits the possibilities of generating a geographically based identity. Art is regarded as a linking force between people

and peoples (Groningen, 1995, p. 8), a function already mentioned in Table 2.3 (relating oneself to others, shared cultural experiences as starting points for interaction with others, open attitude towards others). It is debatable whether specifically the arts have this function or whether culture in general can also be effective. The document of 1995 itself is not clear on this matter as it attributes this type of functioning to art specifically on pages 8 and 21, but to *art and culture* on pages 9 and 81. The policy document seems to be very inconsistent as to which functions can be attributed to the arts specifically.

Another major theme in the document of 1995 is the question concerning whether or not advisory boards value ethnically based cultural activities differently from the way they evaluate Western cultural activities.

All too often, we notice that art experts and advisory bodies little value the (cultural) activities of immigrants, due to an (allegedly) low artistic content. In itself, this is hardly surprising. Many of the artistic utterances of immigrants are characterized by a non-Western interpretation of the cultural concept. Examples are carnival parades and salsa parties. Although these utterances may not fit in with our commonly accepted conception of art, *the participants and visitors actually experience them as such*. From our point of view, art policy should rather be in line with this experience than with an abstract and hardly verifiable definition of what should be considered art. Obviously, the utterances mentioned above expressly do fit within our broad conception of the cultural territory. (Groningen, 1995, p. 23, italics QLvdH)

The document suggests broadening the concept of *culture* that merits attention from the city government. However, the document does not suggest broadening the concept of *art*. Once again the terms 'art' and 'culture' are used quite indiscriminately. The quote suggests that the experience of cultural activities such as salsa parties and carnival parades by ethnic groups is artistic in their nature. The document contains no base for this claim but nonetheless a broader concept of culture is being advanced. It is not clear why the concept of art should not be broadened. Suffice it to conclude that, in the document, the city aims to broaden the cultural policy towards new groups and the cultural policy should be linked more to other sectors (see Groningen, 1995, pp. 25, 30). Therefore new cultural activities are eligible for funding by the city government. For the present research it is noteworthy that this does not seem to be based on a thorough analysis of the specific artistic functioning of cultural activities.

In the policy document of 2000, the notion of ethnicity is expanded in the cultural policy by adopting a policy programme which is aimed at developing opportunities for youngsters to develop their own authentic forms of expression. Youth culture is thought to incorporate the culture of ethnically diverse groups of youngsters. This programme (part of the city's *Actieprogramma Cultuurbereik* and thus partly sponsored by the national government) has been adopted out of fear that youngsters will be left to the mercy of commercially exploited cultural facilities which will lead to dwindling chances for experimental art forms (Groningen, 2000a, presentation letter). Once again this points to the function of art as a means to express ideas and views (Table 2.4). However, the emphasis on youth culture sheds a slightly different light on this function. It is stated that the authentic art forms of youth culture are at stake. One can conclude that art can be regarded as a means for expressing

authenticity. Therefore art can be a form of expression of one's (sub)culture and a point of reference (giving meaning to impressions and events in life, Table 2.2, and establishing social structures, Table 2.3). This – once again – leads to the conclusion that the function in Table 2.4 is linked to the functions listed in Tables 2.2 and 2.3.

Apart from the fear of commercial culture, the city has a second reason to support the cultural expression of youngsters, one which is of specific interest to the present research.

Nowadays, young immigrants often live between two cultures. On the one hand, they feel akin to their parents' culture, whereas, on the other, they are also part of the modern culture of Western youngsters. By enabling young artists to develop their talents, we intend to create opportunities to fill in the gap between the two cultures. At the same time, art gives them an opportunity to excel, show their power and skills and, last but not least, express their creativity. We are convinced that this policy, aimed at the potency of immigrant youngsters, will contribute to their emancipation. (Groningen, 2000a, presentation letter)

This quote comprises several interesting points.<sup>18</sup> First, by actively developing new forms of expression the city hopes that youngsters from an ethnically diverse background will be able to fill the void between their ethnic culture and Western culture. This in fact means that developing their own cultural forms can help to find a secure place in the world mentally (Table 2.2). Second, art is an opportunity to develop one's creativity. This is a new function which has been encountered in other city documents, as in those of Rotterdam and Maastricht for instance. Third, this quote suggests that there is a direct link between the intrinsic functions of art and extrinsic (political) goals such as emancipation. The reasoning seems to be that, by developing the artistic talents of youngsters and giving them opportunities to express themselves, their emancipation (or in more modern terms: integration in society) is stimulated. This at least suggests that there is an indirect link between artistic quality and extrinsic functions. But it also points to the fact that there might be a link between intrinsic and extrinsic functions of art and culture.

A marked difference between the document of 2000 and 1995 is that the linking force of culture and art is presented as a linking force *within* subcultures, whereas in the preceding document the emphasis was on the ability to link people together *between* different subcultures. In the document of 2000, transcending the borders between subcultures seems to be regarded as a function of art specifically:

The first association with the word 'subculture' is often that of youngsters (skaters, hip-hoppers, or 'counter-culturist') or ethnic minorities (Antilleans, Malaccans). But likewise, (...) university scientists or the supporters of FC Groningen are part of a subculture. People within a subculture share the same frame of reference, which gives them a feeling of solidarity.

But the meaning of art goes further than that. Art stimulates people in their aesthetic perception, it stirs emotions and incites people to wonder. Sometimes people are bewildered or even shocked by art. *Artistic expression is not restricted by the boundaries of a subculture.* Art helps to be critical of one's own life and that of others. It offers new viewpoints and new forms of

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<sup>18</sup> It is remarkable that Western culture is presented as a 'modern' culture as opposed to the ethnic culture of the immigrants. One can extensively discuss whether or not ethnic cultures are just as modern as Western culture. This discussion falls outside the scope of the present research.

expression. In this way, art makes a contribution to the development of an open society. (Groningen, 2000a, p. 9. italics QLvdH)

Due to its capacity to transcend the boundaries of subcultures, art is instrumental in developing an open society. This notion has been encountered before, in state documents as well as in documents of other cities. What stands out here is that this function is described as being specifically artistic. The quote also contains several other functions of culture and art which have been encountered before: strengthening social structures (Table 2.3), aesthetic experience (Table 2.1: experiencing beauty, albeit that this section mentions that the function can also be based on the experience of an aesthetic form which is not necessarily beautiful), formulating critique on oneself and society (Table 2.4), and learning alternative visions on reality (Table 2.2). Entertainment is also mentioned as a function (Table 2.1). Entertainment can stem from experiencing something beautiful. This is a new insight for the present research. However, entertainment is not linked to specific artistic functioning in this quote. The main reason for the efforts to include youngsters and ethnic minorities in cultural policy seems to be the notion that new forms of expression are being developed particularly in youth subcultures, which are mainly linked to technological developments: computer graphics, electronic music, sampled music. Art is presented and experienced in new ways, such as DJ and VJ contests and dance parties (Groningen, 2000a, p. 25). It is debatable whether or not all the forms described here can automatically be considered as art, as the policy document suggests.

In the policy document of 2005 the city officials follow the development of the cultural policy on national level. The extreme emphasis on cultural diversity (evident in both *Cultuur als Confrontatie*, Ministerie van OCW, 2000, and *De Kunst van Groningen*, Groningen, 2000) has been abandoned. The cultural policy is legitimized on the basis of the meaning of art for individuals and groups in society (Groningen, 2005, p. 21).

The intrinsic value of art is largely determined by the role it can play in people's lives. Art can teach people to look at reality in a way that differs from what they are accustomed to, and therefore lead to new perceptions. Art has an impact on an individual, emotional level. Thus, people can get carried away by a work of art, be enchanted by a painting, or get goosepimples from an artistic performance. No matter how confronting art expressions may be, they may lead to new insights and experiences. (Groningen, 2005, pp. 21-2)

This quote contains some intrinsic functions that are attributed specifically to art. Art is a means to alter the way we look at things (Table 2.2) and accordingly develop new insights. This last remark is a broadening of the concept in Table 2.2. However, developing new insights through experiencing new ways of looking at reality can still be summarized as 'broadening the mental scope of spectators', which is the heading in Table 2.2. The quote also mentions that art functions on the personal emotional level. This is in agreement with the fact that Table 2 starts with personal experience. The quote refers to examples of the experience as elevating and enchanting or stimulating and shocking. These were also formulated in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (Ministerie van OCW, 2000). Experiencing art works can lead to new insights and the processing of earlier experiences in life. This last function

has been listed in Table 2.2 as giving meaning to impressions and events in life. The quote here, however, suggests that this can be somewhat therapeutically.

The document of 2005 also discerns intrinsic functioning at collective level.

Art is a reflection of social phenomena, communicating on a rational level as well as an emotional one. It communicates surprising opinions on individuals and society, it brings the status quo up for discussion, and it can put the finger on the sore spot. It is unsettling, it removes the unambiguity of life and questions commonly accepted norms and values. In this way, art can contribute to social change. (Groningen, 2005, p. 22)

Art here is seen as a way to formulate critique on society. This function has been listed in Table 2.4. The document suggests that this function is not always recognized by the audience. This suggests that performances can fail artistically (in this respect). However, the quote also suggests that this function can operate unconsciously from the perspective of the audience: communication occurs on a cognitive and on an emotional level. The quote links this function to functions mentioned in Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 (experiencing new visions on reality and being addressed at emotional level: art can make one feel ill at ease). The quote confuses by stating that 'art relieves the unambiguity of existence'. It is assumed that, with this phrasing, the writers of the document refer to functions mentioned in Table 2.2 as rendering significance. As was mentioned above, the document of 2005 devotes little attention to the connecting power of culture and art in society. However, the advisory boards of the city have pointed to the connecting role artists can play in society (Groningen, 2005, p. 24). A last remark should be made about this document with regard to its notion that aesthetic experiences of children are determining factors in their emotional, social and artistic development (Groningen, 2005, p. 105). However, the document offers no clues as to how aesthetic experiences are instrumental in the development of children. Therefore the document confirms the function of personal development as mentioned in Table 2.2.

#### **3.4.3. Economic Functions**

All policy documents of the city of Groningen mention the economic functioning of the cultural sector. They refer to indirect expenditure by visitors to cultural events, such instance hotel reservations for instance. CD stores report increased sales of artists that have performed in the city (Groningen, 1995, p. 29). Visitors to the Groninger Museum spend millions in the city's shops and visitors to the Noorderslag/Eurosonic festival spend some 1.5 million euros during one weekend in January (Groningen, 2005, p. 22). In 1997 the University of Groningen conducted research that showed a growth in expenditure of 30% in the cultural sector between 1987 and 1997. Public interest in cultural activities grew by 47%. The researchers conclude that the cultural sector is of growing importance for the city's economy (see Julien, Ohlsen and De Vries, 1997). Cultural institutions should therefore contribute to stimulating tourism (Groningen, 2005, p. 35).

The document of 2005 mentions the existence of a diverse cultural infrastructure as an impetus for companies to set up branches in the city. The document refers to the study conducted by Marlet and Tames in Utrecht (2002). The document then continues:

The creative industry is becoming increasingly important for the liveliness and the economic flourishing of a city. Creative industry leads to innovation of economic products, due to the competition in ingenuity and design. From that point of view, creativity can be regarded as economic capital (Groningen, 2005, p. 22)

In other words, through the concept of the creative city, as introduced by Florida (2002), the economic functioning of culture in a city is linked to a core quality of the cultural sector: creativity. This suggests that there is a relationship between the intrinsic functioning of culture and art and extrinsic functioning in the economic domain. The policy document of 2000 also suggests that such a link exists.

Art can also be deployed as a means to achieve other goals, such as stimulating cultural tourism for example. Any town may be able to organize a large-scale festival, but 'it takes an artist' to make it a special event. The show called 'A Star is Born' would never have attracted so many tourists without the 'artistic' gift of its organizers.<sup>10</sup> (Groningen, 2000a, p. 9)

The quote suggests that without the specific artistic qualities of the festival, the economic effect (attracting visitors to the city) would not have occurred. This points to the fact that the artistic quality can be a mediating variable between the intrinsic and extrinsic functioning of culture and art.

#### **3.4.4. City Image**

The fact that Groningen is the largest city in a mainly agricultural part of the country has a marked impact on the city's cultural policy. The remoteness of the city's location prompts interest in developing an image of the city as interesting for visitors, but this image is also important to strengthen participation in cultural events by the city's own population. All documents therefore contain remarks on the value of culture to develop the city image (see Groningen, 1991a, p. 29; Groningen, 1995, p. 33; Groningen, 2000a, p. 22; and Groningen, 2005, pp. 23, 26). Its functioning as a proper city with a thriving cultural scene is considered to be of the utmost importance (see e.g. Groningen, 1991, p. 6). This focus is akin to the focus of Rotterdam and Utrecht. Culture is considered to be part of what constitutes urbanity. The relative 'splendid isolation' of Groningen prompts a double-edged approach to cultural policy:

Owing to its infrastructure and its relatively isolated geographic location, Groningen has a unique opportunity as a breeding ground for art. On the one hand, its eccentric location lends it a certain 'splendid isolation'. On the other hand, its infrastructure is remarkably complete, and in the way of culture practically everything seems to be possible, if not already present or available. This makes Groningen an ideal city for experiment, where talents are given an opportunity to find their own way. (Groningen, 1991a, pp. 26-7)

On the one hand, the city aims to offer a complete cultural scene to cater to the specific needs of a diverse public as there are few alternative venues in the region. On the other hand, the city promotes its remoteness as an impetus for artists to experiment with new forms. This vision of the city as a 'breeding ground' for experiment is akin to the approach found in Arnhem, where specific functions for the cultural sector are identified (see section 3.5). This approach towards the cultural policy leads to a critical appraisal of the policies of (nationally funded) production facilities. For instance, in the 1991 policy document, the city council criticizes the North Netherlands Theatre Company's lack of willingness to experiment



### 3. City Government

(Groningen, 1991b, p. 13). As will be shown below, the city feels an urge to influence the policies of the performing arts producers which are located in the city.

The city's cultural scene seems to be substantial for a city of the size of Groningen. This is due to the fact that the city has a central function in a very large region (Groningen, 2005, p. 63). The cultural climate in the city is an important part of the 'city climate' (Groningen, 2000a, *aanbiedingsbrief*). This large cultural scene enables the city to promote itself as an alternative to living in the western part of the country. The city certainly has a 'city feel' but does not suffer from the problems associated with living in large agglomerations (see, e.g. Groningen, 2000a, p. 5 and 2005, p. 15). Not surprisingly reinforcing diversity in the cultural sector is an important aim of the cultural policy of the city (Groningen, 2000a, *aanbiedingsbrief*, 2000a, p. 16, and 2005, p. 14). As in Utrecht, the cultural sector thus contributes to a specific urban image.

Furthermore, a cultural image of the city attracts visitors to the city. The cultural sector is of specific importance because Groningen cannot offer access to a beach, forest or mountains. The attractiveness of the city is largely dependent on the achievements of human labour, especially in the fields of culture and art (Groningen, 1995, p. 64).

In some cases, the cultural policy documents link the contribution to the city image directly to specific cultural institutions and list this as a legitimizing factor for subsidizing these institutions. The document of 1991 links promotion of the city to the programming of popular music and jazz in the city's concert hall, and to the Jazz Marathon, an annual jazz festival covered by national media (see Groningen, 1991b, p. 30, and pp. 33-4). The same holds true for the *Noorderslag* pop music festival. The festival is a showcase for new bands but also promotes Groningen as a city where festivals like this are viable (see Groningen, 1991b, p. 35). The new Groninger Museum (opened in 1994) is a major factor in promoting the city's 'idiosyncrasy' and cultural dynamic (Groningen, 1995, p. 40, and Groningen, 2000a, p. 19). Apart from the museum, several high-quality festivals and the historic inner city are major factors in developing the city's cultural image (Groningen, 2000a, p. 22). Here, the artistic quality is once again linked to extrinsic functioning.

Based upon the study by Drenth, Hansen and Van Munster (2002), the notion of distinction is added to the development of a cultural image in the document of 2005. Culture is seen as a means to distinguish one city from another. The researchers advise choosing a specific city profile in cultural policy which can then be linked to strong points in the city's cultural sector, as opposed to compensating weaknesses. Groningen has chosen the presence of many young cultural professionals as its characterizing profile (Groningen, 2005, p. 24).

For a lively cultural climate, we find it utterly important that opportunities are created for young talents and promising artists. Thus, we intend to give an impetus to the culture in the city, which will be conducive to our cultural image. (Groningen, 2005, p.26; see also pp. 111-12)

It is noteworthy that the writers of the policy document mention *belief* in the effects of offering development opportunities to young talents in the city (see also Groningen, 2005, p. 23). It seems that they lack irrefutable evidence on the functioning of art in this respect. The supposed effects are twofold: an impulse is generated for the culture in the city, presumably an artistic impulse, and the image of the city is strengthened. The document, once again, suggests a link between artistic quality of festivals and the extrinsic effects: promotion of the city is linked primarily to festivals that radiate quality and events for 'connoisseurs'.

### 3.4.5. Social Domain

The policy document of 1991 links the city's cultural policy to social regeneration.

Equally, if not even more important is our ambition for social renewal. We think it is of the greatest importance that attention be paid to the quality of social environment and the way it is experienced. The perception of art is a substantial part here. (Groningen, 1991a, pp. 14-15)

What stands out in this quote is the fact that *artistic* experiences are mentioned, not cultural experiences. This suggests that there is a link between specific artistic qualities of the experience and functioning in the social domain. However, the same page also states the following:

By intensifying contact with people in their own daily surroundings (e.g. with street art, activities in and from local public libraries, cultural projects in schools), we intend to stimulate the inhabitants to participate in cultural matters (and with that in society). (Groningen, 1991a, p. 15)

Here the term 'participation in *cultural* activities' is used. Therefore it seems to be a question of indiscriminate speech rather than a significant difference between 'artistic' and 'cultural' activities. The quotes suggest that, through experiencing culture in the direct living environment, participation in society can be stimulated and thus social exclusion can be prevented. The document of 2005 states overtly that art can be a means to realize societal goals.

Participation in art projects may induce people who run the risk of missing the boat to pick up their social lives again or boost their self-respect. (...) In short, participation in art projects as a meaningful and pleasant pastime. (Groningen, 2005, p. 22)

Preventing social exclusion and developing the self-esteem of participants can be found as functions here. The first should be added to Table 2.5 under 'social cohesion'; the latter was also present in the document of 2000 in which, by enabling youngsters to develop their authentic cultural expression, their self-esteem can be boosted (Groningen, 2000a, *aanbiedingsbrief*). The quote from the 2005 document also suggests that rendering meaning (Table 2.2) is an important aspect of the functioning of culture and art in the social domain. It seems that specific intrinsic functions can be linked to specific extrinsic functions of culture and art.

### 3.4.6. Living Climate

In all the policy documents of the city of Groningen, cultural activities are related to the living climate in the city (see Groningen, 1991a, p.6; 1995, p. 28; and 2005, pp. 22, 127). The

city has a policy of introducing high-quality architecture to influence the living climate in the inner city and in the planning of new boroughs (Groningen, 2005, p. 23). Cultural activities are mainly located in the inner city and therefore cultural institutions contribute to a lively inner city. In the document of 1991, the writers express a concern that cultural activities should also take place in the boroughs. They should stimulate and generate enthusiasm with the aim of contributing to social regeneration (Groningen, 1991a, p. 41). However, the document is not clear as to how cultural activities contribute to social regeneration. The 2005 document mentions investing in cultural activities to counterbalance commercial activities in the inner city itself (Groningen, 2005, p. 15). This suggests that commercial activities are not necessarily geared towards including all members of urban society. Nevertheless, cultural – city sponsored – activities can be oriented toward all members of the city's population. The concern seems to be that the activities in the inner city may become one-sided.

#### **3.4.7. Added Value of Production Facilities**

It can be deduced from the policy documents that the city of Groningen has expectations with regard to the role of the nationally subsidised institutions in the city. The city officials try to influence the policies of these companies (see e.g. Groningen, 1995, p. 15). This is most markedly present in the 1991 document: 'We value a strong interaction between the North Netherlands Theatre Company (NNT) and the cultural infrastructure in our city' (Groningen, 1991b, pp. 13-14). At that point in time, the NNT supported the Grand Theatre (a production house for avant-garde theatre) and workshops in the city theatre. These activities were abandoned in later years. The dance institutions are not exempt from this. The city's policy document mentions the International Choreographers Competition which was organized biannually in the city from 1986 to 1996. The competition was also intended to influence the local (amateur) dance infrastructure, and the city suggested that the organization responsible for the Choreographers Competition should also organize a festival as a showcase for important dance productions in the Netherlands.

We think that such a festival could have a strong influence on the dance culture in Groningen. Apart from that, it will put extra emphasis on the increasing role Groningen has acquired in the international world of dance. (Groningen, 1991b, p. 28, see also p. 26)

This quote suggests that next to the influence on the local (amateur) infrastructure, the production facilities in the city can be used to boost the city's image. However, such a festival has never been held. Furthermore, the city's orchestra is advised in the document to co-operate with other cultural institutions in the city (Groningen, 1991b, p. 31). It is not clear what the nature or goal of this co-operation should be. The 2000 document concludes that the presence of state-subsidized production facilities contributes to the city's identity (Groningen, 2000a, p. 21, and 2000b, p. 19). It is not clear what is meant exactly by the city's 'identity'. It can be assumed that the presence of professional production facilities adds to the city's image but also to the city's self-image.

### 3.5. Arnhem

Arnhem may not be the largest municipality in the eastern part of the country, but in conjunction with its 'twin city' of Nijmegen, it forms a major city agglomeration and centre for the cultural infrastructure. A dance company, theatre company and symphony orchestra are based in the city. This legitimizes its inclusion in the present research. Furthermore, Arnhem is the seat of an art and a dance academy. A university, however, is located in Nijmegen, but Arnhem does have a large student population for it is a major centre of vocational education. Almost 30% of the population is under 25 years of age (Arnhem, 2001, p. 15). Along with Nijmegen, Arnhem services an area of up to 600,000 inhabitants, a number that will grow towards 800,000 in 2015 (Arnhem, 2001, p. 15). This forms a specific challenge to cultural policy. The city does not focus on achieving a full range of cultural facilities; instead the facilities are split up between Arnhem en Nijmegen. City planning is important for the cultural policy.

In 1992 the city published a cultural policy document titled *Meanders, meer cultuur en anders* (*Meanders, more culture and different*). The primary policy aim of this document was to strengthen the position of Arnhem as an important cultural city in the Netherlands in the light of growing competition from other cities (Arnhem, 1992, p. 10). In 2001, a new policy document was drafted, *Cultuurmenu 2001 2005 2014* (*Cultural Menu 2001 2005 2014*) which can be seen as a visionary document. The document contains a multiple-choice menu for the cultural policy, with different levels of ambition. City politics chose the 'medium' variant, which was elaborated in a policy document, surprisingly titled *Cultuurovisie Arnhem 2001 2005 2015* (*Vision on Culture 2001 2005 2015*) and published in 2002. All three documents contain an integral vision of cultural policy. In the future, separate policy documents on the various cultural sectors will be drafted. The document on amateur activities has been included in the present research.

The 1992 document contains surprisingly little intrinsic legitimization of the cultural policy. The fact that the city needs to invest in the cultural sector goes without saying, because the city is faced with the competition from other cities with regard to its position as a cultural centre (Arnhem, 1992, p. 10). This links cultural policy directly to city development; the function of culture is regarded in this light (Arnhem, 1992, p. 13). The intrinsic functioning of culture and art seem to be taken for granted and are not elaborated upon. The documents of 2001 and 2002 do not differ from this approach, although they contain more references to the functioning of the (performing) arts in society. The documents introduce the term 'cultural planning', referring to the juxtaposition of cultural and artistic interests and the development of the city and society: 'The deliberate use of culture as an impulse for quality and (quality) awareness in urban and social development' (Arnhem, 2001, p. 13)

What is interesting for the present research is that culture is seen as a means to further the quality of the city's development. Investments in the cultural infrastructure and activities are

weighed with regard to societal development and to city development (Arnhem, 2002, p. 11). Even more so, it is the policy makers' view that the intrinsic value of culture and art can be augmented by an integral policy approach (Arnhem, 2001, p. 13). One remarkable feature of the policy documents of 2001 and 2002 is the use of the term 'function'. In order to introduce more flexibility to the system of subsidies, the city tries to link the subsidies to the functions that need to be performed by institutions in the cultural sector (Arnhem, 2001, p. 24) rather than offering lump-sum funding to cultural institutions. In the field of the performing arts, this means that the upkeep of a theatre and the programming in that theatre can be two distinct functions and therefore can be subsidized individually. In order to enhance the dynamic in the cultural field, the city's cultural policy should be aimed at facilitating the functions that need to be performed rather than facilitating the institutions performing them (Arnhem, 2001, p. 34; see also Arnhem, 2002, p. 16). The functions should also be the basis for evaluating the performance of institutions (Arnhem, 2002, p. 6). The documents identify ten functions:

- Education and advancement of expertise
- Development and experiment
- Production and co-production
- Distribution
- Conservation and management
- Production and presentation
- Promotion and marketing
- Information and education
- Advice and guidance
- Research and publication (Arnhem, 2001, pp. 27-28, and Arnhem, 2002, p. 18)

Because of the fact that the city's policy makers define the term 'function' as a function to be performed *within* the cultural sector, these functions can all be categorized as 'tasks' in the terminology of the present research, with the exception of research and development. With this 'task', the city denotes experiment in artistic forms, which is a function already identified in Table 2.4. For the present research, the other 'tasks' do not yield new insights as to how the arts function in society. Suffice it to remark that a coherent system of cultural production and distribution facilities comprises all these tasks *within* the city. This can be a distinct interpretation as to what is meant by the value of arts institutions collectively when located in the same city. It seems that the approach in Arnhem does not differ from that in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). The approach involves tasks which should be present in the cultural sector in order for the sector to develop (artistically and institutionally) as any given sector should and to be able to cater to the general public. The approach in Arnhem involves linking the allocation of subsidies to the various tasks that cultural organizations perform and not to the organization itself, and hence to its continuing survival. For the present research, it is of interest to see whether or not this has any bearing on how Arnhem evaluates the cultural policy and/or the performance of single institutions. This is discussed in Chapter 11. Moreover, it leads to the question as to whether or not all tasks should be present in every city. For instance, the preservation function in performing arts which, in the Netherlands, only seems to occur in the theatre museum in Amsterdam, suggests that this is not the case. One can also think of the experiment function, which, in the case of the performing arts, need

not be present in every city to the same extent and may be based upon the characteristics of local audiences. One of the advantages of the Dutch touring system is that experiment can be brought to a city as well as performances of classical repertoire.

### **3.5.1. Intrinsic Functions**

Because cultural policy is linked to city development so closely in all policy documents, the documents contain little intrinsic legitimization of cultural policy. However, the intrinsic functioning is seen as just as important as the 'instrumental' use of cultural policy, for culture is an important part of our life (Arnhem, 1992, p. 73). Art is a means to challenge existing norms and values in society, just as science is (Arnhem, 1992, p. 14). This definition of art is akin to the definitions found in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (Ministerie van OCW, 1995). However, the same page of the document presents another definition of art which is of interest for defining the functioning of art in society:

We see art as a form of communication that can lead to recognition and identification as well as confusion and uncertainty. (Arnhem, 1992, p. 14)

Artistic activities can lead to recognition and identification – confirming existing norms and values within a group, i.e., asserting a certain identity (Table 2.3) – or to confusion and uncertainty – bringing perceived certainties up for discussion (Table 2.2).

The most important legitimization of cultural policy that can be found in the documents of 2001 and 2002 seems to be the input of quality in the city's development. The documents contain little explanation what is exactly meant by 'quality'. However, a second definition of the term 'cultural planning' contains some specific insights into this:

the systematic deployment of culture and cultural history as an impulse for originality, quality-awareness and quality in urban and social development. (...) Vernacular architecture has a social and a physical component. (Arnhem, 2002, p. 3, see also p. 14)

Originality and quality seem to be the contribution of culture to the city's development. This can be linked to some of the functions of art and culture that were encountered previously: most importantly, authentic ways of expression (Table 2.4), but also fantasy and imagination (Table 2.1), stimulation of the mind (Table 2.2) and developing new insights (Table 2.2). Quality itself is a more complex matter. The quote mentions both an understanding of what quality is ('kwaliteitsbesef') and quality itself. Quality itself can be related to the two areas in which cultural planning is evident: societal and physical. The aim seems to be that the social development of the city is such that one can speak of social quality. Quality of life is probably being referred to here. The physical development of the city can be quality development through architectural quality or quality in city planning itself. However, an understanding of quality is of greater interest for the present research. The document seems to imply that cultural planning can lead to a general appreciation of quality in life and culture. This can be linked to recognizing special circumstances and recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures (Table 2.2). The two components of cultural planning imply that the cultural policy should be linked to social, welfare and educational policies. The physical

component presupposes a link between cultural policy and city planning and economic policy.

#### 3.5.2. Economic Functions

In the economic domain, the main focus of the Arnhem cultural policy documents is on the attractiveness of the city to visitors and inhabitants (Arnhem, 1992, p. 22; Arnhem, 2001, pp. 15, 16; Arnhem, 2002, p. 4) and the city's image (Arnhem, 1992, p. 73). The documents do not make clear how culture and/or art contribute to these goals. Art and culture in the city are also necessary to attract businesses to the city (Arnhem, 2002, p. 4). An important aspect is that Arnhem aims to use the vocational training in culture (a dance academy, theatre academy and art academy are located in the city) to improve the city's attractiveness (Arnhem, 2002, p. 8). The documents are not clear on how this is done. The 1992 document also mentions direct employment effects, but the writers of the document lack substantial evidence to use this as firm legitimization of cultural policy (Arnhem, 1992, p. 22). A far more interesting remark is the assertion that cultural policy can have influence on the quality of industrial design and thus influence the city's economy (Arnhem, 1992, p. 22). This is not a type of functioning that can be linked to the performing arts but it can be interpreted as a forebode of the concept of the creative city (see *Meer dan de Som*, 2003, Maastricht, 2001, and Groningen, 2005).

#### 3.5.3. Social Domain

Because city development also means societal development in the policy makers' view, a link is suggested between culture and the social domain. However, this link is not elaborated upon. The 1992 document mentions the activities of the STAP theatre group, a group that develops community theatre (Arnhem, 1992, p. 69). However, the document offers no insight into the functioning of this form of theatre other than the fact that audience members are recruited in their own living environment and are addressed in their own language. This can be regarded as a form of identity-reinforcement (Table 2.3). Furthermore, this document links the visual arts to regeneration of city boroughs (Arnhem, 1992, p. 69). In the more recent documents, the line of reasoning is that a strong cultural sector contributes to the living climate, welfare and social cohesion (Arnhem, 2001, p. 15, and 2002, p. 4). These functions have already been mentioned in Table 2.5. The amateur activities in particular can contribute to the living climate in boroughs (Arnhem, 2003, p. 4). The 2001 document also mentions the question of ethnic diversity.

There is no need to develop a separate culture policy for each ethnic or age group. However, we do seek to develop a varied range (of cultural activities) that caters for everybody and stimulates cultural (sub-)groups to take note of each other's culture. Hence, the 'intercultural' approach prevails over the 'multicultural' one. (Arnhem, 2001, p. 15)

The aim of cultural policy is not to offer specific cultural activities for each subgroup ('multicultural') but to encourage subgroups to become acquainted with each other. The 2003 document adds that different groups in society should come into contact with each other and this should lead to mutual understanding (Arnhem, 2003, p. 4). These notions refer to the functions identified in Table 2.3. However, they raise the question as to whether or not

establishing contact between social subgroups, in other words, transcending the boundaries and cultural codes of subgroups (or linking them in the terms of the policy document of Groningen), is a specific artistic function.

#### 3.5.4. City Development

In 1992 the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen were identified as growth centres in national spatial planning policy (Arnhem, 1992, p. 13). Just as in Utrecht and Rotterdam, city growth seems to be a major impetus to the cultural policy. Investing in cultural facilities goes without saying, because other cities are competing with Arnhem in terms of its historical cultural position (Arnhem, 1992, p. 10). Linking cultural policy to city planning has led to many remarks in the policy documents concerning the relationship between city development and culture and art. For the present research, it is of particular interest to determine what culture and art specifically contribute to city development. The 2001 document contains an important remark in this respect.

Vernacular architecture implies that culture is deployed as a source of inspiration, a treasure chest of suggestions and ideas and a critical guardian of the quality of our living environment. (Arnhem, 2001, p. 13)

Culture performs various functions in the development of the living environment. Culture is used for inspiration and as an 'idea bank'. This can be interpreted in two ways. Either cultural activities can stimulate one's fantasy (Table 2.1) or they can be a source of new ideas for participants (Table 2.2: broadening the mental scope of spectators). Culture is also considered to be a critical guardian of quality in the living environment. This formulation suggests that culture adds quality to life in a city. This interpretation is supported by the 2002 document:

Given the ambitions stated in *Arnhem op weg naar 2015* (Arnhem on its way to 2015), culture is a powerful means to improve the city's quality, its community, its urban space and its value of perception. (Arnhem, 2002, p. 14)

This quote also suggests that culture influences the societal and physical quality of the city. Furthermore, it adds to the experiential value of the city's physical appearance. This is a function that should be linked to architecture and the visual arts. However, one can also interpret the quote from the 2001 document in such a way that the artistic function of formulating critique on society (Table 2.4) is being referred to, as was suggested in the Rotterdam documents as well.

It is important to note that cultural planning is not only linked to the physical development of the city but also to societal development. Investments in the cultural infrastructure should be weighed with respect to both city development and societal development. This stimulates the social climate in the city and the attractiveness of the city. Developing a new pop-music stage can be regarded as an impulse for the pop-music culture and youth culture in the city (societal development) and can boost the city's image (city development) (Arnhem, 2002, p. 4). In this line of reasoning, the interpretation of societal development is conspicuous. The development of pop-music culture in the city itself, which is a cultural quality aim, is



regarded as societal development. However, in the terms of this research, societal development belongs to extrinsic functioning and not to intrinsic. This once again suggests the existence of a relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic functioning, where cultural (or artistic) quality is a mediating variable. And this seems to be the specific contribution of culture to the city development: to imbue it with quality.

#### 3.6. Breda, Apeldoorn and Zwolle

The cities with no performing-arts companies have published fewer and less elaborate cultural policy documents than the other cities in the research. This is a consequence of the fact that they lack professional performing artists. City size appears to be irrelevant as Apeldoorn and Breda are larger than some of the cities with professional performing-arts producers. The cultural policy of these cities seems to be primarily based on extrinsic motivation. The realization of cultural facilities (be it production or consumption facilities) is regarded as belonging to a city of the size of Breda, Zwolle and Apeldoorn. The general view seems to be that a city of over 100,000 inhabitants should offer a full range of cultural events to its inhabitants and to its visitors. It follows that the city government will then subsidize the arts (see e.g. Zwolle, 2004, p. 2). New theatre venues are a specific focal point for the cultural policy of these cities. In Breda, a complex containing a theatre, concert halls and a cinema opened in 1995 (Chassé Theater); in Apeldoorn the existing city theatre (Orpheus) was remodelled to house large-scale productions (2004); and in Zwolle a new theatre for large productions and concerts opened in 2006 (Spiegeltheater).

Of these three cities, Breda was the first to publish a cultural policy document in 1996, *Cultuur is Meer, Beleidsnota Kunst en Cultuur, gemeente Breda* (Culture is More, Cultural policy of the city of Breda). The policy document was reassessed in 2003 (*Herrijking 'Cultuur is Meer', Enrichment of 'Culture is More'*). Furthermore the *Stadsvisie* (City Vision) of 1999 and the programme of the board of Mayor and Aldermen of 2002 have also been studied, as well as the plan for the regeneration of the zone between the railway station and the inner city and the *Aanvraag Actieplan Cultuurbereik 2005-2008* (Request for state funding in the action plan for cultural participation), both published in 2004. Zwolle has published two documents on the cultural policy, *Zwolle, op naar cultuurstad van formaat, Culturele toekomstplannen tot 2005* (Zwolle on the road to become a cultural city) in 1999 and a concept policy document *De basis op orde, Zwolle als creatieve stad de verlegenheid voorbij, concept cultuurnota 2005-2008* (A sound basis, Zwolle as creative city shedding its timidity, concept cultural policy document) in 2004. Both have been studied, as well as a leaflet published to inform the city on the progress of the building of the new theatre, *Theaternieuws* (*Theatre News*), published in 2003, and the subsidy plan for the performing arts, published in 2005. Apeldoorn published a cultural policy document in 2005: *Cultuur in Bedrijf, cultuurvisie Apeldoorn 2004/2014* (Culture at Work: vision on culture for Apeldoorn 2004/2014).

Breda focuses on realizing production facilities in the city with national subsidies (see Breda, 1996, p. 27, and Breda, 2003, p. 5). Since 1991, Zwolle has embarked on a cultural-growth model subsidizing festivals to boost the city's image and building a new theatre in order to offer the full range of productions available in the Netherlands. Zwolle also aims at furthering performing-arts production in the city itself and, for this reason, introduced a subsidy scheme for performing-arts productions in 2005. Before this date, there were only subsidies for programming performances and concerts; now the city endeavours to stimulate performing-arts productions (though not striving to obtain a nationally subsidized performing arts company). The aim of this scheme is described as follows:

This arrangement may also have a positive effect on the quality of what is on offer. By creating opportunities for theatre makers to develop performances in our city, the cultural supply will become more attractive, as will the cultural climate. This means that the public in Zwolle will be given a wider choice and that artists will be drawn to – and will settle in – the city, which will also have a positive effect on the world of amateur art. (Zwolle, 2005, p. 4)

The city aims at developing the supply of cultural events and, in doing so, it aspires to develop the cultural climate and offer a wider variety of performances and concerts to its public. It can be assumed that the city council expects that visits to the performing arts will rise as a result of a wider range of choice for the public. However, this does not offer a new insight into the type of functioning that is expected for this broader audience. The general assumption seems to be that, in a city where there is no production, the performing arts function differently, as was encountered in the national policy documents. However, the policy documents of Zwolle and Breda do not specify how the performing arts will function differently, other than affecting the quality of the cultural scene of the city, including the quality of amateur productions (Zwolle, 2005, pp. 3, 4; Breda, 2003, p.5). Several remarks on this issue can be found in the cultural policy documents. They are discussed below.

### 3.6.1. Intrinsic Functions

In these times of a rapidly growing multicultural society and a continuous stream of social changes, art and culture are vital necessities. In a society where everyday security is gradually disappearing and where technology rages on at unbridled speed, cultural and artistic stability is an absolutely vital necessity. (Breda, 1996, p. 1)

This quote from the policy document of Breda stresses the importance of art and culture in a constantly-changing society. This reflects the notion of finding a secure place in the world which was present in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995, Table 2.2). The document continues:

Cultural resilience and content make man strong and flexible. At the point where culture changes into (the practice of) art, imagination comes into power. Man's creative powers enable him to escape from the daily rut and the often relentless rhythm of daily life. (Breda. 1996. p. 1)

Art specifically offers an opportunity to imagination and creativity and through creativity one can transcend the routine of everyday life. This notion was present for art specifically in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995, Table 2.1). Being culturally active is considered to be especially important to youngsters:

It is crucial that all children and youngsters in Breda are introduced to the various forms of culture this city has to offer. Being active in 'culture' is a stimulus for a child's development in

### 3. City Government

areas other than only the physical (sports) and the cognitive (academic learning). It evokes curiosity and wonder, qualities that are needed to survive in our constantly changing society. (Breda, 2003, p. 6)

This quote is of particular interest because a distinction is made between the physical, the cognitive and cultural development of children. Cultural activities stimulate curiosity and surprise, qualities which are necessary in a society which changes constantly. This suggests that culture and art are indeed a means to acquire knowledge, but in a very different way than 'regular' learning. Culture and art function through experience. The policy document of Breda seems to concur with the items listed under 'personal experience' which were found in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000, see Table 2.1).

The Apeldoorn document refers to the concept of identity.

Cultural participation is important to the private individual as well as society. Culture stimulates man's creative powers. Getting acquainted with art and culture broadens the mind. Culture inspires. It makes people aware of what was, what is, and what could be. Moreover, there is a (distinct) social dimension to participation in culture, in the sense that it allows various sections of the population to manifest themselves, and it connects people with different cultural backgrounds. (Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 14)

Cultural activities – apart from stimulating the mind and creativity (Table 2.2) – offer the opportunity to relate oneself to history (see also Breda, 1996, p. 21). But identity is not only related to history, but may stem from current events or the contrast between historic artefacts and current activities (see Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 6). The linking force of culture is also mentioned. Culture can bring people with different backgrounds together (see Table 2.3 under 'social interaction').

Apeldoorn adopts an integral approach to cultural policy, for culture seems to be linked to many policy areas, such as social policy, city identity and spatial planning. However, the policy document mainly demonstrates the links with urban spatial development. Apeldoorn is concerned with preserving its cultural and natural heritage.

A familiar environment that invites one to participate. Art and culture generate movement and radiation, have an engaging effect, and contribute to the quality of life and social cohesion. Culture brings people together, gives them inspiring and sometimes emotional thoughts, enables people to be active and creative, and bridges cultural differences. An attractive cultural climate is an excellent promotion of our city and, moreover, has a positive economic effect. (Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 6)

The quote mentions some intrinsic functions of culture and art. It suggests that inhabitants of Apeldoorn should be able to derive identity from their immediate living environment. What is of specific interest here is that the document suggests that a culturally interesting environment also stimulates participation in society. *Meer dan de Som* (2003, see Table 2.2) also mentioned the notion of personal development as a means to further social participation; the policy document of Apeldoorn suggest that a strong sense of identity also furthers social participation. Furthermore, the quote also suggests that culture can be a source of inspiration, a function which can be listed under personal development (Table 2.2), and social barriers can be crossed (Table 2.3). A last remark on this quote is that culture is

important to offer inhabitants the quality of living environment they ask for nowadays. Apeldoorn focuses on a specific unique living environment with its location near the national natural park and spacious layout. Culture is also important for city promotion.

### 3.6.2. Economic Functions

Breda actively promotes a cultural image of the city. Cultural heritage, the visual arts and festivals are important means in doing so. The city has chosen graphic design as an area of excellence (Breda, 1996, pp. 13, 34, and 2003, pp. 2, 4). However facilities in other cultural disciplines have also been realized (such as the new theatre and concert hall, Chassé) in order to reflect the ambitions of Breda as an important centre (Breda, 1996, p. 2). The historic inner city of Breda is important in developing this type of cultural image. However, the cultural activities in the city are equally important, and with these, the city should strive to distinguish itself from others (c.f. Groningen). It is the cultural programme of the city that generates an interesting living and working climate. Thus culture generates economic spin-off. Moreover through a more cultural image the city will be able to attract more artists.

This process is crucial for the development of Breda as a cultural city. (...) Attractiveness, variegation and economic (surplus) value lead to a strong cultural consciousness, the latter being a goal in itself because it strengthens people in finding their identity. (Breda, 1996, p. 6)

A strong cultural self-image is important for people to cope with life and to develop their identity. These are intrinsic functions of culture which have been mentioned above.

In the documents of Zwolle a same line of reasoning is present. The documents of 1999 and 2004 stress the importance of festivals (see Zwolle, 1999, p. 11, and 2004, p. 21). A large-scale festival in the city is important for the cultural climate and will attract tourists (Zwolle, 2004, p. 22). As was seen in other cities, a cultural image is important in attracting visitors to the city. Attracting tourists is an aim of the cultural policy in all three cities. However, attracting tourists is linked to cultural heritage (the historic inner cities of Zwolle and Breda), natural heritage (Apeldoorn), museums (Zwolle, Breda and Apeldoorn) and festivals (Zwolle and Breda). This leads to the question as to the specific nature of the performing arts in attracting tourists.

### 3.6.3. Social Domain

The three cities' documents mention functions of the performing arts that fall into the social domain. This stimulates concern about offering a wide variety of cultural activities to include specific ethnic groups or youngsters for instance (see e.g. Breda, 1999, p. 1; Zwolle, 2004b, p. 25; and Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 7). Social inclusion and cohesion are aims of the cultural policy of these cities. However, the cultural policy documents contain no remarks on *how* art and culture function in the social domain. Amateur activities are considered to be important in the social domain (see Zwolle, 2004, p. 33; Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 14). The Apeldoorn document also emphasizes the fact that cultural activities, either active or passive, are typically social activities, (Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 7).

### 3.6.4. City Development

As mentioned above, the growth of the cities is an important legitimization for cultural policy as growth stimulates the need for cultural facilities:

Growth requires a high level of services, such as a varied supply of public cultural activities. Zwolle is already an effervescent city in this respect, but craves more: a new podium facility, coupled with ambitious plans for the layout of exhibitions in museums, a new festival, and the promotion of amateur art. (Zwolle, 1999, p. 2; see also Zwolle, 1999, p. 10)

Investing in cultural facilities is a way to develop the city physically. The director of the city theatre in Zwolle expects that the new theatre will add to the attractions of the inner city:

Zwolle's booming expansion obliges the city to make bigger investments in art and cultural services. The new theatre will be an important step in catching up with modernity. I am convinced that it will be the showpiece of Zwolle's inner city, and an excellent crowd-puller to fill in the remaining part of the Noordereiland area. (Zwolle, 2003, p. 4)

The theatre aims at attracting more visitors to the inner city. At the same time, it is the trigger for the physical development of the inner city. Breda provides another interesting example. The construction of a high speed train service (HSL) from Amsterdam to Paris offers the city the opportunity to develop the area between the railway and the inner city (Sporzone). The development project has had a cultural dimension from the outset.

The Sporzone (Railway zone) is an outstanding example of a location where Breda's creative industry could replace the old (disappearing) activity. (...) In collaboration with the business community, the possibilities for the development, accommodation and exploitation of a House of Arts are being investigated. Here, cross-pollination should take place between professional artists and the upper layer of amateurs in the area of the performing arts, but without neglecting other disciplines. The House of Arts should be conducive to the artistic production climate of the city and initiate co-operation and multidisciplinary projects toward this goal. (Breda, 2004b, p. 5)

Because of the fact that the development of the HSL reduces the travel time to the major Western-European centres (Brussels, London, Paris), the development project is aimed at adding an international top-level to the city, not only as a physical development but most importantly to the 'programme' of the city. Therefore culture is important (see also Breda, 2004a). The mission to add production facilities of national importance (with national subsidies) can be understood in this light. Because of changing circumstances – the growing connections with the major European cities – Breda has had to redefine its international position. Apparently culture and art are important means to do this. Culture and art (and specifically production facilities) are part of this new self-definition of the city. Culture and art are important components of a city's self-image especially in the international context. Though Apeldoorn seems to be the least ambitious of the three cities, it also exhibits an example of city development through cultural institutions. A cultural quarter has been created in the inner city where a combined library, museum and city archive (CODA), a refurbished industrial building with room for cultural entrepreneurs, a new facility for amateurs, and a cinema are located close to one another in a cultural district. This is a means to promote the city as the cultural centre for the region and thus attract visitors (Table 2.5). Also the cultural facilities are a means to improve the liveliness of the inner city (Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 25).

### 3.6.5. The Added Value of Production Facilities

The policy documents of Zwolle (1999) and Breda (1996) and to a lesser extent Apeldoorn (2005) display the aim of attracting professional artists to the city. The documents Zwolle and Apeldoorn provide notions on the added value of performing-arts production facilities.

In the near future, we intend to put more emphasis on the makers of art, i.e., the artists, especially those who work in Zwolle. (...) The thought behind this is that we want to bond Artez (the local vocational training for artists, QLvdH) graduates and other young artists to the city, as artists are important for a society. With their unique view on society, they provoke discussion and debate, which will keep us keen and alert. They are the thorn in the flesh of modern time(s), the 'jesters' of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But above all, they are professionals who can make a (valuable) contribution to our city as a centre of creativity. (Zwolle, 2004, p. 11)

The motivation for the city of Zwolle seems to be intrinsic in nature. Artists are viewed as commentators on society, they provoke debate. This reflects the function of expressing ideas and perceptions that was encountered in the national documents (Table 2.4). However, the motivation for Zwolle is also extrinsic in its nature. Artists form part of the concept of the creative city and therefore are important to the economic development of the city. This concept has already been encountered in the national document *Meer dan de Som* (2003, see Table 2.5) and other city documents. It is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

The policy document of Apeldoorn contains the following remark:

Apeldoorn lacks an institution for performing arts of any stature. Its urban culture sector is too small: apart from the basic cultural services (e.g., a theatre, a centre for cultural education, a public library and a museum) – and with the exception of the Ereprijs Orchestra – there are no other professional cultural organizations. Yet, such institutions are important to the town, as they generate jobs, are a source of cultural entrepreneurship and new initiatives, and contribute substantially to the stature, the representation and the cultural image of the town. (Apeldoorn, 2005, p. 6)

It seems that the added value of production facilities is primarily extrinsic. The direct employment effects and city image are mentioned. These are extrinsic functions of culture and art. The concepts of cultural entrepreneurship and stimulating new initiatives are also mentioned. It is not clear what this means exactly. It seems that the policy makers assume that artists are attracted to places where other artists already are active. They stimulate each other and thus foster new (artistic) developments and hence reinforce extrinsic functioning such as the image of the city.

### 3.7. Summary

This section summarizes the general findings of this chapter. These findings are based upon a comparison of the cultural policy documents of eight Dutch cities from the period 1992-2005. Chapter 4 is devoted to a comparison of the city and state documents. A first conclusion is extremely obvious from the preceding discussion of the city's cultural policy documents. The legitimization of cultural policy in different cities in the Netherlands is largely similar. There are no differences between the legitimization of the cultural policies of the cities based upon the region where the city is located. The cities do not differ in the

desired functions of the (performing) arts and cultural sector in the city. The fact that, in the policy documents, city officials refer to the same publications, such as publications by the *Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau* (e.g. Van den Broek and De Haan, 2000), *Nyfer* (Marlet and Tames, 2002, and Florida, 2002), underlines this conclusion. Moreover, the cities base their policies on research findings in other cities, (e.g. the economic legitimization in the policy document of Maastricht (1988) refers to studies in Amsterdam, London and Vienna). Indeed there are differences between the cultural policies of these eight cities, but they are not based on regional differences in culture.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore the same topics are present in the city documents around the same time. Issues such as cultural diversity, in around 2000, and the creative class argument, in around 2003, occur in almost all cities. Here the city policy documents closely follow the topics of the national policy documents, with the exception of Rotterdam where such themes occurred earlier. It seems that in Dutch cultural policy the national and local authorities are subject to the same 'trends'.

The differences that do exist between the cities derive from the city's history or tradition. Cultural policy seems to occur at different 'stages' which depend on city growth and thus on the growth of the city's cultural infrastructure. Cities with more elaborate cultural infrastructures publish elaborate cultural policy documents, mostly in a four-year cycle (Rotterdam, Utrecht, Groningen). Maastricht and Arnhem also publish fairly elaborate documents, but not in a four-year cycle.<sup>20</sup> The cities in the research with no professional production facilities (Breda, Apeldoorn, Zwolle) have published far fewer documents. However, Breda and Zwolle seem to be catching on as 'cultural cities'. In Breda, cultural policy has been accelerated by the advent of the high-speed railway linking the city to an international transport network. In Zwolle, the development seems to be dependent on the physical development of the inner city. The examples of Rotterdam and more specifically Utrecht also show that cultural policy is accelerated when city growth accelerates. The cultural position of Groningen and Maastricht - both cities that have not experienced accelerated growth - seems to be dependent on the historical position of the city in its surroundings.

This leads to a second conclusion. Cultural policy is linked to urban planning policy. A thriving cultural infrastructure is a prerequisite for 'urbanity' of the cities and therefore the cultural policy is linked to city development. City development has three main aspects: spatial planning, economic development and social development. In almost all policy documents, the cultural policy is linked to all three of these areas. This is important to know when evaluating cultural policy. However, it also poses a significant problem because, when the measurement for policy evaluation is derived from the city's development, one has to argue a causal relationship between the cultural policy and the city development in all three

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that this conclusion does not exclude the possibility of regional cultural differences such as dialect and the historical development of a city. These regional differences, however, find no translation in the legitimization of cultural policy (with the exception of the province of Friesland which has been excluded from the research).

<sup>20</sup> Officials in Maastricht have confirmed that the city will adhere to the four-year rhythm as of 2005.

areas. The discussion of the documents shows that cultural policy usually follows city planning policy; i.e., the causal relationship is the other way around. This is logical because a cultural infrastructure in a city comprises the buildings where activities can take place, in some cases - specifically the performing arts - large buildings with considerable traffic infrastructure to facilitate the attraction of audiences. Urbanity and professional cultural (production) facilities go hand in hand.



## 4. Political Views on the Functioning of Performing Arts in Society

This chapter summarizes the findings from the preceding chapters. Thus this chapter concludes Part I of the research in which the Dutch policy documents have been studied in order to establish which functions of the performing arts in society are expected to occur as a result of art policy. In Chapter 1, a simple model to categorize the functions of the performing arts in urban society was developed. The functions have been categorized on the basis of two divisions:

- The functions are intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic functions are linked to the specific cultural or artistic nature of productions.<sup>1</sup> Extrinsic functions result from other qualities of the productions which are not necessarily artistic in their nature.
- The functions can either occur from the perspective of the artists or from the perspective of the audience. The functions from the perspective of the audience can be divided into functions that occur either on the level of audience members individually or on a collective level.

Because of the nature of the Dutch theatre system to which the national government is a major financial contributor, both the national and city cultural policies from the period 1992 to 2005 have been researched in order to establish which functions of the performing arts can be expected in urban society. All national policy documents from the period 1992 to 2005 containing legitimization of the cultural policy were researched in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the policy documents of eight Dutch cities, spread evenly over the country and comprising cities where performing-arts companies are based and cities where they are not, were researched. The discussion of the city policy documents led to additions to the functions identified in Chapter 2. Some of the functions were also clarified, specifically the added value of production facilities for Dutch cities, which is an important issue in the national policy documents.

This chapter discusses the research findings. The research thus far allows to draw conclusions based upon the comparison of Dutch city cultural policies and national cultural policy. Section 4.1 discusses some general issues based upon this comparison. They concern the lack of precision in the use of the terms 'art', 'culture' and 'art and culture' in the policy

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural expression refers to all forms of symbolic expression that represent shared values and beliefs in society. Artistic expression questions these norms and beliefs. All types of functioning related to these essential cultural and artistic nature of productions is considered as intrinsic.

documents, the issue of the autonomy of art, and the role of the city government in cultural policy. Section 4.2 is devoted to the discussion of the functions of performing arts in urban society, as they can be discerned from the state and city cultural policy documents. Section 4.3 contains an overview of the research questions that should be addressed in order to develop a framework to describe the functioning of the performing arts in urban society and thus evaluate the cultural policy of cities.

#### 4.1. A Comparison of the National and City Cultural Policy Documents

##### 4.1.1. Art and Culture

In the policy documents, the words 'kunst' (art), 'kunst en cultuur' (art and culture) and 'cultuur' (culture) are used interchangeably. Perhaps the most obvious example is the policy document of Groningen of 1995. This is the document that initiated the widening of the city's cultural policy, and therefore of the meaning of the word 'culture' to other policy areas in this city. This is a trend in all of the national and city documents from around that time. This blending of terminology is most markedly present in the sections on the social domain.<sup>2</sup> This poses a problem for the present research for it clouds a clear understanding of the functioning of performing arts in urban society and the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic functions. This vagueness in terminology can be useful for policy makers, as they can stay away from discussions on the specific artistic functions in society. The broadening of the cultural policy to other policy areas therefore seems as much a question of strategy (defending the cultural policy against budget cuts by broadening its legitimization, as was predicted by the 'attachment strategies' described by Gray, 2007, and Belfiore, 2004) as of a conscious effort to reach social, economic or other city goals through public expenditures in artistic and cultural activities. However, by using this strategy, the policy makers parry the question as to what the specific contribution of cultural or artistic activities to these policy aims may be, inasmuch as it cannot be delivered by other activities such as sports, education or business enterprise. For the present research this poses two fundamental problems:

- The relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic functioning is obscured. As was discussed in the preceding chapter, this relationship should be clarified. The question concerns the extent to which extrinsic effects of performing arts are dependent on the cultural or artistic nature of the performing arts. This might be the case for some of

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000, p. 3) where subsidised culture ('gesubsidieerde cultuur') is used while art institutions are being specifically referred to. In the sections on social policy issues in city documents, the term 'culture' can be found, see Rotterdam (1993, pp. 28-30), and Maastricht (1998 enclosure, p. 69) but also 'art and culture' (see Rotterdam, 2003, p. 7), and Utrecht (1999, p. 18), a section that starts with the term 'art and culture' and continues with 'culture'. But 'art' and 'culture' are also used in the same section, see e.g. Groningen (1991a, pp.14-15), where art experience ('kunstbeleving') and cultural expressions ('cultuuruitingen) are used. Another example can be found in the 1995 Groningen document. The document refers to the 'linking force' of culture and art (pp. 8-9). Culture and art are instruments to transcend national borders in a world which is becoming a global village and borders between groups in society. The terms 'art' and 'art and culture' are used here interchangeably. On page 21 of the same document, the linking force is attributed to 'culture' alone. These sections all deal with the functions that are mentioned in Table 2.3.

the extrinsic functions identified. The concept of artistic quality is related to this issue, as it is the cornerstone in allocating subsidies.

- The level of aggregation for measuring the effectiveness of the cultural policy is obscured. The functioning of art and culture can become apparent for individuals attending performances, for audiences as a whole but also for of the total cultural sector of a city and for the city as a whole. This question should be addressed for each function identified.

Part II of the research is devoted to such questions.

#### 4.1.2. Autonomy of Art

The discussion of state policy documents prompted the issue of autonomy of art. It is important to note that, in city policy documents, the autonomy of art is rarely a point of discussion. This can be explained on the basis of the fact that, for the cities, legitimization of cultural policy based upon the extrinsic functions is apparently more important.<sup>3</sup> In the city policy documents, the extrinsic functions of culture and art are elaborated to a far greater extent than in the state policy documents. This is consistent with the fact that city policy documents claim a strong link between cultural and art policy and city development. The state documents are geared towards the development of the cultural institutions themselves.<sup>4</sup> However, in the city documents, intrinsic functions are also mentioned, specifically in the cities with longer traditions in publishing policy documents.

The autonomy of art can be expected to influence the functioning of the performing arts in society, as studied in the present research. It seems logical to presume that art production that thrives autonomously from other social activities will function differently from art production that tends to form a part of other social activities. This question is related to the perceived 'artification' of Dutch theatre (see *Investeren in Cultuur*, 1995, p. 22) and the subsequent advent of 'cultural diversity' as a policy aim, which is present in all the state policy documents as well as in the various city documents. But it also has a more fundamental meaning. It is related to the question as to whether politicians legitimize the art policy on the basis of the art world itself or whether they legitimize the policy on the basis of the effects outside the art world, i.e., whether they adhere to the autonomous tradition or the positive tradition as distinguished in the introduction. On the basis of the discussion of the policy documents of the state and those of eight cities, it can be argued that the legitimization of cultural policy lies outside the artworld itself. This can be deduced from the fact that

- (1) the extrinsic functions in the policy documents do not take precedence in the legitimization of the policy;
- (2) the intrinsic functions in the policy documents are related to what aesthetic activities 'do' for audience members and what this subsequently means in their lives (see section 4.2.1);

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<sup>3</sup> With the exception of Groningen, which legitimizes cultural policy extensively on the basis of intrinsic arguments compared to the other cities.

- (3) a link is suggested in many of the documents between culture and art's functioning as *culture and art* and extrinsic functions.

Thus it would seem that the positive tradition prevails over the autonomous tradition.

But more is at stake regarding the subject of the autonomy of the arts. This regards the nature of the policy documents themselves. The question should be raised as to whether these documents reflect an 'impartial' view on the position of the arts in society or whether the interest of artists and cultural institutions have not been major building blocks for these documents. It does not seem unlikely that the views on the functioning of culture and art in society, as expressed in the policy documents, are the result of joint formulation by the artworld and politicians or public officials. The political views have been based upon existing views within cultural institutions, and the cultural institutions in turn have formulated their missions in anticipation of the stated policy goals. This intertwining of the cultural sector with government policy does not compromise the conclusions of this research. In *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), politics seems to choose most explicitly in favour of legitimizing cultural policy on the basis of the functioning of cultural activities outside the world of cultural production itself. However, functions within the art world can also be found. These functions, such as the research of new forms of expression or the research of historic performance practices, are thought to be relevant too. This research will adopt this view. The functioning of performing arts outside the world of the performing arts is pivotal in the analysis. However, one should not turn a blind eye to the 'internal functions', for they can be regarded as a *conditio sine qua non* for cultural production to effectively function in society. These internal functions have been grouped in Table 2.4 and are considered as tasks. Note that the choice to legitimize the cultural policy outside the artworld itself presupposes that the functions for the artists themselves (cells 'A' and 'B' in Table 1.1) are not relevant to this research. However, the addition that these functions are a *conditio sine qua non* for cultural productions to effectively function in urban society proves the relevance of at least cell 'A', the intrinsic functions from the perspective of the artists. In the national policy documents, no functions were found that fall in cell 'B', the extrinsic functions from the perspective of the artists. However, in the city documents, the direct income effects of cultural production in the city are mentioned, albeit not prominently.

Summarizing, it can be said that the question of autonomy has more layers than was anticipated on the basis of the discussion of the autonomous and positive traditions discussed in the Introduction. The question relates to at least three levels: whether or not the arts can have other than aesthetic functions, whether or not the arts form a separate sphere within society, and whether or not arts policies contain goals that are relevant for the artists themselves. The first issue raises the question of what aesthetic functions actually are, indeed, of what art is. The second question relates to the organization of the artworld and its links to other social systems. These questions will be taken up in Chapters 5 and 6. The third

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<sup>4</sup> It is predominantly cultural production facilities as the national government that mainly subsidizes production.

question can be resolved here: the functions for artists themselves in the policy documents do not boil down to more than that the subsidies are expected to generate direct income for artists.

#### 4.1.3. Instrumentality of Dutch Cultural Policy

As stated above, the intrinsic legitimization of cultural policy seems to take precedence over extrinsic functions, although extrinsic functions were important in the earlier stages of the development of city cultural policies. The question should be raised as to what this finding means for the discussion of the instrumentality of cultural policy – and specifically art policy – as presented in the Introduction. It appears that, in the Netherlands, cultural policy, at least in the period researched, is not primarily extrinsically motivated. Thus one could say that the lamentations of instrumentality only apply in part to Dutch art policy. But such a conclusion is premature for two reasons:

- As will be summarized in section 4.2, Dutch cultural policy is mostly legitimized on the basis of the functions it produces for those who attend, such as the personal development they can gain from this experience. This prompts the question, already stated above, as to whether this development should be construed as an aesthetic consequence – thus falling within the autonomous tradition – or whether this is an instrumental goal of the policy. Here, an important fallacy of the autonomous tradition is encountered, because when one argues that the value of art is entirely aesthetic, one should define what aesthetic *is*.<sup>5</sup> Thus one needs a definition of art. This issue will be taken up in Chapter 6.
- It might be that the legitimization of cultural and arts policies in the Netherlands, as present in the formally written policy documents, is primarily intrinsic, but – as discussed in the Introduction – there can be a difference between the formally stated goals and the goals that are pursued in reality. Thus it could be that, in policy execution, the extrinsic legitimization has far more relevance and that city administrations evaluate policies based upon these goals, thus making policy execution instrumental. This will be researched on the basis of the actual evaluation practices of the eight cities in the research sample in section 11.1.

#### 4.1.4. The role of the City Government

In some of the city cultural policy documents, city officials try to pinpoint the role of the city government in the cultural field (see specifically the sections on the cultural policy documents of Rotterdam, Maastricht and Groningen). Two issues stand out in this effort.

First, the role of the city is defined in relation to private sponsors of cultural activities. The role of the city government is complementary to the activities of private sponsors, although the private sponsors have different interests (Rotterdam, 1993, pp. 4, 33): they only sponsor economically feasible activities. The government should safeguard the diversity of cultural

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<sup>5</sup> In fact this question comes down to whether or not the words ‘instrumental’ and ‘intrinsic’ can be used interchangeably.

supply in a city (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1999, pp. 4, 9, Maastricht, 1988, p. 18). The word 'diversity' refers to a broad range of cultural activities in terms of the different art forms. But the supply in the city should also cater to different groups among the public by ensuring that there is a supply of cultural activities that attract a broad range of groups in society or by safeguarding 'niche' activities. Therefore, cultural policy for cities is about finding equilibrium between strengthening the production of cultural activities (and its quality) and ensuring that various groups in society have or can gain access to these activities (Maastricht, 2001, p. 18).<sup>6</sup> Around the turn of the century, the advent of cultural diversity as a policy aim, adds the notion of ethnic diversity of the public to the role of the government. Some of the policy documents assume a different tone. The subsidized cultural institutions are criticized because they do not cater sufficiently to ethnically diverse audiences (see e.g. *Cultuur als Confrontatie*, Ministerie OCW, 2000) or to youngsters (see e.g. Groningen, 2000, 'aanbiedingsbrief'). But the argument changes in the ensuing documents. Recognizing that the electronic media have brought about an unprecedented reach of cultural activities, the role of the government is once again to safeguard the diversity of the cultural activities being produced, as well as the access to these activities (see Groningen, 2005, p. 14). Therefore, more emphasis is placed on influencing the supply side of cultural policy. Even although the policy documents of Groningen and Maastricht contain an analysis of the changed market circumstances for cultural institutions, and the policy makers in Maastricht conclude that new strategies are necessary for cultural institutions (see Maastricht, 2001, pp. 12-14), neither city opts for new policy instruments. Subsidizing production and reception facilities is still the main focus of their policy. This question of policy instruments is challenging; however, it falls outside the scope of this research. Influencing the diversity of the supply of cultural amenities and access to these amenities (both in terms of physical and intellectual access) remain the most important policy instruments. Tasks such as producing for specific groups and cultural education are important for city cultural policy. However, they do not shed any specific light on the functioning of art and culture in society.

Second, in all city policy documents, attention is turned to the relationship between cultural policy and other policy areas, such as spatial planning, social and welfare policy. For the present research, this prompts the question concerning the dependence of extrinsic functions on intrinsic functions. The 1999 policy document of Rotterdam is very clear: cultural policy cannot be made instrumental to other policy areas (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 12). However, in the following 2003 policy document, cultural policy is linked more closely to city development. The policy documents of other cities also provide evidence that cultural policy should contribute to the city's development and not only to the development of the cultural sector in the city (see e.g. Maastricht, 2001, pp. 10, 21). In Groningen, an overt belief in the interdependence of extrinsic and intrinsic functions is expressed (see Groningen, 2005, p. 23).

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<sup>6</sup> Note that the cultural policy documents of Breda and Zwolle mainly emphasize the reinforcement of the supply of cultural activities (and the quality of the supply). The equilibrium mentioned here

## 4.2. Functions of the Performing Arts in Urban Society in Dutch Cultural Policy

Based upon the discussion of the city policy documents in Chapter 3, Tables 2.1 to 2.4 can be elaborated. The functions found in the city policy documents have been added to Tables 4.1 to 4.4. It is important to note that only new functions (and tasks) have been mentioned in the column for the city documents. When a cell is empty, it cannot be understood that the city documents do not contain remarks on this function (or task). Only when new functions or differently phrased functions have been found in the city documents are they mentioned in this column. The most important changes are discussed in the following sections.

### 4.2.1. Intrinsic Functions from the Perspective of the Audience

The intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience that have been found in the policy documents are listed in Tables 4.1 to 4.3. These are all functions that are linked to the intrinsic cultural or artistic nature of the performing arts, possibly with the exception of the entertainment function and cultural education.

#### *Personal experience*

A first set of functions centres on personal experience. The effect of participating in aesthetic activities for spectators seems primarily to be of an emotional nature. In Table 4.1, all the functions are related to the specific feelings or arousal that attending the performing arts may give rise to.

The emotional aspect has been elaborated to the greatest extent in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000). The experience of beauty, of something unique, of surprise and bewilderment, has been associated with aesthetic experience. The question can be raised as to whether or not this is specific to art, and what further effects such an experience may have upon individual spectators, other than the pleasure it causes. The city documents add the notion of experiencing an aesthetic form. It is an important notion that the experience of beauty seems to limit aesthetic experience to beautiful forms in an artwork. However, specific artworks may also be extremely ugly but nevertheless arouse a feeling within the spectator. Experiencing an aesthetic form therefore seems a more 'neutral' description of the notion found in the national policy documents.

Entertainment is also a function related to personal experience. In *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) and *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), the term 'entertainment' seems to be used in the meaning of 'relaxation' and is opposed to the artistic functioning of the performing arts. *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) refers to a form of intellectual stimulation which, in turn, may have a relaxing effect. In the policy document of Rotterdam (1993), entertainment is contrasted with 'offering a stronghold in difficult times' (Rotterdam, 1993, p. 16). It seems that the term 'entertainment' is used in various senses. The nature of entertainment as a function of culture

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therefore seems to occur in the 'later' stages of the development of the cultural policy of cities, because there seems to be little attention for the reception side of cultural policy in the initial stages.

and art warrants further investigation to establish whether or not it can be considered an intrinsic or an extrinsic function.

Imagination and fantasy are concepts within the personal experience function. *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) introduces the term ‘the power of imagination’, which seems to be a function on an emotional level for ‘it lifts one above the limitations of daily life’ (p. 4). *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) mentions the concept of fantasy (p. 49), and the policy documents of Utrecht and Groningen mention ‘inspiration’ (see Utrecht, 2005, p. 3, and

Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)	City documents *
Emotional experience	Personal experience		Being addressed at emotional level Being surprised Experiencing something unique Experiencing beauty Being bewildered by an experience Being impressed		Experiencing an aesthetic form
Entertainment, relaxation	Diversion	‘Intellectual’ entertainment	Amusement		
Imagination / fantasy		Elevating one above the limitations of daily life through imagination (specifically for the arts)	Stimulating fantasy		Inspiration Stimulating creative thinking

**Table 4.1 Categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society: intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Personal Experience**

\* In this column, the functions and tasks have only been mentioned when the city documents extend the meaning of the functions in the national policy documents, or when they are a new function or task. Empty cells in this column do not indicate that the city policy documents contain no remarks on the specific function. An empty cell only indicates that the city documents mention the same function as the national policy documents.



Groningen, 2000a, p.25). Furthermore, the documents also mention the stimulation of creative thinking (Rotterdam, 2000, p. 3). It is not clear how fantasy and inspiration exactly relate to the power of imagination. Therefore, the specific nature of the aesthetic experience should be investigated in order to indicate which functions exist for spectators and the way in which they are linked to the specific cultural or artistic nature of the performing arts. This should result in a more precise definition of art as well as of entertainment.

#### *Personal development*

A second set of functions can be regarded as personal development (Table 4.2). These functions centre on personal growth through exploration, reflection, curiosity, and learning alternatives visions on reality (in one's own or outside one's own culture). Personal development seems to be mental development of the spectator. The policy documents do not make it clear how personal development through the arts relates to personal experience. A simple reasoning could be that, in the case of culture and art, mental development is achieved through experiencing emotions, whereas in science, mental development is achieved through a rational process. But this would disregard the fact that developing new insights can also give rise to pleasure, i.e., can have an effect on emotional level. This would turn the argument around. Theories on the specific artistic nature of the aesthetic experience could shed light on this subject.

From the policy documents it can be deduced that mental development has at least three specific aspects. First, a form of intellectual pleasure can be involved by stimulation of the mind. This is most markedly present in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (Ministerie OCW, 1995, see p. 4 for example). Mental development is a very important issue in the other national documents too. In *Meer dan de Som* (Ministerie OCW, 2003), mental development through artistic activities is viewed as a means to further participation in society (p. 16).<sup>7</sup> The city documents add the notion of stimulating the ability to think creatively (Rotterdam, 2000, p. 3).

Second, a function of cultural activities is to offer acquaintance with alternative visions of reality. This notion is present in all of the national documents. Culture and art can alter the way people look at things and bring perceived certainties up for discussion. Through learning or experiencing the worldview of others, one can broaden one's own mental scope. The city policy documents add the notion of developing the ability to make independent choices (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1993, p. 16, and Groningen, 2000a, p. 9, and 2005, p. 22). The concept of 'positive freedom' as introduced by Blokland (1990) is the topic of attention.

Third, a very specific function has been mentioned in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995), which can best be described as rendering significance or meaning to impressions and events in life. This function seems to relate to the functions mentioned under 'identity', for rendering meaning lends identity on a personal level. This personal identity, of course, plays a part in interaction with others.

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<sup>7</sup> This – overtly instrumental use of cultural policy – suggests that the extrinsic functioning of culture and art in the social domain (see section 4.2.3, Table 4.5) is dependent on the intrinsic functions described here.

Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)	City documents*
Historical and ethnic identity	Relating oneself to history	Relating oneself to history			Relating oneself to one's ethnic group
Social interaction/ establishing social structures	Shared experiences Bringing people together Relating oneself to others Sharing ideas and perceptions Representation of (dominant or subgroup) norms and values	Strengthening social structures Dividing people into groups A strong sense of one's own culture is important for a tolerant attitude towards others Shared cultural starting points allow us to recognize extra-ordinary achievements of others		Bringing people together Elasticity of society Knowledge of one's own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others	Developing a sense of community Developing self-esteem Representation of the identity of minority groups (emancipation)
Debate, clash of ideas	Testing one's ideas and perceptions against those of others	A means to determine what is of value / recognizing quality Recognizing special circumstances Recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures Being aware of one's own character	Stimulating debate about ideas and perceptions (specifically for the arts) Being a factor in the societal, cultural or intellectual debate	Elasticity of society Knowledge of one's own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others	Offering scope to experience differences

**Table 4.3 Categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society: intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Identity and Social Interaction**

\* In this column, the functions and tasks have only been mentioned when the city documents extend the meaning of the functions in the national policy documents, or when they are a new function or task. Empty cells in this column do not indicate that the city policy documents contain no remarks on the specific function. An empty cell only indicates that the city documents mention the same function as the national policy documents.

Cultural education was mentioned in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000). This seems to be out of place here because it is an activity of cultural institutions themselves, whereas all the other functions have been expressed as (mental) activities of audience members. But cultural education does not fit anywhere else in the tables. It can be regarded as a task within the artworld itself, but it is the only task encountered that focuses on the personal development of the audiences rather than of the artists. Therefore cultural education has been placed here. The question remains as to how personal development occurs through aesthetic activities and how this type of learning and this type of knowledge differs from other scientific or 'logical' learning and knowledge. This is the topic of Chapter 6.

#### *Identity and social interaction*

A third set of functions deals with identity and social interaction (Table 4.3). Whereas the previous functions (personal experience and personal development) are functions on the level of individual audience members, the concept of identity refers to both individual identity building and the collective level. Identity is an important element for the functioning of (performing) art because – as was shown in Chapter 1 – culture essentially lends identity to groups of people. Three issues stand out in the discussion of the cultural policy documents.

The expression of a specific historic or ethnic identity allowing the audience to relate oneself to a historic or group identity can be regarded as a function of performing arts in urban society.<sup>8</sup> This is a function that has been identified as 'social interaction'. The expression of identities allows the development of social structures and a sense of community, as well as enabling one to relate to others (in different group identities). Developing a sense of community in the city documents is related to the functioning of performing arts in city boroughs. The city documents also add developing self-esteem as a function. This is a rephrasing of 'knowledge of one's own culture as a prerequisite for an open attitude to others' as found in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) and *Meer dan de Som* (2003). Under 'debate', the notion is added that cultural activities are a free space to experience the differences between social groups, which is also a rephrasing of the notions found in the last three national policy documents. Furthermore, the policy documents suggest that existing identities are being challenged, specifically in artistic performances, and thus can evolve.

It is noteworthy that, in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), the concept of identity has been mentioned in its 'confrontational' aspects. The *arts* (not culture) are seen as a means to stimulate debate, as a playground for (safe) confrontations of different identities. This

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<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy that the ethnic identity is an issue that is present in city policy documents and not in national policy documents. This is consistent with the fact that city policy documents devote more attention to the functioning of the arts in city boroughs and social policy aims, such as preventing segregation and social exclusion (see the discussion of extrinsic functions in 4.2.3). Specifically, the social policy issues relate to the intrinsic functions mentioned in Table 4.3. However, for the present research, the difference between group and ethnic identity is minor, because a certain historic identity

perception of art as a form of social debate is also present in other documents. In *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) and *Meer dan de Som* (2003) the confrontational aspects of identity are expressed differently than in the other two national documents. They are expressed from the level of an individual (determining what is of value, recognizing special circumstances, recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures, being aware of one's own character, knowledge of one's own culture). However, these individual qualities are used in the confrontation with others. Therefore these functions can be regarded as the same as those mentioned in the other two documents. It is therefore questionable whether or not social interaction and debate are separate functions. Both approaches are also present in the city policy documents. The city documents allow the conclusion that the arts are considered to be a free space for the expression of differences (see e.g. Van Meggelen, 1999, p. IVc). In the documents of Maastricht and Groningen, cultural policy has been related to the emancipation of women (Maastricht, see section 3.3.5) and youngsters (Groningen, see section 3.4.2). Representing the identity of such groups through cultural expression may lead to their emancipation in society. Here, an obvious link between intrinsic functions and social policy issues is suggested. Therefore emancipation should be included under intrinsic functions of culture and art (in Table 4.3) as well as under extrinsic functions (Table 4.5, under social policy issues).

Yet another distinction can be found in Table 4.3. On the one hand, the functions are described in terms of personal development (a means to determine what is of value, recognize the meaning and value of other cultures); on the other hand, the concept of identity is described on a higher level of aggregation: the elasticity of society, free space for the expression of differences. This suggests that personal development and identity are related functions but their effect can be measured on a different level of aggregation. The concept of personal and group identity has to be described in more detail, however, to be able to pinpoint the level of aggregation where these functions should be measured. This issue will be addressed in Chapters 6 and 9.

Finally it is important to note that the concept of identity in the policy documents is not related to regional (geographically determined) identity, either on the local or national level. It is not a goal of cultural policy to influence a specific regional identity. The cultural policy documents do not express ideas about how cultural institutions should relate to their specific regional environment, through a specific choice in repertoire, aesthetic forms, language or subject matter, for instance. However efforts to influence the city's *image* through the cultural policy are extremely evident in some of the city policy documents (see below).

#### **4.2.2 Intrinsic Functions from the Perspective of the Artists**

Table 4.4 lists the functions and tasks found in the policy documents from the perspective of the performing artists.

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may also be based on ethnic nature as ethnic identities can be derived from language and skin colour but most certainly also from the common historic trajectory of a certain ethnic group.

*Expressing ideas and perceptions*

The first function is expressing ideas and views. This function seems to be the cornerstone of the artistic enterprise from a cultural policy point of view. This function is linked to the functions from the perspective of the spectators. It is the active counterpart of functions such as experiencing alternative visions on reality. Under 'expressing ideas and views', the city documents add the notion of criticizing the city's development. The function of art seems to be twofold in city development. By developing the cultural infrastructure of the city, the city is also developed. But the cultural institutions may be critical of the city's development, which is a specific artistic function (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1993, p. 30, quoted in section 3.1.5). The Groningen document of 2000 adds the notion of authentic forms of expression in relation to youth culture (see Groningen, 2000a, presentation letter). The assumption seems to be that groups in society have their own authentic ways of expressing themselves. Art and culture are means to do so. This function links Table 4.4 to Tables 4.2 and 4.3. Expressing ideas and views seems to be the only concept in Table 4.4 that refers to the relationship between the artworld and society and therefore will be regarded as a function in this research. This function is intrinsic because it is linked to the artistic nature of cultural activities.

*Artistic development*

Artistic development as a function involves finding new metaphors to express ideas and views. This is specifically related to artistic activities. *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) suggests that some cultural institutions should gear themselves to experiment with cultural forms. Others should aim at dispersing these new metaphors. In the terminology of the present research, this is a task within the system of production, distribution and reception of the performing arts. The question as to whether individual institutions can limit themselves to either the development or the dispersion of new metaphors as a strategy will not be elaborated upon here. For the present research, it is more important that, in the other national policy documents, the view seems to be that developing new ways of expression is a function of art in society itself, for it enables people to communicate with each other in new ways and to express new circumstances. In this view, the development of new ways of expression is also a function in the terms of the present research and is linked closely to the previous function, expressing ideas and views. Because new ways of expression can be (or some would argue should be) developed from older forms, the research of authentic performance practices is listed here. The city cultural policy documents add that performing new repertoire (texts or musical scores) is important as well (see e.g. Maastricht, 2001, p. 37).

*Tasks*

Producing for specific audiences, producing with amateurs, and the development of young artists are specific tasks mentioned in the policy documents (see e.g. Groningen, 2005). International activities can be listed here as well, because this can be regarded as producing for a specific audience, namely, the international market. It seems obvious that from the perspective of the national government the international productions are relevant. However, in some of the cities, the international dimension is relevant as well. For instance, Rotterdam

	Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)	City documents*
Functions	Expressing ideas and views	Express ideas and views authentically	Formulating critique of society (art specifically)			Criticizing city development** Authentic forms of expression
	Artistic development	Developing new forms of expression (fringe activities specifically)	Renewing the cultural system itself (art specifically)	Experiment and research / laboratory		Performing new texts / scores
				Preserving/ researching authentic performance practices		Performing repertoire
Tasks	Producing for specific audiences	Producing for specific audiences, e.g. theatre for toddlers and youth theatre		Reaching new audiences Producing for target groups		
				International activities		
	Producing with amateurs			Co-operation with amateurs		
	Developing /training professional performing artists					Developing young performing artists Advising and coaching

**Table 4.4. Categorization of functions and tasks of the performing arts in society: intrinsic functions and tasks from the perspective of the artists (and cultural industry)**

\* In this column, the functions and tasks have only been mentioned when the city documents extend the meaning of the functions in the national policy documents, or when they are a new function or task. Empty cells in this column do not indicate that the city policy documents contain no remarks on the specific function. An empty cell only indicates that the city documents mention the same function as the national policy documents.

\*\* City development has three aspects: physical (spatial planning), economic and social.

aims specifically at functioning as an artistic city in an international context (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1993, pp. 33-4, and 1994, pp. 4-5). The same goal is present in the documents of Utrecht (2000, p. 23) and Breda (2004a).<sup>9</sup> Because all of the cities describe an aim to reach various groups in society (e.g. Groningen, 2005, p. 14; Utrecht, 2000, p. 13; Rotterdam, 1999, p. 9) it seems that the task of reaching specific groups in society is relevant for this research, even though it cannot be described as a function. However, this is a matter for debate. It seems obvious that reaching specific audiences is relevant when the cultural policy of a city states that this type of task is a specific policy goal. For instance, a city that aims, with theatrical activities, at reaching all toddlers should incorporate this task when evaluating the outcome of the cultural policy. However, it seems likely that this city has other aims in formulating such a policy. One should wonder why that city chooses to reach all toddlers. The answer to this question is that the city expects that the effects of theatrical participation for the toddlers themselves, as described in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, are important for all toddlers. The same holds for producing with amateurs, although it can also be a policy aim to further the quality of amateur productions by co-operation with professional artists. This can also be considered as an aim which lies within the artworld (and therefore is still a task). This argument also holds for producing with young professional artists.

Even though the tasks mentioned in Table 4.4 seem to be related to the 'internal' development of the cultural system first and foremost, and are therefore intrinsic in nature, they can relate to the specific extrinsic functions listed in Table 4.5, such as economic functions (producing specifically for international visitors to the city) or social policy aims (producing for specific groups that are in danger of social exclusion). This means that these tasks are relevant for developing a framework to describe the functioning of performing arts in urban society, although their relevance is of a different order than the functions in this table. Their relevance depends on the stated goals of a city's cultural policy.

Table 4.4 leads to two questions which are of importance for the present research. The first is whether or not the full 'scope' of functions and tasks listed here should be present in the city itself. Do the performing arts function differently in a city where there is a stage specifically geared to productions that can be characterized as 'experimental' than in a city where such a stage does not exist? The second question is whether or not the performing-arts activities in a city should be so diverse as to cater to all different groups of the city's population. In other words: do the performing arts function differently in a city where there are no productions for toddlers at all? Theoretically these questions are very interesting. However, they are only of importance for the present research when a city's policy states that all kinds of performing arts activities should be present in the city and when the aim of the cultural policy is to reach all different groups in the city's society. In other words, these are primarily political questions.

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<sup>9</sup> Breda aims at adding nationally subsidized production facilities to the city as a result of the advent of a station on the high-speed railway linking Amsterdam to Paris and thus connecting Breda to an

#### 4.2.3. Extrinsic Functions

The national policy documents were not particularly precise on the extrinsic functions of culture and art. They mention:

- The added value of production facilities
- Economic functions (attracting visitors, developing a business and creative climate)
- Social policy issues (social inclusion and tolerance)
- Other issues (spatial planning, political issues and image building)

The city documents add city image and spatial planning as extrinsic functions.

##### *Added value of production facilities*

In the national policy documents, the assumption is made that the presence of (large) performing-arts production facilities is of value to a city. However, this value has not been explained clearly in the documents. It can be assumed that the presence of performing-arts production facilities in a city:

- Has a value for the (regional) public in that city
- Has a value for other cultural institutions in that city
- Influences the functioning of plays or concerts in the 'home' town of the theatre company or orchestra
- Frames the productions of 'visiting' companies, bands or orchestras in a different way so that they function differently (see section 2.5.3).

Based upon the discussion of the policy documents of the cities this issue can be considered in more detail. Most notable is the assumption in the city policy documents that professional production facilities lend 'urbanity' to the city. Therefore they are considered to be a completion of a local cultural infrastructure (see e.g. the policy documents of Utrecht, 1999 and 2000; Breda, 2003; and to a lesser extent Zwolle, 2004). A cultural city is a city of producers, where art is produced *in* the city itself. This is not a very precise description of the importance of professional production facilities. The documents contain various remarks that can be regarded as an elaboration of this notion. They can be grouped into five categories:

1. *Effects of cultural institutions amongst one another*: artists influence each other; this can lead to artistic development. When more artists are located in a city, the artistic development can be accelerated. This notion is present in some of the city policy documents (see e.g. Apeldoorn, 2005, p.6). This notion is also present in the national policy documents where cities are regarded as 'breeding grounds' for culture (see *Investeren in Cultuur*, 1992, pp. 41, 52, and *Pantser of Ruggegraat*, 1995, pp. 6-7). The discussion of the changing market circumstances for the cultural sector in the policy document of Maastricht (2001, pp. 12-14) leads to the conclusion that cultural institutions should jointly develop new strategies in order to develop effective

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international network of large European cities. This is a perfect example of the link between city development and cultural policy.



strategies in the present economic climate (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.4.1). This presupposes the existence of both production and distribution facilities in the city.

2. *Attracting young artist and young artists' organizations*: attracting new artists to the city is important for the continuity and dynamics of the cultural infrastructure. This notion is present in the policy documents of Breda (1996), Utrecht (2000) and Zwolle (2005). Breda and Zwolle seem to focus on developing the cultural infrastructure specifically through young artists. This strategy is somewhat problematic, for it presupposes that cultural innovation is linked exclusively to young cultural professionals. However, older and 'accredited' artists and art organizations can also foster artistic development.<sup>10</sup> In the policy documents of Utrecht and Zwolle, the direct employment for the alumni coming from the vocational training facilities in the cities is mentioned as a bonus of the production facilities in the city, see Utrecht (2000, p. 17) and Zwolle (2004, p. 11).
3. *City image and city identity*: production facilities are part of the 'urbanity' of a city and therefore contribute to the identity of a city as a 'city'. The city's image is also influenced. Utrecht and Groningen actively influence their city's image as a production city, while Apeldoorn also has aspirations in this respect. This leads to an important question. The city's image or identity can be linked to the fact that the city is a city of art (or performing-art) producers. But the question must be raised as to whether the identity is a specific local identity linked to the specific history of the city or linked to the artists who work in the city, i.e., a specific artistic profile of the artists or art organizations. The latter seems to be the case, for the city documents presented no evidence of efforts to influence the content of the art produced in the city (apart from Maastricht, see below).
4. *Economic functioning*: the policy documents of Rotterdam and Utrecht mention the influence of art producers on the living climate and working climate in the city, see e.g. Rotterdam (1993, p. 10), Utrecht (1996, p. 1). However, this claim is not specified. It is not clear how production facilities influence the living and working environment, as opposed to reception facilities. In the more recent policy documents of most of the cities in the research, the concept of the creative class is introduced, on the basis of the ideas in Florida's book (2002). The creative class is in part made up specifically of art producers. This type of economic functioning therefore presupposes the existence of production facilities in the city and is linked specifically to the performing arts (see e.g. Marlet and Van Woerkens, 2004, and Van den Berg, 2006). This should be added to Table 4.5, under 'economic functions'.
5. *Strengthening the local amateur artists*: in the policy documents of Zwolle and Breda, the influence of professional artists on amateur artists is specifically mentioned (see Breda, 2004b, p. 5). The assumption is that working with professional artists can stimulate amateurs. This has already been identified as a task (Table 4.4).

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<sup>10</sup> For instance the production houses in the Dutch theatre system, such as the *Grand Theatre* (Groningen), *Lantaren/Venster* (Rotterdam) and *Plaza Futura* (Eindhoven), are a source of artistic innovation even though they have existed for more than 25 years in some cases.

The first two categories are issues that are 'internal' to the cultural infrastructure of the city. They concern the systemic resilience of the cultural sector. Artistic development has already been identified as a function. The development and training of young professional artists can be added as a task to Table 4.4. Developing joint marketing strategies is not a function of the performing arts in society, but rather a task to be performed by cultural institutions and therefore it will be disregarded. It is important to note that the existence of producers in the city is important for the continuity and lifelines of the cultural sector itself and for the effectiveness of the cultural institutions in 'marketing' their products to the general public. When the cultural scene is larger, artistic development can also be larger. This is consistent with the view that artists and cultural institutions thrive specifically in cities. However, it is debatable whether or not the dynamics of a city's cultural infrastructure is relevant as a measure of the evaluation of the city's cultural policy, even though it can be a stated goal in the cultural policy. Such a goal should be considered as a prerequisite for the functioning of the performing arts in society. This topic will be covered in Chapter 11, where the evaluation of the systemic resilience of the cultural sector will be discussed.

The significance of performing-art producers for the city's image and identity (or self-image) are included in Tables 4.3 and 4.5: on the one hand, people derive a sense of identity from the cultural activities they visit (Table 4.3); on the other, the city's image is important in the economic functioning of the city (Table 4.5). The strengthening of amateur artists is included as a task in Table 4.4. Thus the added value of production facilities in a city is not a specific function in the terms of this research. The added value of production facilities can be expressed in the other functions and tasks that have been identified and therefore need not be discussed separately.

#### *Economic functions*

In the state policy documents, the economic functioning of the (performing) arts is not elaborated upon, although the assumption is made that cultural activities have an economic effect in a city or region. The city policy documents contain more details on this subject.

First, the arts play a role in attracting businesses to cities. The assumption is that cities offering a vibrant cultural scene are attractive to businesses. Both the national and city policy documents are vague in describing this type of functioning. The argument is linked to companies that rely mainly on knowledge workers. In the more recent policy documents, the argument is linked to the concept of the creative city as advanced by Florida (2002). In *Meer dan de Som* (2003), the cultural scene of a city is linked to creativity as a source of economic success and to developing entrepreneurial spirit. The concept of the creative class is relevant as well. Research should be carried out on the influence of the performing arts in a city upon the business and creative climate. This subject will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The direct and indirect employment effects represent a second economic legitimization of cultural policy. The direct employment effects occur on the basis of the sheer volume of jobs

in the cultural institutions in a city (see e.g. Arnhem, 1992, p. 22). Some cities also mention the importance of cultural institutions to create jobs for the alumni of the vocational training facilities in the city (see Utrecht, 2000, p. 4, and Zwolle, 2004, p. 4). Direct employment is the only function that can be categorized in cell (B) of Table 1 because this function occurs for the artists themselves. Indirect employment effects occur in two ways.

The cultural institutions acquire materials from businesses around them. Painters need paint and canvas, performing artists require lighting equipment and sound equipment and technicians to operate them, they require costumes, make-up, etc... The policy document of Maastricht contains a detailed description of the indirect employment effects generated by pop musicians (Maastricht, 1988, enclosure II, p. 43).

The expenditure of art visitors in the city generate indirect employment as well. In the policy documents, this function is generally linked to cultural heritage but it should also be studied in relation to the performing arts. The theatre culture in London certainly attracts visitors from abroad. However, touring theatre companies and ensembles are the rule in the Netherlands, which means that many mainstream productions can be viewed in almost all Dutch cities and the theatre public is not obliged to travel to another city. But many productions are not widely spread over the country. The (commercially produced) musicals are limited to a few venues in the country. This is why the city documents articulate a concern for the theatre infrastructure that can facilitate such large-scale productions. International productions also visit a few cities, as do international pop stars. Investments in theatre facilities have been made in most of the cities examined: Rotterdam (New Luxor Theatre), Groningen (Martiniplaza), Maastricht (City Theatre and Theater aan het Vrijthof), Breda (Chassétheater), Zwolle (Spiegeltheater) and Apeldoorn (renovation of Orpheus). In some of the cities, the concert halls also have been or will be renovated. The city documents present examples of performing-arts activities that generate large numbers of visitors to a city, such as the Gergiev festival in Rotterdam, Jazz Marathon, Eurosonic and Noorderslag in Groningen, and Spring Dance, Festival of Ancient Music and Festival aan de Werf in Utrecht.<sup>11</sup> The value of the performing arts in attracting visitors to a city is therefore a relevant topic to study in more detail, although the capacity to do so is linked to the uniqueness of the performing-arts production in question.

#### *City image*

In almost all the city documents, the city image is an important issue. As mentioned above, the city image is linked to the concept of urbanity. A thriving cultural sector is considered to be indispensable for a real city. The cultural policy documents of the cities show little evidence of conscious efforts to influence the content of a city's cultural production. Nevertheless, cities try actively to influence their image with cultural activities. Maastricht and Rotterdam show efforts to 'redirect' a perceived negative image, Maastricht as a conservative image (see Maastricht, 1992, p. 6), Rotterdam as a working city with no leisure facilities (Rotterdam, 1996, pp. 1-2). Groningen aims at projecting an image of a culturally

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, the visitors of the Noorderslag/Eurosonic festival in Groningen generated 1.5 million euros in turnover in hotels, cafes, restaurants and shops in the city (Groningen, 2005, p. 22).

	Common theme	Investeren in Cultuur (1992)	Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995)	Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000)	Meer dan de Som (2003)	City documents*
Economic Functions	Attracting visitors	Tourism	Attracting tourists			Attracting visitors is linked mostly to museums and the visual arts. For the performing arts, it is linked to uniqueness of the performances.
	Business climate	Attracting businesses	Added value for attracting businesses		Climate for attracting businesses, specifically by providing viable living conditions for knowledge workers	Developing a climate for the creative class
	Creative climate				Contribution to the creative and innovative abilities of society Developing entrepreneurial spirit Creativity as a source of income and economic development	
	Direct and indirect employment					Stimulating direct and indirect employment
City image	City image				Image building (National) prestige	Developing a self-image for the city Developing an external image Projecting an 'urban' image

Social Policy	Social cohesion		Scene for shared experience Bringing people together despite their differences			Preventing social exclusion Attracting inhabitants (high education and spending power)
	Tolerance		Encouraging an open living climate to accommodate different ways of cultural expression (tolerance)		Civilization	
	Emancipation					Emancipation of minority groups
Spatial planning	Spatial planning			Spatial planning		Developing a positive living environment Liveliness of the city (specifically during holidays and after office hours) Adding quality to the living environment

**Table 4.5 Categorization of functions and tasks of the performing arts in society: (extrinsic) functions for cities**

\* In this column of all the tables, the functions and tasks have only been mentioned when the city documents extend the meaning of the functions in the national policy documents, or when they are a new function or task. Empty cells in this column do not indicate that the city policy documents contain no remarks on the specific function. An empty cell only indicates that the city documents mention the same function as the national policy documents.

vibrant city with much room for experiment (Groningen, 1991a, pp. 26-7) and in later years actively promotes the city as a city of young artists (Groningen, 2005, p. 24). But also the smaller cities in the research devote attention to the city's image. Breda and Zwolle try to influence their city's image through cultural activities (see, e.g. Breda, 1996, p. 6). This suggests that research into the city's image could be a measure for the effectiveness of a city's cultural policy.

*Social policy issues*

Social policy issues are more prominent in the cultural policy documents of cities than in the national policy documents. The national documents contain the notions of social cohesion and tolerance. The city documents add the prevention of social exclusion and emancipation of minorities as functions. The first is merely the counterpart of social cohesion and therefore not a new function. The second should be added. In the city documents, social policy issues are mainly linked to the living climate in boroughs. The policy documents of Rotterdam also mention attracting inhabitants to the city or to specific areas in the city. It is assumed that high income groups are referred to in this context. As was concluded previously, the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain seems to be linked to the intrinsic functions in Table 4.3. However there is debate about whether or not this is really the case, as has already been mentioned in the Introduction. It is therefore important to research the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain in more detail. The key question is whether or not the intrinsic nature of performing arts is a necessary condition for its functioning in the social domain.

It is of interest that the city's image is not only an external image. The city's image also influences the self-image of the city's inhabitants. In this respect, the city image refers to the identity-building function of the performing arts, as was found in Table 4.3.

*Spatial planning*

The city documents do contain elaborations for the spatial planning function, which was only mentioned briefly in the national policy documents. The influence of art on spatial planning is mainly related to the quality of city planning (see e.g. Arnhem, 2001, p. 13), the quality of architecture (see Groningen, 2005, p. 23) and art objects in the public space. These issues relate to the visual arts and not to the performing arts, and can therefore be disregarded in the present research. The spatial planning issues that do relate to the performing arts concern the living environment (especially of city boroughs) and the liveliness of the city, especially during holidays and after office hours. The performing arts can foster activities in city boroughs and thus improve the quality of life there. But this also holds true for other cultural activities in boroughs, such as painting classes, libraries, etc. The performing arts do not add specifically to the liveliness of a city borough because of the specific characteristics of the performing arts, other than that they may occur outside on the street and they mostly occur after office hours. This last argument is of specific importance with regard to influencing the liveliness of city centres (see e.g. Rotterdam, 2003, p. 7). However, this is a contribution which is not dependent on the intrinsic nature of the performing arts. Because of the clarity of this functioning, it need not be discussed further. The contribution of the performing arts to the liveliness of city boroughs is linked to social policy issues, as presented in the policy document of Rotterdam for instance (2003, p. 3) where the development of cultural activities in city boroughs is directly linked to intrinsic functions of art such as promoting identity, developing the ability of citizens to make independent choices, and promoting mutual understanding between different groups in

society. This suggests that there is a relationship between intrinsic functions, such as personal development and extrinsic social policy issues, but not spatial planning issues. The functioning of the performing arts in the domain of spatial planning therefore need not be discussed separately.

#### *Other issues*

From the list of other issues mentioned in the national policy documents, only the political issues have not been discussed above. Political issues were mentioned in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) but do not occur in any of the city policy documents studied. The issue has therefore been disregarded in the present research.

Table 4.5 lists the extrinsic functions of the performing arts. For some of the functions in this table, it is obvious that they are linked to intrinsic functions, especially the social policy issues which have been related to the intrinsic functions described in Table 4.3. For all of the extrinsic functions, examination should be performed to establish the extent to which they are dependent on the intrinsic functions, as some of the city policy documents suggest this relationship, although the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic functioning seems to be based on artistic quality (see e.g. Groningen, 2005, p. 23). In other words: can the economic and social functioning of the performing arts occur without the intrinsic functioning of the performing arts? This will be researched in Chapters 8 (economic functioning and city image) and 9 (social policy).

#### **4.2.4. Functions of the Performing Arts in Urban Society**

The functions of the performing arts in urban society can be categorized on the basis of the discussion of the national cultural policy documents and those of eight Dutch cities from the period 1992-2005. The extensive elaboration can be found in Tables 4.1 to 4.5. Table 4.6 shows the aggregated results.

The discussion of the city documents leads to three additions to the table as compared to Table 1.1. In cell (A), the tasks found in the policy documents have been added for they are important for the present research as long as they are part of the stated aims of the cultural policy of a city. The cell therefore is divided into functions and tasks. These tasks concern the dynamics of the cultural sector in a city. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 11, where the cultural systemic resilience is a point in policy evaluation. Cell (B) is no longer empty, for several of the city documents mention the direct employment effects of the cultural sector in the city. It is logical that the cities mention this function for the municipal government is responsible for executing the social welfare policies in the Netherlands, they finance unemployment benefit. However, in the cultural policy documents, the direct employment effects are not very prominent as a legitimization for cultural policy. The emphasis is usually on the indirect employment effects. These have been included in cell (F) under 'economic functions'. The third addition is the elaboration of the functions in cell (F). The added value

<b>Functioning from the perspective of</b>	<b>Intrinsic Functioning</b>	<b>Extrinsic Functioning</b>
<b>Artists</b>	Functions: Expressing ideas and perceptions Artistic development (A)	Direct employment (B)
	Tasks: Producing for specific audiences Producing with amateurs Development/training of (young) professional artists (A)	
<b>Audience members individually</b>	Personal Experience Personal Development Identity (C)	Personal Experience (relaxation) (D)
<b>Audience collectively</b>	Identity and Debate (E)	Economic functions City Image Social Policy Issues (F)

**Table 4.6. Categorization of functions of the performing arts in society based on the national and city policy documents**

of ‘production facilities’ has been eliminated for this can be expressed in terms of the other functions in the table. Furthermore the other issues no longer present a relevant category.

Two general issues should be addressed before turning to a more detailed discussion of each cell. The first issue concerns the critical role of the arts in society. At several points in the policy documents, the function of the arts has been described as ‘to criticize developments in society’ (see e.g. Groningen, 2000a, p. 9, and 2005, p. 22) or ‘the development of the city’ (see e.g. Rotterdam, 1993, p. 20). At first glance this critical function of the performing arts does not have a place in the table, which seems incorrect. However, the critical function of the



performing arts in society is actually placed in the Table at two points: in cell 'A' ('expressing ideas and views'; here it is an active function of artists formulating critique on society through their work) and in cell 'C' ('challenging existing beliefs of spectators', which ultimately is what critique is about). The second issue has already been alluded to in the Introduction and during the discussion of the policy documents. All functions of the performing arts in society have been formulated in a positive manner. This of course entails from the fact that the functions in Table 4.6 have been taken from policy documents which aim to influence the cultural sector and functioning of the arts in society in a positive way. However, the more unnerving effects of art can be perceived as not only positive. The table also leaves room for these unnerving aspects: challenging existing ideas and views (mental development) or clashes between groups on society (debate). As has been shown, the Dutch policy documents, and certainly the more recent ones, do recognize this unsettling effect of cultural activities. The more politically incorrect aspects of cultural policy should also be taken into account. Policy aims such as discriminating against specific groups in society can lead to policy measures which oppress their (authentic) expressions, or a cultural policy can be used to enforce a certain worldview (as was the case with socialist-realism). However, in an open Western democratic society such as the Netherlands such issues are not at stake.

### 4.3. Questions for Further Research

In this section, attention is turned to the questions which have risen concerning the functioning of the performing arts in society. These questions will be described for each cell of Table 4.6. For all functions identified, the description should be precise enough to determine the relationship between different functions. This is necessary in order to develop the framework for the functioning of the performing arts in urban society. Moreover, the descriptions should make clear how the function can be measured. This involves determining which variables are relevant, how they can be measured, and at what level of aggregation they should be measured.

#### *Cell A, Expressing ideas and views and artistic development*

This cell centres on the artistic quality of the performing arts. However, the concept of quality is problematic. It should be determined how artistic quality can be defined and measured from the perspective of a city. The most important question in this respect is whether artistic quality is an absolute measurement, i.e., is it a purely professional standard, or whether it is relative, i.e., should it be defined in relation to the public in the city in question? A second question pertains to the concept of authenticity. The arts are viewed as a means to express ideas and perceptions in an authentic manner. Both issues relate to the autonomy of art in society. This is the topic of Chapter 5.

#### *Cell B, Direct employment*

The direct employment effects of culture and art in a city have been mentioned as a function, in relation to job creation for the alumni of vocational training in the arts for instance. Direct employment has also been mentioned in the policy documents, in relation to the concept of

the creative industry (Florida, 2002). It seems obvious that, in economic theory, measurement criteria have been developed for direct employment effects. This will be discussed in Chapter 8.

*Cell C, Personal Experience, Personal Development and Identity*

The functions in this cell have not been described in detail. However, this will be necessary in order to develop measurement criteria for the evaluation of cultural policy. Key questions deal with the way in which personal experience, personal development and identity relate to one another, and what is specifically artistic about aesthetic experiences (in relation to cultural experiences). In other words, when can an experience be described as artistic, and thus the performance that generates the experience be defined as art, and when can the ensuing functioning in urban society be described as art-based? A further question regards the role of imagination and fantasy in aesthetic experience. These have been described as important in artistic and/or cultural experiences, but the description needs to be refined. These questions can only be addressed on the basis of a thorough analysis of the aesthetic experience. This is the subject of Chapter 6.

*Cell D, Personal experience (relaxation)*

The only function in this cell is relaxation. Art and culture can serve as a means to pass time, to unwind, as entertainment. But a form of intellectual entertainment is also mentioned in the policy documents. It is not immediately clear whether this is an extrinsic or intrinsic function of culture and art. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 6 as well.

*Cell E, Identity and Debate*

Identity seems to be the link between the personal level and the collective one. Especially the performing arts can serve as a means to share experiences. These experiences can be a point of reference for a personal identity but may also lead to group identities. Art can therefore be regarded as an expression of identity. Here, there is a link between cells A and E. This link should be described in more detail. This will be done on the basis of the description of aesthetic experience (Chapter 6) and its relation to social policy issues. This is the topic of Chapter 9.

*Cell F, Economic functions, City Image and Social Policy Issues*

This is the most elaborate of all cells because it contains functions in very different areas. These should be researched individually. However, one common question arises for each area: are these extrinsic functions related to intrinsic functions, and if so, how? Chapter 8 deals with the issues of economic functioning and city image. Chapter 9 deals with the social policy issues.

**PART II:**  
INTRINSIC FUNCTIONING OF THE  
PERFORMING ARTS



## 5. Autonomy, Processes of De-autonomization and Functioning of Art in Urban Society

As discussed in the Introduction, the tradition which holds that the value of art in society is solely aesthetic is a strong one in Western philosophy and arts practices. Thus it is no surprise that the notion of art's autonomy strongly reverberates in the policy documents, specifically those of the national government. The notion refers to the freedom of artists to create an artwork in any way they wish. Artists are free to choose the medium, style and subject matter of a work of art. This can be considered as a first level of autonomy. A second level is the notion of the freedom of the *artwork*. The autonomous position holds that artworks should function *as artworks* and not for other ends. This implies that the audience should regard the work as such and follow its aesthetic (perceptually perceivable) properties. In reality, however, artworks are used for other goals. One can visit the arts as a diversion, as an opportunity to meet other people, or one can earn money as a result of artistic activity. A third level is the autonomy of art fields or artworlds, i.e., the institutional relationships between arts producers, distributors and consumers in society. All three levels are relevant for developing methods to evaluate arts policies.

In the policy documents, the freedom of artists to produce whichever works they see fit is uncontested. It is considered a prerequisite for the arts to function in society (see e.g. *Pantser of Ruggegraat*, 1995, p. 5, and *Meer dan de Som*, 2003, p. 1). Therefore this level of autonomy is not problematic for the present research. The level of the autonomy of the artwork will be dealt with in Chapter 6 on the specific nature aesthetic experience, for this level of autonomy clearly refers to the experiences artworks (can) generate. For the present moment, the third level of autonomy is the most important: the autonomy of the artworld, specifically concerning the subsidized arts (see *Investeren in Cultuur*, 1992, pp. 37-8, and *Cultuur als Confrontatie*, 2000, p. 7). A purely autonomous artworld seems to limit art's functioning in society, for it can be considered as only serving aesthetic needs and the needs of the agents in the artworld. This notion sits ill with the description of intrinsic and extrinsic functions in the policy documents, as they assume some functioning outside the artworld for spectators and for society at large.

In this chapter, the autonomy of artworlds is discussed on the basis of two traditions in the philosophy of art, the institutional and functional approach. Both approaches will be introduced in section 5.1. On the basis of this discussion of autonomy (in sections 5.2. and

5.3.), attention will be devoted to two issues which are prominent in the policy documents: cultural diversity and artistic quality (sections 5.4 and 5.5).

### 5.1. Artworks and their Functioning in Society: Institutional and Functional Paradigms

Davies discerns two approaches to the question of the definition of art, a functional and a procedural approach (see Davies, 1991, 2001 and 2006). In the functional approach 'an artwork performs a function or functions (...) distinctive to art'. In the procedural approach 'an artwork necessarily is created in accordance with certain rules and procedures' (Davies, 1991, p. 1). These approaches seem complementary at first glance. One can imagine that artworks are artworks because they perform certain functions and, at the same time, are created in accordance with certain rules.<sup>1</sup> However, Davies argues that these approaches are not complementary in the case of art because the procedures under which art is created are not in concordance with the function of art in society (*ibid.*). This suggests that what is called 'art' in society does not necessarily function as such. In 1991 Davies writes:

Probably most people look to a definition of art in the hope of finding an account of the value and importance of art. The interest and worth of the philosophy of art lies in its facilitating just such an account. (Davies, 1991, p. 46)

However, he later concedes that the defining essence of a concept will not always reveal why and how it is important to us (Davies, 2001, p. 169). This is especially true for the procedural definitions, but that does not make such definitions erroneous. Davies even prefers such definitions because he believes that much modern art is made and regarded by the public in such a manner that it seems to defy art's functioning altogether (Davies, 1991, pp. 38, 41). Only procedural definitions can account for cases such as Duchamp's *Fountain*. His argument seems to be that artists may disagree – certainly over time – on the functions that art performs in society, and comment by means of their work on the functioning of art in society itself (see Davies, 2001, p. 172). Such artists need a procedural approach to art for their products to be recognized as art at all. However, the opposite also can hold true. Artists can criticize and challenge the conventions which govern the procedures for conferring the status of art to objects, as Duchamp in fact did when submitting a urinal for an art exhibition. If one regards the challenge to artistic traditions, practices and conventions to be one of the functions of art, there is no need to conclude that functional definitions and procedural definitions cannot be combined. However, in his introduction to the philosophy of art published in 2006, Davies still opposes functional and institutional definitions of art.<sup>2</sup> He concludes that

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<sup>1</sup> In this and the following chapter, the words 'artwork' and 'work of art' are mostly used in the common language meaning of the term. These terms do not indicate that the work indeed *functions* artistically in society, i.e., that it provides certain functions that can be called 'artistic' (see sections 5.3 and 6.2).

<sup>2</sup> He now calls the functional approach 'aesthetic functionalism' (Davies, 2006, p. 36). As in 1991 and 2001, he also discerns intentional definitions (referring to the artist's intention that a work be perceived or should function as art) and historical definitions (relating a work to prior artworks by means of a coherent narrative, which is the narrative approach supported by Carroll (1999) or the historic development of conventions under which artworks are being created and appreciated).

There is no clear winner here. Among the advocates of definitions, there is perhaps a growing consensus in favour of hybrid formulations. Functional accounts might be needed to accommodate the earliest artworks and the introduction of novel art forms. And it may be necessary to invoke institutions and historical traditions to explain how items qualify as art when they are intended to be non-aesthetic or anti-aesthetic. This much is clear: if it is accepted that small-scale non-Western cultures possess art and their own artworlds, and that art can often be intended more for ritual use, educative enlightenment, and entertainment than for contemplation for its own sake alone, a rich account of art's functions will be needed, along with acknowledgement of art's institutional variety, if an adequate definition is to be found (Davies, 2006, p. 43).

The opposition between both approaches (or paradigms) in Davies's work stems from the fact that he tries to find a definition of art which stipulates sufficient and necessary conditions to be able to denote a certain object as a work of art. He presents the paradigms with the work of Dickie (procedural paradigm) and Beardsley (functional paradigm). Dickie and Beardsley, however, never thought of their approaches as opposing but simply as being about something different: Dickie's as an inquiry into the organization of artistic production, Beardsley's as an inquiry into art's functions (see Van Maanen, 2009, p. 18). Davies himself concedes that a strict definition is not necessary for research into the value of art (Davies, 2006, p. 46). The question as to what art actually is thus shifts to what art actually does and consequently is (Van Maanen, 1998, p. 28). To discuss autonomy, however, the opposition between the institutional and functional paradigm will be maintained, as both shed light on different aspects. Because Davies opposes both approaches most sharply in his 1991 book, this will be the basis for the following discussion.

### **5.1.1. The Procedural Approach: Institutional Theory**

Davies presents the institutional theory of Dickie as the most fully articulated account of the procedural approach, although he deviates from Dickie's theory at several points and gives his own, more sophisticated account of the theory. According to institutional theories

something is a work of art as a result of its being dubbed, baptized, or honoured as a work of art by someone who is authorized thereby to make it an artwork by her position within the institution of the Artworld. (...) The theory entails that things are artworks by virtue of their being placed within the appropriate institutional context, whereas normally we would think that it is because they are art that it is appropriate so to place them. (Davies, 1991, p. 78)

It follows that any institutional theory should describe the structures and roles of the artworld in order to properly examine artworks and their position in society. The authority for 'dubbing' something as art is dependent on the role one has in the artworld. A role should be regarded as a context for the act of 'dubbing', in the same way as a banker can declare someone free of a debt and a baker cannot (*ibid.*, p. 79).

The notion of Artworld was presented by Danto in 1964. His idea was that artworks are surrounded by 'an atmosphere of theory' which the eye cannot descry. To recognize and understand a work of art as such one must be able to locate it within a historical and social context. That context, or atmosphere, is generated by the changing practices and conventions of art, the heritage of works, the intentions of artists, the writings of critics, and so forth. Taken together, these constitute the Artworld. (Davies, 1991, p. 81)

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However, these approaches can be subsumed in both the functional and institutional paradigm (see Davies, 1991, Chapters 7 and 8; 2001, pp. 175-6, and 2006, pp. 39-41).

Thus institutional theory focuses on the conventions and practices of the artworld, as well as the historical tradition in which these conventions and practices stand. It is assumed that the conferral of art status upon an object takes the previous art history into account. Danto did not see the artworld as being 'structured to a degree that might make it to be viewed plausibly as an informal institution' (Davies, 1991, p. 81).<sup>3</sup> In this respect Dickie and Davies differ from Danto, although Danto's shift from the artistically relevant properties of artworks to the social context without which they could not take on and present such properties sets the scene for the institutional theory (Davies, 1991, p. 81).<sup>4</sup>

In Davies' view, Dickie's institutional theory is not entirely convincing as Dickie 'discusses the conferral of art status as if it were a kind of action, like shaving, rather than the exercise of authority vested in socially defined roles' (Davies, 1991, p. 84). Davies points to the limits of the roles that people can have in an informally structured artworld. For instance, amateur artists have a far more limited role within the professional part of the artworld, while Dickie seems to contend that amateurs can be candidates to bestow art status just as authoritatively as professional artists (Davies, 1991, p. 86; see also under (1), (4) and (6) below).<sup>5</sup> Davies argues that the account by Dickie can be modified sufficiently as to present a coherent institutional theory of the artworld which has several features:

- (1) The artworld is an informal institution structured by various roles - artist, impresario, public, performer, curator, critic, amateur, and so on - which are occupied by agents and by the relationships among these roles and some formally structured elements - theatres, art galleries, ministries of the arts, and so forth.
- (2) An artist acquires the authority to confer art status through his or her participation in the activities of the artworld. The act of conferral of art status is not an act of representation in the sense that a member of parliament represents the sovereignty of his or her constituents. It is merely the exercise of a role of which it has become legitimate that the artist play it.
- (3) The conventions by which art status is conferred and the possible membership of the roles in which there is authority to confer art status are not fixed; they change over time.
- (4) In some parts of the artworld (e.g. amateur arts) the conventions allow almost everyone to occupy the role of artist whereas, in other parts, only a limited number of people are authorized to occupy this position.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Davies this is due to the fact that 'Danto always has been interested in the fact that artworks refer to other artworks and the practices of art creation, and in the way this reference generates a history of art such that works that could not have been created as art in the past become creatable as the art of the present slips into the past' (Davies, 1991, p. 81). Here Danto offers a first glimpse of the history of modern art as becoming more and more self-referential and thus developing an autonomous sphere from an institutional point of view.

<sup>4</sup> Davies notes that Danto has always opposed the institutional theory of Dickie. However, Davies is of the opinion that Danto's argument is not successful in undermining the institutional theory. For the present research, this discussion can be left aside (see Davies, 1991, p. 82).

<sup>5</sup> Amateurs probably stay away from the professional part of the artworld because their activities are grounded in different goals than the bestowal of art status.



- (5) It is the affording of the authority that counts, not the artistic skills, although one might be allocated the authority of the role of the artist by displaying sufficient skill.
- (6) Not everyone who confers art status is an artist in the sense of a creator of a work. A gallery owner who presents chimpanzee drawings or random computer drawings as art is an artist (has the authority to confer the status of art). This logically leads to the conclusion that some works of art, such as chimpanzee drawings or random computer graphics, are presented in an artworld to the art public, but there is no responsibility for them in the sense of an artist-creator (Davies, 1991, pp. 87-9).

It is especially the last element of institutional theory that clashes with common sense. In this respect Davies' argument seems feeble. First, the chosen examples of chimpanzee's drawings and random computer graphics are weak. It is questionable whether or not such works have indeed been granted the status of artworks within the artworld in the long run. Therefore the authority of the gallery owner seems contested, at best. Second, institutional theories seem to have little regard for the act of creation. Though institutionalists will be ready to agree that Duchamp's ready-made *Fountain* is a work of art, because it has been accepted as such by the artworld, they do not seem to fully grasp what the moment of artistic creation was. It seems that the creation took place at the moment Duchamp regarded the urinal as an aesthetic object (and a work of art at that) while institutional theorists will regard the moment the object is placed in the gallery as the act of creation.<sup>6</sup> This argument will be elaborated in section 5.2.3, where critique on the institutional theory will be discussed in more detail.

Davies himself also identifies a few problems with institutional theories. The major problem is that institutionalists have to provide proof that the artworld is institutionalized sufficiently 'to generate a structure of roles and authorities that could explain how the status of art is conferred' (Davies, 1991, p. 172; see also 2006, p. 39). Furthermore the artworld should be distinctive enough from other social practices in order to be able to account for the difference between art and other cultural practices (Davies, 1991, p. 173). Institutional theory also has difficulty in accounting for early artworks (because the artworld of antiquity, for instance, still had to be institutionalized), and for isolated artists or artists working outside the artworld, such as embroiderers (Davies, 1991, p. 173). For the present research, these are not fundamental problems. However, a fourth issue that Davies identifies is certainly problematic:

The institutional (...) (theory) make(s) art relative to an artworld, an organized practice that has established a tradition. But if there is the possibility that there are artworlds other than the Western one, and nothing in (institutional theory) has demonstrated otherwise, these theories are incomplete, because they do not explain what makes an artworld an *artworld* (Davies, 2006, p. 41, italics QLvdH).

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<sup>6</sup> See Boorsma, 1998, p. 88. She argues that the essence of this work is not the urinal itself. The point is that the urinal is used to evoke a deeper message with regard to the status of art. In other words, Duchamp was able to confer art status on the urinal because by putting it in an artworld setting he was able to let this ready-made object perform an artistic function, namely questioning the erstwhile conventions of the artworld.

This implies that artworlds can only be understood when their historic development is taken into account. Furthermore it implies that, although institutional theories point to the limits of art's functioning in society – which is extremely relevant for the present research –, these theories can only be generated on the basis of a notion of art *as art* in society, thus implying that there is a specific form of art's functioning in society. The functional approach is more suited to examine this aspect.

### 5.1.2. The Functional Approach

Davies introduces the functional approach with the theories of Beardsley by referring to his 1958 book entitled *Aesthetics, Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. Here Beardsley hesitates to provide a definition of an artwork. In the postscript to the second edition, published in 1981, he discusses some criticism of the first edition, amongst which the omission of such a definition was the most notable feature.

My present inclination is to give an answer to the question 'What is art?' where this is understood to ask what distinguishes artworks from other things. My answer (...) is that an artwork is an arrangement of conditions intended to be capable of affording an experience with marked aesthetic character – that is, an object (...) in the fashioning of which the intention to enable it to satisfy the aesthetic interest played a significant causal part. (Beardsley, 1981 [1958], p. xix)

For Beardsley notes 'the aesthetic value of anything is its capacity to impart – *through the cognition of it* – a marked aesthetic character to the experience' (Beardsley, 1981 [1958], p. lix). The object does not need to succeed in imparting this aesthetic value to be classified as an artwork. When it is created with the intention to do so, this suffices to call it art. It is important to note that the aesthetic value can only be obtained through cognition of the object, which implies that a specific type of attention to the work is needed.<sup>7</sup> Beardsley looks at aesthetic value as a value in its own right and thus hints at the autonomy of art (see section 5.3). Carroll offers a very similar definition of art in his chapter on aesthetic experience (see Carroll, 1999, p. 162). He points to the intention of the artist to afford an aesthetic experience as important to be able to discern art from natural objects, though he adds that this may not be the primary intention or the only intention of an artist in creating a work. In 2006 Davies expanded the functional definition of art by writing that the work should be *intended to be contemplated for its own sake*. Furthermore, the work can afford an aesthetic experience of *significant magnitude* based upon the work's aesthetic features and that the viewer should adopt *an appropriate frame of mind* (see Davies, 2006, p. 36). The additions allow for the concept of quality (an aesthetic experience of a certain magnitude, although Davies does not indicate whether or not he has a certain threshold value in mind) and for an investigation into the nature of the appropriate attitude of the spectator (see Chapter 6).

Evidently these definitions are circular. Basically they hold that a work of art is a work of art when it is created with the intention to afford an experience which has (an) aesthetic

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<sup>7</sup> Thus Beardsley avoids making the 'definition' of art and aesthetic value relative to the observer and his or her abilities to appreciate a work. Aesthetic value for Beardsley remains a *potentiality* of the artwork.

value(s). To avoid circularity, one should give an account of the values that can be attached to this experience without appealing to the notion of artwork. Beardsley lists five features of an aesthetic experience:

- (a) it is directed towards an object;
- (b) what comes has the air of being freely chosen;
- (c) the object is emotionally distanced;
- (d) there is active discovery of connections, etc.;
- (e) there is a sense of integration between oneself as a person and the object of interest (Beardsley, 1979, cited in Davies, 1991, p. 53; see also Beardsley, 1981 [1958], p. lvi).<sup>8</sup>

The first condition is necessary, the others are not. Any combination of (a) and any of the other features suffices to classify an experience as an aesthetic experience. As will be shown later, (c) and (e) relate this account of aesthetic experience to Kantian aesthetics (see section 5.3.1). It may be questioned whether or not this list suffices to describe aesthetic experiences which is the topic of Chapter 6 of this book. The value that can be attached to aesthetic experience derives from its giving rise to valuable effects (Davies, 1991, p. 54). Beardsley derived seven effects of art on consumers from the work of Shelley, Richards and Dewey (Beardsley, 1981 [1958], pp. 574-6):

- (a) relieving tension and quieting disturbing impulses;
- (b) resolving lesser conflicts within the self and helping to create an integration, or harmony;
- (c) refining perception and discrimination;
- (d) developing the imagination and along with it the ability to put oneself in the place of others;
- (e) serving as an aid to mental health, but more as a preventive measure than as a cure;
- (f) fostering mutual sympathy and understanding;
- (g) offering an ideal for human life.

From his phrasing it may be concluded that Beardsley does not argue that this is a complete list.<sup>9</sup> It is easy to see the links between this list of valuable effects and the functions which have been mentioned in the policy documents (Chapters 2 and 3). So, for the present research, the fact that the definition offered by Beardsley seems circular and the circularity can only be absolved by an – admittedly – incomplete list of valuable effects is not a problem. It is precisely such a list of functions that is the object of the present research.

The functional approach is not without problems. For instance there are ‘hard cases’ of artworks which a functional definition can not effectively account for, such as conceptual art. Beardsley’s insistence on the aesthetically relevant properties of a work of art bars such works as Duchamp’s *Fountain* and minimal music from the realm of art (Davies, 1991, p. 56) as well as all other artworks that lack or reject aesthetic properties that can be perceived

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<sup>8</sup> By referring to ‘object’ it might seem that the theories discussed here apply to the visual arts. However, a performance can also be considered as an object as well, and the theories apply to all forms of artworks.

<sup>9</sup> Beardsley writes: ‘Thus we *might* say aesthetic experience ...’ (Beardsley, 1981 [1958], p. 574, italics QLvdH).

sensuously (Davies, 2006, p. 37). However, if one assumes a calmer stance towards the properties of a work, a functional paradigm should be able to account for these cases.<sup>10</sup> This means that the fact that the object affords experiences which are of aesthetic nature and value, and the fact that the object has been created with the intention to afford such experiences, constitute the most important traits of a functional paradigm.<sup>11</sup> This leads to the problem of who is doing the intending. It seems obvious that the artist-creator of a work is a candidate. The artist can have two types of intentions. First, that his or her work be perceived as an artwork and he or she thus presents it in a setting that induces such a regard, in a museum, art gallery, theatre or concert hall, for example.<sup>12</sup> Second, with the work, he or she can have an intention to express certain views or a belief. A third intention can be the case of the gallery owner presenting ordinary objects in order for them to be regarded as artworks, such as chimpanzee drawings. In the performing arts, this scenario occurs when old texts or musical scores which have never been regarded as artworks, nor were intended to function as such by their author, are presented as art, or more importantly, when certain works are excluded from the stage because there is no expectation that they will function artistically. A fourth intention is more important, namely the intention of the work itself. This intention is embedded in the formal arrangement of the work and presents itself as a necessary way of interpretation. It need not be the same thing as the artist-creator's intention with the work. Bourdieu argues that the objective meaning of a work of art (indeed of any cultural object) depends on the sign systems current in the culture in which the work stands, and may have nothing to do with the author's intention. It is the codes within the culture that ultimately determine a work's meaning (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 216). Shusterman points to the fact that in perceiving a work one tries to make sense of it rather than to describe 'an objectified meaning already carefully buried in the text by its author' (Shusterman, 1992, p. 92), inferring that there may be a difference between the two. With Bourdieu he seems to agree that the meaning depends on the culture within which the work stands, but he rather means the culture in which it is interpreted and not the culture from which the work originates. Thus he allows for the meaning of a work to be flexible and change over time (*ibid.*, p. 100).<sup>13</sup> When taking into account these differences in intentions that may be at stake in the

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<sup>10</sup> For instance, the negation of aesthetic properties itself can only be perceived sensuously.

<sup>11</sup> In his postscript to the second edition Beardsley himself writes that his 'definition' does not imply that the intended aesthetic values indeed are realised, nor that other objects which are not artworks (e.g. natural and technological objects) can not also afford experience with marked aesthetic character (Beardsley, 1981 [1958], p. xix).

<sup>12</sup> Here an obvious connection between the institutional and functional paradigms becomes apparent. This has been fully elaborated by Bourdieu (see section 5.2.1) who argues that the proper way to regard artworks is institutionalized in the historical development of artworlds.

<sup>13</sup> According to Shusterman there can also be something such as the intention of the audience. He describes popular misreadings of works (Shusterman, 2000, p. 51). This occurs when certain groups within mass audiences attach their own meaning to a work which in fact can be contrary to the 'original' meaning, such as Marxist fan's of *Dallas* and gay fans of *Dynasty*. This implies that the audience is actually more creative in interpreting the work than the creators, and regard the work with a specific interest. It appears that such instances depend on the dissemination of an artwork through reproducible media in order to reach a large enough audience of a specific nature. This is rarely the case in the performing arts with its much smaller audiences.

production and presentation of art, the functional paradigm is suitable to study art's functioning in society.

Davies indicates a few more problems with functional theories.

First, a functionalist may argue that many works which are created and presented as artworks are not really art because they do not afford the appropriate experience (Davies, 1991, p. 51, and 2006, p. 37). From a policy point of view, this need not be a problem. One can surmise that many works that are presented as art (within an artworld setting) indeed are not art, they simply fall short of the expectation of them functioning properly as art. However, this can only be established after the creation of the work and its reception by an audience. Therefore the subsidies can be viewed strictly as not enabling the production of art but enabling the production of objects that have the ability to afford aesthetic experiences with artistic nature, although they may not do so. This is exactly why measurement criteria of the effects of art policy that only include numbers of performances and attendance at these performances are crude instruments for measuring the effects of policy. Because it is Davies's goal to provide a definition of art, he upholds a very strict view of functionalism which is not ready to allow a work to be called 'art' if it does not function as such, and which does not allow for bad art. However, in his later writings, he seems to have adopted a more easy-going stance in allowing for bad art or damaged art. However, he still holds that functional theories do not fully account for such cases (Davies, 2006, p. 37).<sup>14</sup>

Second, in Davies' view, it is difficult to find a single function that is potentially served by all artworks. One can question whether this is necessary. As Beardsley pointed out, a work needs not perform all possible artistic functions for it to be considered art. For the purpose of introducing a thorough definition of art, such as is Davies's aim, this entails offering a *complete and exhaustive* list of artistic functions. For the purpose of the present research this is less crucial. The list should be based upon the functions which have been mentioned in policy documents, because those functions should be considered in policy evaluation. Artistic functions that have not been mentioned in the policy documents apparently are not a goal of the policy and need not be evaluated.

Third, Davies writes: 'Functionalism does not readily encompass works that are plainly expected to perform social, ritual or didactic functions, as against aesthetic ones, as is so for much non-Western and popular art.' (Davies, 2001, p. 172. see also 2006, p. 42) For the present research this poses a major problem. On the one hand, this relates to the issue of applying Western conceptions of (the functions of) art to non-Western art forms, which will be discussed in section 5.4. On the other hand, this implies that a strict use of the functional paradigm excludes societal functioning from artistic functioning. It is one of the aims of the

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<sup>14</sup> His argument is unconvincing because he claims that there is a residue of artworks which were created just as the author intended and who meet a willing audience who experience it in the proper manner, but still there is no aesthetic functioning. The works are simply not interesting aesthetically or do not provide a function which can be considered as art-defining (Davies, 2006, p. 38). However, there is no reason to suppose that a functionalist will refer to such works as 'art'. By a functionalist account they are not. Davies's main difficulty with functional theories seems to be that he does not want to allow that works are presented within the artworld which turn out not to be 'art' after all.

present research to investigate the relationship between intrinsic (or artistic) functioning and extrinsic (or societal) functioning. A strict functional approach that only includes aesthetic functioning seems to imply that such a relationship does not exist.

Based upon the functional approach it is possible to reassess the definitions given in the first chapter. 'Functioning' can now be described as the occurrence of valuable effects from the aesthetic experience. It should be noted that this new definition adds a step to the process of functioning: an aesthetic experience gives rise to valuable effects, or *values*, for the spectator. Such a value can subsequently be instrumental to some further goal, or *function*, for either the individual spectator or society. Once such functions are linked to the *artistic* nature of the experience, the values and the resulting functions can be regarded as artistic. It seems logical to regard them as intrinsic. At first glance, the valuable effects mentioned by Beardsley all seem to correspond with what have been classified as intrinsic functions in Part I, except for serving as an aid to mental health (e) which is not mentioned in the policy documents at all.<sup>15</sup> Functions (a) through (d) can be considered as values for the individual spectator and (e), (f), and (g) as functions for the individual spectator or for society. Some of the values are instrumental to some of the functions, such as relieving tension and quieting disturbing impulses for instance, and may be considered conducive to mental health.

Functional theories use the word 'aesthetic' when they speak of the aesthetic character (or nature) of the experience. It is not clear whether 'aesthetic' and 'artistic nature' can be considered to be the same thing. This problem will be dealt with in Chapter 6. It is obvious that the classification used until now in the present research should be refined in order to differentiate between the values, functions and their mutual connections. There appear to be three different layers:

- The values of aesthetic experience for the person seeking such an experience.
- The functions that these values can give rise to for a person.
- The functions that these values can give rise to in society.

In Chapter 6, this refinement of terminology is based upon a thorough description of the aesthetic experience. The issue of art's autonomy now will be discussed using both the institutional and functional paradigms (sections 5.2 and 5.3).

## 5.2. Autonomy and Processes of De-autonomization in the Institutional Paradigm

### 5.2.1. Bourdieu's Field Theory

Bourdieu is one of the most influential theorists on cultural policy from the previous century. He developed what has been called 'field theory' in recognition of the fact that both the analysis of works of art as objects in themselves and of the social circumstances under which art objects are created do not paint the whole picture. In his view, works should be studied on at least three levels: (1) the work itself and the relation of the work to other works,

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<sup>15</sup> One can interpret offering an ideal for human life (g) as a form of formulating critique on society, which has been mentioned in the policy documents.

including the strategies and trajectories of the makers of the work, (2) the artworld (Bourdieu uses the term 'field'), and (3) the broader surroundings of the artworld (especially the power relations). As Johnson writes in an introduction to a collection of some of Bourdieu's essays, this amounts to 'radical contextualisation, (...) the full explanation of artistic works (...) is to be found in the history and structure of the field itself, with its multiple components, and in the relationship between that field and the field of power' (Johnson, 1993, p. 9). According to Bourdieu, the meaning of a work or genre changes with changes in the structure of the field (Bourdieu, 1993a, pp. 30-1). Historians of art need to reconstruct the social history of art, which means reconstructing the space of possible position-takings. However, these were self-evident facts of the situations in which works of art were created, and thus they may remain unrecorded in contemporary accounts, chronicles or memoirs. This is a major problem for the analysis of art (*ibid.*, p. 35).

Bourdieu is fundamentally institutional in his analysis and, at the same time, pays due attention to the historical development of the belief that something is or can be art. Art theory therefore should not be limited to either an internal analysis of the work or an analysis of the social circumstances in which its creator created it, but also of the social circumstances which designate that the work be regarded as a work of art (including the opinions of those who think the work in question should not be regarded as a work of art). In Bourdieu's view 'disinterestedness' or the pure gaze (which will be discussed below in the section on functionalism) also is a product of social circumstances 'linked to the institution of the work of art as an object of contemplation' (*ibid.*, p. 36). In short, not only the work but also how it should be properly regarded as a work of art is a result of historical cultural development. The meaning of a work of art can never be fully researched without being aware of this.

Given that works of art exist as symbolic objects only if they are known and recognised, that is, socially instituted as works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and recognising them as such, the sociology of art and literature has to take as its object not only the material production but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e., the production of the value of the work, or which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work. (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 37)

This means not only researching the work and its direct producers but also the contribution of the critics, publishers, educators, etc., 'the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing the work of art as such, in particular teachers (but also families, etc.)' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 37). This implies that the influence of government agencies and advisory boards is an important aspect of the functioning of the artworld. For Bourdieu the concept of *art for art's sake* is a historical fabrication of the Western artworld (Bourdieu, 1993c, p. 256; see below). In this regard his field theory is not purely institutional but allows for functional tendencies. Specifically he accounts for the dominant views on the function of art in society, which can make up the doxa that hold the field together. However, field theory focuses on the power struggles between dominant and subordinate fractions and does not study the differences of opinion between such fractions on what proper art is and should do. For the present research it is important to note that Bourdieu points to the fact

that the views on the ('proper') functioning of art are in fact culturally 'indoctrinated' in audiences (and policy makers alike) as well as the views on the conditions under which these functions can be realized. Furthermore, his field theory leaves open the possibility that works may be produced that have the capacity to perform these functions, but they are not recognized as such as a result of the current power relations within (and around) the field. In Bourdieu's own words:

(...) it is a question of understanding works of art as *manifestations* of the field as a whole, in which all the powers of the field and all the determinisms inherent in its structure and functioning are concentrated. (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 37)

The advent of new works or genres changes the meaning of existing works or types of works. For example, dominant works and genres are pushed into the position of classical works (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 32). This is difficult for the field of the performing arts because these works only exist for the duration of their performance. Every performance (even of a classical play or symphony) is a *contemporary* work of art where the artists have chosen to perform this particular piece at this moment in time, with this specific interpretation or mode of execution. However, some works (dramatic texts, scores and their interpretations) become conventions which can be considered as 'outmoded' or 'classical' by performers, critics and audiences, whereas they had previously held a dominant position in the field. It can be assumed that different views on the (desirable) effects of the works are conducive to these power struggles between the types of works in the field. Thus it seems useful to understand the field theory as a methodology for social scientists to analyse an art object and the position it occupies in a field and why it takes up such a position, which also applies to the field of theatre.

For the present research the external influences on the field are of specific interest.

The field, as a field of possible forces, presents itself to each agent as a *space of possibles* [i.e., of possible positions, QLvdH] which is defined in the relationship between the structure of average chances of access to the different positions (...) and the dispositions of each agent, the subjective basis of the perception and appreciation of the objective chances. In other words, the objective probabilities (of economic or symbolic profit, for example) inscribed in the field at a given moment only become operative and active through 'vocations', 'aspirations' and 'expectations'; i.e., so far as they are perceived and appreciated through the schemes of perception and appreciation which constitute a *habitus*. (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 64)

The actions of actors or agents in the field may be explained by their inherent dispositions (*habitus*), which are achieved through education but also through earlier participation in the field, and their perception of the possibilities in the field to gain economic or symbolic profit. These possibilities are dependent on the state of the struggle for economic and symbolic power in the field. The autonomy of a field can be defined as the degree to which the specific capital at stake in the field is divided among the agents according to the laws of the field itself. In the field of cultural production, artistic prestige is the capital which is at stake.<sup>16</sup> The degree of autonomy is reflected in the degree of specific consecration or artistic prestige



independent of other forces, i.e., 'the extent to which [the field] manages to impose its own norms and sanctions on the whole set of producers' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 40). These other forces result from the fields within which the field of cultural production is contained: the field of power (which abides by economic laws) and the field of class relations (which is characterized by struggles between dominant and subordinate classes). In a perfectly autonomous field of cultural production, the inherent struggles in the field are dominated by artistic criteria alone. Bourdieu refers to this as the sub-field of restricted production where the only audience aimed at is the audience which consists of other producers (*ibid.*, p. 39).<sup>17</sup> Analysis of art should include the struggles between the more autonomous and more heteronomous agents in the field. Blindly following the definition of art which seems dominant in the field disregards the fact that this type of definition is only applied as a weapon in the struggle, mostly by agents in the sub-field of restricted production.<sup>18</sup>

The evolution of different fields of cultural production often is accompanied by the fact that art becomes increasingly self-referential. Bourdieu speaks of a 'reflective and critical return of the producers upon their own production' (Bourdieu, 1993c, p. 264). From the perspective of the already consecrated artists, this is a profitable strategy (in the sense of gaining symbolic profit) for they have arrived in a position to impose their own style (over subject matter) as the thing that matters in determining the artistic value of works (*ibid.*, p. 265). On the consumer side, this leads to a necessity to be able to classify works of art correctly within cumulative art history, in order to determine their artistic value. This reduces art reception to a classification in the history of forms, and foregoes the sociological reasons why these different forms came into being and attained value (*ibid.*, p. 266).<sup>19</sup> In other words, this limits the functioning of art in society, namely, to those who are able to classify artworks properly.

One last important aspect of the field theory is the question as to how different positions in the field become apparent. Because the consecration is done by (already consecrated) artists

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<sup>16</sup> Note that in Bourdieu's work the term 'field of cultural production' refers to the field of art specifically but on many occasions is used in a broader sense, also encompassing science and journalism for instance. The present discussion refers to the artworld specifically.

<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu gives the example of Symbolist poets who apparently only wrote for the benefit of their peer poets. In the actual field of restricted production, other agents, such as members of advisory boards, critics and theatre programmers, can function as the targeted audiences of connoisseurs. It is easy to imagine that the more diverse the 'in-crowd' for whom the production is made, the greater the chance that economic and class-related forces are at play in the field.

<sup>18</sup> This hints at a conclusion which will be defended in the section on the functional paradigm that aesthetic experiences which are artistic in nature can occur outside the consecrated artworld, but they will not be recognized as such. None the less, the field theory points to a difficulty for the present research based upon an analysis of the functions found in the policy documents. As stated above, these documents have not been formulated independently of the views of agents in the field of cultural production itself. However, the inclusion of extrinsic functions in the policy documents indicates that there is not a simple connection between the artworld and the formulation of policy documents, in Bourdieu's terms: they are influenced by heteronomous forces and not just the result of the definition of art put forward by a single faction in the field.

<sup>19</sup> This may very well be what Davies means when he writes that the procedures under which art is created part company from the point of having art (Davies, 1991, p. 1).

and people in a position to do so within the field, artists' forewords to the work of others and other reviews constitute relevant study material for a social scientist of art. Manifestos in which 'new' artists define their position relative to already consecrated artists or art movements, and the reaction of older artists to such manifestos, are also relevant in the analysis of the state of the field. Moreover, 'the various positions in the field of cultural production can be (...) easily characterized in terms of the audience which corresponds to them. (This) results from the homologies between the positions occupied in the space of production, with the correlative position-takings, and positions in the space of consumption; that is (...) in the field of power (...) or in the field of class relations' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 45).

This may seem a very analytic approach to art, leaving out the idea of the pleasure and the emotions artistic or aesthetic encounters may give rise to. In his preface to *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu devotes more attention to the functional side of the analysis. In his view

The love of art (...) feels founded in its object. It is in order to convince oneself of being right in (or having reasons for) loving that such love so often has recourse to commentary, to that sort of apologetic discourse that the believer addresses to himself or herself and which, as well as its minimal effect of redoubling his or her belief, may also awaken and summon others to that belief. This is why scientific analysis, when it is able to uncover what makes the work of art necessary (...) also furnishes artistic experience, and the pleasure which accompanies it, with its best justification. (Bourdieu, 1996, p. xix)

In other words, research of the specific artistic nature of the experience is needed to legitimize it as such. This clearly is a functional tendency in Bourdieu's theory, although he is critical of the traditional view on the function of art in modern Western societies. The specific economy of the field of cultural production is based on a *belief* in what constitutes a work of art and what its aesthetic and social value may be (Johnson, 1993, p. 9). But that is what it is, a belief, which is historically and socially constructed by all the agents in the field, consumers and producers alike.

Bourdieu is anxious to renounce the idea of pure interest in pure form. He aims to analyse the specific interests which operate in the field, and regards such things as 'pure interest' and 'pure form' as mystifications of the capital that is truly at stake in the field (Bourdieu, 1996, p. xx). This means that the idea of what constitutes a work of art changes over time and from artworld to artworld, and thus Bourdieu is critical of analytical philosophers who try to search for an ahistoric essence of art.

What is forgotten (...) is the fact that although appearing to be a gift of nature, the eye of the twentieth-century art lover is a product of history. (...) the pure gaze, capable of apprehending the work of art as it demands to be apprehended (i.e., in itself and for itself, as form and not as function), is inseparable from the appearance of producers of art motivated by a pure artistic intention, which is itself inseparable from the emergence of an autonomous artistic field capable of formulating and imposing its own ends against external demands. (Bourdieu, 1993c, p. 256)

In short, fields enforce their own specific way of contemplating or valuing their products. Therefore Bourdieu also developed a sociological theory of art's reception, which will be discussed in the section on functional theories.

### 5.2.2. **Autonomization of the Dutch Artworld**

In 1990 Oosterbaan Martinius published a study on how the Dutch national government has dealt with problems of legitimizing the art policy and the allocation of subsidies. The tension between the autonomization of art (which leads to the legitimisation and allocation problems) on the one hand, and the pressure for objectification and accountability of the art policy, on the other, is central to his analysis (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 12). His thesis states that the demand for objectification and accountability in art policy leads to bigger problems than those found in other policy areas (*ibid.*, p. 202). The present research has been prompted by the same concerns. Oosterbaan Martinius's work relies extensively on Bourdieu's field theory. His study can be regarded as an application of field theory to Dutch art practice and, although it does not directly apply to the policy era that has been studied in the present research and although his study focuses on the visual arts, it remains of interest here.

Oosterbaan Martinius defines the autonomization of art as 'the long-term process in which art became increasingly "free". That gave art a turbulent character, especially in the twentieth century, but also simultaneously led to the loss of the bond with large parts of the general public' (*ibid.*, p. 18). In referring to the freedom of the arts, he means that church, state and wealthy contributors no longer define the subject and design of artworks (*ibid.*, p. 18). The arts have become a medium for self-expression of the artists. Autonomization is an aspect of the professionalization of artists as a choice of occupation. This process had already started in the eighteenth century, but led to great turbulence in the twentieth century, specifically with the ever-changing styles and art movements.<sup>20</sup> The autonomization of art relates to the decline of the influence of (royal and papal) courts in Europe and the

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<sup>20</sup> Oosterbaan Martinius refers to the art historian Gombrich (1982) who pinpoints the start of this development in 1789 with the French Revolution. Carroll refers to the advent of Romanticism in Western European culture as a 'seismic shift' from artists aiming to represent the objective features of the world towards exploring their own subjective experiences. He dates the development back to the same year with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth who, in his Introduction, wrote that poetry 'is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' (Carroll, 1999, p. 59). Luhmann dates the development even earlier. He observes that 'We are not missing the mark if we assume that in earlier societies the objects we retrospectively perceive as art and store in museums were produced as supports for other functional circles, rather than in view of a special function of art. (...) In retrospect, we describe the intricate, specifically artistic form combinations of such works as incidental, as ornamental. In any event, the link between functional specification and the differentiation of functional systems constitutes a socio-historical nexus, which long remained protected by familiar contexts. Not until artistic possibilities of this sort reached a high degree of evidence and independence did the specific function of art take hold as an attractor for creating forms that now followed their own dynamic and began to react to their own realization. This apparently happened for the first time in ancient Greece and then again during a period that deserves to be called the "Renaissance".' (Luhmann, 2000, p. 140) This means that objects are not valued on the basis of their user value but rather for their aesthetic appeal; in other words, art becomes autonomous. 'Once art becomes autonomous, the emphasis shifts from hetero-reference to self reference (...). That [art] draws on (...) overall greater degrees of freedom corresponds to the conditions of modernity and signals that a society differentiated along functional lines must do without authority and representation.' (Luhmann, 2000, p. 149) Note that Luhmann does not imply that this is the same as self-isolation, and he thus explicitly leaves leeway for art's functioning in society.

advent of the power of the citizenry. The courts were no longer able to dictate certain styles. This leads to what Oosterbaan Martinius calls 'taste-uncertainty' (*smaakonzekerheid*) and a subsequent need for specialists to determine taste (*ibid.*, p. 22). Artists are faced with the obligation to be original, and personal development becomes an assignment for artists. This leads to ever-changing styles and the co-existence of different art movements, specifically in the twentieth century (*ibid.*, p. 20). Although one could argue about whether personal style and originality had perhaps also been relevant to artists working for royal or papal courts, the argument that the artists developed from a position as mere craftsmen (however much revered in their own time in some cases) to a specific profession which distinguishes itself from traditional artistry and the vernacular is compelling. Blokland describes the same development when he writes that with cultural policies

an assortment of complex, innovative cultural expressions is stimulated and produced, an assortment that increasingly demands prior knowledge in order to understand it and appreciate it. Partly due to this, the gap between the interested fans on the one hand, and the artist and initiated on the other, has thus become greater. This, in turn, has led to it becoming increasingly difficult to penetrate a certain artworld. The assortment thus precludes large-scale participation. This process probably explains the previously observed elite-forming within public that attends theatre and (subsidized) art manifestations. (Blokland, 1995, p. 350).

The autonomization is related to the creation of specific buildings for art.

The autonomization of art has led to separate areas being allocated to artworks, in buildings especially assigned for that purpose. (...) It is the provisional finishing point of a process in which art has received an increasing number of social functions. (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 23)<sup>21</sup>

Here, the fact that Oosterbaan Martinius limits his description to the visual arts inhibits the possibilities to generalize his findings to all art forms. In the visual arts, the tendency to create art which is only suited for presentation in a museum (instead of being bought by private individuals who wish to hang a painting in their living room) is important. However, the performing arts are by their very nature a public art form to be experienced in public buildings (or open air) instead of in private use. A history of public buildings and erecting concert halls and theatres may be less of an expression of the autonomy of art than art museums are.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Oosterbaan Martinius does have a point. Museums, theatre venues and concert halls can have a 'temple-like' quality which, on the one hand, leads to a certain attitude in experiencing the art created in it, and, on the other, selects a certain kind of audience.<sup>23</sup> For instance, plays in schools or music in cafés and restaurants tend to attract a far more mixed audience than formal city theatres and concert halls.

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<sup>21</sup> It is precisely this creation of a 'compartmental conception of fine art (which) remits (the aesthetic) to a separate realm – the museum, theatre and concert-hall' (Shusterman, 2001, p. 100; see also 2000, p. 6) which Shusterman criticizes as robbing art of its functions in society. See section 5.2.3.

<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, one should realize that some museums, especially in a social-democratic or communist tradition, have been erected by members of the privileged class with the aim of stimulating or preserving art's functioning in society. They wished private art collections to have a more public function.

<sup>23</sup> It is illustrating to look at the history of reception conventions in classical music. Smithuijsen (2001) describes the history of reception conventions in the Dutch concert halls where originally the audience

Oosterbaan Martinius stresses that while government policy aims at toning down the effects of autonomization, in doing so it inadvertently strengthens it (*ibid.*, p. 18) by making use of taste specialists in the allocation of subsidies.<sup>24</sup> The fact that the advisory boards which decide over allocation of subsidies consist of members of the artistic profession themselves can be viewed as the final piece of the autonomization process. However, Oosterbaan Martinius demonstrates that the influence of the artists themselves in the *Raad voor de Kunst* declined considerably between 1947 and 1987 in favour of managers and art theorists (see *ibid.*, pp. 126-7).<sup>25</sup> Oosterbaan Martinius considers this an example of the 'incomplete professionalization' of artists in the Netherlands (*ibid.* pp. 129-30). However, if one includes these managers (who have undoubtedly been recruited from the boards of art institutions or are former public officials or politicians responsible for art policy) and art theorists in one's conception of the artworld – because these managers and theorists can be considered as frequent users of art – the argument of the autonomization of art still holds. None the less, the professionalization of artists seems faulted when compared to the legal and medical professions for instance. Oosterbaan Martinius therefore admits that the artists themselves seem to have limited influence in advisory boards on artistic quality, whereas membership of these boards seems to be the most important instrument in securing the field's autonomy. Even though the Dutch national advisory committees which decide on actual subsidy allocation do predominantly consist of artists and critics, these committees are not able to prevent 'self-taught' artists from entering the field of cultural production, a situation which

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was seated at tables and food and drink were served during concerts, a situation which allowed social contact between the audience members. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the seating plans changed in order to enforce concentrated attention to the music. Likewise, many city theatres were built in such a way that the audience was able to see each other just as easily as the performers on stage. Sometimes lodges had curtains which could be closed during the performance by the audience members in order to conduct other business. In more recent theatres, the seating plans are such that every audience member has the best possible view of the stage.

<sup>24</sup> He claims that there is also a *public demand* for ever changing styles in art which can explain the style diversity (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 20). However, his claim is insufficiently supported on the basis of Grampp's notion of the declining marginal benefits of consumption of more of the same product. It can not be expected that two artworks – however much realized in the same style or tradition – are exactly the same. Other authors stress that there are parts of the public that favour experiment and surprise (see e.g. Van Kerkhoven, 2005, p. 109). But it is questionable whether or not the demand from these small portions of the audience can account for the style diversity. The internal drive of artists, which is accelerated by the judgements of peers in advisory boards, is a far more likely explanation.

<sup>25</sup> The *Raad voor de Kunst* (Council for the Arts) was the advisory body for the national art policy from 1947 until 1996 when the *Raad voor de Kunst* was replaced by the *Raad voor Cultuur* (Council for Culture) which advises on the full range of cultural policy (and not the art policy exclusively). The reorganization of the Council was prompted by the conviction that the primacy of politics had been neglected. 'Advisors should have taken more into account the primacy of politics, and were no longer expected to take the lead in policy development' (Pots, 2006, p. 331). One of the most prominent changes was that council members are no longer appointed independently (i.e., by the Council itself). They now are recruited by a departmental committee presided over by the director of the *Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau* (Social and Cultural Planning Agency, an independent organization which supports social, welfare, education and cultural policy by doing research).

has been successfully prevented in other professions due to legal protection of the profession.<sup>26</sup>

A last remark should be made about Oosterbaan Martinius's research. He draws a distinction between ethical and aesthetic norms which govern the art policy. He claims that the aesthetic norms have become increasingly important in art policy, whereas religious and moral values, and more recently, in the 1970s, what he calls 'social' norms once dominated (*ibid.*, pp. 105-6). In doing so, he concurs with the short history of the national cultural policy presented in Chapter 2. Since the 1980s, the art policy has been governed solely by aesthetic norms:

Art policy has been geared towards the quality of art. The art itself has become the focus of the policy *and not the societal effects of the arts* (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 203, italics QLvdH).

In other words, though the professionalization of Dutch artists seems faulted as compared to other professions, they have none the less been successful in securing the place of *art for art's sake* in Dutch cultural policy. However, the inclusion of many policy goals which lie outside the artworld demonstrate that the autonomy is far from complete.

An important issue for the present research concerns whether or not the account of Dutch cultural policy, as rendered by Oosterbaan Martinius, is still valid. On the one hand, this seems to be the case because the major policy instruments and the distribution of responsibilities between the most important actors in cultural policy – public administration, private persons and professionals – have not changed fundamentally. Even more so, with the adoption of the *Wet op het Specifiek Cultuurbeleid* (Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy) in 1993 the existing distribution of responsibilities has been legally affirmed (Pots, 2006, p. 324). On the other hand, Pots concludes that, in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the legitimization of cultural policy has shifted towards education, the development of a sense of community in a multi-cultural society and cultural diversity, which have become prominent since 1990 (*ibid.*, p. 417).<sup>27</sup> These are goals that Oosterbaan Martinius would consider as ethical rather than aesthetic. Thus it seems that the Dutch cultural field has since been de-autonomized rather than that autonomy has been strengthened.

### 5.2.3. Critique of the Institutional Paradigm

The central thesis of institutional theories is that what art is cannot be 'discovered' on the basis of some particular features of artworks. Artefacts come into being through the actions of people, and they attain the status of 'artwork'. This means that not every object is likely to

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<sup>26</sup> Note that the current *Kernraad* (central council) consists of scientists, programmers and former politicians but not art producers themselves, although artists are still present in the subcommittees that decide on individual grant applications. These subcommittees function independently of the *Kernraad*.

<sup>27</sup> These last two legitimizations seem to differ in the sense that developing a sense of community prompts an aesthetic exploration of the common aspects of different ethnic heritages, whereas cultural diversity prompts a concern for the representation of specific ethnic and youth groups in cultural practices.

become an artwork. It also implies that art history is constantly being reinterpreted. The attainment of art status is dependent on the specific art tradition in which the artist operates. The institutional paradigm depends on an artworld in which agents are able to endorse 'their' preferred objects and ways of contemplating them as art. It is questionable whether or not this is still the case in contemporary Western artworlds. Various authors have recently questioned some of the consequences of field theory.

*Consecration of new art forms*

The position of the traditional, 'higher' art forms has been challenged by art forms that were formerly regarded as illegitimate. Pop music is perhaps the best example. This discipline has been professionalized through the establishment of a national institution (the Dutch Pop Music Foundation) which awards an annual prize (*Grote Prijs van Nederland*). This foundation has received structural national funding since 1987 and started up a policy of sustaining local pop-music venues. The further professionalization of pop music proceeded with the advent of courses in pop music at the official conservatories of music in the Netherlands (a national Rock Academy was established in Tilburg in 1999, followed by an academy for pop and pop culture in Leeuwarden in 2003). In the curricula for cultural education at primary and secondary education and in the media, the attention given to pop music has also more than doubled. A similar process can be recognized in the development of crime novels (Janssen, 2005, pp. 6-8). Though this last genre has not secured subsidies, the legitimacy of the subsidized 'high' culture has eroded because the diversification of genres has diminished the consensus on 'the nature and quality of cultural expressions' (Janssen, 2005, p. 8). Janssen thus confirms the mechanisms that Bourdieu describes in the professionalization process that contributes to developing autonomous fields. Wilterdink, in a reaction to Janssen's work, observes that, within the new genres, such as pop music, differences between more complex and simpler forms arise which coincide with specific audiences. The more highly educated public favours complex forms and they are the ones who argue for the recognition of the genres as official art genres (Wilterdink, 2005). Rather than refuting field theory, it seems that these examples show that the same mechanisms for the professionalization of hitherto 'non-classical' genres is now occurring, creating their own fields with their own mechanisms for distinguishing between good and better art.<sup>28</sup> The point is that when multiple fields arise, the legitimacy of the claim to being the 'right' field producing the most valuable artworks is weakened considerably.

*The classification of various publics for different art forms*

One important indicator for the presence of an autonomous field is the division of the general public for specific art forms. In contemporary marketing literature, the impossibility to classify various publics along sociologically relevant categories has been argued, and the cultural omnivores – consumers who freely alternate between different 'scenes' and who build a lifestyle out of elements of both high and low culture – seem omnipresent

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<sup>28</sup> With the development of popular music, it even seems to be the case that popular acclaim is part of the consecration mechanism, as can be witnessed in the success of TV shows such as *Idols*.

(Twaalfhoven, 2005). However, it turns out that differences between cultural consumers along the lines of education still exist. Cultural competence is still an important explanatory factor for differences between audiences of different genres (Janssen, 2005, p. 9 and Wilterdink, 2005, cited above). The cultural omnivores are mostly people with higher education who visit 'popular' and 'high' culture alike. However, specifically the younger generations seem to be less likely to participate in the traditional art forms. The growth in welfare with its subsequent rise in expenditure on leisure activities is conducive to the development of the diversification of cultural production and consumption.

Both points indicate that one should adopt a more sophisticated view of the institutional theories rather than dividing the artworld into high art, usually with state funding, and low culture. Even though new art forms have claimed 'higher' status and the classification of cultural consumers is much vaguer than it used to be, these developments do not discredit the validity of Bourdieu's field theory. It seems that through support from highly educated and (thus) economically powerful consumers, new art forms gain recognition and are able to professionalize. However, the new methods of dissemination generated by IT have enabled greater flux on the side of both the producers and the consumers than Bourdieu's field theory takes into account. Especially the education system, although still related to the social stratification, has become more open to underprivileged groups (Janssen, 2005, p. 15), and therefore has lost its power to affirm patterns of cultural consumption as 'appropriate' (see section 5.3.2). Furthermore, as Shusterman argues, conspicuous consumption nowadays seems to be present in the domain of popular culture more than in the high arts. Ever-changing styles and trends keep mass consumers in a frenzy that leads them to buy more in order to keep up with fashion. Taste specialists are also needed here (Shusterman, 1992, p. 146).

#### *Why art status is conferred*

Regardless of the particular mechanisms that one discerns for the bestowal of art status, and regardless of the degree of openness one might think the artworld shows toward new genres and their public, institutional theory remains open to a crucial criticism. It may be true that certain persons or agents come to be in a position to bestow the status of art upon certain works and withhold this status from others. However, this does not answer the question as to the validity of the premises upon which these persons or agents base their decisions when bestowing this status. It may be true that they base these decisions upon their expectation that these works will have a certain function for their audience, or for specific audiences. Likewise, the tradition of evaluations of artworks in the past may also have been based upon this supposed functioning of the works for their public or publics. Van der Tas argues that, in Dutch cultural sociology, the assumption has been too easily made that people align their aesthetic judgements to 'taste specialists', and thus the complexity of the process of art's creation and reception is underrated. Institutional theory crudely divides the various publics on the basis of the alleged correspondence between social and economic position and cultural preferences, disregarding differences within these various publics and the values



they attach to cultural consumption (Van der Tas, 1993, p. 422).<sup>29</sup> Shusterman also voices such critique. Even with the addition of a historical analysis to the institutional theory, he observes that institutional theory:

... cannot adequately explain the ends for which art practices and institutions were developed, what human goods they are meant to serve, and why non-Western, non-modern cultures also pursue what seems to be artistic practices. (Shusterman, 2000, p. 6)

Shusterman suggests taking these 'human goods' as the starting point of analysis. He suggests that apart from the modernistic temples of culture, the mass media, popular culture and body art and live art are increasingly areas for alternative aesthetic experiences. They are characterized by 'a deep recognition of the value and pleasure of aesthetic experience, our need for beauty and intensified feeling, and the integration of such enriching experience into our everyday living' (Shusterman, 2000, p. 7). It follows from his argument that the level of autonomization of art depends on the exclusiveness of the public for art one has in mind when evaluating, and that the functional paradigm is more suitable than the institutional one for a thorough consideration of the value of aesthetic experience.

#### **5.2.4. The Value of the Institutional Paradigm for the Present Research**

The above strongly suggests that the mechanisms that support the development of autonomous fields in the Dutch artworld have weakened. The democratization of education has allowed greater social mobility. Revolutions in (information) technology have allowed more rapid development of new aesthetic genres and more democratic media for dissemination. Combined with growing welfare, this has cultivated mass audiences with economic power which has led to a diversification of aesthetic genres and tastes. As a result, the claim to being the right type of art and reception circumstances has been considerably weakened. Multiple semi-autonomous fields of cultural production have developed and subsidized art production in the Netherlands has now incorporated many new genres such as pop music. The 'field of the subsidized arts' only provides a relative degree of autonomy as well, most notably because of the inclusion of non-aesthetic goals in Dutch cultural policy and a decline of the position of aesthetic professionals in advisory boards.

However, the fact remains that specifically the subsidized arts reach only a restricted proportion of the population, namely, those that have developed a *habitus* to experience art because they are acquainted with the artistic codes and 'proper' reception practices. Repeated empirical research has shown that public demand for Dutch subsidized performing arts is limited. It is estimated that 14% of the population visits professional theatre (drama). Only 2% are frequent visitors, paying four visits per year or more (Van

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<sup>29</sup> Van der Tas thus argues for research into the values people attach to cultural participation. However, his findings confirm in part the field theory inasmuch as people seem to agree on the values which *should* be attached to cultural consumption regardless of their socio-economic background. This suggests that privileged classes have been able to endorse their values of cultural consumption as the proper values.

den Broek et al., 2009, p. 39). Van Maanen estimates that only four per cent of the Dutch population visits the *subsidized* theatre (Van Maanen, 2008b, p. 132). Visits to ballet and modern dance are made by 5% of the population and 1% is frequent visitor. Classical music and opera are visited by 14%, with 3% as frequent visitors. The total reach of the performing arts has risen from 48% of the population in 1995 to 53% in 2007. The rise is caused by the growing popularity of cabaret and pop music concerts (Van den Broek et al., 2009, p. 40). For the research aiming at the development of an evaluation instrument for cultural policy, this has two consequences. On the one hand, the aesthetic values and functions realized for these restricted audiences are key in developing an evaluation instrument. On the other hand, the question arises as to the value of experience for those who do not attend. This can either be through dissemination of the values from the attendees to non-attendees, by audience members who share their experiences with others for instance, or through effects on collective level, such as city image.

### 5.3. Autonomy and Processes of De-autonomization in the Functional Paradigm

#### 5.3.1. Kantian Aesthetics

The idea of aesthetics working as a distinct type of functioning is founded upon the philosophy of Kant. He distinguishes between 'agreeable art' which is aimed merely at enjoyment and momentary entertainment, and beautiful art (Kant, 2000 [1790], p. 184).

Beautiful art (...) is a kind of representation that is purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication. The universal communicability of a pleasure already includes in its concept that this must not be a pleasure of enjoyment, from mere sensation, but one of reflection; and thus aesthetic art, as beautiful art, is one that has the reflecting power of judgement and not mere sensation as its standard. (Kant, 2000 [1790], p. 185)<sup>30</sup>

In other words, art represents a separate sphere in society based upon how it works: *through the sensation* or the perception of an object, a subject will increase his or her power of judgement. Although beautiful art (or rather art or the aesthetic) should be regarded disinterestedly, it is not without purpose as it is an exercise in the faculties of judgement. Aesthetic experience has a reflective quality as one becomes aware of a self-related experience within the perception, which is not the case for agreeable art (or other mental activities such as education and science). Such an outcome of experience only is possible when adopting an accurate attitude towards the object. Kant refers to this attitude as 'disinterested', referring to a pure gaze without the desire to own the object or to use it for a purpose other than contemplation.<sup>31</sup> In Kant's words:

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<sup>30</sup> Note that Kant's opposition of agreeable art and beautiful or aesthetic art can be regarded as a precursor to the difference between comfortable and challenging aesthetic experiences that was (re)introduced into the Dutch cultural policy debate by Van Stokkom (1995), see section 6.1.2.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that Kant's disinterestedness does not preclude societal functioning of art. It merely stresses that the object should be regarded without ulterior motive (and even this assumption will be complemented in the next chapter). However, Kant still holds that in the end art – when it is contemplated disinterestedly – does communicate wisdom on ethical matters, i.e., it does have a purpose. Belfiore and Bennett demonstrate how a misreading of this particular point in the 18<sup>th</sup>

If the question is whether or not something is beautiful, one does not want to know whether there is anything that is or that could be at stake, for us or for someone else, in the existence of the thing, but rather how we judge it in mere contemplation (intuition or reflection). (Kant, 2000 [1790], p. 90)

Art now can be conceived as a separate sphere in society as the judgement of taste can be distinguished from cognition (Kant, 2000 [1790], p. 89). In *Art and Social Theory*, Harrington (2004) complements Kant's philosophy with Hegel's, arguing that, in the philosophy of art, the aesthetic experience came to be valued in itself, a value which is separate from moral issues and practical value (Kant) and religion and philosophy (Hegel). 'In the nineteenth century, ideas of the autonomy of art judgements soon became linked to the idea of the autonomy of art itself. Art was seen as resting on a self-evident value of its own' (Harrington, 2004, p. 14). As a consequence, artistic production is seen as distinct from craftsmanship, industrial production, materialism and science. Harrington stresses that the thesis of aesthetic autonomy is a normative thesis:

Works of art can be, *and ought to be*, valued 'for their own sake', rather than for the sake of some ulterior interest or purpose, such as for entertainment or for a moral or political purpose or instruction and exhortation. (Harrington, 2004, p. 83, italics QLvdH)

Aesthetic judgements are formed from the 'free play' of the faculty of intellect with the faculty of perception. 'Kant argues that aesthetic judgements neither communicate any information about the physical properties or causes of their object, nor express any judgement about the moral worth or practical utility of their object. They express the pleasure of the spectator on apprehending the object' (Harrington, 2004, p. 85). An important consequence of Kantian aesthetics is the fact that the question 'what is art?' cannot be answered on the basis of certain characteristics of the work of art, but rather by the type of attention that is paid to it and from the values the experience generates for the subject. Aesthetic judgements are typically laid down in the form of a challenge to others. Beauty is not a property of the objects itself, there is no objective concept of beauty. What can be beautiful in one painting (a certain colour blue) can be extremely ugly in another. However,

Kant insists that the fact that there cannot be universally valid aesthetic concepts or principles does not mean there cannot be universally valid aesthetic judgements. Kant argues that aesthetic judgements not only involve an avowal by persons that they like the object in question (...). They also involve a commitment from these persons towards showing how the object could, and should, be an object of pleasure for everyone. Aesthetic judgements involve pointing to particular features in the object and showing, through critical communication, how these particular features contribute to the total aesthetic merit of the object' (Harrington, 2004, p. 86).

For Kant it was possible to agree on an aesthetic experience, indeed he presupposes a universal capacity for common feeling which he calls the '*sensus communis*' of human beings. Based upon this *sensus communis*, Kant argues that, through the proper use of intellectual capacities, humans will arrive at the same aesthetic judgements although they cannot agree

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century led to the autonomist tradition in Western thinking on the relationship between the arts and society. The proponents of the autonomous tradition hold that Kant argued in favour of a total separation between art and morale, thus precluding any other than aesthetic consequences for art (see Belfiore and Bennett, 2008, p. 181). This presents a fundamental weakness to the autonomous tradition.

on taste. For the present discussion on autonomy, it is important to note that his claim for universality in aesthetic judgement may overstate two facts: (1) the willingness of spectators to reflect on their own perception of something beautiful, and (2) the possibility to arrive indeed at the same judgements. None the less, the notion of an intelligent debate on aesthetic judgement based upon distinguishing pleasing elements in the object of contemplation is of value.

Harrington observes that 'Kant was concerned more than anything else with the logical structure of judgements about art and beauty, not with empirical historical circumstances under which objects of art and beauty come to be valued by society' (Harrington, 2004, p. 88). Harrington thus concedes that Kant's account of aesthetic judgement does not paint the whole picture. He opposes the normative thesis of aesthetic autonomy to the empirical sociological research of, most notably, Bourdieu. Harrington admits that factors such as the socio-economic background of spectators and their education influence patterns of consumption of cultural products, and that generally the cultural practices of the more privileged classes have been considered to be of greater value than those of other classes.<sup>32</sup> However, this does not undermine the validity of Kantian aesthetics. The democratic sense may demand that cultural practices by different social strata should be valued equally. Moreover, a parity of value should be acknowledged between different groups of cultural products, e.g., between theatre-going and film. It cannot be argued that the one is more valuable than the other. But this does not 'entail that equality of value should be recognized in individual objects of cultural consumption' (*ibid.*, p. 108).

There are two sides to the study of value in sociology of the arts. There is the side of empirical social facts about differences of habitus in respect of categories of cultural production and consumption, and there is the side of the normative aesthetic validity of individual objects of culture. (Harrington, 2004, p. 109)

In other words, even though differences in consumption habits of different groups in society are omnipresent, this still means that:

1. individual cultural objects can be expected to function in an autonomous way (in the terms of the present research: intrinsically), and that, in comparison, cultural objects within a certain class (such as sentimental film comedy or post-9/11 literature) can be thought of as functioning better others (i.e., having more artistic quality);
2. individual works of art can be contemplated in different ways by different people (disinterestedly, with cultural disposition, or an otherwise functional disposition) and thus generate different aesthetic and/or artistic values for different people, while the one may not be more important than the other;

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<sup>32</sup> However, Harrington's rendition of Bourdieu's theory seems incorrect. For instance, he regards the consumption patterns of individuals as their *habitus*. But the habitus is a person's set of dispositions which can be an explanatory factor for their consumption pattern. At this point it suffices to say that Bourdieu recognizes Kantian disinterestedness in what he calls 'aesthetic disposition', which is something only culturally educated people are able to do. It follows that people who lack aesthetic disposition might have other functional dispositions which lead them to contemplate artworks differently and which can generate other than aesthetic values for them.

3. it can be assumed that artistic functioning is present for different groups within their own consumption habits, even though not all of the consumption practices may receive public support in the form of subsidies (for either production or consumption of the objects in question) and will be recognized as artistic.<sup>33</sup>

For the present research it is important to identify how the artistic functioning for one social group (the attendees at performing arts) has relevance for other social groups (the non-attendees). This question refers to how individual aesthetic experiences can become collective experiences (from cell C to cell E in Table 4.6), and to how intrinsic functioning influences extrinsic functioning (from cell C to D and F).

### 5.3.2. Bourdieu's Theory of Distinction

Bourdieu sees art perception as involving a conscious or unconscious operation of deciphering the work of art because the work can be considered to be made out of cultural codes (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 2, and 1993b, p. 215).<sup>34</sup> In order to be able to comprehend a work, the beholder needs to command a certain *artistic competence* which matches the codes used in the work.

A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. The conscious or unconscious implementations of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and, more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 2)

Artistic competence is thus a condition for the reception of art (see also Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 216). Experiencing and understanding a work of art are two different things. Experience is possible without comprehension, or without full comprehension. However, it is logical to suppose that the experience of a work one can decipher is different from the experience of a work that one cannot (see point 2 in the last section). Bourdieu argues that a person who is not acquainted with the codes of a work will stop short at the sensible properties of a work or at the emotional resonance aroused by these properties. However, he or she will not experience the meaning of what is signified in the work (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 2). This means that a person must learn the appropriate disposition to adequately experience art. Such a disposition is socially installed in the audience members.<sup>35</sup>

The goal of the deciphering operation is to identify the objective meaning of the work, which is not the same as the artist's intention with the work. 'The work of art considered as a

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<sup>33</sup> This has already been encountered in Chapter 2 where it was concluded that cultural objects can function differently for different social groups.

<sup>34</sup> Bourdieu's idea of cultural codes to be deciphered is quite like the idea of languages of art as suggested by Goodman (1976).

<sup>35</sup> Bourdieu distinguishes between right and wrong reception, though not overtly. His argument is that experience of cultural objects without knowledge of the sign systems used (whether they are artistic or not) is not adequate. Recognizing the signs in a work for what they are meant to represent (*aisthesis*) can lead to enjoyment whereas the scholarly savouring of a work can lead to *delight*, to an experience that has more value. He even goes so far to denote this as the *adequate* experience of a work of art (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 220).

symbolic good (and not as an economic asset, which it may also be) only exists as such for a person who has the means to appropriate it, or in other words, to decipher it' (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 220). In deciphering a work, an audience member needs to use two types of codes. First, the codes from everyday life to be able to appreciate what the work represents. For example, the arrangement of the leaves on trees and clouds in the sky can lead to the conclusion that a storm is being depicted.<sup>36</sup> But for aesthetic appraisal attention should be turned to the manner in which the representation is done, to the style of the work. 'The perception of the work of art in a truly aesthetic manner, (...) consists of (...) noting its *distinctive stylistic features* by relating it to the ensemble of works forming the class to which it belongs, and of these works only' (*ibid.*, p. 222) and thus applying the right code to decipher the work's meaning. The degree of artistic competence of an audience member depends on the subtlety of the classification system used by that audience member, and not every audience member has command over a sophisticated classification system. Bourdieu points to the fact that these systems are social codes and that every society writes its own classification system of art at any point in time, thus the history of the conditions under which art is produced should be matched by a history of how artworks ought to be contemplated. The artistic competence of audience members depends on their own trajectory and on the codes present in his or her society. It is a social code which must be mastered (*ibid.*, p. 225). This learning usually occurs unconsciously and through prolonged contact or appreciation of works of art (of specific classes). This is why members of the privileged classes usually regard aesthetic experience – particularly when artistic in nature – as something 'natural', specifically in relation to works in scholarly traditions, and they thus attribute magical powers to the works of art. They are not aware of the social and cultural conditions underlying aesthetic experience (*ibid.*, p. 234). If one is aware of this, the social use of art becomes apparent: culture's primary ideological function is class co-optation (*ibid.*, p. 235) and thus his theory is called 'distinction theory'.<sup>37</sup>

Bourdieu's distinction theory has become influential in cultural policy (Van Stokkom, 1995). For instance De Swaan (1985) argues that cultural policy, although proclaiming a democratic notion of spreading the benefits of cultural participation, actually makes use of a mystification which has become possible through the use of style and the subsequent taste specialists for judging artistic quality, and thus aims at defending art from mass tastes.<sup>38</sup> It is questionable whether or not this is a viable reading of Bourdieu's theory. It is true that

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<sup>36</sup> Maas (1990) here discerns two types of codes, the code of everyday life (representation) and a symbolic code through which a person may find it normal that a witch flies through the air on a broomstick (see Maas, 1990, p. 43). However, both are used to discern what is being represented and not the style in which the representing is done.

<sup>37</sup> Bourdieu adds that the education system – notwithstanding its emancipatory claims – is in fact the major builder of class structures.

<sup>38</sup> It is remarkable that De Swaan's essay ends with a thorough defence of the value of aesthetic experience, though he is critical of the functioning of the Dutch artworld in defending aesthetic ideals against affect and necessity; obviously he still thinks this is the right way to experience art, as Bourdieu also seems to be doing. On the other hand, De Swaan defends the value of the 'popular culture', just as Shusterman does (2001).

distinction theory stipulates that the disposition to adequately experience works of art is not distributed evenly in society but is the domain of the privileged classes. However, this does not mean that class distinction is a motivation for consumers in attending performances, as theorist like De Swaan (1985), Knulst (1989) and Ganzeboom (1989) seem to suggest. Bourdieu argues that distinction, which becomes apparent in sociologically homogenous audiences, is a consequence of 'the specific logic of the economy of cultural goods' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 1), rather than its cause.

### **5.3.3. Critique of the Functional Paradigm**

The foregoing discussion has mentioned several points of critique on the functional paradigm. A functional approach does not seem to be particularly successful in defining art, for it holds a circular line of reasoning: something is art when it is capable of affording aesthetic (or artistic) experiences. Such experiences have (artistic) value for the subject and these values can lead to intrinsic functioning. This kind of definition requires a list of values (and subsequent functions) that can be attached to the experience. A strict use of a functional paradigm (i.e., the autonomous tradition which misinterpreted Kant) even excludes any effect from artistic events outside this separate sphere. Shusterman (2000 and 2001) criticizes such strict functionalism. He discerns two main criticisms on the conception that art should function autonomously:

1. Aesthetic experience cannot be conceived as an unchanging concept narrowly identified with fine art's purely autonomous reception. For not only is such reception impoverished, but aesthetic experience extends beyond fine art (to nature, for example). Moreover, aesthetic experience is conditioned by changes in the non-artistic world that affect not just the field of art but our very capacities for experience in general.
2. Aesthetic experience requires more than mere phenomenological immediacy to achieve its full meaning (...) immediate reactions are often poor and mistaken, so interpretation is generally needed to enhance the experience. (Shusterman, 2000, p. 20)

The second point is telling. It refers to what Bourdieu has called the operation of 'deciphering'. Shusterman concurs that the experience can be enhanced through interpretation and subsequent understanding of a work. Bourdieu argues that understanding affords more pleasure ('delight' as opposed to 'enjoyment'). But then if one assumes that interpretation is necessary to develop the 'true' meaning of an aesthetic experience, this presupposes that the subject has an interest in the work (or rather in the experience the work affords to him or her). For without such an interest, no search for interpretation will be undertaken either in one's own mind or through discourse with others, written texts, commentaries, or reviews. However, the interest could lie in the felt immediacy of an aesthetic experience, but it cannot be the case that the aesthetic experience is purely

'disinterested'. Shusterman thus argues against Beardsley's third feature of an aesthetic experience (presented in section 5.1.2), that the object is emotionally distanced.<sup>39</sup>

Carroll also is critical of the 'disinterestedness'. He observes that disinterestedness and engagement do not seem to go together. In genres such as feminist literature or anti-racist films one does strive for a specific interest in the sense of a moral response (Carroll, 1999, p. 177-8). Thus formulating critique on society through art would be impossible if disinterestedness is upheld as a prerequisite for art. Likewise Harrington discerns that socialist art, feminist art and art for ethnic minorities presuppose a moral interest in the experience (Harrington, 2004, chapter 2). Nevertheless, a property of engaged works is that a moral stance is reached through the formal arrangement of the elements in the work and, in order to arrive at the intended moral stance, the viewer has to open up for the formal arrangement in the work to let it 'do its job'. Thus, even in works of art with an overtly moral purpose, a certain kind of surrender to the work's structure is necessary, yet the gaze must still be disinterested in some way. Carroll introduces the term 'sympathy towards the work'. Zeglin Brand takes critique on 'disinterestedness' a step further: she claims that it does not exist. One can only strive to regard a work as disinterestedly as possible because one can not become a 'pure, unflawed mirror' (Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 167). She voices a feminist critique that the disinterested attention to artworks is in fact a white, middle-class, male conception of art and that disinterested attention is not possible because people are either male or female and thus will always approach a work with a specifically male or female interest.<sup>40</sup> In contrast to feminist critique, though, she argues that in order to fully appreciate a work one should alternate between interested and disinterested (or at least as much as possible) attention to the work. Both Carroll's and Zeglin Brand's arguments will be taken up in Chapter 6.

Shusterman insists on aesthetic experience (i.e., the function of artworks) as the starting point for aesthetic theory, a position he derives from Dewey (see Shusterman, 2001). Dewey's approach departs from the recognition that art and beauty are basic vital functions in human life. Art indeed serves a purpose, it has a function. In Shusterman's (and Dewey's) opinion,

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<sup>39</sup> To complete the criticism of Beardsley's features of aesthetic experience, the discussion of Bourdieu's distinction theory above has indicated that the second point, the experience has the air of being freely chosen, in other words, it feels 'natural', only feels so because the disinterested contemplation is socially indoctrinated in culturally competent classes and thus *feels* as natural. Bourdieu's and Shusterman's accounts concur with Beardsley's features, that the experience is directed towards an object and that there is active discovery of connections (which is the deciphering operation). Shusterman concurs with the fifth feature that there is a sense of integration between oneself and the object. This means that one feels attached to a work (or style), it can even become part of one's lifestyle, and consequently one does take an interest in it.

<sup>40</sup> The traditional feminist stance also implies that females are indoctrinated to adopt the male stance in which women are depicted as objects of desire and possession. Thus feminist critique follows Bourdieu in the sense that the appropriate way to contemplate art is to remain indoctrinated. Zeglin Brand argues that this is a specific feminist lens for viewing political artworks. She thinks that the richness of artworks can only be appreciated by adding such lenses rather than subtracting the 'male' lenses as feminist critique tends to do (see Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 167).



this function is more than just aesthetic. Thus they stand in sharp contrast to the 'extreme emphasis on disinterestedness' which in Shusterman's opinion analytic aesthetics – functionalists and institutionalists alike – 'inherited from Kant' (Shusterman, 2001, p. 98). 'Disinterestedness in analytical philosophy is necessary to place art apart from and above instrumental value and natural satisfactions. But in doing so, the bodily factors and desires involved in the aesthetic are ignored' (*ibid.*, pp. 98-9) and art's historico-political and socio-economic determinants and instrumental power as well (*ibid.*, p. 99). Shusterman introduces two levels of ends for the arts:

For anything to have human value it must in some way serve the needs, and enhance the life and development, of the human organism in coping with its environing world (...) art's special function and value lies not in any specialized, particular end but in satisfying the live creature in a more global way, by serving a variety of ends, and most importantly by enhancing our immediate experience, which invigorates and vitalizes us, thus aiding our achievement of whatever further ends we pursue. (...) works of high art are (...) not merely a special function-class of instruments for generating aesthetic experience (as they essentially are for Beardsley) (...); they modify and enhance perception and communication; they energize and inspire because aesthetic experience is always spilling over and getting integrated into our other activities, enhancing and deepening them. (Shusterman, 2001, p. 99)

Disregarding the blurring of terminology (function, value, ends) in this quote, Shusterman seems to undermine effectively the idea of the aimlessness of art. The aim, though, seems to be at a different level than the primary 'urges' that lead people to the consumption of artistic events, which, according to this line of reasoning, can be for realizing specific ends (such as socializing, meeting other people or friends, affirming one's social status or merely diversion) but a aesthetic experience which is artistic in nature transcends such primary goals.<sup>41</sup> As a consequence of placing the aesthetic experience, rather than the artwork, at the centre of attention, this conception of art leads to the inevitable conclusion that aesthetic experience can occur outside what is normally considered to be the artworld (Shusterman, 2001, p. 100). 'The compartmentalization and spiritualization of art as an elevated separate realm set upon a remote pedestal' (*ibid.*, p. 101; see also 2000, p. 34) have impoverished the aesthetic quality of our lives.<sup>42</sup> However, it is of great importance for contemporary society

... as we move from a more unified experiential culture to an increasingly modular, informational one. This results in art that highlights fragmentation and complexities of

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<sup>41</sup> Shusterman here does not seem to recognize that a large number of the goals mentioned by Beardsley already have this type of 'transcendental' character. In his 2000 publication, however, he praises Beardsley's approach as being the most true to Dewey. Therefore one can argue that Shusterman's (and Dewey's) pragmatic aesthetics is an elaboration of the functional paradigm.

<sup>42</sup> It seems that the policy instruments of subsidizing production and reception facilities aid this compartmentalization of art. However, the issue concerning the instruments for arts and/or cultural policy lies beyond the scope of this research. Research should be performed on whether demand-oriented policy instruments can be more effective in terms of sustaining art's functioning in society. For the present research, none the less, it is important to define the 'playing field' of the government in the cultural policy more precisely. It seems that when an aesthetic experience with artistic nature can be present everywhere, it can also be present in non-subsidized cultural practices. Limited government interference in the cultural sector can then only be legitimized by either sustenance of the more artistically challenging (and economically less profitable or unprofitable) productions, or by intervention due to market failures in realizing either intrinsic or extrinsic functions at the collective level.

information flow that are often too helter-skelter to provide the coherence needed for traditional aesthetic experience's pleasurable sense of focused, funded affect.<sup>43</sup> (...) There is a growing concern (...) that we are being so thoroughly reshaped by our informational technology that our experiential, affective capacities are wearing thin. (Shusterman, 2000, p. 33)

Though he does not acknowledge art's autonomy, Shusterman does find that art has a specific function to perform in contemporary society. This is a function, however, which is also being performed outside the traditional artworld in mass culture and body and lifestyle art. Van Stokkom argues that the subsidized artworld is not the only place where artistic renewal takes shape. Within popular culture, much artistic renewal is occurring which is also of great value to people (Van Stokkom, 1995, pp. 330-1).<sup>44</sup>

Janssen also argues that the strict division of tastes for 'high art' and 'popular art forms' is no longer valid. Specifically the younger generations, also including highly educated youngsters, stay away from traditional art forms and orient themselves towards 'popular culture'. And even more so: indulging in 'popular' culture nowadays does not result in loss of status as it did in the fifties.<sup>45</sup> Janssen discerns three factors that undermine the strict divisions in the general public that Bourdieu predicts. First, there is a trend in the cultural industry itself which has lost state support due to neo-liberal politics. A greater dependence on ticket sales has prompted cultural institutions to market their products more as 'commodities', thus making them more like regular products (Gray's 'commodification thesis'). Second, the education system in the Netherlands has changed in such a way that high education is far less a privilege of certain classes nowadays. 'The dwindling interest for traditional art forms and the re-evaluation of popular forms of culture can in part be considered as cultural side-effects of social mobility' (Janssen, 2005, pp. 15-16). Though it has been thought that social climbers will distance themselves from the art forms of the class from which they originate, it actually seems that social climbers have taken these forms with them to the higher circles. Third, the processes of democratization and emancipation in Western societies have led to a different attitude towards authority. People are far more likely to consider themselves as equals to those from privileged groups. Thus the possibilities to distinguish oneself through conspicuous cultural consumption have

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<sup>43</sup> This refers to post-modern aesthetic theory. Harrington argues that though the autonomy of artistic fields may seem compromised (he speaks of 'relative autonomy') it still is possible to conduct arguments about the value of art (Harrington, 2004, p. 197). See also van Stokkom's criticism on diverse experience, section 6.1.2. Van Maanen (2008a) also points out that one should speak of relative autonomy.

<sup>44</sup> Popular culture is here defined as aesthetic activities that occur without subsidies, usually in venues which are not considered as part of the 'field of restricted production' and in mass media such as television, radio and internet. A strict definition is difficult, however, because some forms of popular culture have been able to secure public funding, mostly through funding of the venues for jazz and pop music.

<sup>45</sup> Harrington confirms that empirical research in the United States has yielded more intricate patterns of consumption than Bourdieu might have predicted. He observes that Bourdieu's theory cannot be generalized outside of the French society of the seventies in which he conducted his research on distinction (Harrington, 2004, pp. 98-100). Janssen refers to some of the same American sources in her claims.

diminished.<sup>46</sup> In a reaction to Janssen's work, Van Maanen adds that it may be true that differences in taste seem to have lapsed with the advent of cultural omnivores, but this does not mean that people attribute the same value to attending a performance by a subsidized company and watching a sentimental movie on television. He argues in favour of replacing the adjectives 'high' and 'low' with 'challenging' and 'common' (Van Maanen, 2005a, p. 59). This argument will be taken up in the following chapter.

Although Bourdieu's field theory may still be a valid way to describe artworlds, it seems that the thesis of social distinction as a result of cultural consumption has suffered considerably in validity.<sup>47</sup> However, these research findings do not discredit the distinction theory entirely. It still seems to be the case that cultural dispositions are not distributed evenly in society. Moreover, the 'cross-over' of tastes between different groups (cultural omnivores) does not mean that people with differing social backgrounds seek the same gratification in consumption of the same cultural products. For the present research, the key issues remain whether or not experiences in which codes can be easily deciphered are artistic, and the value of the experiential component versus the cognition component of the aesthetic experience. These issues will be taken up in Chapter 6.

#### **5.3.4. The Value of the Functional Paradigm for the Present Research**

Kantian aesthetics, which has been hugely influential in Western society, stipulates that art is a way to communicate knowledge about society, but in a specific way. Art should therefore be experienced 'for its own sake', thus yielding specific aesthetic benefits. This is usually referred to as 'disinterested attention' to works of art. It is precisely these aesthetic benefits that are the focus of the present research. Therefore, these benefits and the way in which they are generated through aesthetic experiences will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Contemplating art for its own sake involves deciphering the codes in which the work has been executed. Knowledge of the codes (and a tendency to favour attention to artistic languages) is therefore regarded as a prerequisite for aesthetic experience. Such knowledge is not distributed evenly in society, and the tendency to focus on the aesthetic qualities of a work as the proper way to experience it is a matter of social indoctrination. Thus the Kantian notion of disinterested attention to a work of art is a major building block for the institutional paradigm. Furthermore, the functional paradigm leads to the inevitable conclusion that aesthetic values will also be realized outside of official art circuits, in popular culture for example. In studying the realization of aesthetic values in society for the purpose of evaluating cultural policy, this fact should be borne in mind.

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<sup>46</sup> Wilterdink and Schnabel (2005) both suggest that status considerations are still important nowadays but these may not always come to the fore in cultural consumption. Instead, the entire lifestyle of people is used as a distinguishing feature.

<sup>47</sup> Though one could hypothesize that for less egalitarian cultures than the Dutch, such as the French, German and British cultures, distinction still plays a more significant role. Although the processes of emancipation and individualization also have taken place within these cultures, their education systems might be geared more to handing down traditional cultural values.

#### 5.4. Cultural Diversity

Chapter 4 concluded that cultural diversity became a major concern in Dutch cultural policy at around the turn of the century. This is not such a new phenomenon as one might conclude from the discussion of the policy documents from 1992 to 2005. Oosterbaan Martinius studied cultural policy up to 1990 and also found concern about the exclusiveness of art and art criticism. In his view, this amounts to nothing more than a 'ritualistic doubt' (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 144) of the cultural policy which is expressed by groups who benefit most from the cultural policy. Their expressed concern that others do not benefit is false, in Oosterbaan Martinius' view, and only adds to the legitimacy of the cultural policy itself (*ibid.*, p. 144-145). This may seem a plausible explanation for the advent of cultural diversity as a policy aim in around 2000 as well. However, the question can be raised as to whether it is the only explanation. Oosterbaan Martinius himself offers another explanation, which is equally cynical. He suggests that the well-informed elite understands perfectly that art policy will not survive in the long run without broader public support for the arts, and therefore their expressed concern for a broader cultural policy only is meant to secure long-term support for subsidizing the arts and thus their own elitists tastes (*ibid.*, p. 144). Blokland is of the same opinion. In his view, politicians who argue for a broad span of cultural amenities do not genuinely mean it in real life (Blokland, 1995, pp. 347-8, note 31). But one can also be less cynical and suggest that cultural diversity is a sincere concern, for the fact that the personal benefits that can be gained from participating in aesthetic activities should not be limited to small audiences. In other words: the experience of culture and art is of value and therefore should be accessible to large groups in society.<sup>48</sup> This implies that the functions themselves should be researched and not be foregone, as Oosterbaan Martinius and many institutional theorists do.

In the case of ethnic minorities, a functional approach to cultural diversity is not without difficulty. From a functional point of view, one can conclude that the concern that some groups – in this case ethnic minorities – do not benefit from the functions of culture and art in society may constitute a motivation for policies aimed at cultural diversity. This presupposes that one finds the same functions in art or cultural forms specifically developed for ethnic minorities, or that members of ethnic minorities who are recruited for regular aesthetic activities by means of specific marketing approaches will experience the same functions while participating as 'white' audience members do. In other words, members of ethnic minorities 'search' for the same values in cultural and art participation as 'white' audience members do. This may be true for white youngsters who want to further the acceptance of 'their own' cultural and artistic forms. However, it is questionable for members of ethnic minorities who have their roots in non-Western cultures. The functioning of art and culture as a separate sphere in society – its autonomy – is a typically modern and Western conception. One can assume that, for people who come from non-Western cultures, aesthetic

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<sup>48</sup> Which is exactly why Blokland, for instance, defends cultural education as a means to spread the ability to experience culture and art (see Blokland, 1995, pp. 365-7).

experience is much more linked to other areas of social activity, such as religion, weddings and funeral rites, and that they will therefore experience other functions than those identified in the policy documents. There are indications that this assumption is not without merit. In a research on the aesthetic activities of ethnic minorities in the city of Groningen, executed in 1996, it was found that, when asked which activities they participated in, some of the participants mentioned religious ceremonies (among which were voodoo and winti-worship, a traditional religion from Surinam), marriages and traditional crafts; activities that are far less autonomous in nature than the western concept of art. However, the research indicates that the Western definition of aesthetic activities was already recognized by ethnic minorities (Van den Hoogen and Van den Berg, 1997, p. 395). Note that research in Rotterdam showed that the most important reason for the non-participation of ethnic minorities is their economic situation and lower education levels (Rotterdam, 1999, p. 8). This suggests that ethnic minorities – once they have acquired sufficient income and education levels – will participate, but still this does not offer an explanation for their motives. They might be searching for different values. This means that the findings of this research cannot be used to measure entirely the effects of cultural diversity policies. The research is restricted to those situations where aesthetic activities take place in specific venues – as is the case with most subsidized art forms, even those that do attract ethnic audiences such as reggae concerts. However, the composition of audiences for cultural institutions in terms of ethnic diversity can be used as a measurement point for the evaluation of cultural policy.

### **5.5. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Functioning and Artistic Quality**

Based upon the preceding discussion artistic quality can be defined in three ways:

1. Artistic quality can be regarded as the degree to which artworks manage to realize their artistic values. Therefore, the question as to how these artistic values (and their subsequent functions) are realized should be answered based upon a description of the specific artistic nature of aesthetic experience. From a functional paradigm, this is obviously the best way to ascertain artistic quality. Defined as such, artistic quality correlates directly with intrinsic functioning of performing art in society. However, it is not clear whether or not artistic quality, defined in this way, correlates directly with extrinsic functioning.
2. Artistic quality can be judged in terms of the representation in the artwork of the subject matter about which it is communicating. It can be expected that works which communicate profound messages will be experienced as having a higher quality than works that communicate worn-out phrases.
3. Based upon the institutional paradigm, artistic quality can be defined as how the code or artistic language is employed in works of art. This refers to two aspects of quality: to craftsmanship in the execution (command of techniques) and to development of the code itself, the way in which the code employed relates to existing works. Experiment thus becomes an important aspect of the judgement of artistic quality.

All three ways should be regarded as relative criteria, which means that the quality of works can vary with the intended (or actually realized) audience of artworks. This is most obvious for the last two definitions of quality. To a great extent artistic competence influences the quality one will perceive in a work. The same holds for the subject matter of a work; its relevance can vary for specific audience members. The functional definition of quality (the first above) is also dependent on the other two, and therefore functional quality can also vary from audience member to audience member.

The interesting question now is whether or not advisory boards deciding over the allocation of subsidies in the Dutch art field do so in a way that limits the functioning of art in society. In a strictly Bourdieusian artworld, the advisory boards are composed of taste specialists who look for artistic craftsmanship, originality, and so on. In the terms of this research, it can be expected that the advisory boards will therefore focus on the style of works and the development of style within the artistic discipline. Their measurement instruments are geared only towards the functions mentioned in cell 'A' of Table 4.6: the intrinsic functions for the artists. The assumption made here is that when the artistic quality is high, the art in question will also function better in society; i.e., it will realize its artistic values. From the perspective taken here, this is a highly debatable assumption. However, it should be noted that advisory boards nowadays also include other criteria, such as marketing criteria, in their evaluations of artistic quality. Research should be carried out to clarify the role advisory boards play in policy evaluation (see Chapter 11).

## 5.6. Summary: Autonomy in Relation to Functioning in Society

A first conclusion to be drawn from the preceding discussion regards the question as to whether or not the functioning of the performing arts in society is conceivable under the condition of the autonomy of art. The answer to this question should be positive. The *relative* autonomy of art (Van Maanen, 2008a) seems to limit artistic functioning, yet simultaneously it is precisely the autonomy of art (or artists) that makes the functioning of art possible. The autonomy of the arts is closely related to the specific artistic functions because autonomy as a concept arises from the recognition that there are specific artistic functions which are different from moral, political, religious and scientific considerations. Autonomy thus is necessary for art to be able to function artistically. This means that artists are free from political or ethical pressures in their choice of subject matter and of style. The critical functions of art are threatened without such autonomy, especially in contemporary society in which the media steer conceptions through images. Art's autonomy is necessary in order not to succumb to the ideology of that media society (Kuypers, 2005). This is consistent with the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic functions which has been adopted in the present research. The assumption of 'disinterested' contemplation of works of art is at the basis of art's autonomy. However, this assumption can be criticized, for it can be assumed that spectators do need to take an interest in the work, in order for it to be able to be of any value at all and thus function in society. The specific artistic nature of the aesthetic experience is at

the basis of the functioning of the (performing) arts.<sup>49</sup> This specific nature of the aesthetic experience will therefore be discussed in the next chapter.

From a political point of view, it is important to note the limits of the functioning of the arts in society. The fact that subsidised art consumption in Western societies is limited to elite audiences may severely limit the functioning of subsidized art in society. The relatively small public attendance at the subsidized arts can be explained on the basis of the style uncertainty that is a result of the uneven distribution of cultural competence and the development of various co-existent styles in the arts. Power relations within the artworld also have a defining character in that they limit the power to consecrate. This can lead to the omission of the cultural products of certain groups in society from official art institutions, such as the products from underprivileged or less well-educated people, women, ethnic minorities and youngsters.<sup>50</sup> These groups do not seem to be able to consecrate their cultural forms of expression in the established art institutions. Although this research does not question the policy instruments employed in cultural policy, one certainly could do so from an institutional point of view. For instance, one can devise measures to include members of 'excluded groups' in advisory boards, but one can also think of more demand-oriented forms of subsidy. From a more functional approach, one might add that the importance of aesthetic experience lies in the functions it performs for the spectators. Such 'benefits' should be evenly distributed in democratic societies. However, this presupposes that the benefits of aesthetic experience for excluded groups can be expressed in the functions found in the policy documents as well. For the working class, this certainly seems to be the case, as well as for white females and youngsters. However, because of the fact that the functioning of the performing arts is related to the autonomy of the arts, this assumption cannot be made so easily for members of ethnic minorities, because the autonomy of the arts is a specific Western phenomenon.

Recent theorists have pointed to the fact that artistic pleasure can also be expected to occur in 'popular' culture. Within both the institutional and functional paradigm, it cannot be logically argued that this will not be the case. Likewise, the functional paradigm points to the fact that some of the artworks which are produced within the institutionalized artworld do not in fact function as such; they fall short of the expectation that they can function artistically. On the other hand, specific niches have developed within popular culture, leading to the conclusion that appreciation of stylistic features occurs just as well within popular culture.

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<sup>49</sup> Here, a problem of translation arises between English and Dutch. In Dutch there is a distinction between 'esthetische ervaring' (aesthetic experience) and 'artistieke ervaring' or 'kunstzinnige ervaring' (artistic experience). In English and American literature, aesthetic experience can denote both artistic and non-artistic experiences but also is used to mark the specific artistic nature of experiences. A definition of both terms will be given in Chapter 6 of this book.

Artistic quality can be defined in several ways. For the present research, artistic quality refers to the extent to which art objects fulfil their artistic functions. This is a more all-encompassing definition than defining quality on the basis of how works are executed and the experimental nature of the artistic languages employed, or on the profoundness of the subject matter of works. However, it is questionable whether advisory boards on artistic quality, who advise on the appropriation of subsidies, use a definition of quality that refers to the functioning in society, or whether they limit their judgements to the employment of artistic languages and content. The membership of advisory boards has not surprisingly been identified as an important way to secure the autonomy of the (subsidized) artworld. The contribution advisory boards can make to the functioning of art in society is therefore an important issue in this research.

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<sup>50</sup> The inclusion of women in this list does not imply that they are a specific social group which is underprivileged. However, a case can certainly be made for the under-representation of women in official art circles.



## 6. Aesthetic Experience

This chapter is devoted to descriptions of aesthetic experience. Description is necessary to identify the way in which the performing arts function in society. Section 6.1 discusses descriptions of aesthetic experience in arts philosophy and sociology. It starts from the Kantian premises that aesthetic experience should be studied on the basis of the mental processes that an object arouses in the subject (in Kantian terms: the free play of the faculty of intellect with the faculty of perception, see section 5.3.1) Section 6.2 deals with the specific artistic aspects of aesthetic experience. This is needed to clarify the obscurity in the use of 'art' and 'culture' in the cultural policy documents. This will be the topic of the last section, which offers a description of aesthetic experience of the performing arts in order to identify the values and subsequent functions that can be associated with aesthetic experience and which are, therefore, intrinsic.

### 6.1. Descriptions of Aesthetic Experience

#### 6.1.1. Semi-functional Approaches: Aesthetic Properties

Carroll and Davies have both published introductions to the philosophy of art. They are critical of the functional paradigm, although they concede that the description of the aesthetic experience is an important part of the philosophy of art. Their account of the aesthetic experience links aesthetic experience to the aesthetic properties of an artwork. These properties of the object are response-dependent properties (Carroll, 1999, p. 157) which means that humans attribute the property to the object. Without humans, objects can still have properties, an object may be three metres high for instance, but it would not be possible to say that the object is 'monumental'. Though aesthetic properties are experienced as properties of the object, they are 'implicitly connected to the reception side of things' (*ibid.*, p. 158). To Carroll, aesthetics is a larger domain than the study of arts because one can experience nature in an aesthetic manner as well.<sup>1</sup> Carroll discerns two approaches of aesthetic experience: a content-oriented account and an affect-oriented account. The content-oriented account is straightforward: an aesthetic experience is the experience of the aesthetic properties of a work (*ibid.*, p. 168). The affect-oriented account tries to clarify the nature of the experience rather than what features of a work are being experienced. According to Carroll this account is dominant in art theory.

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll is of the opinion that the philosophy of art and of aesthetics can be considered independently of one another, for the philosophy of art is object-oriented and aesthetics is reception-oriented (Carroll, 1999, p. 159). From a functional paradigm, however, this is not true because in this paradigm the definition of art depends on the functions it serves for the audience, therefore it is reception-oriented as well.

A first important feature of an aesthetic experience is the attitude of the viewer. He or she should not be moved by ulterior motives but must allow him-/herself to be guided by the work's structures and purposes. This 'presupposes playing by the object's own rules, rather than importing our own (...), placing yourself in the hands of the maker of the object – going wherever she bids you, and attending to whatever she makes salient' (*ibid.*, p. 171). Carroll associates this attitude with 'disinterestedness' such as it has been encountered in Kantian aesthetics. However, he prefers a different term: the viewer should be *sympathetic* towards the work. With this he means that audience members should take an interest in the work (disinterestedness is not the same as *uninterested*) but at the same time should surrender to the work and not try to read certain predetermined interests in(to) it. He gives the example of a Soviet official expecting a work to affirm the doctrines of communism. He therefore only experiences the features of the work that affirm these and he rejects other features that might be in conflict with his doctrine. This, of course, is not the way to fully experience a work (*ibid.*, p. 184). This interpretation of disinterestedness is attractive, for it allows for ulterior motives such as socializing and status affirmation in cultural consumption as long as the audience members are sympathetic towards the internal structures, i.e., the formal arrangement of elements in the work. Many customs in performing-arts attendance, such as dimming the lights in the auditorium, a proscenium arch and curtains, the tuning of instruments and the subsequent advent of the conductor, are devices to create the desired attitude in the audience members by separating the real world from the theatrical or musical reality of the performance, which is a reality in itself. Though this account of aesthetic experience seems illuminating, it does not discern between the experience of art and other sensorily perceivable objects or presentations. For instance, when attending a lecture one also must be sympathetic towards the arrangement of formal elements of the work, in other words, allow the structure of the argument presented by the lecturer to convey its message.

A second important feature of the affect-oriented approach to aesthetic experience is contemplation (*ibid.*, p. 171). Carroll writes:

To contemplate an object is to be acutely aware of its details and their interrelationships, (it) calls for keen observation. It also involves exercising actively the constructive powers of the mind, of being challenged by a diversity of often initially conflicting stimuli and of attempting to make them cohere. (Carroll, 1999, p. 172)

This feature of aesthetic experience brings us closer to a truly functional paradigm. Some of the features here resemble functions mentioned in the policy documents (such as training the power of observation and exercising the powers of the mind). The search for coherence in initially conflicting elements also resembles Beardsley's active discovery of elements. Carroll states that this contemplation can be a source of immense satisfaction:

The active search for details and connections itself can be exhilarating, and the success of such activity, where it occurs, can bestow a kind of self-rewarding pleasure on the activity as a whole. With aesthetic experience, this sort of pleasure is said to be valued for its own sake (...) the mental and emotional workout afforded by aesthetic experience is its own reward. (Carroll, 1999, p. 172)

The last sentence of this quote is consistent with Carroll's interpretation of disinterestedness as sympathy towards the work. Ascribing contemplation to aesthetic experience makes the concept clearer. It is also consistent with Kantian aesthetics, where the exercise of the powers of the mind is crucial in describing aesthetic experience and the pleasure which can be derived from this: the harder one has to strive to reach success in the active search for connections (i.e., the more diversity the elements of a work contain) the greater the feeling of achievement will be. However, this account describes the aesthetic experience as primarily a cerebral puzzle and leaves the affective side of the experience out of the picture. Furthermore, this description still does not strictly separate artistic from non-artistic (though aesthetic) experiences because all of this – the search for details and connections, active discovery of elements, mental workout – can occur when watching a craftily made detective series. Following a lecture also involves being acutely aware of the elements presented in the lecture and following their interrelationship, or even being challenged by provocative statements of the speaker and trying to make sense of them. In Carroll's approach it seems that the difference between artistic and non-artistic aesthetic experiences is a gradual one. The more complicated the 'puzzle' is, the more likely that the experience will be artistic. This would entail that there is no fundamental difference between non-artistic and artistic aesthetic experience. The difference would be merely based upon the competence of the spectator.<sup>2</sup> Carroll uses the term 'design appreciation' to denote the sympathetic attention afforded to the structure of the work (*ibid.*, p. 183). Aesthetic experience involves the constructive powers of the mind which become evident in design appreciation 'where the challenge of comprehending the diverse elements of an artwork is joined by relating them to the point of the whole' (*ibid.*, p. 201). But as the example of a lecture demonstrates, design appreciation is not specific to aesthetics experience, though it is an important constitutive part of it.

According to Carroll, aesthetic experience is not a basis to define art and, considering the way he describes aesthetic experience, one has to agree with him. 'We can have what we call aesthetic experiences of artworks, or of everyday things, like nature. These experiences involve attention and contemplation as their most characteristic elements' (*ibid.*, p. 183). Though the affect-oriented account claims to describe the aesthetic experience, it actually does not because it still rests on a description of the properties of the artworks. However, the elements of attention and contemplation as part of aesthetic experience do provide insight. Carroll's account of aesthetic experience comprises some of the functions encountered in the

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<sup>2</sup> Boorsma, for instance, argues that when the signs in the work (she uses the term artistic metaphors) are decoded in a systematic way, the experience will not be artistic. She argues that the manner in which a metaphor is decoded is key to the artistic nature, rather than the difficulty in decoding it. She points to the fact that free association should be used (see Boorsma, 1998, p. 89). Furthermore, the resulting interpretation of a metaphor should be experienced as new to the consumer and the experience should be subjective and individual. Although she does not rule out the possibility of interpretation through discussion of the experience with others, she points to the fact that this can lead to objectifying the experience and thus applying pre-existent interpretations to it and thus excluding an artistic quality of the experience (*ibid.*, p. 92). Interpretation will be discussed in more detail in section 6.1.5.

policy documents. He also offers an account of intellectual relaxation versus entertainment in the sense of diversion. This account relies heavily on the complexity of the 'puzzle' offered by the artwork, and therefore the difference between intellectual entertainment and diversion seems gradual and dependent on the capacities of the observer. There appears to be no clear distinction between the two. It should be concluded that Carroll's account does not describe the aesthetic experience but the attitude of a viewer towards a work. The attitude of the viewer is merely a prerequisite for the occurrence of aesthetic experience. His account stops at the point of interest of the present research: what makes an experience specifically artistic and to what values and functions does this give rise?

Davies offers an account of aesthetic experience which is similar to Carroll's. He describes aesthetic properties as follows:

Aesthetic properties are usually characterized as objective features perceived in the object of appreciation when it is approached for its own sake (...).<sup>3</sup> They are directly available for perception in that their recognition does not require knowledge of matters external to the object of appreciation. In particular, their recognition does not depend on information about the circumstances under which the item was made or about its intended or possible functions. These properties announce their significance, as it were, through the experience they provide. (Davies, 2006, pp. 53-4)

This definition concurs with Carroll's object-oriented account of aesthetic properties. In Davies' view, aesthetic properties are directly and sensorily perceivable properties of a work. Davies opposes these to artistic properties of an artwork which, in his view, are not directly perceivable. They include conventions of (religious) iconography, quotations or reference to other artworks, the position of a work in the author's oeuvre or within an art movement (originality, influence by other works or other artists) or a specific function of a work (elegy, portrait, hymn). These are all properties that are beyond a work's immediate boundaries. This seems an elegant way to discern between aesthetic properties and artistic properties of a work: all properties that concern interpretation are considered to be artistic. But matters are not that simple. In itself, it may be logical to use the word artistic to denote every experience of properties of a work that involve interpretation (*ibid.*, p. 61). But that does not shed any light on the nature and value of such experiences. Davies' account immediately recalls Bourdieu's radical contextualization and cultural competence. It is necessary for a spectator to know that, in Christian iconography, a white dove represents the Holy Spirit when this symbol appears in a painting or sculpture in order to be able to decipher the meaning of the work. A viewer without such knowledge will have difficulty understanding the work. Although he or she will experience the work differently, nonetheless there is an experience of it and it cannot be ruled out that such an experience is artistic. Davies' definition is therefore able to distinguish between aesthetic and artistic features of works, but not of their experience and subsequent value. This is why one can argue that he should have chosen the term 'interpretative' properties instead of 'artistic', for, in his definition, the distinction is

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<sup>3</sup> It is questionable whether this approach to aesthetic properties is usual in the sense that it is generally accepted within aesthetic theory, as Davies suggests. However, the contemplation of a work for its own sake concurs with the emphasis on disinterestedness in Kantian aesthetics.

based upon the fact that the properties involve interpretation to discern their meaning.<sup>4</sup> This, however, does not pertain to the value of the experience.<sup>5</sup>

For the present discussion it should be added that Davies devotes attention to the value of art (*ibid.*, chapter 8). First he discusses pleasure.

The pleasure is not separable from the artwork that is its cause (...). It requires and arises out of the person's active perceptual and cognitive involvement with the artwork that is its focus (...) this engagement is concerned with determining the work's identity and content, so that the work can be recognized and appreciated in its particularity. (Davies, 2006, p. 210)

Obviously Davies hints at the kind of intellectual pleasure that Carroll also indicates, which is important for an answer on the difference between intellectual entertainment and diversion. Davies stresses, however, that pleasure is not the primary reason why people tend to seek out aesthetic experiences. Factors such as habit, curiosity and other factors that pay no regard to pleasure can be their motivation. Davies also points to the fact that art can become a mode of existence for audience members and be part of the self-realization of individuals. If such is the case, the suggestion that one seeks pleasure in art does not come close to the extensiveness of its role in someone's life (*ibid.*, pp. 211-12). Davies also points to the educative value of art. He uses Collingwood's definition of art as 'an act or process of expression through which the artist clarifies her inchoate emotions and states of mind' (*ibid.*, p. 213). So art is a source of self-knowledge for both the artist and the audience. Furthermore, art can serve as a source of propositional knowledge. 'We learn from (art) that things are or could be so-and-so, and what this would be like to experience or achieve. And we transfer this knowledge to the actual world' (*ibid.*, pp. 213-14). Art can serve to refine our perceptive and discriminatory skills and enhance our imagination and it can shape or change our attitudes and values (*ibid.*, p. 215). Davies calls these extrinsic values of art. However,

learning from the work can be intimately bound up with recognizing and understanding it for the artwork it is. To follow Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, the reader must come to appreciate how the heroine can be led to suicide by the events of her life, and it is precisely that understanding that might translate to the real world. We learn through example, mimicry, and experience, as well as by explicit instruction, and artworks provide the opportunity for us not only to observe how fictional characters grapple with and perhaps learn from their situations, but also to imaginatively rehearse our response to equivalent, possibly future, circumstances. It is true that we need to bring beliefs, values, and sensitivities from the real world to our appreciation of the novel, but it is no less true that through appreciating the fiction we may develop, recognize, and refine them. Fictions can represent complex situations in concrete detail and thereby bring to life ideas and emotions we may previously have grasped only in schematic, abstracted forms. (Davies, 2006, pp. 216-17)

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<sup>4</sup> The term 'interpretation' is used here on a specific level, that of interpreting the meaning of specific (features of) artworks. In the following sections, the term will be used in different ways. Interpreting and interpretation are thus difficult terms that need to be clarified. This is the topic of section 6.1.5.

<sup>5</sup> Moreover Davies' distinction between aesthetic and artistic suggests that artistic properties are not a subset of aesthetic properties. This stems from the fact that Davies makes the distinction on the basis of the properties of the artwork itself rather than on the nature of the experience that is afforded by the artwork. In this research, however, artistic experience will be regarded as a subset of aesthetic experience (see the following sections).

With this description Davies brings the educative power of art so close to its core as art, that it seems strange that he insists these values of art are extrinsic. The cognitive benefits one can gain from reading *Anna Karenina* are linked forcefully to the artistic character of the novel. Fictional art in particular is very suited to highlight significant patterns we might miss in every day life (*ibid.*, p. 217).

According to Carroll and Davies, aesthetic experience is linked to perception of the aesthetic properties of the artwork itself, which can be described as the formal arrangements of elements in the work that can be sensorily perceived by the audience. It seems that what is being described here is the appreciation of the form of a work, the manner in which its medium has been used by the artist. In common language this refers to the beauty of artworks (or lack thereof) and not to the nature of the experience they afford. This is why one could call their approaches 'semi-functional'. Though it seems obvious that the aesthetic properties make aesthetic experience possible, in that they require a person to regard the work in a certain way, the semi-functional approach is not sufficient to assess the value and functions of the experience afforded. It does pay attention to the way in which the meaning of a work (or specific features of it) can be deciphered, but it does not shed light on the value of the experience of a work. Moreover Davies' division between intrinsic and extrinsic functions of art seems strange. Their descriptions of the specific attention audience members should pay to artworks, sympathy towards the formal arrangement of elements in the work, are particularly useful interpretations of Kant's 'disinterestedness'.

### 6.1.2. More Criticism of Disinterestedness

There is more to say about the proper attitudes for experiencing artworks, based on the ideas of Zeglin Brand (1998) for instance. She argues that the traditional view on disinterestedness is to disregard any interest in the object's existence, thus forgoing any desire to own or use the object (Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 156). This also entails denying any involvement with the work on a personal level, even seeking mastery over one's own bodily responses. This is why feminists criticize disinterestedness as a gendered reaction in a self-conscious, controlling way which they see as psychological censure (*ibid.*, p. 159). This type of emotional detachment from the work seems at odds with the common experience of art. Works of art that people love and cherish have profound meaning for them and they can feel very much attached to them. Furthermore, disinterestedness logically seems to exclude many works of art from the realm of art, for these works do invite the spectators to take an interest. For instance many artists have called attention to the plight of working classes (such as Heyermans in the Dutch theatre).<sup>6</sup>

Zeglin Brand argues that it is undeniably the case that viewers tend to identify with works of art, they do take an interest in them and, in so far such an interest is self-conscious and self-

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<sup>6</sup> Shusterman argues that the popularity of many rap songs depends on their distinctive ethnic and ideological focus, portraying the black underground culture in American large cities (Shusterman, 2000, p. 52). This can only be appreciated when taking an interest in the work, politically or morally.

directed, this becomes an interested stance (Interested Attention, IA). This is why works of art matter to people, and it usually happens when a viewer learns more about the background of a work (Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 162). Her argument is not that works should only be experienced on a base of interestedness, but that

the adoption of a stance of traditional disinterestedness (...) is still a possible and appropriate, useful mode of experiencing art (...). What I call Interested Attention (IA) may persist only for the duration of one's initial encounter. It may last for the first few seconds, or it may come later. It may be interspersed with brief moments or long intervals of what I will call Disinterested Attention (DA). The 'toggle' between the two types of attention might be deliberate or not. In any case, one cannot 'see' with both types of attention at once. (Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 165)

So the interested attention may be what draws a viewer to a work, may be the reason why he or she takes notice of it and strives to understand it better. It usually occurs in the beginning of the aesthetic experience. But then the viewer has 'to engage intellectually and disengage emotionally with the work of art' (*ibid.*, p. 165), which is to regard it as disinterestedly as possible. Zeglin Brand argues convincingly that a pure disinterested stance is never possible, but one can try to abandon one's interests as much as possible. This amounts to allowing the formal properties of the work to guide the experience, i.e. sympathy towards the work. Zeglin Brand subsequently describes the toggling between DA and IA as adding lenses to the perception of the work. After allowing DA to the work, the subject should add several lenses to the work's reception, such as a gender lens for instance, a race lens, or any other designated lens. Note that one cannot experience a work with no lenses at all, but applying a lens of formal appreciation and intellectual analysis (DA) means stripping away as many lenses as possible and subsequently adding specific, interested lenses. This enhances the meaning of the work (*ibid.*, pp. 166-7). Such shedding of lenses might arise involuntarily or it may be a habitual, learned practice. Thus works of art can yield multiple, even conflicting, sorts of experiences.

In 1995 Van Stokkom published an article criticizing Dutch cultural policy. One of his major objections was that views of cultural policy leave little room for new forms of art to be appreciated as such, as is the case with pop music for instance. In his view, such genres may rely on expressiveness and thus an emotional surrender to the work first and foremost. None the less, there is also a lot to be done for audience members who like to reflect on their experience (afterwards) and who like to research form elements of different movements within pop music (Van Stokkom, 1995, p. 332, see also De Vries and Julien, 1998 and Shusterman, 2000). Van Stokkom uses the term 'absorption' instead of 'sympathy.

Absorption, the full surrender to an aesthetic experience, (...) can (...) work in an enriching way. Anyone who 'sinks into' the artwork temporarily suspends the capacity to judge in order to experience the view of others. This entails 'abandonment', a release of control. In the more reflective stage that follows these experiences, the newly acquired impressions and discoveries may stimulate further research. Self-loss and self-conscious reflection are thus not poles but complements (Van Stokkom, 1995, p. 333).

In order to understand an artwork adequately, it can be necessary to rely on one's affective abilities to be open to strange and unknown forms. This presupposes a willingness to question conventions and traditional explanations, and to be prepared to follow the

perspective of others (Van Stokkom, 1995, p. 333). This is a somewhat different attitude than sympathy to the work's elements in order to 'let it do its job'. Some works require total surrender, their aesthetic properties being of the nature that they induce such surrender. Though disinterestedness traditionally requires a person to distance himself/ herself from the work, Van Stokkom argues that surrendering to the work also is an 'adequate' way to experience it. Although he stresses the importance of experience over cognition or interpretation, Van Stokkom does not dispense with cognition altogether. He advocates 'serious' attention to artworks over the constant playing with and switching between styles and emotions that has become characteristic of modern experience (*ibid.*, p. 335).<sup>7</sup> In his view, cultural policy should reckon with the specific forms of pleasure which can be derived from participating in cultural events. Diverse attention to cultural forms (switching between different items in order to drown out negative feelings but never really focusing on one item in particular) and comfortable experiences (pleasure which mainly derives from satisfying physical needs) form a separate domain. Both types of attention to works of art have in common that the spectator does not engage in any form of effort and research into the work's meaning (*ibid.*, pp. 336-7). Benson, who studied what he calls 'aesthetic absorption' from a developmental psychological point of view, arrives at the same conclusion as Van Stokkom:

Aesthetic absorption (...) makes different demands on its participants since it demands different forms of engagement. (...) The engagement of self in aesthetic absorption is active, chosen, informed, attentive, demanding and – depending on the quality of the art – enlarging. It is itself the outcome of achievement. It is rooted in interest and not in evasion. (Benson, 1993, p. 184-5)

Absorption thus is not a stupor. It is not a passive state in which subjects allow themselves to be guided by whatever happens, they are actively engaged in the experience. Benson is wary of the negative side of absorption, for the subjects temporarily suspend their powers of judgement. This makes the subjects vulnerable to indoctrination through art. He concludes that without indoctrination no pure art is possible.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, according to Benson, in a truly democratic society the government should safeguard a free space, which is autonomous in the terminology of the last chapter, in which producers can create, relatively free from outward pressures such as religious or political fundamentalism and economic doctrines, either communist or capitalist (see Benson, 1993, p. 183).<sup>9</sup> Note that both Van Stokkom and Benson seem to hold that comfortable experiences are not aesthetic. Van Stokkom equates aesthetic with artistic, for he writes that comfortable experiences 'do not afford the satisfaction that we can expect from true art' (Van Stokkom, 1995, p. 336). So, in their theories, the distinction between aesthetic and artistic is not precise. The crux of their argument, that absorption is an active form of experience which can challenge the spectator,

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<sup>7</sup> Van Stokkom refers to this as 'the jazz of modern experience' (1995, p. 335), though he clearly hints at what has come to be considered as *post*-modern experience (see Harrington, 2004, chapter 7).

<sup>8</sup> Benson's use of the term indoctrination may be overstating the case somewhat. He seems to hold the view that every attempt at artistic communication is a political act in the sense that a worldview is being 'imposed' upon the spectators.

<sup>9</sup> In this respect Blokland speaks of the ability of individuals to make independent choices (personal autonomy), which is an important goal of cultural policy. Note that he refers to the broad domain of cultural policy which also comprises education and not only art policy (see Blokland, 1995, pp. 400-2).



is nevertheless of much interest for the present research in determining the artistic moment in aesthetic experience.

Both Van Stokkom and Benson argue that, for the experience of an artwork to have value, the viewer should take an interest. In Van Stokkom's view, art nowadays is of specific importance, even more so than science and journalism, to convey new insights because (post-)modern society has been pervaded by aesthetics. Science and journalism are bound to have little impact on subjects. Therefore a pure (and modernistic) interpretative approach to art:

(...) has little impact and denies the experiential value (...) it seems better to choose another option: a sensitive aesthetics that problemizes the real world rather than the artwork. (...) The result is impact: the viewer is captivated, the articulated longings and fantasies remain etched in memory for longer, and, at the same time, the viewer is left with ambiguous question that encourage reflection. (Van Stokkom, 1995, p. 338)

Thus Van Stokkom is critical of the self-reference of contemporary art. In his view, art should promote questions about real life and should not be a reference to itself, a criticism also voiced in the policy documents. His approach suggests that cognition in art occurs *through* the experience of emotions. The benefit is that a feeling of importance is linked to the cognition realized. Also an important feature of Van Stokkom's account is the fact that cognitive processes occur after the aesthetic experience, just as in Davies' and Carroll's view.<sup>10</sup> However, the question should be raised as to whether such cognitive processes after the aesthetic experience are part of the experience itself or whether they merely are a reflection on the experience. A last remark should be made. In his effort to define renewal in the arts as content renewal, Van Stokkom seems to neglect the importance of the development of the medium in which the art work is executed. When we accept Eldridge's formula that 'works of art present a subject matter as a focus for thought and emotional attitude, distinctively fused to the imaginative exploration of material' (Eldridge, 2003, p. 259), Van Stokkom clearly totally disregards the imaginative exploration of the material, the 'formal dimension of the work' in Eldridge's terms (*ibid.*, p. 259). Research should be performed on the possible value of the renewal of artistic styles as such (see section 7.3).

Van Stokkom and Zeglin Brand regard the aesthetic experience as a powerful mechanism to convey content to spectators. Their approaches concur in that the viewer should take an active interest in the work and embark on a research path to discover its meaning and value. Zeglin Brand points to the fact that this can only be done by turning attention to the formal properties of the work, by first subtracting specific interests one might have in the work as much as possible (DA) and subsequently adding specific, but varying interests (IA). Then the full meaning of a work can be discovered. Toggling between DA and IA is necessary for an

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<sup>10</sup> Although Van Stokkom is not eager to use the term 'interpretation'. He prefers the term 'intervention by the artist' which immediately 'makes clear the suffering and fury behind everyday routine' (Van Stokkom, 1995, p. 338). When interpretation involves the study of new form experiments in art, Van Stokkom is quite wary of it. Nevertheless his approach does not exclude cognitive interpretation after an experience, as long as it refers to cognitively digesting art's messages about circumstances in real life rather than about design appreciation itself. But he seems inclined to think of it as an integral part of the experience because he stresses the immediacy of intervention.

aesthetic experience to become artistic in nature. Both seem to argue for works of art that refer to the real life world, that have meaning outside the artworld itself. However, they leave little room for the importance of the development of expressive media, of artistic languages themselves. Granted, this may have become too important in cultural practices, but the value of the development of artistic languages should not be disregarded in this research. In Van Stokkom's view, experiences that are not followed by a process of (cognitive) interpretation can still be meaningful experiences as long as the experiences challenge the spectator and are not just a diversion and/or merely physically gratifying. In his view, absorption into the work is a 'correct' way to experience the artistic nature of artworks, even if such absorption is not followed by a cognitive process of consciously discovering a work's meaning. However, both Van Stokkom and Zeglin Brand stress the importance of such a process. They do not make clear whether this process is part of the experience itself or whether it is a reflection upon the experience. Van Stokkom seems to suggest that interpretation occurs immediately, within the experience, Zeglin Brand is not clear about whether adding and shedding lenses occurs only during or after the experience, or both.

### **6.1.3. Pragmatist Aesthetics**

The previous chapter already alluded to the aesthetic theory of Shusterman. He regards himself as a pragmatist in aesthetic theory and derives this position from Dewey. Pragmatist aesthetics departs from the value which aesthetic experiences hold for the subjects and their responses to the experience. Aesthetic experience is not something to be put on a remote pedestal, but forms part of everyday life. Shusterman points to the fact that aesthetic experience includes more than 'independent thinking' which is stressed in Kantian aesthetics and by theorists such as Bourdieu.<sup>11</sup> There are also somatic responses, such as dancing to rock music which can be linked to overcoming embarrassment and self-consciousness by the subject (Shusterman, 2000, p. 44). Shusterman argues for the value of the experience of popular and 'high' culture alike.

If popular art can reward without serious intellectual effort, this does not mean that it cannot profit by and reward such effort. If it can be enjoyed mindlessly, it does not follow that it must be so enjoyed and has nothing else to offer. (Shusterman, 2000, p. 45)<sup>12</sup>

He discredits some of the usual misconceptions of popular culture. Popular culture often is about issues which are important in real life, whereas high art usually has a more ephemeral content. Some popular art forms do contain subtleties and complexities in their use of aesthetic language which may require considerable skill in deciphering them. The

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<sup>11</sup> It thus seems that Kant's major contribution to aesthetic theory lies in the fact that the notion of disinterestedness separated the aesthetic experience from the practical and conceptual realms: to be disinterested was to be without interest in the object's existence. Thus the focus of aesthetic theory shifted from the work of art itself to the experience it affords (see Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 156). The main criticism of pragmatists such as Shusterman is that the description of the aesthetic experience has become too limited, disregarding the emotional and physical responses to art, even discrediting them in favour of cerebral interpretation.

<sup>12</sup> Note that Shusterman here writes 'art' and not 'culture' inferring that artistic experience can be afforded by experience of the products of what is generally denoted as popular culture.

stratification of these art forms is even necessary in order to appeal to a variety of groups with often conflicting interest. Moreover, some popular art forms were started in order to convey important and subversive messages, such as rock 'n roll (arguing for moral and sexual freedom) and rap (arguing against discrimination of blacks). Finally popular culture contains originality and innovation just as much as high art, though Shusterman concedes that it also contains many standardized works, produced according to a formula. But nevertheless, even works considered as important artworks depend for their status on the existence of a tradition and corresponding expectations in the public in order to be recognizable as breaking with these traditions (*ibid.*, p. 46-50).<sup>13</sup> In short, many of the characteristics valued in art can also be found in popular culture, if one is willing to see them. In Shusterman's view 'the philosophy of any cultural form (including philosophy itself) is unwise to ignore the socio-cultural space that shapes the production and use of its products' (*ibid.*, p. 77).

He thus argues vehemently for the meaning of rap music which, in his view, functions artistically (especially in its initial stages at the end of the 1970s), contributing to the development of music styles and technologies and representing a black identity as an oppressed group denied entry to the multimedia world.<sup>14</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, rap developed the same 'Bourdieuian' mechanisms as present in other autonomous cultural fields, such as its own distinctive language system which needs to be decoded on the basis of competence in Afro-American verbal prowess and in terms of its own record labels and price systems. Likewise, Shusterman argues for the value of the experience of country music (and country musical films) which has a deep impact upon its dedicated audience due to its sentimentality, its message of authenticity and purity which is mainly told through its negation of an urban lifestyle replete with commercial tastes and trends, although country music in itself is deeply commercial in its nature. The conformist lifestyles and values of the performers in real life are used along stylistic lines, such as simple musical arrangements which focus on the lyrics to convey country's traditional and conformist message. Though its musical traditions heavily borrow from Afro-American culture, country is seen by a vast majority of white people as 'the expression of a deep collective memory, recalling the sadly universal (archetypical) realities of lost innocence, corrupted values, betrayed love, disappointed hopes, the common failures of life, and the inevitable loss of death' (*ibid.*, p. 95). Pragmatist aesthetics accept that people have a need for such emotions, a need that can be described in the same manner as a *habitus* (*ibid.*, p. 86). Shusterman convincingly

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<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Shusterman challenges the notion that aesthetic value only is real if it stands the test of time and the universality of good art. In his view, post-modern aesthetics proclaim the temporality of *any* cultural form (Shusterman, 2000, p. 66). However, it seems more viable to suggest that some forms – be they from popular culture or from the realm of high art – have universal value and thus stand the test of time, such as the works of Shakespeare and 'evergreen pop-songs', whereas others can only function artistically in their specific social and historic circumstances. Most engaged works seem to do so. Likewise some art or cultural forms only have meaning in specific cultures or subcultures.

<sup>14</sup> Although rap musicians did gain entrance to Western media once the music became popular among larger audiences and the conditions of reproducibility expanded, they have since held an ambivalent attitude towards it, both scorning and exalting the media, see Shusterman, 2000, chapter 3.

demonstrates that much of the devices of high art, such as *habitus* and cultural competence in deciphering the cultural codes of the cultural forms in question and field mechanisms, also apply to popular culture.

Pragmatism (...) is a philosophy of embodied, situated experience. Rather than relying on a priori principles or seeking necessary truths, the pragmatist works from experience, trying to clarify its meaning so that its present quality and its consequences for future experience might be improved. Experience is evidently contextual (...) a philosophy that argues from experience and recognizes its contextuality should be reflective enough to declare its own experiential situatedness. (Shusterman, 2000, p. 96)

Thus Shusterman's pragmatism is not far from Bourdieu's radical contextualization. Shusterman's criticism is that Bourdieu has extended his theory only to high art, which is contemplated in a disinterested fashion. It seems that this is stretching Bourdieu's position somewhat, and that Shusterman does not fully realize that he has more of an ally in Bourdieu than an opponent. However, in his theory of interpretation, Shusterman does deliver a more sophisticated account than Bourdieu's notion of deciphering the cultural code of the work.<sup>15</sup>

He argues that there is a 'functional distinction' (*ibid.*, p.118) between interpreting and understanding an aesthetic experience (note that he does not write 'artistic experience'). Even without interpretation, an aesthetic experience can still be meaningful. Shusterman argues that the sensory immediacy of aesthetic experience has been neglected in the philosophy of art (*ibid.*, pp. 132-3). Although understanding and interpretation can be linked to the same object, they differ in the sense that understanding has an immediate quality, it occurs unconsciously and frequently gives rise to an emotional or somatic response (dancing, mimicking music or an emotion presented on stage). Interpretation involves a conscious and deliberate process of thinking. 'We can understand something without thinking about it at all; but to interpret something we need to think about it' (*ibid.*, p.125). Moreover, interpretation involves testing understandings that have come to us intuitively (it seems). Interpretation and understanding thus revolve in a cycle, 'what is immediately understood may once have been the product of a laboured interpretation and may form the basis for further interpretation' (*ibid.*, p. 132). He describes the process as follows:

Though frequently what we encounter neither demands nor receives interpretation, many things are felt to be insufficiently understood until they are interpreted by us or for us. We seek

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<sup>15</sup> Perhaps Shusterman's conception of Bourdieu's work originates mainly from *La Distinction* which he quotes frequently. However, Bourdieu's later writings on field theory and the production of belief in the field concur with much of Shusterman's position, though Bourdieu does not overtly extend his analysis to popular culture. But his interest lies in discerning heteronomous influences in the field, more specifically, the economic forces and power relations in society that undeniably play an important role in shaping popular culture. Shusterman's examples of rap and country music confirm rather than refute field theory (see section 5.2.4). What remains is Shusterman's criticism of 'the pure gaze' which is at the basis of distinction theory and field theory. But Bourdieu also considers the concept of the pure gaze to be a socio-historical fabrication. It seems that Shusterman's criticism boils down to the fact that distinctive attention to stylistic features in popular culture can enhance the aesthetic experience of such forms, plus the fact that there is more to the experience of high culture than only the 'cerebral' process of interpretation.

an interpretation because we are not satisfied with the understanding we already have – feeling it partial, obscure, shallow, fragmented, or simply dull – and we want to make it fuller or more adequate. Yet superior interpretation sought must be guided by that prior, inadequate understanding. We no longer feel the need to interpret further when the new, fuller understanding that interpretation has supplied is felt to be satisfactory. (Shusterman, 2000, p. 132)

Thus Shusterman explains the feeling of unease that can occur in experiencing art and the subsequent feeling of release when an adequate interpretation is found (intellectual pleasure). With the term ‘understanding’, Shusterman seems to point to several features of the aesthetic experience which, in his opinion, should receive more attention for they are an important aspect of the aesthetic experience:

- The response to a work is emotional and/or somatic (dance, movement, mimicking). These can be taken to be signs that a subject understands what is being presented and is attentively following the structure of the work.
- The emotional response can generate a sense of importance and thus an interest in interpreting the work when the understanding is only vague. Thus understanding is a prerequisite for interpretation (compare with Bourdieu’s cultural competence in deciphering the work’s codes, but Shusterman’s notion of understanding is broader than only knowledge of the codes).
- Vague understandings may be tested through interpretation if the feeling of unease is significant enough for the spectator. However, if understanding is non-existent, the experience has no meaning at all for the subject and will be rejected as worthless.

It is interesting to see how one can ascertain that interpretation has occurred for the subject. Shusterman writes:

A criterion for having an interpretation of some utterance or event would be an ability to express in some explicit, articulated form what that interpretation is. To interpret a text is thus to produce a text. Understanding, on the other hand, does not require linguistic articulation. A proper reaction, a shudder or tingle, may be enough to indicate one has understood. Some things we experience and understand are never captured by language, not only because their particular feel defies adequate linguistic expression but because we are not even aware of them as ‘things’ to describe. They are felt background we presuppose when we start to articulate or to interpret. (...) The ineffable but manifest is as much ordinary as mystical, and it is mystifying only to those disembodied philosophical minds who recognize no understanding other than interpretation, and no form of meaning and experience beyond or beneath the web of language. (Shusterman, 2000, pp. 135-6)

He thus puts up a defence of ordinary experience and feeling as opposed to the usual emphasis on cerebral interpretation as the only worthy experience of art. He emphasizes the value of unconscious or emotional understanding and rightly claims that it is a prerequisite for aesthetic experience. Shusterman uses ‘understanding’ to denote an intuitive and unconscious grasp of what is being presented. This does not refer to understanding in terms of grasp of certain (theoretical) concepts. The understanding takes place *within* perception. In his own words:

understanding something is not the mirror-like capturing of replication of some fixed and determinate intentional object or semantic content. It is fundamentally an ability to handle or

respond to that thing in certain accepted ways which are consensually shared, sanctioned, and inculcated by the community but which are nonetheless flexible and open to (divergent) interpretation and emendation. What counts as the proper response of true understanding not only depends on the normative practices of the given society but also varies with respect to different contexts within that society and its subcultures. (Shusterman, 1992, p. 90)

His defence of immediate emotional responses to aesthetic experiences seems to validate the claim to art status of the more abstract art forms such as dance and music. Their experience may give rise to interpretation in a linguistic form, but more often it seems that they do not, or that the linguistic interpretation does not fully grasp the meaning of the experience. They seem to be linguistically inarticulate expressions because the art forms they refer to defy linguistic description, thus their interpretation in linguistic terms may also be difficult.<sup>16</sup> However, if one allows for the imperfection of the linguistic grasp of interpretations – and that is what they are, *interpretations* and not *experiences themselves* – the argument still holds. In that case, one will allow for seemingly inarticulate interpretations such as ‘Oh, that was beautiful’ and infer that the spectator’s previous understanding of beauty may not have been adequate to accommodate the beauty of the experience he or she has just had. The understanding of beauty may therefore have undergone an interpretation extending the possibilities of beauty for that person. Shusterman’s understanding-interpretation cycle seems perfectly able to accommodate this kind of experiences. He also emphasizes that experiences which are artistic in nature can occur outside what is normally considered as the art world. He not only defends the value of popular art forms such as country music, but also argues that the borders between aesthetic experience and other experiences in life are extremely vague, inferring that the lifestyles of people, including their sense of fashion, decoration and body adornments, form a continuum with their cultural activities such as theatre or concert-going. Because the present research is limited to the realm of cultural policy and thus to institutionalized cultural forms, this aspect of Shusterman’s work is not further elaborated. However, Shusterman’s notion that understanding without interpretation is of eminent value in itself is an important notion for the present research. As Shusterman himself puts it, there is something ‘beneath interpretation’ (Shusterman, 1992, chapter 5).<sup>17</sup>

For the present research Shusterman’s theory is certainly of importance though it does not provide new insight into the differences between art and non-art. Shusterman himself does not even distinguish between artistic and non-artistic experiences, although it is obvious that, to him, *the need for an interpretation* indicates whether an aesthetic experience is artistic in nature. The conclusion can be drawn that when a subject develops an interpretation, the experience that necessitated it has been artistic to the subject. But when the subject has not

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<sup>16</sup> Shusterman is adamant that interpretations are expressible in linguistic terms because, in his view, interpretation involves ‘conscious, deliberate thought (...) the *articulation* of previously unstated formal or semantic relations between elements’ (Shusterman, 1992, p. 133, italics QLvdH).

<sup>17</sup> Shusterman elaborates this most extensively in *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (1992), chapter 5, where he argues against what he calls the ‘universalist view’ of theorists such as Gadamer who claims that ‘all understanding is interpretation’ (*ibid.*, p. 120). Shusterman’s argument is that most understanding does not involve interpretation, unless the understanding is not satisfactory to produce a meaningful

been able to develop an interpretation (as of yet), the experience can still be artistic in nature.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that Shusterman would agree with Van Stokkom's (1995) notion of challenging experience. However, he seems to attach value to understanding itself, whereas Van Stokkom clearly only values challenging experiences.

One problem with Shusterman's pragmatist aesthetics remains. It is odd that a theorist who so adamantly argues in favour of the value of the experience as opposed to the cognitive side has chosen a word ('interpretation') that so obviously relates to cognition. It even weakens his defence of country music, rap and raves. It remains to be seen whether 'interpretation' is the most adequate word, and what it should signify in the theory of aesthetic experience. Suffice it here to say that, although aesthetic experience definitively has a cognitive dimension, the experience itself is regulated by the intrinsic satisfaction it generates. This satisfaction does not manifest itself after the experience – something that might be induced by the concept of interpretation versus understanding – but during the experience and it is an integral part of it (Schaeffer, 1998, p. 51). However, one can easily imagine that generating a coherent interpretation of an experience, although it may take months or even years after the experience, may enhance the significance of the experience for the individual. For the moment, the most important feature of pragmatist aesthetics is that it overcomes the divide between high art and popular culture which is present in both Kantian aesthetics and field theory. Popular culture affords meaningful and valuable experiences as well.

#### 6.1.4. Structure of the Aesthetic Experience

Eversmann proposes that though the content of aesthetic experiences may differ from art object to art object and observer to observer, the structure of these experiences is the same. The experiences are usually described as fully concentrated, involving a heightened consciousness, they are deeply moving, there is a loss of the sense of time (and place), the end of the experience feels as waking from a dream, and the experience results in a sense of liberation and/or personal growth (Eversmann, 2004, pp. 139-40). These elements can easily be related to some of the concepts of other theorists described in this chapter. 'Heightened consciousness' resembles Kant's description of aesthetic experience. The concept of absorption is reflected in the concentration, loss of sense of time and waking up from a dream. The development of cognition through emotion, as described by Van Stokkom and Shusterman, is also reflected in the fact that the experiences are deeply moving and therefore have an impact on the spectator. The sense of personal growth is mirrored in Shusterman's concept of the understanding-interpretation cycle.

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experience. Shusterman does not make a sharp turn away from the universalist view, he merely clarifies it.

<sup>18</sup> This rather seems to be an extra defence for Shusterman's argument for the value of popular culture. As was argued in Chapter 5, popular culture is experienced by lower and higher education-level groups alike. It is logical to assume that higher-education groups may have developed a *habitus* of reflecting on their experiences more than lower-educated groups. With Shusterman, one can argue that this does not make their experiences more valuable than those without reflection. It simply means that different groups seek different gratifications in the same cultural products.

Eversmann uses the concept of flow experiences to search for the common structure of aesthetic experiences.<sup>19</sup> A flow experience occurs when one is involved in 'activities in which one does not engage for the sake of an external result or reward, but because they are experienced as intrinsically pleasurable' (*ibid.*, p. 145). It involves doing things that are fun, such as a hobby for instance. Usually such activities involve a great deal of investment in order to develop the appropriate skills (in Bourdieu's terms: cultural capital). Eversmann uses the four dimensions of the aesthetic experience that Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson applied to the visual arts:

- (1) *Perceptual*. This involves the direct experience of stimuli offered by the work of art, such as colours, light, composition, etc. without interpreting or attaching meaning to the experience. This dimension also involves kinetic responses to these experiences, such as involuntary mimicking expressions of actors, or miming to the movement of a melody or rhythm. Shusterman calls these somatic responses, in other words: understanding occurs at the level of perception.
- (2) *Cognitive*. This dimension concentrates on the theoretical and art-historical aspects of the work. Earlier experience in art reception and expectations of a performance play an important role in this dimension. For dramatic art forms, this dimension involves following the story-line and making sense of the performance. Recognizing oneself or familiar circumstances in a play is an important aspect of the theatrical experience, or one can imagine oneself to be in the circumstances which are depicted in the play.
- (3) *Emotional*. Here the emphasis is on emotions as expressed by the work, and on personal associations. This dimension seems to be more important than the cognitive dimension. It deals with feelings that are connected to the content of the work but also to emotions that are connected to theatre-going itself. Eversmann points out that one of the most important emotions is the feeling of being carried away by the performance, a feeling that is generally pleasurable and can occur independently of cognitive insights.<sup>20</sup> The emotions seem to be physically more intense than in real life, hence the experienced heightened consciousness.
- (4) *Communicative*. This dimension integrates the others. 'The art object is now seen as a means to communicate with the artist and/or the culture in which that object was created. This dimension also incorporates the use of the work of art as a means to engage in a dialogue with oneself. And finally, references to transcendental experience (sense of the absolute, affirmation of a higher order, etc.) find a place under this heading' (*ibid.*, p. 146). In theatre reception, there are two levels of

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<sup>19</sup> He follows the research done by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson who described the experience of visual arts in terms of flow experience (see M. Csikszentmihalyi and R. Robinson, 1990). Relating aesthetic experience to flow experience has one drawback: it only refers to successful, i.e., meaningful aesthetic experiences.

<sup>20</sup> Eversmann also adds that the emotions evoked in the theatre have a very strong physical component that is absent in the reception of other forms of art (Eversmann, 2004, p. 156). However, such strong physical responses can also be present in the reception of music, especially rock music, so it is unclear why Eversmann singles theatre out in this respect, although he is undoubtedly right that strong physical emotions are usually more common in a performing-arts setting than in a museum setting. As Eversmann suggests, the collective nature of experience can explain this.



communication possible. The first is an active internal debate about the issues raised by the performance. The second is communication with other spectators which again can have two forms: a feeling of community (usually during the performance) and discussion of the event with the other spectators (afterwards).

Based upon interviews with experienced theatre-goers, Eversmann describes the structure of the theatrical experience as follows: there is either question of an 'initial hook' or a gradual process by which one comes to be intrigued by a work. Attention is focused on the performance. The result is an extra interest to know more about what is happening, which is:

- an emotional reaction expressing an interest in the performance, such as total concentration on the performance, with the effect that everyday life recedes into the background (absorption);
- a cognitive process which may be set in motion. The experience 'appeals to the intellectual skills (...) by framing the performance (or some aspect of it) as a challenge, a puzzle that has to be solved' (*ibid.*, p.160). This process may be connected to an initially negative feeling (usually irritation that 'something is not quite right'). During the performance, perceptual and emotional dimensions take precedence over cognition.<sup>21</sup> Cognition may only be limited to following the story-line and storing the performance in memory. (*ibid.*, pp. 159-61).

Immediately after the performance, the reaction is usually described as an emotional one. After the performance, the cognitive processes are most important.

Of course this process is not only influenced by the (aesthetic) properties of the performance itself and the personal circumstances of the spectator (education, previous experience with theatre, his or her normative views on what constitutes good theatre and the reasons for attending the specific performance). The event is framed by physical circumstances (the theatre building, etc.) and the cultural context in which the performance takes place. Eversmann describes the skills necessary for theatre reception, as they were reported by his expert respondents. Theatre-going is not regarded as a blissful capacity in every case experience because it can inhibit the capacity to be open towards the performance, which is described as the most important skill for an aesthetic experience (*ibid.*, pp. 161-3). However, experience with theatre enhances the analytical skills and appreciation of the craftsmanship of the theatre makers.

Tulloch is critical of Eversmann's approach although he does think the 'map' of theatrical experience that Eversmann provides is useful (Tulloch, 2004, p. 203). His main criticism is that Eversmann's approach is too limited. The theatrical experience - and thus the aesthetic experience - is influenced by more factors than Eversmann describes. 'The horizon(s) of expectations brought by an audience to the theatre are bound to interact with every aspect of the theatrical event and its general implications' (*ibid.*, p. 179). In his view, factors from the

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<sup>21</sup> Eversmann describes the perceptual dimension in the same way as Shusterman does understanding: 'experiencing without interpreting or attaching meaning to the experience' (Eversmann, 2004, p. 151).

field of economics (with this he refers to aspects of Bourdieu's field theory, both in terms of the socio-economic positions of audience members and their corresponding habitus and the material circumstances within which the production and reception are realized) and the kind of theatre (is it mainstream or canonical, is the building a metropolitan or regional theatre?) influence these expectations. In his view, it is important to know whether respondents who emphasize emotional before intellectual experiences are 'expert' audience members or 'lay' audience members (*ibid.*, p. 180).

Since Eversmann tends to universalize his 'theatrical event' (...) we have absolutely no way of knowing what kind of respondent actually said 'I feel it in my stomach ...'. By whom, where, in what local circumstances and in relation to which daily experience of the event? (Tulloch, 2004, p. 181)

In short, Tulloch's criticism is that the theatrical event should be framed within the daily circumstances of audience members and theatre makers alike to be able to indicate which values of the experience are being generated. However, it is likely that Eversmann will agree, because his aim is to develop a structure of the aesthetic experience and he is not primarily interested in researching the values that such an experience will generate. Therefore, in order to measure the effects of theatrical participation, the theatrical event should be framed within its daily context.<sup>22</sup> Tulloch also hints at another specific weakness in Eversmann's research. His research involves expert respondents who are either theatre students or are professionally involved in the theatre (programmers, educators). Eversmann chose these respondents because they could be expected to be able to analyse their own reception of theatre. However, this creates a bias towards experience in theatre-going and professional reasons for attending performances. A more average public might go more for the fun of it, and be less keen in discerning which reactions the performance evokes and how. Nevertheless, these expert respondents also stress the importance of the emotional aspects of the experience. In Shusterman's terms, the expert respondents may be more inclined to articulate their interpretations of an experience. However, this does not point to the fact that the expert are more prone (or less prone) to indeed have artistic rather than non-artistic aesthetic experiences.

### 6.1.5. Interpreting

The term interpretation has featured in several of the theories discussed in this section. Before a thorough theory of aesthetic experience can be developed the term should be clarified. Davies' approach suggests that interpreting is paying attention to the artistic properties of a work which he defines as properties that are outside the direct bounds of the artwork. This means regarding the work within the canon of works and applying culturally

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<sup>22</sup> Tulloch provides some practical examples such as the visitor who celebrates her birthday and was presented the ticket for the show by her husband or a pensioned visitor who is brushing up on his cultural education. Both can visit the same performance of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* for very different reasons and thus the experience can result in very different values and functions for them. These differences seem almost practical in comparison to the differences in cultural competence and position in the field of power that Bourdieu points to.

dependent codes to the work such as iconography. This resembles Bourdieu's decoding of a work. However, Bourdieu himself recognized that decoding the work, discovering its meaning, is not the same as artistic pleasure.<sup>23</sup> In Bourdieu's theory, the ability to decode a work is merely a prerequisite for artistic pleasure and he points to the fact that this ability to experience artworks is not distributed evenly in society and different groups in society seek different gratifications in the experience of art. This suggests strongly that interpretation is not the same as the artistic nature of the aesthetic experience. Zeglin Brand uses the concept of adding and shedding specifically interested lenses to fully understand the meaning of an artwork. To her, interpretation is testing the work against varying different perceptions. As 'togglng' between disinterested and various interested stances is the cornerstone of aesthetic experience to her, she seems to imply that this only occurs during the experience. However, she does not exclude this occurring after the experience. To Van Stokkom, interpretation is only valuable when it means reflecting upon what art objects communicate with regard to real-life circumstances. Such reflection occurs immediately; this is what makes the experience challenging. Van Stokkom does not seem to exclude that interpretation occurs after the experience. Shusterman uses the term 'interpretation' extensively in order to argue that there is something 'beneath interpretation', which he indicates as understanding. Understanding means developing an immediate adequate response to the work, whereas, in his view, interpretation denotes a cognitive process which occurs when understanding the work does not suffice to afford a meaningful experience. In the future, new interpretations can be used for understanding other works. He is not clear as to whether interpretation occurs within or after the experience. Eversmann does not use the word 'interpretation'. From his assertion that, during the performance, emotional processes are dominant and that after the performance cognitive ones, it can be deduced that he equates interpretation with cognitive processes that are deployed to search for the meaning and importance of an aesthetic experience.

Based upon the foregoing discussion, interpretation can be defined as a cognitive process in which the subject searches to find the meaning of an experience. The subject will be able to reflect on the experience afterwards and tell why it is important, though possibly in verbally crude terms. As some people may have a *habitus* of developing interpretations, they will be more prone to do so than others. Thus the term 'interpreting' does not relate to the nature of the experience or to any characteristics of the work. Note that cognitive processes, such as 'decoding' the messages that are embedded in the work's formal arrangement, which occurs either through design appreciation or through paying attention to the symbolic quality of the formal arrangements in the work and relating these to the cultural codes of the culture from which one regards the work, are *not* part of interpreting. They also occur within understanding. Interpretation can involve objectifying the experience by either discussing its

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<sup>23</sup> See Bourdieu, 1984, p. 2, and 1993b, p. 216, where he argues that knowledge of the codes in which the work is executed is only a precondition of its appreciation, and also 1996, p. xix, where he argues

	Understanding	Interpretation
Artistically aesthetic experience	The delight of experiencing something new without being able to articulate what is new.	The delight of the experience of something new and the development of an articulation what it is and why it is important.*
Non-artistically aesthetic experience	Confirmation of already known meanings. (comfortable experience)	Hitherto unknown cultural codes (or artistic metaphors) are 'digested' within already known cultural codes and thus are not experienced as new or challenging.
No meaningful experience	The formal arrangement of the work (or its cultural codes) are unknown to the subject**. (no meaningful aesthetic experience takes place)	

\* This can include experiences where the subject rejects the interpretation. The work will be experienced as incorrect or inappropriate. It can be assumed that these will be quite shocking and uncomfortable experiences. However, the subject will experience these as meaningless (see 6.2).

\*\* Either because one does not recognize the codes used and thus can make no sense of the work (neither understand nor interpret it) or one does not know or one is uncomfortable with the attitude that is needed to realize the aesthetic value of the work. This occurs when teenagers are not willing to listen to a whole classical concert for instance, or are unwilling to concentrate long enough to follow a play.

**Table 6.1. Understanding and interpretation in relation to aesthetic experience**

types of techniques used. Such a process may occur after and not during the experience. When a satisfactory interpretation is reached, the subject may be able to verbally express it. This kind of expression only is an approximation of the experience, it is not the experience itself. It should be noted that aesthetic experiences which do not involve interpretation can be valuable to the subject. In this respect, Shusterman is right in supposing that there is 'something beneath interpretation'. The distinction between comfortable and challenging experiences or, in Shusterman's terms, the *felt need* for an interpretation, seems accurate to establish whether an aesthetic experience is artistic in its nature or not. Interpretation itself is not a suitable indicator in this respect. Table 6.1 summarizes the relationship between interpretation and aesthetic experience.

**6.2. The Artistic Nature of Aesthetic Experience**

Van Maanen (1998 and 2004) has developed a model to describe what is specifically artistic about aesthetic experience in more detail than presented the descriptions in the first section of this chapter. It also makes clear how knowledge production occurs through aesthetic experience based upon the difference between comfortable and challenging experience,

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that sociology can intensify the artistic experience through clarifying the social conditions of the production and reception of a work, rather than reducing or destroying it.

which also incorporates the development of the medium in which an artwork has been implemented. His model therefore incorporates the theories of Bourdieu, Shusterman and Van Stokkom and can be used to answer the question which has been raised with regard to Eversmann's description of theatrical experience. In essence, Van Maanen regards the theatrical event as

something happening among and between people who are playing the game of theatre (...). What happens between both parties can be described as theatrical communication, that is to say, an exchange of signs, produced by the use of the body (and voice) which make sense in the perception system of the people involved within the borders of the 'game'. (Van Maanen, 2004, p. 247)<sup>24</sup>

This means that the perception system of the spectators is confronted with that present in the performance. On the basis of their preparation, the performers have the most influence on the communication that takes place, but 'the most important results of it occurs on the side of the spectators, who complete the total process by producing images in their own way' (Van Maanen, 2004, pp. 247-8). Artworks can be considered as aesthetic sign systems in which the perceptions of artists have been produced. This means that the substance and form of a performance can be considered as the signifier. The concepts to which the signifier refers form the signified. In order to attach meanings to signs, one has to be able to refer to a body of more or less concrete objects and experiences on which the concepts are based (referent).<sup>25</sup> Aesthetic communication takes place on the level of perceiving rather than on the level of thinking or feeling. When a comfortable aesthetic experience takes place, the perception scheme of the spectator is not challenged by the aesthetic sign system, this means that the signifier, signified and referent cohere and fit the perception schemes applied to the performance by the spectators. A meaningful perception is the result. This process occurs automatically in aesthetic experience, the thinking is subservient to perception (*ibid.*, pp. 249-50). This process is what Shusterman refers to as understanding. However,

If the signifier manipulates the signified (the concepts) by the uncommon ways in which it refers to the referent, the sign loses its coherence and solidity and no longer can automatically be assimilated into existing perception schemes, nor smoothly be transcribed into a meaningful perception (...). In that case, a temporary accommodation of the perception schemes is demanded to follow the players and the play and not to give up. (Van Maanen, 2004, p. 250)

Because the perception scheme consists of fixed, existing concepts, it cannot generate this temporary accommodation.<sup>26</sup> The use of imaginative power is necessary to generate an

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<sup>24</sup> Van Maanen here uses the word 'game' in reference to Gadamar (1993), who compares aesthetic pleasure with playing a game. In order to take pleasure in the game, one follows its rules, i.e., one follows the formal arrangement of the work.

<sup>25</sup> Van Maanen here uses a combination of the semiotic theories of Saussure and Peirce. Saussure, who researched the structure of linguistic signs, distinguishes between a material component (the actual sound of a word), which he calls 'the signifier', and a semantic part (the meaning evoked in the listener), which he calls 'the signified'. Saussure also identifies 'the referent' which denotes the actual physical object or the idea to which the sign refers. Peirce represents a sign therefore as a triad using the words Interpretant, Object and Representamen to denote the referent, signifier and signified. Van Maanen therefore seems to use Peirce's triad while using Saussure's terms (see Balme, 2008, p. 79 for a short explanation of both theories).

<sup>26</sup> Zeglin Brand describes basically the same process. 'One's initial confusion upon encountering a work of art is a preliminary configuring of our mental set to construct both a pattern and an

'imaginative thought'.<sup>27</sup> The imaginative power partly takes over the organization of the perception so that the existing perception schemes can be manipulated and thus co-operate, in such a way that the 'imaginative thoughts', which harmonize with the offered sign system on the one hand and are sufficiently meaningful for the spectator on the other' (Van Maanen, 2004, p. 250) can be produced. This means that the imaginative thought has to be 'new' to accommodate the perception scheme provided in the performance, but it also has to relate to the existing perception scheme of the spectator in order to be meaningful.<sup>28</sup> The imaginative thought can install itself in the existing perception schemes of the spectator. The process has been schematically outlined in Figure 6.1, where the numbers refer to the order in which the process takes place.<sup>29</sup> The fact that the imaginative power needs to be invoked in order to generate a meaningful experience is a necessary precondition for the experience to have meaning.

Van Maanen's approach thus explains the difference between non-artistic and artistic aesthetic experiences *within* the experience itself rather than explaining what happens after the experience. In concurrence with Shusterman's pragmatic aesthetics, it leaves room for the specific effects to which both types of experiences give rise. As the artistic nature of the experience derives from the operation of the imaginative power in Van Maanen's view, *artistic* effects should result from this. He discerns two forms of artistic enjoyment: the

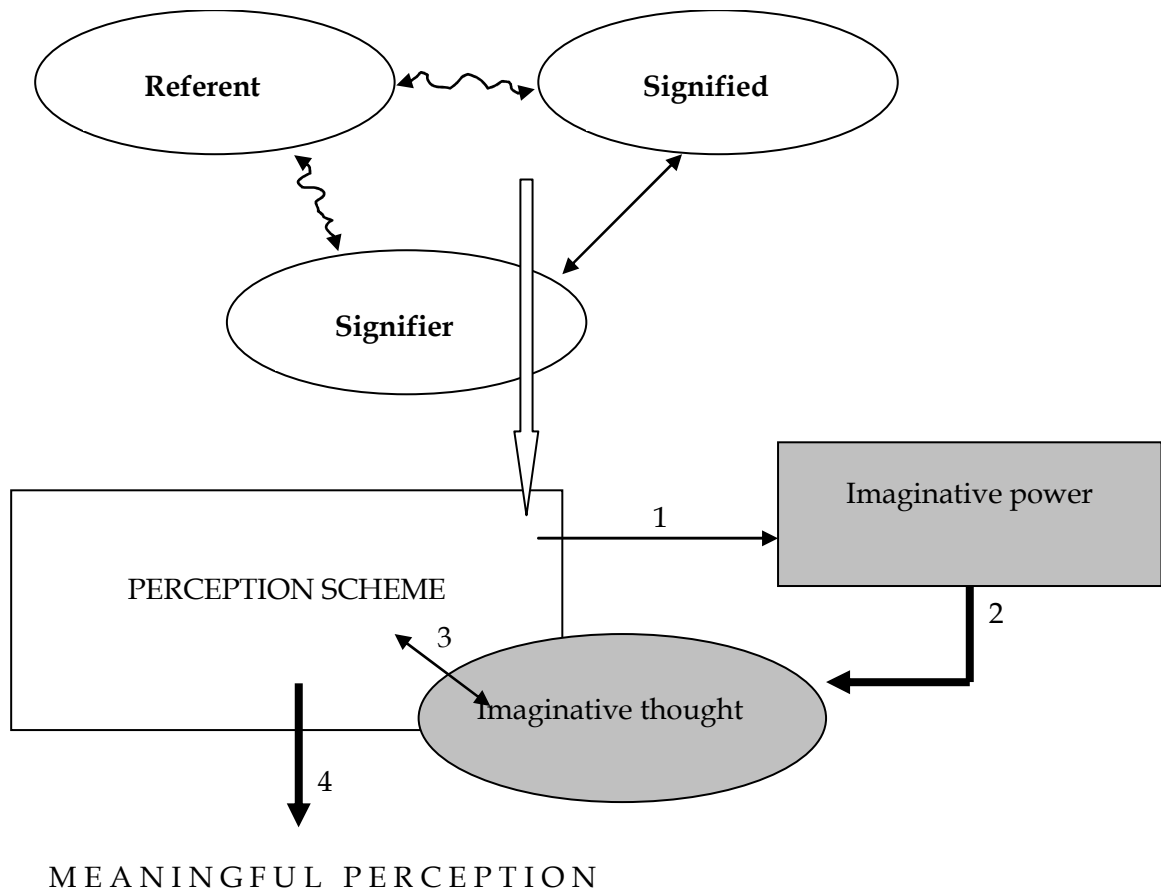
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interpretation from what is perceived' (Zeglin Brand, 1998, p. 165). Schaeffer refers to the aesthetic experience as a cognitive relationship in which all our senses and conceptual frameworks collaborate. Multiple imaginative activities are induced by the encounter of the perceptual data with our conceptual classifications (Schaeffer, 1998, p. 50). Because both Zeglin Brand and Schaeffer refer to the experience of visual arts, it can be concluded that Van Maanen's account of aesthetic experience and artistic experience has wider significance than only for the theatre. Schaeffer argues that the experience is guided by the satisfaction it induces and not by the cognition it generates (Schaeffer, 1998, p. 51). That means that the experiential quality is not dependent on the cognition realized, but resides in the perception process itself.

<sup>27</sup> Note that in using the word 'thought' it is not implied that an imaginative thought is generated through cognition. It is generated within perception. Once installed in the perception scheme it may become available for cognition. Furthermore, note that the imaginative thought need not be expressible in words as it is not a cognitive thought. It is a temporary accommodation of the perception scheme of the subject. Probably most perceptions in the perception scheme are not linguistic but deal with form and rhythm.

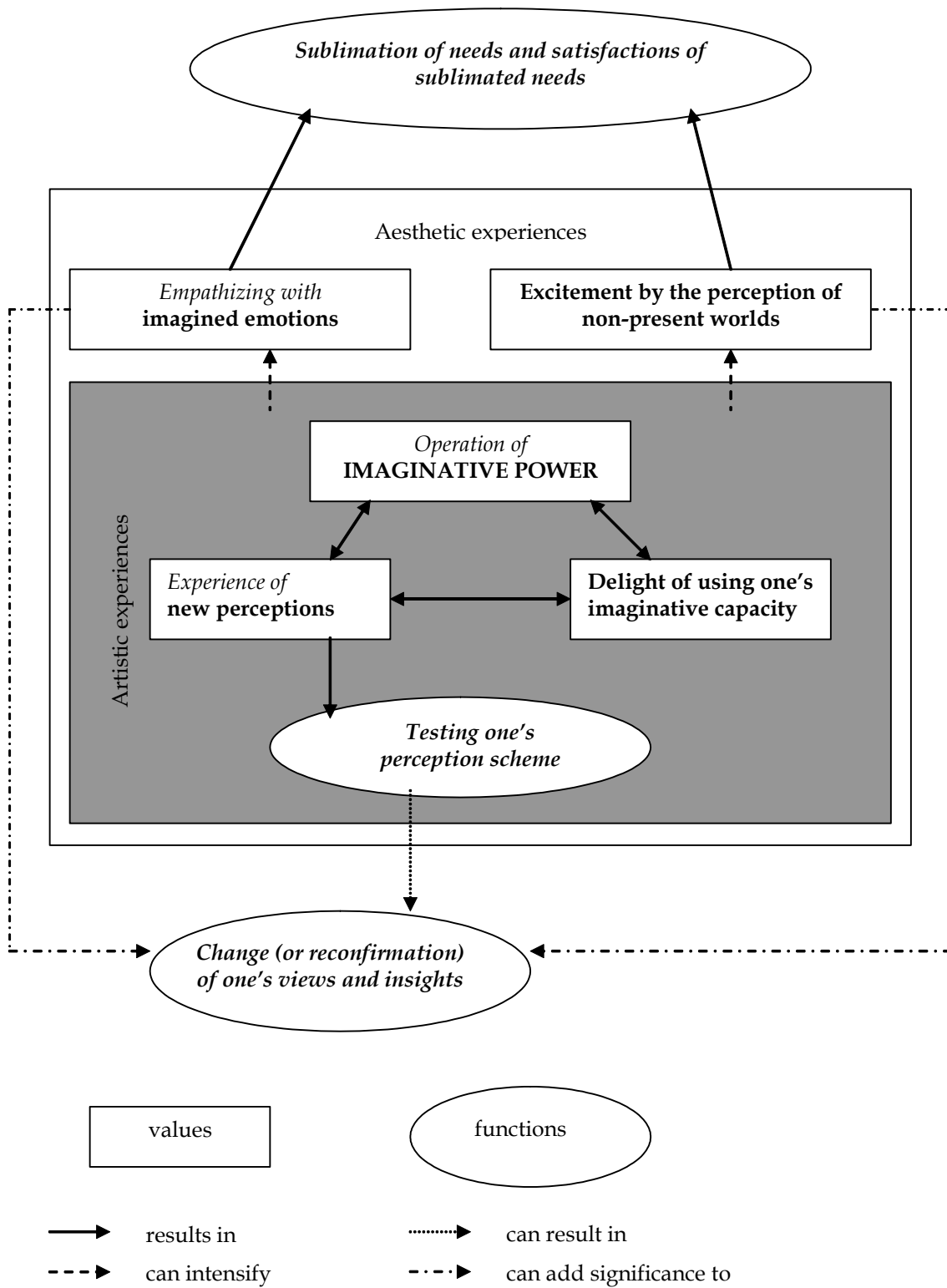
<sup>28</sup> Note that Van Maanen uses both the terms 'imaginative power' and 'imagination'. With the imaginative power he refers to the capacity to develop imaginative thoughts which is a process that involves both the imaginative power and the perception of a spectator. With 'imagination' (here: imaginative thought) he refers to the temporary scheme of perception that is the result of the combined effort of the perception and imaginative power of a person (Van Maanen, 2004, p. 251). This points to the fact that artistic reception involves a skill that can be trained.

<sup>29</sup> Figure 6.1 has been altered at two points from Van Maanen (2004). First, Van Maanen represents the relationship between the signifier and the signified as strained. However, within the sign itself there can never be tension between the signifier and the signified. For instance, a tree leaf painted blue (signifier) can relate perfectly well to the concept of 'a blue tree leaf' (signified). As tree leaves are never blue in real life – they are green in spring and summer and yellow and/or red in autumn – the tension in the sign system occurs between the signifier, signified on the one hand and the referent on the other. This is why there is a straight arrow between signifier and signified. Second, the word imaginative thought has been used, rather than 'imagination'.



**Figure 6.1** The process of producing an artistic aesthetic experience  
(edited from: Van Maanen, 2004, p.251)

delight of using one's imaginative capacity and the experience of new perceptions which derive directly from the use of one's imaginative power. These are values of the experience. The experience of new perceptions can lead to changing understandings and views in the spectator. This means that the imaginative thought is 'internalized' in the spectator's perception scheme and thus becomes the basis for new understanding. Furthermore Van Maanen discerns two values which derive from the experience but they are not necessarily based upon the artistic nature of the experience: excitement caused by the perception of things that are not really happening, and the experience of emotions by empathizing with the feelings expressed by the actors. These are values of the aesthetic experience as well, only they do not depend on the artistic nature and also occur for non-artistic aesthetic experiences. Even more so, it is easy to imagine that, for aesthetic experience which are in nature, these two values will be enhanced. The emotions imagined can be new emotions (and therefore need imaginative thought to be perceived meaningfully) and the non-present situations can be close to or further away from the known experience of a spectator (and therefore in need of new imaginative thought as well). The artistic nature of the experience enhances these common features of aesthetic experience. One more remark ought to be made concerning these two values. When experiencing the emotions portrayed by the actors, this can emphasize the importance of the new understandings which are generated in the



**Figure 6.2. Values and functions of aesthetic experiences**  
(edited from Van Maanen, 2004, p. 253)

spectator. The same can be argued for the perception of non-present worlds. When one is intrigued by the world that is being presented in the work (because it is beautiful, magical or a hitherto unknown musical universe) this can add significance to the resulting



understanding.<sup>30</sup> One important feature of art, as opposed to science, is that the knowledge one receives is imbued with a feeling of the importance of this knowledge. In other words, the cognition that is generated in art (through the change in one's perception scheme) is not value-free. This is why there are arrows connecting these values to the change of views and insights in Figure 6.2. Finally, empathy with imagined emotions and the excitement of the perception of non-present worlds lead to the sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs.

The effects of artistic and aesthetic experience have been depicted in Figure 6.2. This figure differs from that of Van Maanen (2004) in three ways. First – as has been mentioned above – arrows have been added to indicate the significance aesthetic values can give to the resulting change of views. Second, to mark the difference between the non-artistic and artistic nature of the experience more clearly, a box has been added around the grey area which represents the artistic nature in order to denote the non-artistic nature. Third, the process involving the use of the imaginative power has been elaborated in the figure. A step has been added: the use of the imaginative power gives rise to two types of values, the delight of using one's imaginative power and the experience of new perceptions. These may lead to testing of one's existing perception schemes. In the long run, the experience can lead to a change of one's views and understandings. This function lies outside the experience itself, it is a consequence of it and is cognitive rather than perceptual. Thus, the fact that the experience of new perceptions does not automatically give rise to the development of new views and understandings is incorporated in the model. There are several possibilities:

- After a long or shorter period of interpretation, the imaginative thought turns out not to be new at all. A person's views and understandings may not need to be changed at all, they are actually confirmed by the experience. But some perceptions that had previously lain in the background of the perception scheme have now been highlighted and have become more prominent. This means that the perception scheme has indeed changed; its arrangement now has a different order. A spectator's reaction to the performance might be: 'This is what I have always felt to be true and how clever of the artist(s) to make this so poignantly clear.'<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Van Maanen himself does not seem to recognize this for the latter value. In his view, only the empathizing with imagined emotions can be linked to the artistic nature of the experience. However, he does not explain why this is not possible for the excitement resulting from the perception of non-present worlds as well.

<sup>31</sup> This category may very well comprise the vast majority of aesthetic experiences which are artistic in nature, as Kieran writes, following Carroll:

Normally, art seeks to deepen our pre-existent understandings by drawing out the implications of certain already-held presumptions (...). Indeed, art works often do not even so much as deepen our understanding, but serve to revivify impressions or understandings we have already (...), by foregrounding in peculiarly vivid and striking ways aspects of ourselves, or others or the world (Kieran, 2001, p. 221).

As discussed in section 6.1.5, the use of the term 'understandings' is problematic. Because Kieran also refers to impressions (and writes in the plural, not the singular understanding) it can very well be concluded that he refers to what Van Maanen denotes as 'perceptions'.

- The imaginative thought may not be new in the sense of 'hitherto unknown' but the experience may prompt a spectator to apply it to a different situation in which he or she had not thought that the specific perception was appropriate to use. This is what happens for instance when a spectator is overwhelmed by the beauty of an experience.
- The imaginative thought may be in serious conflict with the perception scheme of a spectator. In this case, he or she needs to make a major accommodation in his/her perception scheme (which will probably only occur when such conflicts arise repeatedly and are not based upon one single experience) or he/she will reject the imaginative thought as not relevant or viable after a process of consideration; in so doing, he/she will confirm his or her views and understandings.<sup>32</sup>
- The imaginative thought is new but the spectator is able to accommodate it. This will lead to new views and insights. However, one should note that it is not possible to indicate when this will exactly happen. It might occur directly after the performance, it might also take years for the spectator to mull over the experience. What may happen, though, is that the spectator will be able to formulate an articulation of the experience which either indicates the questions he or she is considering, or the conclusions he or she has reached on the basis of the considerations. This type of articulation is neither part of the experience, nor is it an indicator that the experience has become artistic.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the new insight can also recede into the background of one's perception scheme, or be rejected after new experiences which contest it. A person might even revert to his or her 'old' views.

These instances make clear that an aesthetic experience which is artistic in nature does not automatically have lasting cognitive effects which lead a person to think and act differently. However, the use of one's imaginative power can give rise to such pleasure (or delight) that the experience is characterized as meaningful, without it leading to new understandings and views. This is why the use of the imaginative power is the crucial characteristic of the experience. Consequently, all four instances above are instances in which the aesthetic experience is artistic in its nature. A verbal articulation of the experience is possible – not necessary – only in the last two instances.

Van Maanen's view on the artistic nature of aesthetic experience may seem very strict. This distinction, however, does not coincide with the difference between subsidized and non-subsidized culture, or 'low' or 'popular' culture and 'high' or 'elite' art. In principal aesthetic

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<sup>32</sup> It may seem odd to include this last possibility. However, not changing one's views and understandings does not simply imply that the experience has not been challenging for the subject. He or she has been invited to deliberate on existing perceptions, but opts not to respond to this challenge by changing his or her views and understandings. Such an experience will be more demanding than a comfortable experience where no debate on views and understandings is evoked at all.

<sup>33</sup> The opposite may even be true, for one can suggest that when an experience is comfortable, i.e., it fits in the existing perception schemes of the subject, a subject may be capable of developing a linguistic expression of the experience more easily than when the experience has been challenging.

experiences of more complex or less complex art languages can be artistic in nature, provided that the imaginative power has to be invoked to aid perception (Van Maanen, 1998, p. 42). This means that in popular culture aesthetic experience also can be artistic in nature.<sup>34</sup> This concurs with the pragmatist view of aesthetic experience as voiced by Shusterman (see section 6.1.3). This certainly does not mean that all *cultural* experiences are equally valuable from a policy point of view and thus eligible for government subsidies, as some relativists on cultural policy have suggested.<sup>35</sup> The *artistic* nature of the experience is indeed something special with its own value, even though it can occur with or without direct government intervention. It does not depend on either the complexity of the art work or on the competence of the spectator in deciphering cultural languages or codes.

Van Maanen seems to be well aware that this is a quite strict interpretation of art. He refers to it as 'art in a narrow sense' (*'kunst in enge zin'*, Van Maanen, 1998, p. 30, and 2005b, p. 70). Art can be defined as aesthetic symbol systems that afford an experience in which the imaginative power has to be invoked. Art forms part of the aesthetic symbol systems which merely address perception (*'kunst in ruime zin'* [art in a broad sense] or *'cultuur in enge zin'* [culture in a narrow sense]), which in turn form a part of the culture in general: systems for rendering meaning such as religion, the press, science, education and art (Van Maanen, 1998, p. 31; see also *Pantser of Ruggegraat*, 1995, p. 4). In his quest to identify the specific artistic nature of the experience, Van Maanen seems to disregard effects that can arise from non-artistic aesthetic experience. In the preceding discussion, this has been added to his analysis. Furthermore it is important to note that the experience is framed not only by the culture in which the performance occurs but also by organizations in which the performance takes place. Van Maanen discerns the *communicative frame* which 'forms itself during the event on the basis of what the perception systems of the spectators have in common with the perceptions materialized during the performance' (Van Maanen, 2004, p. 254). Aesthetic experience takes place within the communicative frame, albeit conditioned by the other frames. The communicative frame is encapsulated by the *organizational frame* which 'organizes the physical aspects of the meeting within which the theatrical event takes place' (*ibid.*, p. 260). Specifically, it organizes the aesthetic and social conditions under which the theatrical event occurs, including mechanisms to induce the proper attitude to experience a work.<sup>36</sup> The last frame is the *institutional frame*, which consists of a move from individual

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<sup>34</sup> And subsequently in non-subsidized settings.

<sup>35</sup> In part, Van Maanen's article from 1998 is an attack on a Dutch study on the values that visitors to non-regular performing-arts events (i.e., amateur arts and events occurring in bars and other non-regular venues) attach to these events, which according to this research do not differ from the criteria that the advisory boards for cultural subsidies use (Van der Blij, 1995). The research led to some debate on the exclusion of parts of cultural life from government support, such as the circus (see Van der Blij and Langenberg, 1996). Van Maanen's effort was to clarify the mystification of the terms art (*kunst*) and culture (*cultuur*) which was present in the policy documents as well (see section 4.1.1).

<sup>36</sup> Note that the organizational frame is not flexible enough to adapt to all types of aesthetic experiences. This means that the organizational frame imposes certain reception conditions and therefore encourages certain types of works. Consequently, dedicated organizational settings for various art forms have developed.

performances to the level of 'the abstract structure of historically developed relations between institutes' (*ibid.*, p. 267). More specifically, the historically developed systems of production, distribution and reception of theatre – in short: the artworld or theatre world – condition the theatrical event. Each frame influences the perception systems of the spectators and the artists (and thus the perception system presented in the performance), thus shaping the possible communication that can take place between these perception systems. Moreover, the frames influence the conditions under which this communication takes place. With the description of the organizational and institutional frames, the institutional approach is combined with the functional. For the purpose of this chapter, however, the description of the core of the theatrical event suffices. In Chapter 10, the organizational and institutional frames will be added to the analysis under the term 'organizational setting'.

With this account of aesthetic experience, the discussion focuses on the experience of theatre. Although this account can be applied to other art forms, it seems that it is particularly suitable to the fictional and dramatic nature of theatre, and it may also apply to the more abstract forms of the performing arts, such as music and dance. However, as already noted, Van Maanen's account concurs with observations by Zeglin Brand (1998) and Schaeffer (1998), who write about the experience of visual arts. Furthermore, the fact that it also may be applied to other art forms can be demonstrated by deliberating on the experience of beauty. McMahon argues – in concurrence with Kantian aesthetics – that though there may be no principles of beauty, judgements of beauty are universal (McMahon, 2001, p. 229). However, she allows that some judgements of beauty may be universally shared, others depend on the specific aesthetic practices of the culture from which the subject originates (such as Japanese tea ceremonies for instance) and thus can be inaccessible to 'the uninitiated' (*ibid.*, p. 236). Nevertheless, she proposes that the structure of the experience of beauty is the same. In her view, the experience of beauty is a matter of becoming aware of the principles of form which are embedded in the visual system of the beholder.

These perceptual principles would constitute a part of the architecture of the mind, and as such, could not themselves be represented explicitly and unequivocally in language (...). Perhaps certain relations in the object, in the course of being perceived, challenge or stretch the relevant perceptual principles in an unprecedented or non-typical way. On the other hand, the relation of the elements within some objects, such as natural forms (and those art works which mimic these forms), might epitomize these principles. (McMahon, 2001, pp. 235-6).

McMahon's assertion that the perception principles of beauty cannot be represented in language although they are a part of one's 'architecture of the mind' relates her concept of beauty to Van Maanen's perception schemes. What McMahon describes is the process of challenging a perception scheme, in this case, a person's perception of what beauty is or can be. Thus, it can be inferred that Van Maanen's aesthetic theory also comprises the experience of beauty and that perception schemes should not be regarded as only applying to linguistically expressible schemata. As a result, the theory presented here is not restricted to 'linguistic' forms of art such as dramatic arts and literature, but can be extended to the experience of abstract art forms such as music, dance and abstract visual arts as well.

### 6.3. Summary: Intrinsic Values and Functions of Performing Arts

Based upon the foregoing discussion, it is now possible to give a description of the aesthetic experience of performing arts. The aesthetic experience is not an experience that is separate from daily life. It forms an integral part of the experiences of life and is an important building block of people's life styles. Aesthetic experiences are a way to express one's identity, and also to examine it. This means that the experience can occur in popular culture as well as in elitist forms of culture, and has value for people. The aesthetic experience involves knowledge of the sign languages employed in the object, otherwise the experience will have no meaning. The knowledge necessary is a complex matter, encompassing different layers:

- Everyday knowledge to be able to understand what is being represented.
- Iconographical knowledge to decipher specifically culturally embedded codes (such as religious iconography).
- Knowledge of the signs within a specific art form (e.g. musical or theatrical signs)
- Knowledge of codes within specific subcultures.
- Knowledge of the appropriate attitude to experience the work (and the willingness and capability to adopt such an attitude).

This knowledge results in what can be denoted as cultural competence. Cultural competence is not evenly distributed in society. It is learned through the education system and through prolonged contact with cultural goods. The match between the sign systems used in the cultural object and the cultural competence of the subject largely influences the pleasure gained from the experience. This does not mean that there should always be an exact match. The experience can be stimulating on the basis of the fact that the subject has to learn new codes because his or her competence is not sufficient to fully understand the object's meaning immediately. The subject is challenged to embark on a process of discovery of the object's meaning. But the opposite can also hold true: the subject is more than competent to understand the object. In that case, the experience can be relaxing or even boring.

It is important to note that the pleasure derived from the experience not only depends on the competence of the subject but also on his or her state of mind at the time of consumption. For instance, fatigue or preoccupation with something else can greatly influence the experience. This point relates to the attitude of the subject. Though there is some debate about the 'proper' attitude for aesthetic experience, there seems to be agreement on the fact that the subject should focus on the object and allow the formal arrangement of the work to guide the perception (sympathy towards the work). However, there are different types of this attitude. The subject can either distance himself/ herself from the work, i.e., contemplate it or become immersed into the work, which is called absorption. The formal arrangement of elements in the work can be expected to be designed in such a way as to induce the most proper attitude to experience the work. Good art enforces the attitude in which it should be properly perceived. For the performing arts, specific customs, such as dimming of the lights, tuning of the instruments, are designed to induce this kind of focus on the work itself (these are

devices from the organizational frame). The value of an aesthetic experience is *in* the perception of the object. This means that the value of the experience lies on the perceptual level. However, an aesthetic experience can yield emotional and cognitive values.

It should be recognized that aesthetic experience cannot be disconnected from daily life. Several authors point to this, most explicitly Shusterman and Tulloch. Therefore, the aesthetic experience should always be framed within its specific context because this context generates meaning and value in the experience; it is not only the artwork – in the performing arts, the single performance – that generates meaning. In general, these contexts are generated from different frames with an ascending order of generality:

- *Characteristics of the physical location.* Different types of locations for the performing arts confer different meanings and values upon the experiences offered there. A performance in a tent or the open air can provide totally different values than a performance in a classical theatre venue or concert hall (organizational frame).
- *Personal circumstances of performers and audience members.* The events of the day or week surrounding the aesthetic experience influence the meaning that will be generated for audience members as well as the reasons why they visit a specific performance.
- *Personal characteristics of the audience.* Audience members differ in their knowledge of cultural languages, their socio-economic status and (ethnic) sub-group identities. This will be reflected in their value orientations which direct the types of values they seek to realize in aesthetic experience and strategies of experiencing. Most notable is the fact that people who have enjoyed more education tend to be more omnivorous in their taste preferences than people with lower education levels. Nevertheless, all groups realize certain value in aesthetic experience, this is not the privileged domain of the cultural 'haves' which is defended against the 'have nots' (cultural competence and perception schemes of spectators including the proficiency in deciphering cultural codes and in engaging the imaginative power).
- *Subcultural differences.* Different groups in society will have different value orientations which place specific values on specific cultural practices. These differences exist between ethnic sub-groups, or they can be based on regional cultures or education or occupation. For the performing arts in particular, the different cultural position of outdoors leisure activities can influence the value of an experience (cultural competence, specifically knowledge of the proper attitude to experience the work).
- *Societal differences.* The arts or the particular art form in question can have a specific position in society which affords it a specific meaning. The economically oppressed position of black music in the United States is an example. The position of the artworld within a general culture is what is being referred to here. For instance, the position of historic artefacts differs immensely between the Western world and fundamental Islamic cultures as has been shown by the destruction of Buddhist

statues in Afghanistan (institutional frame, or position of the field of culture within the fields of economy and power relations).

This means that aesthetic experience cannot be studied as an autonomous phenomenon. The value generated by these experiences is not determined by the artwork in and by itself. Different people seek different types of values in the aesthetic experience, and thus employ different strategies in their experiencing. Accordingly, different art forms can have specific homogeneous audiences. However, the performing arts in particular are effective in uniting different public members on the same experience, although this experience will rarely afford the same values for all audience members.

The experience of the performing arts has a specific three-phase structure. In the first phase, there is either an initial hook or a gradual process by which the subject becomes intrigued by the performance. This means that the subject lets his or her perception be guided by the elements in the work. During the second phase, the subject follows the performance on a perceptual level. Cognitive activities are usually constricted to following the action of a play or the movements of dancers or themes in a concert. This can either mean that the subject is absorbed by the performance or that he or she alternates between different perspectives to follow the performance. The demarcation between the first two phases is blurred with regard to time. The experience may be followed by a third phase which occurs after the performance has ended. In this phase, the cognitive processes take over. These processes are most markedly present when the experience becomes artistic: the subject tries to meet the challenge put forward by the performance and to make sense of it. The subject might use different perspectives (interests) to make sense of the performance and thus enhance its meaning. This can also occur through conversation with fellow audience members. However, cognitive processes of this kind can also occur during the performance when the performance poses a limited challenge for the spectator, which is met during the performance itself. This phase can be called the interpretative phase. However, its occurrence or absence is not indicative of the artistic nature of the experience.

Non-artistic aesthetic experiences and artistic aesthetic experiences give rise to certain values which, in turn, can give rise to functions. These are indicated in Figure 6.3. All of these values and subsequent functions are linked to the intrinsic aesthetic and artistic nature of the experience. It therefore seems necessary to distinguish between aesthetically intrinsic values and functions and artistically intrinsic values and functions. The next step in the research is to relate these values and functions, as they have been determined on the basis of the discussion of art-sociological literature, to the functions that have been found in the policy documents. This is the topic of the next chapter.

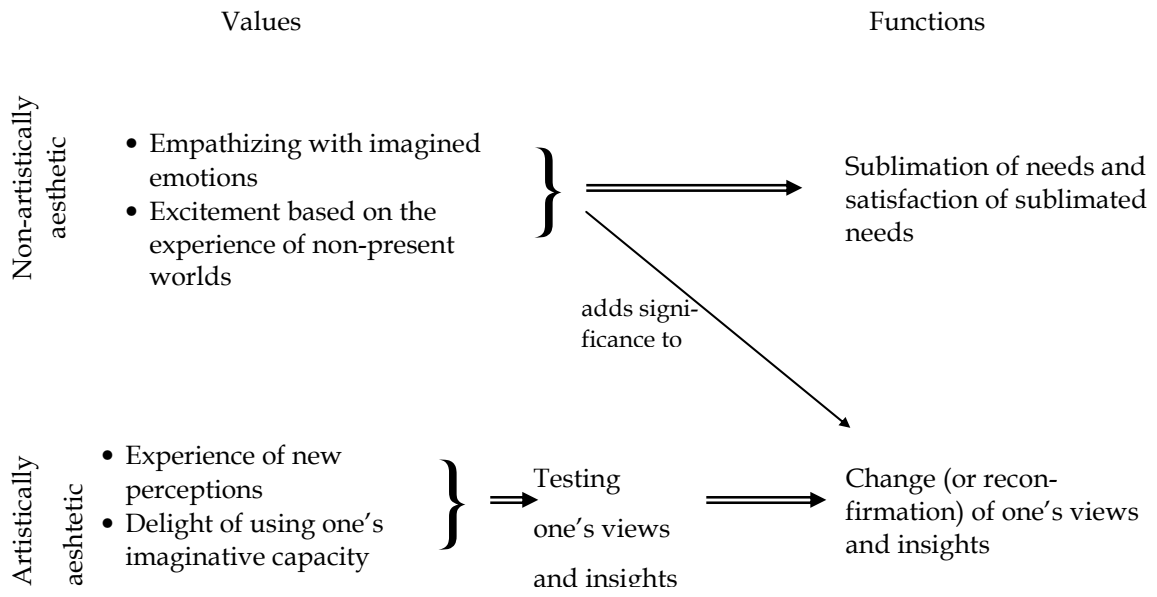


Figure 6.3 Intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience.



## 7. Aesthetic Experience and Functioning in Society: Intrinsic Functioning in Theory and Policy Practice

### 7.1. Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society under Conditions of Autonomy

Chapters 5 and 6 have addressed two key issues concerning the functioning of performing arts in society: the autonomy of art and the distinction between aesthetic experience and artistic experience, or rather: non-artistically and artistically aesthetic experiences.

On the one hand, the autonomy of art is a precondition for art's functioning in society. Artists should be free to choose the subject matter, the expressive media and the manner in which they explore these media in order for art to perform its functions in society, specifically the more critical functions. The free exploration of expressive media leads to unexpected results which are generally expected from artistic activity: the elements of surprise, fantasy and creativity are intimately bound to aesthetic experience. On the other hand, art's autonomy appears to limit the functioning of art in society. Based on the institutional paradigm, the suggestion has been advanced that artistic development in Western societies has taken a self-referential turn which has led to uncertainty as to how art should be valued and to a decrease in art's audiences. Only expert audiences are able to follow art's developments and therefore art's impact on society has become limited, for it only affects small proportions of society that have an appropriate cultural competence and *habitus* for 'properly' experiencing art. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the supposed functions of art in society are a weapon in the struggle for dominance in the cultural field. This means that the actions of agents in the artworld, and even the statements they make on art's functioning in society, are normative. They institute a 'proper' way of experiencing art and a 'proper' functioning of art excluding other groups and functions from the field of art.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this concept of art's autonomy makes is perfectly feasible for the arts to function autonomously within heteronomously defined contexts. The example of the *Blue Moon* festival in Groningen, cited in the Introduction, can be used to explain this. One of the festival's aims was to draw the citizens' attention to a new part of town. This means that the aesthetic activities employed have to relate to the setting of the new city district, which is heteronomously defined by the city administration, but the artists should determine how they react aesthetically to this situation, i.e., how they imaginatively explore their mediums to either contribute to or criticize this heteronomously defined situation. Such can also be the case with artists working in school settings where they have the assignment to make their work function within the school setting, without being told *how* to do this.

These issues are a result of the professionalization of artists. However, it has also been shown that the professionalization (and thus autonomization) of art is incomplete. For instance, professional artists have not been successful in blocking self-taught artists from entering the field of cultural production. Furthermore, new genres may have been denied entrance but have nevertheless gained recognition through quite the same type of mechanisms of autonomization. This means that multiple fields of production have arisen, and this weakens the claim of traditional art forms to yielding the 'correct' and most valuable art products and/or experiences. As a result of the greater social mobility of people and technological development of media and means of dissemination, the mechanisms for autonomization have been weakened and thus the distinction between high and low culture has become irrelevant. Though it seems true that subsidies in Western societies tend to favour already established art forms and the policy system may be slow in absorbing new ones, this has nevertheless happened, as can be seen by the example of pop music. This does not mean that subsidized arts have no societal functions, it only means that such functions can also be found elsewhere. A striking feature of Bourdieu's field theory is that it reduces the actions of agents in the field of cultural production to strategic decisions in the struggle for dominance in the field. However, it has been suggested that this represents a limited interpretation of Bourdieu's theory. It cannot be ruled out that the decisions of agents in cultural fields are based upon their vision on the *functions* of art in society. Although the institutional paradigm certainly points to limitations of art's functioning in society, it does not exclude art's functioning altogether. Institutional theories are even dependent on the notion of a function of art *as art* in society.

The notion of disinterestedness, the contemplation of cultural objects for their own sake, is crucial to the functional paradigm. This view of aesthetic experience seems to preclude any interests one might have in the object, and thus art's functioning in society becomes a difficult matter. However, Chapter 5 demonstrated that this traditional view represents a limited interpretation of Kantian aesthetics as Kant does proclaim that art's function is to communicate knowledge of the world, albeit in its own specific way, namely through aesthetic means. Furthermore, as was demonstrated in Chapter 6, there are multiple ways to experience art. Disinterested contemplation can be regarded as 'following the rules of the art object to let it do its job'. This has been called 'sympathy towards the work'. It has also been shown that the engagement with art objects can be active and involved. Absorption into the work is a viable way to aesthetically experience artworks, as long as one takes an active interest in it. Furthermore, one can alternate between different, specific interests in order to experience a work, a way of contemplation that has been described as shedding and adding specific lenses to the art work to discover multiple meanings. It also has been shown that different groups can take different interests in the same artworks and thus experience them differently. They attach different values to the experience of the same art works.

The functional paradigm suits the present research for it focuses on the specific functions of art in society. Nonetheless, it depends on the institutional paradigm because, for art works to

function aesthetically, it relies upon cultural or art institutions with reception practices that aid in developing appropriate attitudes in audience members. Institutional and functional theories complement one another. A closer inspection of both paradigms leads to the conclusion that there only is 'relative' autonomy for the arts in Western society (Van Maanen, 2008a). As Shusterman puts it:

... there is no compelling reason to accept the narrowly aesthetic limits imposed by the established ideology of autonomous art (or indeed its traditional definition of the aesthetic as utterly disengaged from life's practical and material interests). Nor does challenging the established form of artistic autonomy mean rejecting the whole idea of a relatively autonomous institution of art. (Shusterman, 1992, p. 143)

The separation of art from society is not as absolute as it seems. Even art practices in dedicated institutions can coincide with everyday non-artistic praxis without threatening the possibility for art to function in a specific, aesthetic way (either non-artistically or artistically), i.e., *as art*.

This leads to some important points for this research:

- The research outcomes cannot be generalized to beyond Western cultures. The research depends on the Western phenomenon of (relative) autonomization of culture and art. In cultures where art forms are more closely connected to other social activities, such as funerals and weddings, the values that are attached to the experience of these art forms are quite different. Thus the functioning of art and culture in these societies cannot be studied in the same way.
- The way in which advisory boards evaluate artistic quality is crucial in the development of autonomy in the arts. It is also crucial in the possibilities of the functioning of the subsidized arts in particular in society. When advisory boards only pay attention to the development of artistic languages and not to their dissemination in society, the functioning of the subsidized arts appears to remain limited to specific audiences.
- Because of the fact that the (subsidized) arts have a limited audience, it is important to know how the arts can function in society for those who do not attend performances. Furthermore, the composition of audiences is a measuring point in evaluating art policy.
- The research into the functioning of art in society cannot be based upon specific properties of cultural objects themselves, but should be based on the specific nature of the *experience* of such objects. The functioning of culture and art in society occurs through the values that cultural activities generate for individuals. These values can yield certain functions for the individual, and both the individual values and functions can yield functions on a collective level. A thorough description of the aesthetic experience is therefore at the basis of this research.

The closer look at the nature of the aesthetic experience (in Chapter 6) has revealed that the values such experiences generate should be divided into non-artistically aesthetic values, which can yield certain non-artistically aesthetic functions, and artistically aesthetic values,

which can yield artistically aesthetic functions.<sup>2</sup> The non-artistically aesthetic values can add significance to the artistically aesthetic functions. The artistically aesthetic values and subsequent functions depend on the fact that the subject has invoked his or her imaginative power in order to generate a meaningful experience. Thus the simple model of the functioning of the performing arts, as introduced in the first chapter, has been refined in two ways. First, the refinement involves enabling specific values of the aesthetic experience for the spectator. Subsequently, these values can give rise to functions for the individual spectator, and both the values and functions on individual level can give rise to functions at the collective level.<sup>3</sup> Second, the refinement involves the distinction between non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values and functions within what has been denoted as intrinsic functioning. There are two non-artistically aesthetic values: the excitement of the experience of non-present worlds and empathizing with imagined emotions that yield the function of the sublimation of needs and the satisfaction of sublimated needs. There are three artistically aesthetic values: delight in the use of one's imaginative power, the experience of new perceptions, and the testing of one's views and insights.

The personal development that has been connected to art in the policy document can therefore be understood as development of one's perception. This can lead to a change of one's perception but this is not necessary for the experience to be artistic in its nature. A reconfirmation of previously held views can also occur, as long as the views have been challenged during (or as a result of) the experience. Furthermore, the perception scheme of a subject need not always be expanded as a result of the realization of artistically aesthetic values. The experience can also lead to a new order in the scheme where previously held perceptions have become more prominent. Some people, mostly those with a *habitus* for doing so, will be able to express verbally an interpretation of the experience. Some art forms, such as drama, are more prone to generating interpretations than others, such as dance and music. Their text-based nature and presentation of a storyline which enables the development of propositional knowledge facilitate developing a verbally expressible interpretation of the work. But interpretation is neither part of the experience itself nor an indicator for its artistic nature. At this point, the question ought to be posed as to whether or not all functions realized are dependent on the values. Van Maanen suggests that there is an instrumental relationship between values, functions on a personal level, and societal functions. However, he also writes:

Generally speaking, values form a means to realize functions. The result of this is that functions, in contrast to values, can also be realized by activities other than artistic ones. Social coherence, open-mindedness or autonomous citizenship can also be achieved by participating in sports, watching television, reading books or (...) attending debate series. There is only one function

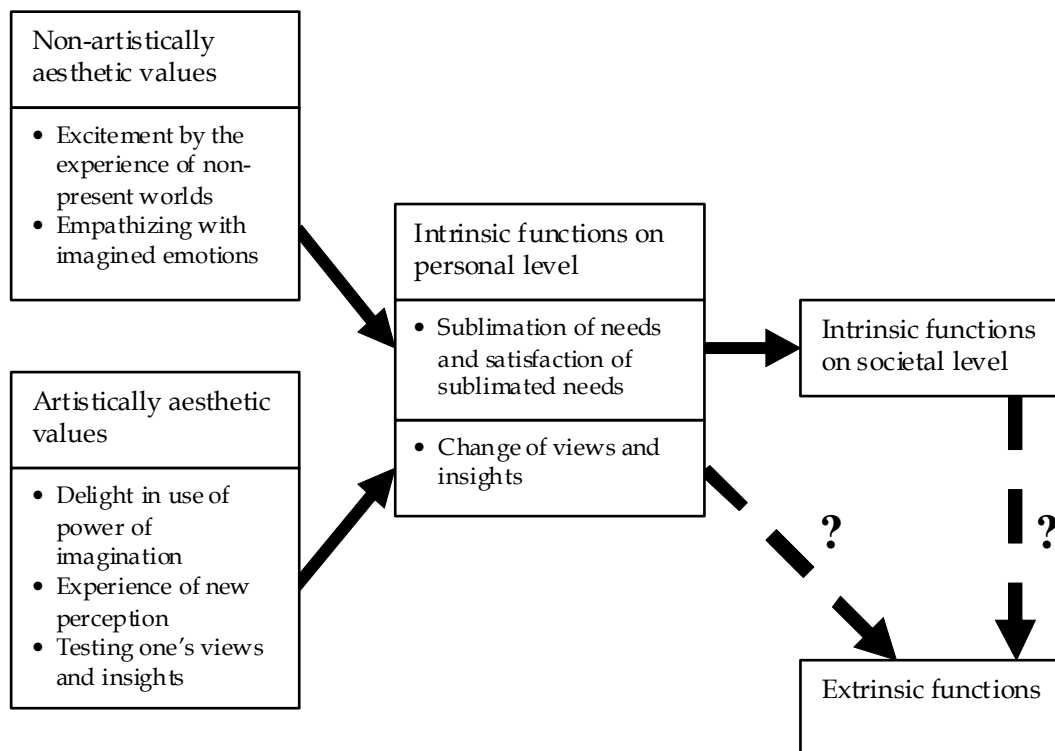
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<sup>2</sup> Plus of course the extrinsic values, which do not derive from the aesthetic communication itself but from the 'organizational setting' within which the aesthetic experience is realized; i.e., the physical organization of the meeting of the artwork and audiences, and the institutional relations between the arts organizations.

<sup>3</sup> Van Maanen distinguishes between values, functions and societal benefits (Van Maanen, 2005b, p. 73).

that can be called purely art-intrinsic and that is the development of the power of imagination. The use of this power is the inalienable core of artistic value. (Van Maanen, 2005b, p. 74)

In other words, the functions based upon the non-artistically aesthetic nature of the experience can all be realized by other activities as well. It seems obvious that participating in a football match between gay and Muslim sportsmen, for instance, as has been staged on several occasions in the Netherlands, can be helpful in generating mutual understanding between different groups in society. The integration of young asylum seekers in the Netherlands has been proven to occur successfully through membership of an amateur sports club.<sup>4</sup> The question remains as to whether or not cultural events can be specifically successful in this respect because they operate on the perceptive level. Specifically those societal functions that aim at fostering mental abilities of the population might best be served by cultural activities. This issue should be investigated in more detail (see Chapter 9). In the present research, both the non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values of the aesthetic experience and their subsequent functions at personal and societal levels are relevant. This means that the intrinsic values and functions used in the model for evaluating art policy can include both the non-artistically and the artistically aesthetic values and functions. The inter-relationship of functions and values is depicted in Figure 7.1. The instrumental relationship is as follows. The non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values of the aesthetic experience are instrumental to intrinsic functions on a personal level, which, in turn, are



**Figure 7.1 Interdependence of intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience**

<sup>4</sup> See *GVAV Rapiditas Integratieproject Allochtonen*, Groningen: GVAV Rapiditas, February 2006.

instrumental to intrinsic functions on a societal level. It is a matter for debate as to the extent to which the extrinsic functions are dependent on the intrinsic functions, as has been suggested in some of the policy documents, specifically for the social domain. In Figure 7.1, the relationship has therefore been indicated with dotted arrows. The relation between intrinsic and extrinsic functions is researched in Part III of this book. Chapter 8 deals with the economic domain and Chapter 9 with the social domain. In the remainder of this chapter, the intrinsic functions on personal and societal levels are discussed. The intrinsic functions found in the policy documents should be related to the values and functions as found in theory.

## 7.2. Relating the Intrinsic Functions from Theory to Those in the Policy Documents

### 7.2.1. Personal Experience

In the policy documents, the aesthetic experience has been described as an emotional experience (being addressed at emotional level, being surprised, being impressed, being bewildered). It involves experiencing something unique (beauty, uniqueness, aesthetic form) and can be entertaining, although a question arose here regarding the nature of the entertainment: relaxation versus what has been indicated as 'intellectual' entertainment. Imagination and fantasy have also been mentioned as part of the experience (see Table 4.1). Questions have risen about the specific artistic nature of the experience and the relationship between artistic quality and the nature of the experience.

The emotional nature of the aesthetic experience is also evident in theory. The experience of non-present worlds and empathizing with presented emotions can generate an enjoyable experience and subsequently aid in the affect-regulation of persons. Sharing experiences with other audience members can enhance the experience as well as the beauty of forms, the uniqueness or authenticity of the performance (either through the star quality of the performance or through the uniqueness of the art languages employed, or both). These qualities can enhance the experience (make it profound) but the *artistic* nature of the experience does not reside in them. Moreover, the perception of non-present worlds can invite a person to use his or her fantasy and empathize with imagined emotions.

The artistic nature of the aesthetic experience is connected with the fact that the imaginative power is being invoked to produce an imaginative thought which makes the experience into a meaningful perception. The use of the imaginative power gives rise to delight, which is a value of the experience. This makes clear what the difference between relaxation and 'intellectual entertainment' is. The experience can be merely relaxing when it does not challenge the perception system of the subject. However, when the perception system is challenged, this should not be regarded as simply putting effort into the experience, rather than facilitating a pleasurable or entertaining experience. It enhances the pleasure derived from it. This can be explained by the fact that a challenging experience gives rise to tensions. The incongruity between the referent, the signifier and the signified causes tension between

the referent and the perception scheme of the subject which can only be relieved by producing an imaginative thought. This gives rise to a feeling of relaxation and to delight that can be experienced on the basis of the fact that one has been able to resolve such tensions. The use of the imaginative power thus gives rise to pleasure, which can be regarded as 'intellectual entertainment'. Both types of entertainment should be considered as intrinsic because they are linked to the aesthetic values (be they non-artistic or artistic) of the experience. However, this does not mean that cell 'D' of Table 4.6 is empty. This is because there is yet another form of relaxation that is relevant here, which has not been hinted at in the policy documents. Aesthetic experiences in themselves can be a source of relaxation because, to the participant, they represent a break from everyday routines. Attending the performing arts (usually) means that one ventures outside, meets other people and, during the experience, one is submerged in a totally different world. This in itself offers a recreational form of relaxation. However, this form of relaxation is also present when going to a football match, dining in a restaurant or going on vacation (although when done routinely, the ensuing relaxation may dwindle; moreover, it should not be forgotten that (parts of) these experiences may also induce much stress). Thus the relaxation resulting from the break from routine should be placed in cell 'D' of Table 4.6.

Furthermore it has now become clear that a distinction should be made between fantasy and imagination. Both have been taken together in Table 4.1. Invoking one's fantasy (in Dutch: *voorstellingsvermogen*) is needed when experiencing non-present worlds and empathizing with emotions of others. However, when the perception scheme of the subject is challenged, the imaginative power has to be invoked (in Dutch: *verbeeldingskracht*). Therefore a distinction between fantasy and imagination is useful, fantasy being a non-artistic aesthetic property of the experience, imagination an artistic aesthetic property.<sup>5</sup> The imaginative

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<sup>5</sup> In the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* the terms 'Imagination' and 'Phantasia' are discussed. 'Imagination is generally held to be the power of forming mental images or other concepts not directly derived from sensation' (Manser, 2006 [1967]). In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes two tasks for the imagination: to complete the necessarily fragmentary data of the senses (e.g., one can only see three sides of a cube at once, but one imagines that there are six sides) and to combine experiences into a single connected world. Kant refers to this as the 'productive imagination'. Both are necessary to create knowledge. Coleridge has taken up Kant's two tasks in distinguishing between the Fancy (a mode of memory which operates mechanically), Primary Imagination (which is Kant's productive imagination) and Secondary Imagination. The Secondary Imagination dissolves, diffuses and dissipates in order to recreate. For Coleridge, this is a vital function of imagination as it helps to discover deeper truths about the world (Manser, 2006 [1967]).

The word 'fantasy' refers to the power to form mental images as well. In Greek philosophy, the word *phantasia* – usually translated as 'imagination' – refers to 'the psychological capacity to receive, interpret and even produce appearances and those appearances themselves' (Sheppard, 2006 [2005], p. 270). Aristotle places *phantasia* between perception and thought. To Aristotle, *phantasia* includes mental images, dreams and hallucinations. It is based on sense perception. 'The Neoplatonists took over Aristotle's concept (...), but developed it in ways of their own. Plotinus (...) suggests that there are two "image-making powers", one that receives images from sense-perception, and one that receives images from the intellect' (*ibid.*, p. 271). Here again two forms of imaginary capacity are discussed, quite similar to Kant's use of the term. In this research, the first is denoted as 'fantasy', the second as 'imagination'. Note that Coleridge's Secondary Imagination occurs at the level of functions of aesthetic experience in terms of this research.

thought puts the existing perception scheme of the subject to the test. This can lead to new views and insights, which means that the imaginative thought becomes permanently embedded in the perception system of the subject, or that its order has been rearranged. This relates personal experience to personal development. Sometimes the experience results in a process of interpretation. All of the *functions* listed under 'personal experience' in Table 4.1 turn out not to be functions of the aesthetic experience at all. They are *values* that can be attained through aesthetic experience.

### 7.2.2. Personal Development

In Table 4.2, personal development has been described as mental development of the spectators (stimulation of the mind, furthering maturity, reflection, reappraisal of values, and personal development as a means to further participation in society). Furthermore, personal development has been characterized as broadening the mental scope of spectators (learning alternative visions on life, experiencing new ways of looking at things, satisfying curiosity, bringing perceived certainties up for discussion and developing the ability to make independent choices) and as rendering significance to events in life and thus finding a secure place in the world mentally.<sup>6</sup> The first two categories can easily be related to the description of the aesthetic experience. Personal development through the arts occurs when the perception schemes of spectators are modified. The significant feature of personal development that occurs through the arts is that it occurs at the level of perception. The arts differ from science in their manner of knowledge generation. The knowledge may be linguistically inarticulate but it is imbued with a sense of importance. Personal development is related to personal experience in the arts: the knowledge is generated through perception.

The issue of knowledge creation automatically refers to the possibilities for artists to express their ideas and views through their works. Note that, to them, such ideas may not even be conscious and expressible in a verbal manner. They manipulate the expressive possibilities of the medium and thus create the meaning. However, the spectator also adds his or her creativity to the experience through the use of imaginative power or through the variety in perception schemes applied to the experience (in the terms of Zeglin Brand: alternating between different interested lenses). This means that spectators can add to the work meanings that artists had not intended or thought of. The mental development and widening of the mental scope of spectators seem to amount to the same thing, thus the categories no longer need be distinguished. They can be summed up under 'development of perception' because it is the perception schemes of spectators that are being developed in the first place. This is an artistically aesthetic function of the experience and relates directly to change of views and insights.

Rendering significance to events in daily life should be regarded as a value generated by the aesthetic experience. As a value, this relates to excitement by the perception of non-present

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<sup>6</sup> Cultural education has also been mentioned in Table 4.2 but this can be disregarded in the present discussion because it is a task for cultural institutions and not a function resulting from aesthetic experience.



worlds and empathizing with imagined emotions, for the significance of what one experiences is mainly related to the emotional aspect of aesthetic experience. The development of perception in aesthetic experience is always accompanied by a sense of the importance of the new perceptions realized. But it can also be related to the artistically aesthetic value of experience of new perceptions, for this is an emotional experience as well. Rendering significance as a value is instrumental to a function on societal level: determining one's identity (or developing one's identity when the experience is artistic) and establishing social structures. To summarize: rendering significance is a value of both non-artistically and artistically aesthetic experience. The development of perception is a function of artistically aesthetic experience.

### **7.2.3. Identity and Debate**

In Table 4.3, the functions of art in society that relate to identity and social interaction have been subdivided into three categories. First, there are the functions relating to the identity of individuals (historic and/or ethnic). This means that people can relate to history or to ethnic groups. Second, there are the functions that relate to social interaction and establishing social structures. This involves bringing people together through shared experiences and representation of (sub-)group identities. This also means developing a sense of community and self-esteem. Third, there are the functions that relate to the confrontation of different (sub)groups in society: debate and clash of ideas. This means one's ideas and perceptions can be tested against those of others, the arts are seen as a free space to experience differences in society. This category can be regarded as a subcategory of the second. However, it is important to note that the debate can be conducive to the peaceful coexistence of different groups, fostering mutual understanding between them. One can be receptive to the culture of others on the basis of a strong sense of one's own culture. This is a politically interesting feature of aesthetic experience. But it can also result in a clash of ideas. Cultural policy tends to overrate the positive side of mutual understanding and promoting elasticity in society while it disregards the more negative side when cultural expression can lead to clashes and tensions in society.

The description of the aesthetic experience in Chapter 6 has not made the functions of identity and debate immediately clear. At several points, however, these functions may be connected to the account of aesthetic experience. It is obvious that one's perception schemes and one's identity are related. Who we are, the views and insights we adhere to, and how we react to certain situations all determine the framework we use to make sense of experiences. The development of one's perception schemes (coupled with a sense of significance) will result in a change in identity and is important in social interaction.<sup>7</sup> People can affirm their identity through cultural activities, through the experience of codes or languages that they have become accustomed to. When the experiences are shared experiences, as is the case

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<sup>7</sup> With this last point, the social policy issues which have been identified as extrinsic functions already become apparent and thus their classification as extrinsic functions is debatable. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

with the performing arts, group identity is affirmed.<sup>8</sup> This may prove to be a very profound experience, but nevertheless it is an act of confirmation that thus strengthens an established identity.

Aesthetic experiences that are artistic in nature invite spectators to use their imaginative power. On the one hand, this may lead to appreciation of new aesthetic forms and thus to development of the group identity. On the other hand, it may lead people to question their views and insights. When the existence of subcultures is defined on the basis of shared beliefs in norms and values (as discussed with reference to the theories of Zijderfeld and Newman in Chapter 1) this means that people can question the identity of the group they belong to or feel they belong to. This may lead spectators to engage in debate with their group members in order to put the shared norms and values up for discussion and subsequently change them. The performing arts seem to be specifically useful in this respect because performing-arts experiences can immediately be shared experiences. However, other art forms may be just as effective in this context, such as visual arts in public spaces for instance. Here, we see a convergence of the interests of an artist aiming at criticizing society and of the spectator experiencing this critique.<sup>9</sup> However, the experience may also have an entirely different effect. The spectators in question may decide not to engage in public debate on what they have experienced and may just decide to quit the group that upholds the morals questioned by the experience. If this means starting to vote for a different political party or donating to a worthy cause or refraining from undertaking actions that might harm people of which one has become aware through the experience, this may be considered as a moral response to the aesthetic experience. Furthermore such an experience may lead people to conclude that the ideas and values to which they adhere are less absolute than they thought them to be. This refers to the propositional knowledge (Davies, 2006, pp. 213-14) that can be attained through aesthetic experience. Specifically dramatic forms of art are capable of 'asking' the audience member to consider what he or she would do in certain circumstances.

The experience of aesthetic forms that one is not accustomed to may lead one to reject these forms and the culture they stem from. This can be regarded as one of the more harmful effects of cultural activities in relation to identity. For instance, older people may feel baffled

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<sup>8</sup> Different art forms can have meaning for certain social groups. Sharing the aesthetic experience can build group identity and different social groups can thus be defined on the basis of the aesthetic traditions in which they participate. Some specific art forms have meaning to them and others do not. In this respect, social groups are sometimes referred to as 'interpretative communities'. Shusterman rightly points to the fact that these should not be regarded as academic critics of art, but as any social group that attaches meaning to certain cultural practices. Academic criticism may help specific groups in adhering such meaning (Shusterman, 1992, p.108). However, based on the discussion of 'interpretation' in Chapter 6, it seems fair to say that 'interpretative community' is not the right term, as meaningful reception can also take place without interpretation and possibly most frequently does.

<sup>9</sup> Note that the organizational and institutional frames that encompass the aesthetic experience may prevent these types of functions, specifically in the contemporary Western artworld where many may not feel 'at home' in formal cultural institutions. Attending performances for this reason alone can thus estrange individuals from their communities of origin, rather than the artistic functioning that results from the experience (see Chapter 9).

at the loudness of music youngsters enjoy. This will not lead to mutual understanding between elderly people and youngsters. Also the overt expression of ethnic or sexual identities in the public sphere, as in carnival parades and the Canal Parade on Gay Pride Day, for instance, may induce appreciation of the culture of 'others' but it can also give rise to rejection of this culture and instigate violent reactions towards it. The debate between cultures will then fail to induce more mutual understanding.

For the present discussion, the foregoing analysis leads to the conclusion that identity is related to perception, and that the affirmation of existing identities may be a result of non-artistically aesthetic experience (when the perception scheme does not alter). A change in a person's perception scheme may lead to a development in identity, thus altering social structures. When the experience has been challenging – without a resulting change in views and insights – this can lead to a clash of identities at collective level.

#### 7.2.4. Summary

The above discussion shows that the intrinsic functions of the aesthetic experience found in the policy documents can be related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience that have been found in theory. The policy documents thus prove to have been written with an ample understanding of the values and functions that arise from aesthetic experience. However, the expression of the functions in the policy documents is less precise than in theory. Therefore the values and functions as found in theory will be used in the remainder of this research. The above discussion is summarized in Table 7.1.

The table indicates that the sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs is still the vaguest of functions. Abbing suggests that the sublimation of needs and the satisfaction of sublimated needs are related to the process of civilization. With the ever-increasing intricacy of society, there is an increasing need to tone down affects. Art can be a way of either sublimating affects or releasing them with their combination, or 'togglng' between restraint and absorption. However, Abbing also mentions sports and play (games) as ways to do this (Abbing, 1989, pp. 66-70), therefore it is right to classify these as non-artistically aesthetic functions. The policy documents do not devote attention to these functions, which means that elaborating them extensively is not necessary. This means that developing a sense of belonging, of one's place in a historic, ethnic or social respect, is a sublimated need which can be fulfilled through cultural activity. As was also the case with Table 4.6, the critical function of art in society seems to be missing in this table. However, one should bear in mind that the critical function of art can only 'work' when art is being experienced. The critique formulated by artists may lead to the development of people's perception. This has been included in the table as an *artistic* function.

The next step in the research involves clarifying the relationship between these intrinsic values and functions and the extrinsic functions as they are mentioned in the policy documents. Research should be performed on the extent to which extrinsic functions depend

Values and Functions from Theory		Functions mentioned in the Policy documents		
		Personal Experience (Table 4.1)	Personal Development (Table 4.2)	Identity and Debate (Table 4.3)
Non-artistically aesthetic	values	Excitement by the perception of non-present worlds	Emotional experience Fantasy ('voorstellingsvermogen')	
		Empathizing with imagined emotions	Emotional experience Entertainment (relaxation)*	Rendering significance
	functions	Sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs		**
Artistically aesthetic	values	Delight in use of imaginative power	'Intellectual' entertainment*	
		Experience of new perception	Emotional experience	Rendering significance
		Testing one's views and insights	Imagination ('verbeeldingskracht')	
	functions	Change of views and insights		Development of perception

The arrows in the table indicate the instrumental relationship between values and functions.

\* Note that there is a third form of relaxation or entertainment that results from aesthetic experience. This is an extrinsic value as it results from the organizational setting and thus is not included in this table.

\*\* The fact that this box is empty means that the policy documents focus on the artistic functions rather than on the aesthetic ones.

**Table 7.1 Intrinsic functions of aesthetic experience: comparing the theory with policy documents**

upon intrinsic values and functions. This type of relationship has been suggested in some of the policy documents, specifically for the social domain. This will be the topic of Chapters 8 and 9.

### 7.3. The Value of Development of Ways of Expression

The discussion of theories on aesthetic experience in Chapter 6 has made it clear that the theories leave little room for the development of ways of expression as a function of art in society. Nevertheless, this has been mentioned as a function of culture in the policy documents. The development of the media in which the artworks are executed is an integral part of artistic practice. Moreover, artistic development has been mentioned in the policy documents as a function from the perspective of the artists, in conjunction with the expression of ideas and views (see Table 4.4). This is about renewal of the cultural system itself and research and development of new ways of expression. The policy documents relate these functions specifically to artistic (and fringe) activities.

Several authors invoke a distinction between style and content (e.g., Bourdieu and Van Stokkom). It seems obvious to assume that an artist expressing his or her ideas does so in the content of the work of art. But this seems a very crude way of describing the actual process of creation because, first of all, artists may not be consciously aware of the perceptions they express and may not be able to express them verbally (just as spectators may not be able to do so). Second, the expression of perceptions occurs through the imaginative exploration of the material, which means that the ideas may develop during the process of making an art work and they may not be present beforehand.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, Eldridge's 'formula' of art as a means of expression is more useful. Artistic expression entails two necessary characteristics:

- presenting a subject matter as a focus for thought and connecting a feeling or attitude towards the subject matter by means of
- exploration of the expressive possibilities of the medium (Eldridge, 2003, p. 259).

This means that Eldridge does make a distinction between style and content, but he argues that the one is fused to the other. The development of ways of expression is therefore more than just the development of style. However, Eldridge's account does not entirely accommodate abstract forms of art. In his view, even abstract works represent something and thus present a subject matter.<sup>11</sup>

This line of reasoning describes the articulation of ideas and views as expressing certain feelings or attitudes towards some subject matter. These feelings or attitudes are aroused in

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<sup>10</sup> Furthermore the ideas are only present in the artwork itself and do not exist outside of it (see Gadamer, 1993 and Luhmann, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> It is debatable whether or not this is true, but this is not a problem for the performing arts because there seem to be no purely abstract performing-art works apart from abstract music and dance (and possibly Dadaist works and word games like Beckett's, but these works can also be considered to refer to a certain subject matter, namely, the use of language and its conditioning power in everyday life).

the spectator when the work is performed. This links 'expressing ideas and views' (Table 4.6, cell A) directly to 'personal experience' (cell C). This leads to the conclusion that cells A and C are related to one another, but the development of ways of expression can also be related to identity building because new identities can be related to new forms of expression. For instance, rap music became possible with the technological development of music amplifying devices. Black American urban identity became expressible in this way (Shusterman, 1992, chapter 8). Furthermore, the development of ways of expression can also be related to the economic functions mentioned in the policy documents (cell F). The development of designer software and the development of electronic music instruments can yield considerable economic returns, for instance. Thus the value of the development of ways of expression is threefold:

- Offering the possibility for new perceptions (which means that new experiences become possible).
- Offering the possibility to express new identities (or giving hitherto under-represented groups the ability for self-expression).
- Economic development through the exploitation of technological advancements of media (including media for reproduction and dissemination).

This means that the functions mentioned in Table 4.4 are related to those in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Thus they need not be discussed separately in the remainder of this research.

**PART III:**  
EXTRINSIC FUNCTIONING OF  
THE PERFORMING ARTS





## 8. Extrinsic Functioning of the Performing Arts: Cultural Policy and Economy

### 8.1. Economic Functioning in the Cultural Policy Documents

This chapter deals with the relationship between culture and economics, or, to be more precise, between cultural policy and economic performance. It aims to clarify how aesthetic activities, specifically the performing arts, contribute to economic performance of the city subsidizing these activities. First, the way in which the aesthetic activities contribute to economic performance needs to be clarified. Second, whether or not this relationship is based upon the intrinsic valued and functions of aesthetic experience also needs to be clarified. If this is the case, the economic effects of performing-arts activities are not extrinsic functions (as has been suggested in Part I). In other words, it needs to be established whether or not the economic functions, as identified in the policy documents, depend in some way on artistically or non-artistically aesthetic values and functions of aesthetic experience. The third step is to clarify how these economic effects can be measured.

The policy documents have mentioned the following economic functions (see Table 4.5):

- Direct employment
- Indirect employment (as a result of expenditures by cultural institutions and by visitors to these institutions in other sectors of the economy)
- Developing a business climate
- Developing a creative climate<sup>1</sup>

These functions have not been described in much detail in the cultural policy documents and therefore it is not immediately clear how they operate. Note that the above list has overlapping categories. Developing a business climate and a creative climate both deal with the beneficial effects of culture on private business in a city. However, developing a creative climate is a specific concern of the latest of the policy documents studied. The literature on the relationship between arts and economics needs to be studied in order to clarify the relations. Furthermore, the policy documents mention city image as a function. As will be shown, city image, as a function of culture and art, relates closely to the economic functions mentioned in the policy documents, hence it will be included in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> At first glance, this might not be considered as economic functioning of culture and art in society. However, developing a creative climate is geared towards attracting a specific part of the population to a city or region, namely, creative people who have a specific economic function (see Section 8.3.2). It also pertains to generating a climate which fosters innovation, which, in turn, can generate economic growth. Therefore including this function in the economic domain is justified.

In this chapter, the relationship between (culture and) art and economic performance will be studied on the basis of impact analysis and theories on the relationship between creativity and economics. Impact analysis enables the effects of public investment to the economy, i.e., the indirect employment effects, to be assessed. In Section 8.3, the development of a business climate and a creative climate will be studied on the basis of theories on the relationship between art and economics relating to creativity, such as those of Throsby (2001) and the Creative Class thesis of Florida (2002). Section 8.4 is devoted to city image and regeneration. Each section closes with a summary of the points relevant to the present research. The chapter ends with conclusions drawn from these summaries.

## **8.2. Impact Analysis**

Impact analysis is a feature of Keynesian economic theory (Van Klink, 2005, p. 24).<sup>2</sup> The theoretical concept behind this type of economic theory is based upon the multiplier effect. This means that expenditures in one sector of the economy lead to further expenditures in other economic sectors, so the total economy grows with more than the amount injected into the specific sector, in this case the cultural or arts sector. The ratio between the amount injected into the economy and the resulting total economic growth is the so-called multiplier.

### **8.2.1. Impact Analysis in the Netherlands**

Impact studies became 'popular' in the field of cultural policy in the 1980s and early 1990s. A study of the economic impact of the arts sector on the New York economy in 1983 has been hugely influential. In the United Kingdom, studies on the economic impact of the arts date back to a study by Myerscough in 1988 on the economic impact of the arts in Britain (Reeves, 2002, p. 7). Several cities in the Netherlands commissioned similar studies, such as Amsterdam, Utrecht and Groningen (see Van Puffelen, 1992 and 1993). As was demonstrated in Chapter 3, some cities did not bother to conduct their own research but used the other studies to legitimize their cultural policy without questioning whether or not these studies were applicable to their situation (e.g. Maastricht, 1992). Van Puffelen has published several articles on impact studies.<sup>3</sup> Such research involves four steps:

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<sup>2</sup> In his overview of cultural economics, Van Klink (2005) also discusses neo-classical economics in relation to cultural policy. Neo-classical economic legitimizations will not be studied here because they do not shed light on the values of aesthetic experience in society. Rather, by means of concepts as external effects, merit goods, collective goods, developmental effects, option value, existence value and bequest value, neo-classical economists try to make room for value considerations within economic theory without discussing the values themselves or the social processes that determine value. For a description of these neo-classical legitimizations, see Abbing (1989 and 2002), Van Klink (2005), and McCarthy et al. (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Van Puffelen was the senior researcher on the first extensive impact study in the Netherlands for the city of Amsterdam (Hietbrink, Van Puffelen and Wesseling, 1985). This study was received enthusiastically in the arts sector as a strategy of attachment (Gray, 2007). However, the study has undergone serious criticism. In an article in 1992, Van Puffelen reacted to the criticism stating that the research design indeed was flawed and that one should be cautious with the results of impact analysis (see Van Puffelen, 1992).

1. Delineation of the arts or cultural sector. This is a highly arbitrary step. One should decide whether or not the advertising industry should be counted and whether the research should comprise only professional cultural organisations or also amateur organizations. However, when the boundaries one chooses have been described clearly in the research, the arbitrary nature of such boundaries does not influence the validity of the study.
2. Determining the production value and employment of the sector. The production value consists of the added value of the sector plus the value of the purchased goods and services from other sectors.
3. Determining the additional expenditures by the visitors to the arts sector.
4. Determining the indirect effects which are a result of:
  - a. the expenditures by the employees of the cultural sector;
  - b. the expenditures by the arts institutions in delivery sectors;
  - c. the rise in sales which is generated by the additional expenditures of the arts consumers.

The production value and the employment effects should be calculated for each of these (Van Puffelen, 1992 and 1993).<sup>4</sup>

In short, impact analysis involves calculating the economic value of the activities in the cultural sector itself, including the generation of employment (the direct effects) and the economic effects that relate to these activities indirectly through the expenditures by employees in the arts sector, the expenditures by the art institutions themselves in other sectors (delivery), and the value of the expenditures by visitors to cultural institutions in other sectors of the economy.

### 8.2.2. Critique of Impact Analysis

Impact studies have been criticized. Arguments have been put forward that the economic impact of cultural activities have been both overestimated and underestimated in these studies (Van Puffelen, 1992). Arguments concerning the overestimation fall into five categories.

1. Problems may arise when calculating the production value of the cultural sector. What if cultural institutions supply one another mutually? Then this results in double counting (*ibid.*). It seems obvious to conclude that impact studies will be more accurate when the region and industry under study are restricted.
2. The indirect effects cannot always be directly linked to the cultural sector, most notably with regard to the expenditure by visitors to cultural facilities in a city. It cannot be argued that this expenditure would not have been made if there were no cultural institutions in the equation. For instance, a visitor buying a skirt in the city after visiting a museum might have bought the skirt anyway had she not visited the museum. She could easily have come to the

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<sup>4</sup> For the sake of brevity, the way in which such effects can be calculated will not be explained here. This involves input-output table analysis amongst other things.

city because she wanted to buy a skirt and have thought it convenient that she could also visit the museum. Only expenditures by visitors who come from outside the region and who visit the city specifically for the cultural institutions can be regarded as additional expenditures (Van Puffelen, 1992; Van Klink, 2005).

3. The expenditures may not all be beneficial to the local economy. For instance, when the staff members of the cultural institution do not live in the region, it is not 'fair' to count their salaries as an economic impact in the region. Furthermore, the expenditures on goods and services by the institution itself may not be made in the region under study, thus they do not contribute to the local economy. For this reason, Noordman argues that, for example, the economic impact of the Lowlands pop festival on its hosting municipality, Biddinghuizen, is limited (Noordman, 2004). When researching the impact on *local* economies, the 'leakage' of expenditures to other regions should be taken into account (Long and Owen, 2006; Van Klink, 2005). This can be done by using input-output models (Van Dijk and Oosterhaven, 1986). Leakage of expenditures to other regions results in a smaller impact in the region in question; it does not mean that the impacts cannot be estimated at all.

4. Abbing (1989) points out a flaw in impact studies, for they presuppose that the entire cultural sector could be dispensed with. This hardly seems to be the case, so the amount of subsidy into the sector cannot be regarded as an injection into the economy. Only if the money were not spent at all, and thus used to reorganize city budgets, could the arguments behind impact analysis hold. But it seems more likely that politicians will find other ways to spend the money if it is not spent on culture, such as on sports facilities for instance. This problem of alternative expenditures can be tackled using net multipliers in which the impacts related to cultural subsidies are compared to alternative expenditures, including reorganizing city budgets, which will lead to lower taxes and thus to higher private expenditures (see Oosterhaven and Stelder, 2002; Oosterhaven et al., 2003).<sup>5</sup>

5. There is a problem regarding impact analysis and employment benefits. Van Puffelen (1992) argues that budget cuts will lead to unemployment of the staff of cultural institutions and thus they will receive unemployment benefits – which will also be paid by local government in the Dutch situation – and they will still spend money on housing and food in the city. Alternatively, not all direct benefits of enlargements of the cultural sector lead to additional spending, as the extra wages paid may go to previously unemployed individuals in the region. Generally, the assumption behind impact analysis is that all extra employment in the region will lead to new people and jobs in the region regardless of the fact previously unemployed inhabitants may also take the new jobs, thus overestimating the impact. Such overestimations can be dealt with by using multipliers that take the changes in employment

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<sup>5</sup> Van Puffelen also argues against Abbing's line of reasoning. In his view, it is conceivable that a part of the subsidy budget can be reduced. This will certainly result in downsizing in the sector, which limits its economic potential in the sense of added value and direct employment. However, there is no direct relationship in the sense that when the cultural budget is reduced by 50% that the indirect effects also will decline by 50%. It seems likely that the avant-garde institutions will suffer more in the case of a budget cut than other institutions. Van Puffelen proposes that avant-garde institutions are usually not able to attract vast amounts of visitors. So the expenditures by visitors to cultural institutions may very well remain unchanged, regardless of a budget cut (Van Puffelen, 1992, p. 187).

benefits into account, the so-called 'type III' multipliers (see Van Dijk and Oosterhaven, 1986).

It appears that these objections to impact analysis can be met using correct research methodologies, i.e., correct delineation of the sector under study, only counting the truly additional expenditures by visitors, using input-output tables to account for leakages of benefits to other regions, by using net multipliers to account for alternative spending of the subsidies, and by using type III multipliers to account for changes in unemployment levels. However, one fundamental criticism of impact analysis remains. Keynesian economics and input-output analyses work under the assumption that there are no supply constraints. This assumption does not always hold, as is the case when, for instance, a regional economy uses its maximum labour capacity, or when production factors such as energy supply to the region are restricted. In such cases, the growth of one sector will drown out economic activity in other sectors as they compete for these resources. Impact analysis assumes that this type of regional capacity problems can be met through 'importing' the resources (e.g., by building more houses to house a growing workforce). In the short term, this may not always be feasible.

Van Puffelen also cites critique claiming that the effects in impact studies are underestimated. This results from the fact that these studies do not take certain effects into account. These are:

- The value added to the national (or regional) product by better design and advertising. This argument does not pertain to the performing arts but to the visual arts and design.
- Cultural institutions may raise the attractiveness of a city for companies to settle there due to the appealing living conditions for their employees.
- Art helps to foster a creative climate which nourishes innovation and stimulates employers to become more productive.
- Cultural facilities improve living conditions.
- Cultural facilities improve a national and cultural awareness.
- Cultural facilities improve tolerance in society.

The first argument does not pertain to the performing arts and therefore will be disregarded. The following three will be discussed in Sections 8.3.2 and 8.3.3 because they form part of the theory behind the creative economy. The last two arguments are specifically intrinsic in their nature. Van Puffelen thinks these effects are highly speculative and cannot be measured (Van Puffelen, 1992, p. 187).<sup>6</sup> They will be taken up in Section 8.3.1.

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<sup>6</sup> He may be right in a strict economic approach, but this study is an attempt to quantify at least some of these arguments.

### 8.2.3. Popular-Music Scenes<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that several authors are critical of the volume of direct job creation through cultural activities (see e.g. Noordman, 2004; Strom, 2003; and Bailey et al., 2004). This may certainly be true when one compares the volume of jobs in the cultural sector to the total economy. Furthermore, jobs in the cultural sector are often part-time and low paying (Abbing, 2002). Thus one should be weary of regarding cultural policy as a means of securing direct income. However, there is a difference between the classical performing arts and popular music (and adjoining sectors such as video design).

First, the popular music scene is characterized by a blurry division between amateur and professional performers. Musicians rehearsing in their garage, performing in local bars and youth centres may have a (sometimes costly) hobby one day, whereas the next day they can be spotted by scouts of the music industry and earn their income through music. Second, upsurges in pop music genres and groups can often be traced back to specific venues or cities. The number of visitors to these venues is usually quite small, so one might speculate that the economic impact of these performances is limited. However, if the specific 'sound' catches on, the economic impact may be substantial. The publicity generated by the performances is key to this, not the number of visitors. In popular culture, things do not exist if they are not written about, on paper or on the internet. So venues must be willing to play a role in catering to the local music scene *and* bringing it in contact with the press and/or offering an (interactive) media platform. Not all venues are able or willing to play such a role. For a city, the development of a specific 'sound' is interesting because it offers abundant possibilities for identification. Clusterings of venues, (small) record labels, and the press are key elements in producing such effects. Many examples of these places can be found in the Netherlands. Blues is typical of the city of Groningen.<sup>8</sup> The upsurge of Frisian pop music in the Netherlands around the turn of the century can be traced back to two venues in Friesland (Bolwerk in Sneek and 't Hert in Joure). The association of Amsterdam with dance music can be traced back to the discotheque Roxy.

Thus popular music (and adjoining industries such as design and video graphics) can be especially important for the economic impact of the performing arts. Although the development of a certain 'sound' connected to a city may indicate an intrinsic type of functioning, this actually is not the case. It is merely evidence that the uniqueness of the productions offered is of importance. This refers to artistic quality, in the sense of a product property (and thus to the institutional definition of art) and not to the specific nature of the experiences afforded. It should also be noted that the direct economic benefits may not be limited to the city or region. Because of the international nature of the popular music industry, the direct proceeds will most likely accrue to the larger corporations. Musicians

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<sup>7</sup> This section is based upon an interview with Peter Smidt, director of *Buma Cultuur*.

<sup>8</sup> Groningen's pop music scene has benefited from the decision not to impose closing times for bars that offer stages for live music. As a result many pubs started programming live bands and thus a circuit of small venues developed. In conjunction with a medium-sized stage and a large-scale music centre, Groningen offers an ideal breeding ground for the development of bands.

also have a tendency to move to locations from which they can travel easily and thus may not spend their income in their city of origin. However the development of a local 'sound' can boost local economy through:

- Tourism: it is popular to visit the 'authentic' clubs and scenes where internationally famous artists started their careers. This effect is taken into consideration in impact analysis.
- City image, which is discussed in Section 8.4.
- Gentrification (see Gibson and Homan, 2004), which is also discussed in Section 8.4.

#### 8.2.4. Summary

The direct and indirect economic benefits of performing arts can be assessed through impact analyses. Although constructing correct multipliers to assess the indirect effects is no easy task, it is possible. Thus the methodology offers possibilities to assess the economic functions mentioned in cells B (direct employment) and F (indirect employment) of Table 4.6. For the present research, it should be noted that the effects depend on the sheer size of the employment offered by the cultural institutions. Thus the effects result from the institutional frame within which the aesthetic communication takes place. The effects do not depend on the aesthetic nature of the experiences afforded, thus they are truly extrinsic.

### 8.3. The Relationship between Creativity and Economic Performance

As the discussion of the policy documents indicates, the relationship between economic performance and creativity has received much attention in recent years. As far back as 1989, Abbing already postulated this type of relationship:

A culture in which economic progress rests to such an extent upon fundamental scientific and technological innovation and product innovation must also initiate large-scale artistic innovation as well. (Abbing, 1989, p. 214)<sup>9</sup>

He thinks that a relationship between artistic innovations and technological and scientific innovation is obvious in Western societies. Thus the arts can influence economic performance. Van Klink (2005) regards such lines of reasoning as a precursor of Richard Florida's theory of creative class. This theory will be presented in this section. Throsby has questioned the relationship between culture and economics on a more generic level. In his view, there is more at stake than just a relationship through creativity and innovation. His observations will be discussed first.

#### 8.3.1. Throsby on the Relationship between Culture and Economic Performance

In his book *Economics and Culture* Throsby has tried to bring the worlds of economics and cultural philosophy together through the notion of value, which is common to both fields of

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<sup>9</sup> Surprisingly, in *Why are Artists Poor* (2002) Abbing does not discuss this relationship when analysing the reasons why governments support the arts. He limits his analysis to the neo-classical arguments. Van Klink (2005) also does not think this line of research is promising as it is too philosophical to count as cultural economics. However, the recent stress on the creative class argument in the policy documents does warrant a discussion of these theories.

research (Throsby, 2001, p. 20). In the economic domain, value pertains to the utility that individuals assign to commodities (and thus a price for the product is established). In the cultural arena, utility subsists in certain properties of the cultural product, the experience it affords, or, in more general terms, as an indication of the merit of a work in relation to other works (*ibid.*, p. 19). However, because neo-classical economics does not study the social circumstances under which value is attributed, Throsby is of the opinion that market prices are only an imperfect approximation of value (*ibid.*, p. 22).<sup>10</sup> He writes:

If we accept the broadly based definition of culture (...) – that culture can be seen as a set of values, beliefs, traditions, customs, etc... which serve to identify and bind a group together – then it is not difficult to propose that culture will affect the way individuals in the group think and act, and will also have a significant effect on the way the group as a whole behaves. (Throsby, 2001, p. 63)

A nation can be considered as a group, in which case the national identity relates to the inherited traditions and rituals and religious beliefs of a nation. But the employees of a business corporation, with its specific corporate identity, can also be considered as this type of group. Throsby goes on to argue that the quote above can also be phrased in economic ‘language’ in terms of how ‘the group’s identity and values shape the preference patterns of individuals, and hence their economic behaviour’ (*ibid.*, p. 63). In other words, the group’s identity determines the value orientations of its individual members (‘preference patterns’) and their behaviour as producers and consumers (‘economic behaviour’). It is then possible to suggest that culture (including art) – as a system of building, experiencing and altering identity – will affect economic outcomes considerably. Throsby suggests this influence runs in three broad directions:

- Efficiency: Shared values condition the way in which the group members undertake the economic process of production.<sup>11</sup> In other words, group identity may encourage a group to produce more efficiently, thus influencing the group’s total wealth.
- Equity: Shared moral principles of concern for others may influence the resource allocation amongst group members. Here, Throsby suggests that some identities favour systems of job security and social welfare more than others.<sup>12</sup>
- Objectives: The culture determines the objectives that the group thinks of as worthwhile to achieve.

Taking this line of reasoning to the extreme implies that artistically aesthetic experience is bad for economic performance (in all three areas) as shared preferences can be challenged and group members become confused about the objectives that should be achieved or about

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<sup>10</sup> Throsby voices this point as a criticism of economics. However, the question should be posed as to whether or not his rendition of the classical economic paradigm is correct, as neo-classical economists do recognize the importance of these social circumstances. However, they do not claim to study them, but rather take the value considerations that result from them as a given (see the second note of this chapter).

<sup>11</sup> It is not clear why Throsby here excludes the economic process of consumption. However, this does not matter for the argument.

<sup>12</sup> It is also possible to extend this argument to sustainability when the resource allocation amongst generations is considered.



how production should be organized. This may hinder economic performance. But that is perhaps making a mockery out of Throsby's argument. The point he tries to convey seems to be that, if culture and art can influence the identity of people, this will lead people to come to different judgements and thus may stimulate them to act differently. This also means that their economic behaviour will change and thus culture can influence economy. However, the direction of such influence is not immediately clear. It therefore seems correct to expect economic consequences from culture. This can be regarded as a result of the changed identity of people that alters their behaviour, including their behaviour as producers and consumers. This argument will be taken up on the next chapter where Blokland's theory of positive freedom will be discussed. It may also be the case that contact with cultural products leads people to be open to new ideas and thus fosters innovation. This is Abbing's argument on the simultaneity of scientific, technological and artistic innovation that started this section and is now elaborated on the basis of Florida's theory of the creative class.

### 8.3.2. The Creative Class as described by Florida

The theory of the creative class follows Abbing's reasoning more closely than it does Throsby's. Here, the relationship between culture and economy runs through creativity, a concept usually associated with culture and art. Florida summarizes his theory as follows:

Essentially my theory says that regional economic growth is driven by the location choices of creative people – the holders of creative capital – who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas. (Florida, 2002, p. 223)

Creativity fosters advances in the standard of living because creativity is used to devise new technologies or products, or to develop new ways of producing and distributing. These are factors that propel economic growth. The third chapter of Florida's book shows, by means of abundant statistics, that creative work has become relatively more important in the American economy from the 1950s up to 2000. Florida's addition to this argument is that it has led to the development of what he calls the 'creative class'. The creative class is a segment of the workforce whose essential economic function is either to produce 'new forms or designs that are readily transferable and widely useful' or to engage in 'creative problem solving, drawing on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems' (Florida, 2002, p. 69). The creative class can be distinguished from the service class which consists of people performing low-end, low-wage and low-autonomy jobs in the service sector. The service class is in great demand because the creative class needs these services to sustain their lifestyle of working long and unpredictable hours (*ibid.*, p. 71). Furthermore, there is the working class, the blue collar workers, and the workers in the agricultural class. The composition of the American workforce has changed dramatically since 1950, with the working class and agricultural class diminishing, while service and creative classes now comprise 43% and 30% of the American workforce. However, the creative class receives the highest pay per hour (*ibid.*, p. 74) and thus has become an increasingly important factor in the national economy.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Florida bases his concept of 'class' on the economic function of the people in it. Usually class is defined on the basis of social habits or demographic factors such as age, education and income. In

'Creativity requires a supportive environment (...), such a broadly creative environment is critical for generating technological creativity and commercial innovations and the wealth that flow from it' (*ibid.*, p. 22). This is why creative people tend to cluster. They are moving away from traditional corporate communities to what Florida calls 'creative centres' which

provide the integrated eco-system or habitat where all forms of creativity - artistic and cultural, technological and economic - can take root and flourish. (...) What (creative people) look for in communities are abundant high-quality amenities and experiences, an openness to diversity of all kinds, and above all else the opportunity to validate their identities as creative people. (Florida, 2002, p. 218)

As companies nowadays follow the settlement decisions of the creative class, or are founded by them, people are the motor behind regional economic growth. Florida identifies criteria for places that the creative class seeks out (*ibid.*, pp. 223-9):

1. There should be a thick labour market to provide ample opportunities to change jobs. The creatives do not want to stay at one job or company for a long time. So they need horizontal career opportunities. Thus larger cities are at an advantage because they can provide ample alternative job opportunities better than regions with lower population densities.
2. The place should provide a variety of scenes to accommodate different lifestyles. Experiential scenes are highly valued as well as a vibrant nightlife.
3. The place should provide opportunities for social interaction. This includes parks and bars where one can meet during the day and in the evening, places between work and home.
4. The place should allow for diversity in thought and be open to new ideas and lifestyles. A highly visible gay community and ethnic diversity are indicators of such openness.
5. The place should offer opportunities for authentic experiences. This can either be through the existence of monuments and cultural heritage or through the opportunity to experience unique scenes. For instance, the development of a certain 'sound' in music is a bonus for a city (see Section 8.2.3). Authentic places offer unique and original experiences, music here has an important role.
6. The place should offer possibilities to develop one's identity. Florida concurs with Castells's theory that, in a constantly changing post-modern world, the place where one lives becomes an important source of identity, more important even than one's education or vocation (Castells, 2004).

Florida sums these requirements up under 'Quality of Place' which comes down to: 'What's there, Who's there and What's going on?' (Florida, 2002, p. 232). Cultural and artistic facilities evidently play an important role in providing a milieu for creativity. However,

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contrast, Florida's definition of class 'emphasises the way people organize themselves into social groupings and common identities based principally on their economic function. Their social and cultural preferences, consumption and buying habits, and their social identities all flow from this' (Florida, 2002, p. 68). This means that the creative class is hard to find in statistics and their preferences are multifaceted. Florida's use of the term, however, is not new; it represents a return to the Marxist origin of the term. In Marxist theory, class is solely dependent on the economic function of people, just as in Florida's theory.

other recreational facilities such as sports, natural environment, parks, and bars and restaurants are just as important. However, the cultural facilities have the advantage of providing ample opportunities for building and maintaining specific identities. Moreover, aesthetic experiences when artistic in nature can help people become more open towards others. Thus they help to provide a tolerant environment.

But providing a tolerant environment in which the creative class prefers to live is not the whole picture behind economic growth. The technology needs to be there to produce the new goods, the business models need to be there to capitalize on creativity amongst which entrepreneurship, venture capital, intellectual ownership and outsourcing are important factors. Florida states that a city has to work on the three T's: Technology, Talent and Tolerance.<sup>14</sup> All three have to be there to be successful in the new economy. His argument is not that every city can boost its economy by catering to the creative class or to bohemians such as artists, through expenditures in cultural and other leisure facilities. Some people in the creative class have far more conventional tastes, such as software engineers for instance (see e.g. Slager, 2007). Furthermore, he suggests that the different forms of creativity – artistic and cultural, technological and economic – can reinforce one another. The rise of creative content industries, ranging from publishing and music to film and video games, is evidence of this (Florida, 2002, p. 55). Therefore the relationship between economic success and cultural facilities is not straightforward. Not every city with an artistic milieu will be able to perform well economically. Moreover, it seems a viable option for cities to invest in linkages between the existing artistic sector and business sector, instead of focusing on attracting new businesses and artists.

The concept of creative class suggests that cities that offer a large variety of leisure facilities are more prone to attracting creative people who generate larger economic growth in the current economic structure. The relationship concerns the diversity of amenities offered in a city, amongst which an experiential artistic scene is important. This is not an intrinsic type of functioning because it relates to art in the sense of an institutional definition. A city should offer cultural amenities that exhibit properties considered as experimental. This does not necessarily mean that the experience afforded need be artistic.<sup>15</sup> Thus the relationship is not intrinsic in the terms of this research. Note that a tolerant climate also is important for attracting the creative class. Here the relationship is indirectly intrinsic as far as the city's identity is concerned.

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<sup>14</sup> Bille regards only the 'T' of tolerance as a new concept. To her, the other 'T's represent old settlement factors (Bille, 2008, p. 3).

<sup>15</sup> Even more so, it can be speculated that the creative people cherish the possibility to visit cultural amenities in particular. Thus aesthetic experience itself is not a factor here, although one might venture to say that, when the cultural scene of a city is diverse, the chances that a diverse population of audience members will have aesthetic experiences which are artistic in nature are higher than when the assortment of cultural amenities consists of standardized entertainment facilities.

Two fundamental questions can be levelled at the theory of the creative class as presented by Florida. The first is that the theory is not substantiated with empirical research. Bille has tried to remedy this situation by comparing the leisure activities of the Danish population to their occupation, using data from a survey of the general population in 2004. She found evidence that corroborates Florida's thesis. In general, the creative class (comprising almost one third of the Danish adult population) is more active in 'popular' and 'broad' cultural areas. They tend to visit contemporary concerts, art exhibitions and art museums more than the service class and blue-collar workers. They also visit urban milieus and cultural landscapes more and engage more in sports and fitness and use the internet more in their leisure time.<sup>16</sup> Bille also looked at the creative core of the creative class (in line with Florida's theory). The creative core – to whom Florida assigns most creativity – consists of those employed in the IT and mathematical branches, architects and engineers, researchers, artists and designers, and those employed in the entertainment industry, sports, media and advertising. Furthermore, the creative professionals are those whose job is characterized by problem-solving and requires a high degree of education, such as business and financial managers, legal professionals, medical professionals and people employed in high-tech industries (Bille, 2008, p. 4).

In Bille's research, the creative core is generally more creative in their leisure time than the creative professionals and the service class. They engage more in expressive creative activities (singing, acting, playing instruments, arts and crafts, writing and film/video). They also engage more in free and non-institutionalized fitness (walking, cycling in the local area and cycling to work), they read more, visit libraries more often and go to professional theatre and concerts more often. They are less likely to be a spectator at sports events. They indulge in in-home leisure activities such as watching TV, video, listening to music just as much as the other classes, and also visit amusement parks, zoos, cinemas and lectures to the same degree (Bille, 2008, pp. 19-20). In short, it is specifically the creative core that has an urban outgoing lifestyle in which they favour the performing arts more than the other classes do. This corroborates Florida's argument perfectly. Bille concludes:

If a city or region wants to attract the *creative core*, the results show that it is green areas and good paths for walking and cycling (...) that attract the creative core, as well as good conditions for creative self-expression within various art-forms. Furthermore it is access to knowledge (libraries) as well as history and cultural heritage (e.g. cultural and natural historic museums, science and heritage centres, historic buildings and historic monuments) that appeal. This points to [the fact] that a conscious profiling and promotion of original history and cultural heritage of an area will create interest for the creative core. Finally, good amenities within classical cultural forms such as theatre and classical concerts can be assumed to attract the creative core. (Bille, 2008, p. 20)

Contemporary concerts, art museums and art exhibitions plus good sports facilities and recreational facilities are necessary for the creative class as a whole. Many of the amenities mentioned cannot be easily influenced by a city administration. The natural surroundings of

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<sup>16</sup> As the higher education levels of the creative class can explain the more outgoing lifestyle, Bille has controlled for differences in education levels between classes.

a city are there to a greater or lesser extent, but their accessibility can be influenced. The same holds for cultural heritage (old cities are at an advantage) and historic museums (which depend on the presence of an interesting historic collection). The urban landscape can be influenced through good city planning policies with attention to architecture. The diversity of cultural and sports amenities, both amateur and professional, can be influenced directly through cultural, arts and sports policies. These particularly attract the creative core.

However, the second flaw of the creative class theory cannot be remedied quite as easily. Nowhere does Florida ask the question as to which is the cause and which the effect. Is it the arts sector that follows the creative class, because especially the creative class can be a dedicated audience, or is it the creative class that follows the artists (Bille, 2008, p. 3)? As the arts have historically flourished in large agglomerations, and Florida points to the fact that large cities are at an advantage from the start, one might believe his theory. But hard proof of which causes which is not available. Even if the truth lies in the middle, this weakens the argument considerably.<sup>17</sup>

### 8.3.3. Does the Theory of the Creative Class apply in the Netherlands?

The popularity of the theory of the creative class in cultural politics has prompted several studies in the Netherlands to establish whether or not the theory is applicable in this country. Most have been conducted at national level by policy advisors (see Marlet and Van Woerkens, 2004; Kloosterman, 2005 and Boschma et al., 2005) and some at local or regional level (see e.g. Marlet and Tames, 2002).<sup>18</sup> Just as Florida demonstrated with regard to the US, the creative class can also be isolated as a group of workers in the Netherlands, with growing numbers (Marlet and Van Woerkens, 2004). Boschma et al. (2005) conclude that the proportion of the creative class in the Netherlands is one of the highest in the world. But that is not all. The fact that the creative class in the Netherlands can be isolated from the rest of the workforce does not mean it has the predicted influence on local economic performance. This is because the Netherlands is a far smaller country than the US. The entire Dutch population (of around 16 million people) can be found in three or four major urban centres in

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<sup>17</sup> In a recent article in the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, McGuigan is very critical of Florida's thesis and the popularity of his ideas amongst city administrators. According to McGuigan, administrators are inclined to do 'a Florida thing' (McGuigan, 2009, p. 291) without realizing that here the value of culture and art is reduced as a result of instrumental use (Gray's commodification thesis cited in the Introduction). To McGuigan, Florida's theory is about economic policy – of a stark neo-liberal economic brand – and not about cultural policy. He warns administrators not to succumb to this blend of 'cool capitalism' (*ibid.*, p. 299). Furthermore, he is critical of Florida's definition of the creative class. He wonders whether all of its member really are involved in creative problem-solving (*ibid.*, p. 293). Here, McGuigan evidently misses the distinction between the creative core and the creative professionals. McGuigan rightly argues that Florida's theory disregards the global context in which certain kinds of labour are displaced to low-wage economies where working conditions are 'appalling' (*ibid.*, p. 298). This is an important criticism, although it is not relevant to the present research.

<sup>18</sup> Although these are commissioned reports in most cases and thus should be suspect (Belfiore, 2004), they have not only been commissioned by cultural politicians, as the Ministry of Economic Affairs is behind most of them. Some have been conducted by truly independent research institutes (e.g., Boschma et al., 2005, and Kloosterman, 2005).

the US. The Rim City (*Randstad*) as a whole may be compared with American cities, although the area consists of several cities. In addition, travelling distances are much shorter in the Netherlands, which may impact the arguments about settlement decisions.

Kloosterman (2005) compiles several empirical studies on the creative class in the Netherlands. The contribution of the creative class to the Dutch economy is studied in direct terms (as a sector in the economy and delivering content to other sectors of the economy) and indirect terms (as creating a favourable business climate). As far as the direct contribution is concerned, the conclusion is not hopeful. For the Netherlands, the impact of the creative class on employment in other sectors of the economy can only be ascertained in Amsterdam, not for the country as a whole (Marlet et al., 2005, pp. 34-5). Moreover, it seems that the creative industries in the Netherlands mainly consist of initial creation (especially design) but production among the creative class itself is relatively low, for it usually takes place abroad (Kloosterman, 2005, p. 95).<sup>19</sup> The same holds for the creative production in the form of exhibitions in museums, theatre shows and visual arts. Only in Amsterdam can a direct influence on the local economy be established. Boschma et al. (2005) come to similar conclusions: the creative class can be linked to regional economic growth specifically, but not to the national economic performance of the Netherlands in the period 1999-2002. The existence of a creative class in a region does not propel high-tech developments in the region, as seems to be the case in the US.

However, the indirect contribution to local economies can be verified. It is not the creative *sector* that influences local economies in the Netherlands, but the creative *production*, in the form of theatre shows, exhibitions and events, that is of importance because these influence the settlement decisions of highly educated and creative households. Specifically the assortment of performing-arts events and, to a lesser extent, the cultural heritage are explanatory variables in the settlement decisions of these groups, confirming Bille's (2008) research, and it also can be established that the highly educated, creative households contribute to the local economy (Kloosterman, 2005, p. 97; see also Marlet and Van Woerkens, 2007, p. 16).<sup>20</sup> Boschma et al. (2005) reach a different conclusion here. They argue that the creative class clusters in but also *around* cities in the Netherlands, but not because of the amenities found in cities.

Differences in the presence of socio-cultural facilities turned out to have no demonstrable effect on the distribution of the creative class. Municipal councils that believe they can attract a creative class by means of investment in cultural facilities will thus probably be disappointed.

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<sup>19</sup> Note that famous designers such as Rem Koolhaas and Viktor & Rolf may be linked to specific Dutch cities (Rotterdam and Arnhem respectively) and thus may influence the image of the city, they do not directly influence the local economy. The fame of Dutch design seems to influence the local economy of Amsterdam, regardless whether the designers can be linked to the city (Kloosterman, 2005, p. 95). However, such effects are only limited to the design sector and thus are not relevant for the present research. The effect of performing arts on city image will be discussed in section 8.4.

<sup>20</sup> In this study, Marlet and Van Woerkens relate the impact on the local economy to option value, i.e. the value of the possibility to attend cultural activities, regardless one actually does or not (see McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 17).

In contrast, investment in social infrastructure and the facilitation of tolerance have more chance of achieving this goal. (Boschma et al., 2005, p. 27)

However, the question should also be raised as to whether or not the operationalization of regional differences in amenities is correct. It seems that the data has been limited to expenditure on reception facilities (libraries, theatre venues) but not on production facilities. The first are more evenly spread in the Netherlands (every municipality supports a library) than the latter. The analysis of Roo (2005), with most data on production and vocational arts educational facilities, does show a connection between cultural facilities and regional economic growth. She has tried to investigate whether or not the economic performance of regions in the Netherlands correlates with the expenditure on culture in the region. Using the national subsidies for culture (and thus leaving out private and local public expenditure on culture) she concludes that it is likely that there is a positive correlation.<sup>21</sup> In 2008 Beemster tried to replicate Roo's findings. In his model, the municipal subsidies of culture have been used as a proxy for cultural capital, leaving out the national subsidies. His study does not yield evidence for this type of relation at regional level in the Netherlands. An analysis of both national and local subsidies is needed because, in the Dutch situation, national subsidies represent production of culture (therefore representing direct creation, thus related to the size of the local creative core) whereas local subsidies generally concern reception facilities (including library subsidies which can run up to 90% of the cultural budget in small municipalities). Both studies suffer from yet another methodological flaw as they assume that the influence of cultural amenities on economic growth occurs instantly. However, it is far more likely that these effects will only occur over time. The research design should take this temporal aspect of the dependence into account. The evidential basis of the connection between economic growth and cultural subsidies at regional level in the Netherlands therefore seems mixed at best.

In conclusion, these studies show that the direct relationship between creativity and economic performance for the Netherlands (with the exception of Amsterdam) cannot be established. None the less, the effect on the settlement decisions of highly educated creative people can be established. Thus smaller cities in the Netherlands can embark on a strategy to attract these people through cultural amenities, especially performing arts activities, although this is just one part of a strategy to influence regional economic performance through the creative class concept. Investment in other leisure facilities, such as sports and

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<sup>21</sup> Although the data gathering may be incomplete, the data gathered can certainly be representational for differences in levels of spending amongst regions, especially if one realizes that local government spending and national government spending on culture coincide in the Netherlands. The national government mainly subsidizes institutions in larger cities that tend to have larger culture budgets. Furthermore, Roo included spending on vocational training in the arts. There is a grave flaw in the research design at the point where she tries to distinguish between the producing cultural sectors (in her view, amateur arts, cultural education and vocational education in the arts) and the consuming sectors (performing arts, museums, etc.). Because she did not include local government spending, she should have included the performing-arts spending in the producing sector, as the Dutch national government only subsidizes production. Her assertion that the producing sector in particular

the accessibility of cultural heritage and natural surroundings, are necessary as well as the diversity of amenities, which is key. The safest bet for measurement of this type of impact is therefore to assess any changes in the proportion of the creative class in the local workforce. This is only relevant when subsidy levels for aesthetic activities have changed dramatically.

#### **8.3.4. Summary: the Relationship between Creativity and Economic Performance**

From the above discussion on the relationship between creativity and economic performance, several conclusions can be drawn on how cultural activities influence economic performance. The classification of economic functioning of culture and art as an extrinsic function is debatable to a certain extent.

Throsby's argument is that the identity of groups (or nations) is a factor in their economic performance. The concept of the creative class has also pointed in this direction, because tolerance to different lifestyles and ways of thinking is key in attracting highly educated knowledge workers who generate economic growth, although tolerance is not the only factor: talent and technology are needed as well. But on a more generic level, it seems that economies that are more open to new ideas have higher levels of product and process innovation and therefore achieve higher economic growth, although this cannot be related to the sheer volume of the creative sector in the Netherlands, apart from Amsterdam. Size does matter, as Florida suggested.

At the same time the relationship is extrinsic in its nature. Cultural facilities, like sport facilities or natural surroundings (mountains, forests or seas) all form part of the amenities a city offers its inhabitants. The greater the diversity of such amenities, the more the city has to offer as a place to live and work. These 'soft' factors have gained influence in settlement decisions of corporations, as the ability of companies to attract highly educated professionals becomes more and more important in the modern economy, although more traditional factors such as accessibility of a city still count as well. The fact that cultural facilities rank amongst sports and natural facilities indicates that the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience are not at stake.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore it should be noted that the direction of the relationship between cultural and economic policy is not clear. It could be that cultural facilities attract knowledge workers. Such measurements can only be done at an aggregate level (for the whole city) and thus do not reflect the effects of public cultural policy, as the non-subsidized performing-arts assortment also causes these effects. Moreover, such measurements are only needed when the city explicitly aims at catering to the creative class

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influences economic performance positively may seem logical, but this cannot be based upon her analysis.

<sup>22</sup> If one defines 'intrinsic' functioning in a product-oriented manner, i.e., it alludes to the quality of performances and if one assumes that this quality will increase with cultural subsidies, it could be suggested that this type of economic functioning of art and culture is intrinsic. However, in this research, the intrinsic functioning is related to the specific nature of the experiences afforded by the performing-arts activities. The artistic nature of the experiences does not necessarily coincide with the quality of a production, when quality is defined as a property of the product. Moreover, the second assumption that quality increases with rising subsidy levels is questionable at best.



with its cultural policy. However, such policies are questionable, as the direction of the relationship between cultural supply and the creative class is not certain. It could be that creative people flock to where (performing) artists are, but it is equally likely that artists follow the settlement decisions of the creative professionals.

Measuring these effects is a difficult matter. The effect mentioned by Throsby is not actually economic but social in its nature, and might be traced through the methods described in Chapter 9. Policies attracting the creative class can best be evaluated by calculating changes in the proportion of the creative class in the local workforce, though evidence of a direct link between cultural subsidies and local economic performance has yet to be found.

#### 8.4. City Image and City Regeneration

The image of the city is a point of concern in most of the city cultural policy documents. Cultural activities can help to develop a certain self-image in the city: a diverse supply of cultural facilities in the city helps to project an urban image (see, Groningen, 1991a, pp. 26-7; Rotterdam, 1996, pp. 1-2; and Breda, 1996, p. 6). Cultural activities also help to develop an external cultural image (such as the Groninger Museum for the city of Groningen and museum Boymans van Beuningen for the city of Rotterdam).<sup>23</sup> The policy documents are not very precise in their outline of the way in which a city image is influenced by cultural facilities. Moreover, they are not clear on for whom such an image should be developed.

Boogaarts mentions that, in the Netherlands since the end of the 1980s, cities have become popular as places to live, work and relax, after a period in which there had been a decline in the attractiveness of city life. She argues that this poses new requirements on arts institutions: to have an economic impact, to contribute to the quality of life in a city and to boost city image (Boogaarts, 1991, p. 28). As has been shown in the discussion of the policy documents in the Netherlands, this trend has continued since 1992. In Boogaarts' view many investments in the cultural infrastructure of cities have been legitimized on the basis of such arguments, although she also concludes that the investment plans for the cultural infrastructure of cities are vague in this respect. They do not specify in quantifiable terms what is being expected from culture and art, and she is wary that the role of culture and art in these areas is being overrated (Boogaarts, 1991, p. 34). Along with Van Aalst (1997), she warns that such emphasis on external outcomes may lead to large investments in high profile cultural and arts facilities, although without the structural funding to finance adequate activities in these institutions in order to perpetuate the desired effects. In other words: the extrinsic policy aims may impede the intrinsic functioning of arts and culture.

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<sup>23</sup> Only the last of the national policy documents studied in this research *Meer dan de Som* (2003), which spans the period from 2005 to 2008, contains the function of image building. It is logical that specifically the city documents mention this function for it is a specific concern of the local politicians. In *Meer dan de Som* (2003), the concept of the creative class has been introduced in the national cultural policy. The city 'feel' is an important aspect for the cultural creatives, and therefore it is logical that this national policy document also mentions city image.

Although these studies may provide insight into the drives of city officials when they support cultural policy, they do not shed light on how culture and art influence such policy aims other than by referring to the quality of the architecture and the uniqueness of the facilities which lead to (media) attention for the facility and the city in which it has been built. Moreover, these studies do not shed light on how to evaluate this type of aim in cultural policy, although Boogaarts does point to the fact that the image of buildings in a city (or district) contribute to the image of derelict areas by influencing morale and atmosphere (Boogaarts, 1991, p. 31). This points to intrinsic functioning as defined in this research. Examples can also be found for facilities other than museums, such as libraries (e.g., Peckham Library in London) and theatre venues. The impact these new facilities have is that, in a derelict area, erecting a new, modern building which is praised for its design may lead people in the area to realize that they are worth such an investment. This leads to higher self-esteem of the area. Consequently, this may lead to private investment in the area as well, and real estate values will start to rise (see e.g. Marlet and Tames (2002), Strom (2003), and Gibson and Homan (2004), studies that will be discussed below). Here, the functioning is related to building a new facility with a certain atmosphere, rather than to the (performing-arts) activities in the building, which is the aim of the present research. However, this kind of example shows that city regeneration is influenced by city image (or the image of the district). There is an obvious link with social policy issues here.

Cachet et al. (2003) and Noordman (2004) provide studies into the use of culture in city-image policies with evidence that is based on several Dutch cities. Both studies indicate that few Dutch municipalities have full-fledged policies to influence city image, for the image to be projected toward certain groups is usually not specified. Drenth et al. (2002) found that cities usually aim their cultural policy towards providing a full array of cultural facilities and thus focus on their weaknesses. In order to project a distinct cultural image or profile, it is more interesting to focus on the city's strong points.<sup>24</sup> All three studies are aimed at providing practical guidelines for city policy makers in deciding on cultural or city image policies. Therefore they shed light on the position of art and culture in respect to city image. It is important to note that cultural activities only are *a part* of the cultural identity of a city or municipality. The cultural identity also concerns the natural surroundings or economic activities, such as Leerdam with its glass production, Eindhoven with Philips, Rotterdam with its harbour, and the south of Limburg with the (defunct) mining industry. Artistic activities seem to connect specifically to an image based upon discovery and dynamics,

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<sup>24</sup> However, it should be noted that striving towards complete cultural amenities does fit in with a strategy to project an image of 'urbanity' that is crucial in attracting the creative class, amongst other things. Rotterdam and Groningen are examples of cities that have voiced such ambitions; Zwolle and Breda also seem to be embarking on the same path (see the discussion in Chapter 3). Therefore it can be assumed that this advice is either geared towards small cities in rural areas as an alternative to providing a full array of amenities, and to cities striving to attract tourists. It seems that the conclusion of Drenth et al., that Dutch cities all tend to look alike in their cultural amenities, is especially worrying when one wants to attract tourists.

along with science and research (Cachet et al., 2003, p. 48).<sup>25</sup> This means that the image of a city can be influenced by cultural activities (in the sense of the term of this research) among many other things. Thus, there is no direct causal relationship between city image and the cultural activities in the city, although such activities can support a desired image. For example, in the 1930s the Dutch city of Bergen (NH) was home to a movement of painters and visual artists (amongst whom Charley Toorop is the most famous) which is referred to as the 'Bergen School'. Nowadays the municipality of Bergen is aiming to project a cultural image of the village, supporting it with specific cultural activities (*ibid.*, p. 28). However, the fact that these activities relate to the visual arts is enough, the specific nature of the experiences afforded by these activities is not relevant, whereas the fact that the village's heritage involves a specific Dutch school of painting is.<sup>26</sup>

A further point of interest is that these studies all indicate that municipalities generally do not specify the particular image that should be projected towards certain groups. Noordman suggests distinguishing between tourists and corporations. He concludes that the cultural policy of Dutch cities generally only caters to the city's own population or the surrounding region (Noordman, 2004, p. 201). However, it is not without logic to include the city's population in a city marketing strategy. The self-image is important to projecting an external image for a city. Moreover, as has been the strategy in Rotterdam, the city's inhabitants can function as ambassadors to attract tourists and businesses. But there is more to this strategy when the arts are involved. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 6 artistic activities in particular can be instrumental in changing the views and insights of people, with related consequences for their identity. It is logical to suggest that the image of the city influences the self-image of inhabitants and vice versa. This is of particular interest in city regeneration projects. Cultural activities in specific districts can enhance the feeling of self-worth of the inhabitants of that district and may lead them to act in a different manner. This will be elaborated in the chapter on social policy issues. However, this process is also of interest from an economical point of view because of the phenomenon which has been called *gentrification*. When city districts are in decline the price of housing will drop. This makes the neighbourhood attractive to artists and cultural entrepreneurs who may set up ateliers, fringe activities such as cinemas, music venues, and even shops. This may lead to attractiveness of the area as a place for leisure and eventually living. Such processes have been witnessed in Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg district for instance (see Marlet and Tames, 2002). Gentrification may be a specific form of the concept of the creative city, but now at the level of a city district.<sup>27</sup> Marlet and Tames have tested whether or not the process of gentrification is visible in the Netherlands. Their conclusion was that this indeed is possible and that

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<sup>25</sup> Noordman (2004, pp. 134-7) mentions five elements of city identity: Location, History (critical incidents, legends, heroes and cultural heritage), Appearance (monuments and/or modern architecture) and Size of the cultural sector (both its infrastructure and the reservoir of talent in the city). The cultural activities in a city are thus only one element amongst many.

<sup>26</sup> Although one might speculate that visitors to Bergen for whom the aesthetic experiences have been artistic in nature might be more prone to recognize the cultural image of the village.

specifically the performing arts are prone to generate such effects (see *ibid.* and also Marlet, 2009). Strom has studied four cases of the effects of the development of some derelict inner cities by means of adding new concert halls. She also found rising real estate values around these new facilities, although she is wary of contributing this effect to the new concert halls alone. She is in favour of common sense which credits the projects for creating these positive effects. She writes:

especially for cities like Newark and Philadelphia, whose efforts at revitalization are often stymied by their poor reputations, if enough people believe that their downtowns are better places to visit because of their concert halls it becomes true. (Strom, 2003, p. 261)

Gibson and Homan (2004) have documented a successful gentrification strategy in Sydney stimulating live music venues as a means to create a positive 'scene' in various parts of the inner city and adjoining districts. Music has a particular ability to do so (see also Section 8.2.3). A study by Marlet and Tames (2002) showed that the attractiveness of Dutch cities as a place to live depends on accessibility by train and car and on the supply of performing arts in the city. They measured attractiveness based upon the prices for houses. In their opinion, the real estate values express people's preferences more accurately because they represent actual behaviour and not revealed preferences, as questionnaires tend to do. The option value of cultural facilities such as the performing arts is thus reflected in real estate values.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore they argue that, because of the growing popularity of pop music and with the need for live events only being strengthened by the evasion of life by the multimedia, investments in pop music can be especially fruitful for a city (*ibid.*, p. 31), although they do agree with Florida's contention that the variety of performing arts amenities is at stake.<sup>29</sup>

Not the type of culture in itself but the amount of different sorts of culture consumed appears to be important for the status of the citizen: the longer the educational programme, the larger the variety in tastes. (Marlet and Tames, 2002, p. 31)

Thus they confirm this part of the creative class theory with empirical evidence for the Netherlands. The economic functioning of performing arts can be measured through multi-variate analysis of real estate values in a city. They claim that an extra stage presenting 200 shows a year, according to their research, adds € 1800 to the value of a home in the city (*ibid.*, p. 24). The nature of the performance or the experiences afforded does not matter for this figure. A recent study by Marlet (2009) reconfirms that the attractiveness of a city is reflected in real estate values. Through multi-variate analysis, the effects of the supply of performing arts facilities can be isolated, although this is certainly not the only factor influencing the attractiveness of a city. None the less, the supply of performing arts here is the only factor

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<sup>27</sup> Florida points to the fact that usually the artists themselves are the first victims of gentrification, for, with the rise in attractiveness of a neighbourhood, housing prices will go up again (Metz, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> Throsby defines option value as: 'People may wish the option that some day they, or someone else for whom they have concern, such as their children, may wish to consume the asset's services – for example, by visiting a particular cultural site at some time in the future' (Throsby, 2001, p. 79).

<sup>29</sup> Their report was written in defence of the investment in the refurbishment and enlargement of the Tivoli pop venue in Utrecht, thus it may be regarded as advocacy. However, in their later independent publications, they do substantiate their claims with more research (see e.g. Marlet and Van Woerkens 2004 and 2007).

regarding *cultural* policy that is statistically significant (Marlet, 2009, p. 360). Rising real estate prices can therefore be regarded as an indicator of the economic functioning of the performing arts. Researching this impact is only possible at the level of the city as a whole, comparing between cities with different supply levels. Such analysis does not distinguish between subsidized and commercially produced supply.

Cultural policy can be used to attract tourists to the city. Tourists generate indirect expenditures, as can be studied in impact analysis. For the present research, it is important to note that generally the museums and cultural heritage are most important in this respect (see Marlet and Van Woerkens 2007, pp. 13, 16, who base this conclusion on a review of international literature on the impact of the arts for cities). However, the performing arts do fit into a strategy in which low budget tourism is aimed at. Specifically the popular forms of performing arts (pop music) can attract large amounts of tourists (Noordman, 2004). For instance, Dance Valley and Lowlands in the Netherlands attract many tourists (Cachet et al., 2003, p. 50). Noordman suggests that cities can either choose to adopt a high strategy, involving high-profile cultural amenities attracting the cultural in-crowd, or a low strategy with more low-profile activities and facilities. A low profile strategy takes more time but can be just as effective (Noordman, 2004). It should be noted that 'high-profile' and 'low-profile' as terms here relate to the institutional definition of art, not to the functional. This type of functioning of art is therefore extrinsic, as it does not relate to the nature of the experiences afforded.<sup>30</sup>

Gearing a cultural policy towards attracting business(es) is perhaps the oldest form of using a cultural profile of a city. Both low and high profile strategies may be useful in this respect. However, in general, it still seems questionable as to whether or not culture and art do actually play a role in settlement decisions. In the Netherlands, research on business settlement in the nineties simply did not ask whether cultural facilities played a role in management's settlement decisions (Cachet et al., 2003, p. 49). None the less, there seems to be agreement that cultural amenities do help and that attracting highly knowledge-based industries in particular has been of specific importance in recent years. This relates to the concept of the creative class.

To summarize, it should be noted that, as a function of culture, city image is problematic. First, the image of a city cannot be causally linked to the cultural facilities in a city. Many other factors, such as natural surroundings and economic activity, play an important part. Nevertheless, in some instances, cultural activities have helped to influence city image (as in the case of Rotterdam for example). Second, it seems that city image helps to magnify the economic effects of culture and art: generating indirect expenditures by visitors to the city.

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<sup>30</sup> Strategies to attract tourists to a city by means of cultural events or programming may not be as economically beneficial as one might think. The low-budget tourism (backpacking) to Amsterdam (induced by a combination of the 'relaxed' stance towards soft drugs and alcohol and the vibrant bar and music scene in the city) may be harmful for the city's image. Furthermore some events, such as Lowlands, may lead to job creation outside the hosting municipality (Noordman, 2004, p. 151).

These effects can be measured in impact analysis. Third, city image may help to attract businesses to the city and thus generate employment, though there is not sufficient research to suggest that cultural amenities are an influencing factor, let alone a decisive factor, for business management in location decisions. None the less, the concept of the creative class has boosted this legitimization for cultural policy.

A last remark should be made about city image in relation to city regeneration. Cultural facilities can be instrumental to the gentrification of derelict areas in cities. This effect is reflected in rising real estate values. Performing arts buildings and pop music are of particular interest for this function. Moreover, a link can be assumed between the image of the city and the self-images of its inhabitants. This suggests that city image also relates to the social policy aims and that this type of functioning of the performing arts in a city can be intrinsic in nature. This will be discussed in the next chapter, on social policy issues.

It thus can be concluded that, in the economic domain, the functioning of the performing arts as an influence upon the image of the city is extrinsic in its nature. Moreover, the functioning is indirect: it enhances the economic functions as have been discussed in this chapter. Therefore, in Figure 8.1, 'city image' has been set apart and is connected to the arrow between the 'intrinsic functions on societal level' and 'intrinsic economic functions', and also to the arrow between 'extrinsic economic values' and 'extrinsic economic functions'. Nonetheless it can be argued that a reciprocal relationship exists between city image and the cultural identity of a region, which can be influenced by the changes in views and insights that result from aesthetic experience once artistic in nature. The effects can be measured through multi-variate analysis of differences in real estate values between cities.

### **8.5. Summary: the Functioning of the Performing Arts in the Economic Domain**

A first point on the economic functioning of the performing arts is that the non-artistically aesthetic values and functions cannot lead to intrinsic economic functioning, because these values and functions can also be satisfied through other than cultural activities, such as sports for instance. If these activities are more efficient in that they have lower costs or reach more inhabitants, then they should be the subject of investment from an economic point of view. It follows that economic functions can only be intrinsic when the artistically intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience are at stake; i.e., when the functioning depends on the ability of performing-arts experiences to question the perception schemes of participants and consequently change their views, insights and resulting behaviour.<sup>31</sup>

The relationship between economics and culture has different aspects:

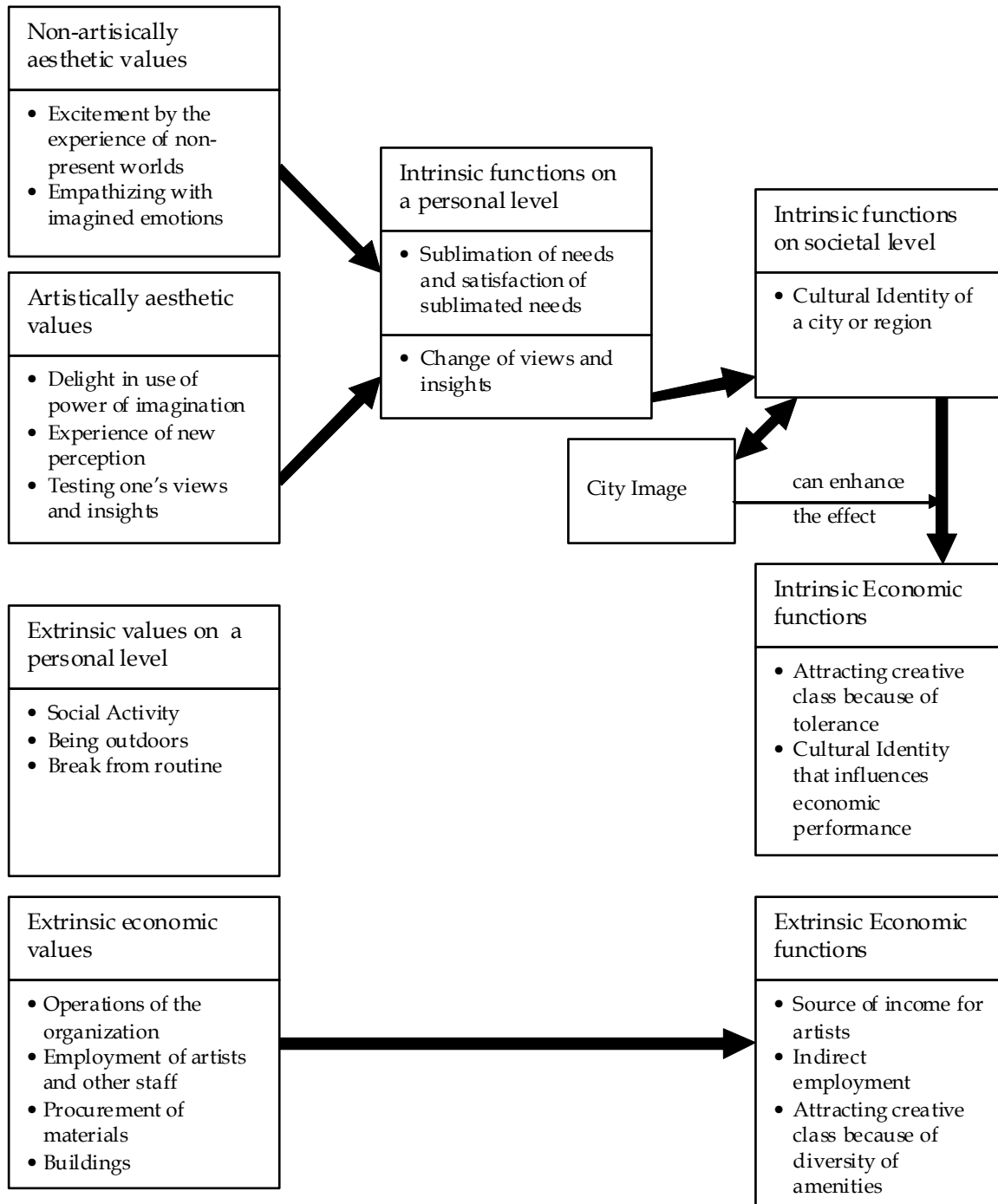
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<sup>31</sup> As will be discussed further in the next chapter, this is not the case for the functioning of culture and art in the social domain because social functions can also stem from the fact that identities are being affirmed, and not only from the fact that they are challenged as a result of aesthetic experience.

1. First, the influence of culture on the economic behaviour of individuals is indirect. It occurs through the influence of culture and art on the identity of people. Their views and insights may change as a result of aesthetic experience (when artistic in nature) and this may lead them to act differently. Their altered behaviour may have economic repercussions. However, in itself this is not an economic functioning of art and culture. Note that the effect on the economy can be positive as well as negative.
2. A relationship between culture and the presence of knowledge or creative workers has been suggested, though the causal direction of this link is questionable. Culture and art may aid in attracting these workers to a city and although it can be suggested that they contribute to economic performance of the city in advanced service economies, a direct link between cultural subsidies (as a proxy for the variety of cultural amenities in the city) and economic performance has not been established. This is an extrinsic type of functioning. The contribution of this arts scene to an open living climate is intrinsic functioning.
3. Cultural facilities can aid in regenerating derelict districts in cities by altering the experience of such areas. Such effects can occur on the basis of the architecture of the theatre venue or the concert hall in itself. It seems that the performances in these buildings are less at stake. The effect is called gentrification and rising real estate values can be an indicator of the effect, although multi-variate analysis of real estate values between cities is needed to link the effect to the performing arts (both subsidized and commercially produced). Accessibility of the district and its immediate surroundings are also contributing factors. Actually this type of functioning in the economic domain is quite like the type mentioned under 1, although the impact on the mentality of people living and working in the district at issue can be considered as a type of intrinsic functioning. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
4. Art and culture are economic activities in themselves and, as a sector, can generate direct economic benefits (source of income for artists) and spin-off because of the expenditures of the employees in the sector, the procurement of materials (technical supplies, etcetera), and the additional expenditures by visitors to this sector in other sectors of the city's economy. This is an extrinsic type of functioning and it can be measured through impact analysis.
5. There is an obvious connection between city image and cultural activities in the city. Performing-arts activities can play a role here, but not all kinds of performing arts. Such an image helps to generate visitors to a city and it can enhance the effect of gentrification as mentioned under 3. The cultural identity of a city is influenced by the self-image of its inhabitants which can be changed as a result of their perception schemes being challenged as a result of the artistic nature of the experiences. Therefore, 'city image' has been added in a separate box in Figure 8.1 in order to indicate that it coincides with 'identity-building' which is an artistically-aesthetic function of aesthetic experience. City image can enhance the other intrinsic economic functions.

Note that the effects of culture and art in the economic domain are rarely related to single aesthetic *experiences* or performances, though impact analysis and gentrification can be related to single *institutions*.

Figure 8.1 represents the functioning of the performing arts in the economic domain. In the figure, 'city image' has been placed in a separate box, indicating that it has a reciprocal relationship with 'cultural identity', as it can be the result of aesthetic experiences.



**Figure 8.1 Interdependence of values and functions of aesthetic experience in the economic domain**



# 9. Extrinsic Functioning of the Performing Arts: The Social Domain

## 9.1. Social Policy Issues in the Cultural Policy Documents

Although the policy documents relate cultural policy to social policy issues (see Table 4.5), they are not clear on how art and culture function in the societal domain. One issue that has been referred to is that culture and art help develop social cohesion: they provide a scene for shared experiences, bring people together despite their differences and prevent social exclusion. The fact that the performing arts by definition constitute a social activity is important here. Furthermore, culture and art are regarded as conducive to attracting inhabitants with spending power, which can aid in developing the social climate in a city or district. Obviously the social and economic domains coincide in this case. A third issue in the policy documents is tolerance. Culture and art provide an open living climate to accommodate different ways of cultural expression.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, culture and art have been linked to the civilization process of society. None of these connections relate to the nature of the experiences afforded. Thus art's functioning in the social domain is regarded as extrinsic.

However, based upon the description of aesthetic experience in Chapters 6 and 7, it has been suggested that the functioning of art in the social domain is related to what has been categorized as intrinsic functioning (both non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values and functions).<sup>2</sup> Two issues stand out. First, personal identity is a key factor in relating aesthetic experience to the social domain (see Chapter 7). Second, it is easy to see that personal development is closely linked to a person's position in society (personal identity) and therefore the personal development that occurs through participation in cultural activities influences personal identity. This has been categorized as an intrinsic function of culture and art. In addition, collective identities are also formed through personal identity. This again relates the functioning of culture and art to the social domain (and the collective level).

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<sup>1</sup> The economic ramifications of an open living climate have been researched in the previous chapter through the concept of the 'creative economy'.

<sup>2</sup> This can also be seen in the policy documents themselves, see e.g. Rotterdam (2003, p. 3), where borough regeneration is related to the capacity of performing arts to foster identity-building and the ability to make independent choices, or *Meer dan de Som* (2003, p. 16), where mental development through artistic activities is regarded as a means to further participation in society, which suggest that a link between intrinsic and extrinsic functions, especially through personal development. The policy document of Groningen (2005, p. 3) even suggests that there is a link between artistic *quality* and extrinsic outcomes.

Thus, for the purpose of the present research, two questions are important:

1. How can the values and functions of aesthetic experiences that occur for individual audience members have an effect at collective level? In other words: how can the performing arts that function for individual audience members also function for the relations between performance attendees and for those who do not attend performing arts in the community?
2. Are these effects at collective level so closely related to the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience, as described in this research, that they should be regarded as intrinsic rather than extrinsic? This question can also be phrased differently: what is the specific artistic aspect of art's functioning in the social domain?

In order to answer these questions, some other issues need to be addressed as well. First, something more needs to be said about the relationship between individuals and communities and/or society. Second, investigation should be carried out to establish which goals are categorized under social policy issues in cultural sociological literature, and whether or not these goals coincide with those mentioned in the policy documents. These two issues will be addressed in the Sections 9.2 and 9.3. Section 9.4 deals with the issue of personal development in relation to social policy issues. Section 9.5 deals with image and identity. Finally, in section 9.6, a theory of the functioning of culture and art in the social domain is developed. This theory can answer the two questions mentioned above.

## **9.2. The Individual, Society and Community**

The social policy issues typically relate the individual who is having an aesthetic experience to the collective level. Therefore, the question concerning the way in which individuals relate to groups or communities needs to be addressed. For this research, the question concerning the way people relate to the level of the city community is specifically relevant. In the policy documents, the level of city districts has also been mentioned, specifically in relation to social policy outcomes. Community art or community theatre is a prominent term in the documents and literature as well, and thus should be clarified here.

Chapter 1 has shown that culture, art and identity are related concepts (see Section 1.2). Based upon definitions provided by Zijderveld (1983), Fischer-Lichte (2002) and Newman (2004), identity has been described as people's most essential personal characteristic. It is the answer to the question 'Who am I?' A personal identity is composed of a person's membership of various social groups, this relating a person to the collective level. Identity has various sources: geographical location (the village or city district, town or country one lives in), ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and so on. As was discussed in Chapter 6, aesthetic experiences can either affirm such identities or develop them. It is important to bear in mind that identity is not a fixed phenomenon and that the development of identities is not simply a matter of switching from one (pre-existing) identity to the next. A lot has happened since the times of antiquity, in which context Fisher-Lichte describes

theatre practices as an act of representation of a communal identity of the Greek *poleis* (Fisher-Lichte, 2002). Technological and economic developments have made it possible for the individual to choose more freely among the available alternatives for self-representation.<sup>3</sup>

The elements of identity as described by Newman (2004) may seem fixed: race, ethnicity, religion and gender. But in contemporary society this is less and less the case. The decline of the standard family weakens its ability to designate a clear identity (see e.g. Castells, 2004). Gender surgery has blurred the gender divide, and skin whitener products even threaten the (outwardly visible) boundaries determined by racial background. The increase of upward (and downward) social and economical mobility has weakened discrimination based upon the more flexible elements of identity such as education levels or affluence. The forces of globalization, regarded as a process 'through which people's lives all around the world become increasingly interconnected - economically, politically, environmentally and culturally' (Newman, 2004, p. 34), even weaken the identity-building power of geographical location because place becomes less relevant for production, distribution and decision-making. Although society may have a macro-structure that still persists, which consists of statuses, roles, groups, organizations and institutions (*ibid.*, pp. 24-5, see also Field, 2008, p. 10), many sociologists point to the fact that identity should be regarded in terms of fragments, flux and an endless process of self-creation, even to the point that it seems that identities can be assumed and discarded at whim in contemporary society (Elliott, 2001, p. 131), although there is debate concerning the extent to which this actually occurs. People in contemporary society have multiple identities that can even contain contending elements. This being the case, the relationship between individuals, groups and communities has altered. Where once a carnival parade in a city district, or its drum band and (amateur) theatre group could represent *the* identity of the district's community, it can in no way be claimed that the aesthetic manifestations of these community, such as performing arts events, can be regarded as manifestations of *the* identity of this community.

This leads to the very interesting point of community arts or community theatre. In Dutch cultural policy, there has been debate on this issue. Trienekens (2005) has developed a 'working definition' of the term: Art projects with a societal aim and with a process and group-oriented method. Such art projects appear to have five central components:

- (a) There is active participation by a community.
- (b) The community consists (primarily) of persons not accustomed to consuming institutionalized art forms and cultural education.
- (c) The use of artistic professionals with the aim of an artistic outcome.
- (d) Projects comprise art disciplines which can fall outside the classical canon; usually a combination of art forms is used.
- (e) The project has societal aims and outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> A process which has been mentioned in the policy document *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995): 'Although people are handed down these cultural systems of meaning from predecessors and contemporaries, they are reasonably free in relation to these, certainly in our society' (p. 4).

She recognizes that especially the last point is debatable, for it is not clear what can be considered as a societal outcome. It is important to add that, in this working definition, the word 'art' is used in the institutional sense, not denoting the specific values it may generate. More attention will be paid to community arts in the closing section of this chapter. Thus, identity is not a fixed phenomenon. Identities are fluid even to the point that nowadays a person's identity consists of many different elements which may not cohere and may even be contending. Identity relates a person to the collective level. In this research, the term 'community' will be used to denote this level for two reasons. The first reason is that the term 'community' is frequently used in the literature on societal outcomes of culture and art. The second reason is that this term allows one to differentiate between culture in its anthropological meaning, culture in its narrow meaning (as the manifestations of cultural practices), and various groups or subgroups in urban society.

### **9.3. Social Policy in Relation to Art policy: Views from Cultural Sociology**

The question concerning the way in which cultural activities relate to social policy issues has received much attention in the literature on cultural sociology. Some of these studies have been written to defend subsidies to cultural activities, by offering broader support for their benefits to society (McCarthy, et al., 2004). This has led to a debate (which has already been alluded to in the Introduction to the present research) on the question as to whether or not social benefits are rightfully expected of cultural activities (see Merli, 2002; Matarasso, 2003; Belfiore, 2002 and 2004; and Belfiore and Bennett, 2009). Most research in this area (see e.g. Hughes, 2002, and Newman and McLean, 2004) focuses on participatory activities specifically designed for specific groups. The present research, however, focuses on the effects of the general public's attendance at the professional performing arts. Therefore these studies will not be used as a basis for developing a theory on the functioning of art in the social domain. In this section, attention will be given to four major issues that seem to dominate the debate on the relationship between cultural activities and social policy. The first is the issue of cultural diversity and representation of under-represented groups, which is a concern within policies striving for what has been called 'inclusive societies'. Community arts have also received attention in recent years as an instrument to cater to under-represented groups or to target specific groups. A third issue is health in relation to art policy. In Chapter 6, health was identified as a function of cultural activity not mentioned in the policy documents. A fourth issue has already been encountered in the previous chapter: city (borough) regeneration.

#### **9.3.1. Cultural Diversity and under-represented Groups**

Scholars in various countries have concerned themselves with issues of cultural diversity in cultural policy.<sup>4</sup> The view on aesthetic experience taken in the present research does not differentiate between specific ethnic groups in society. Although the aesthetic traditions of

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<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Van den Hoogen and Van den Berg (1997), Skot-Hansen (2002), Yim (2002) and De Haas et al. (2003).

migrant communities and the functionality of cultural expressions in their traditions may differ from Western traditions, there need not be a difference between ethnic and western communities with respect to the values and functions that can be derived from aesthetic experience.<sup>5</sup> The policy issue of cultural diversity in the present research is reduced to the question of access to the official cultural amenities as has described in Chapter 5.<sup>6</sup>

Matarasso (2005b) specifically mentions the policy goal of giving scope for expression to underrepresented groups. For instance, he mentions people with severe psychological health problems, or alcohol and drug addicts. He claims that the fact that they can express themselves as individuals through cultural activities may improve their position in society, certainly more than the situation where they are identified as a problem group by others (in power to do so). Wang (2004) refers to multiple-ethnic identities in Taiwanese society, some of which have been under-represented and have only recently found room for expression. In a similar way, Shusterman describes rap music as a form of authentic expression for black minority groups in ghettos in large American cities (see Chapter 6). Another example can be found in the 'balls' that black and Hispanic transvestites organized during the eighties in major American cities. In this way, they staged their own beauty contests, contrasting with the dominant white-female beauty image as occurs in Miss World competitions.<sup>7</sup> These examples all relate to the issue of self-awareness which can occur through participation in cultural activities that are intimately related to the specific socio-economic and/or ethnic groups in question. The present chapter must cover the question as to how the personal development of participating individuals that occurs through their cultural activities relates to the social position of the group as a whole. This is a topic for Section 9.5.

### 9.3.2. Community Arts: from Participants to Audiences

Though Matarasso's work on art in the social domain focuses on participatory arts projects, more specifically the so-called 'community arts', it should be discussed here. The publication of *Use or Ornament* in 1997 formed a starting point for the debate on the social impact of participation in the arts in the UK.<sup>8</sup> His research claims that the functioning of art in the social domain starts from the fact that participation in the arts is an effective route for

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<sup>5</sup> Research into the differences is necessary, but falls outside the scope of the present research. However, the main difference between Western and non-Western audiences appears to be that cultural activities for migrant communities are far less separated from ordinary life than those in Western tradition (see Van den Hoogen and Van den Berg, 1997). This may be true of the institutionalized art world, but the vehement defence of aesthetic experience as part of ordinary life, as voiced by Shusterman (1992 and 2000), leads to the conclusion that the differences are not as prominent as they are sometimes thought to be.

<sup>6</sup> In the policy document of Groningen (2000a and 2000b), the issue of cultural diversity is described as an issue of under-representation of specific groups when the policy-makers claim that youth culture is being denied access to the official cultural institutions. This demonstrates how cultural diversity and under-representation can be regarded as an issue of access to cultural institutions.

<sup>7</sup> These sub-cultural events have been documented in films like *Paris is Burning* (1990) by Jennie Livingston.

<sup>8</sup> Matarasso himself describes the study as a first endeavour into the *terra incognita* that is the evaluation of the social impact of participation in the arts (Matarasso, 1997 p. iv)

personal growth. This kind of approach does dovetail with the view taken on aesthetic experience in this research, in which personal development is an important function of aesthetic experience at personal level. Therefore, in developing a theory of arts' functioning in the social domain, Matarasso's work should be included. It is important to analyze whether or not the social impact of the arts upon audiences (as is the topic of the present research) and participants (which is the topic of Matarasso's research) differs. Indeed Matarasso refers to this difference.

There is an important difference between the experiences of participants in the arts and those of audiences; the impacts described in this report relate principally to the former. This distinction is significant because participation is the main interface between the arts, volunteering and community activism. Some (but, (...), by no means all) of the social impacts described in this report arise as much from people taking an active part in their own developments, and in the lives of their communities, as from the arts themselves. (Matarasso, 1997, p. 74)

This implies that city administrators who seriously aim at social impact should focus on participatory arts projects (community arts and amateur arts). Nevertheless, Matarasso leaves room for social impact to occur with passive participation as well. Even more so: he argues that despite the variety of the projects studied, there appeared to be no specific difference to the social impact found. Thus he argues that 'community arts are not more "effective" than amateur or professional arts' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 75). This conclusion seems rather dubious as the projects studied were mostly designed and executed with a specific place and participants group in mind. Thus the projects relate to the lives of the participants more easily than the 'regular' professional performing arts events and most amateur arts activities do. It can therefore be assumed that:

- (a) The magnitude of the social impact at personal level of attending performing arts is more limited because, whereas participatory projects typically span a longer period of time, attending performances only lasts for the duration of the performance.
- (b) As participatory projects can target pre-existing social groups (such as regular visitors to a youth centre) the social impact at group level may be greater because the group members remain in contact after the project, while audiences attending the professional performing arts usually disperse after the performance is over.<sup>9</sup>
- (c) The magnitude of the social impact of attending the performing arts is smaller because some of the benefits reported by Matarasso depend on people taking an active interest in their surrounding community, which cannot be automatically said of performing-arts audiences.
- (d) Participatory activities train certain capacities in the participants (e.g. they improve oracy, see McDonnell and Shellard, 2006) which non-participatory events do not address for audience members.

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<sup>9</sup> One might venture the notion that the fact that community arts projects are usually geared specifically to the lives of the participants may give them greater opportunity for identification with what is being performed, and thus they have a greater impact than 'regular' performances. However, this kind of assumption is dangerous because the aesthetic properties of a regular professional performance may attract specific audiences that are as eagerly 'receptive' towards what is being presented as participants in a specifically designed project.

Bearing these differences in mind, Matarasso's work can be used to develop a theory for the functioning of art in the social domain (see Section 9.4.2).

### **9.3.3. Health and Well-Being in Relation to Cultural Policy and the Social Domain**

Another issue concerning social policies is the health and well-being of citizens. People who are healthy and who feel well can participate more easily in society. Health, specifically mental health, has already been associated with aesthetic experience (see Chapter 6). Even though health has not been mentioned in the cultural policy documents, the relationship between participation in culture and health has been discussed in cultural sociological literature.

Matarasso mentions health and well-being as one of the categories for outcomes of participatory arts projects. With this he means that such projects can support vulnerable groups in the community, that personal empowerment can ensue, and health can be promoted through education. He regards this category as 'neither a primary issue, nor a common experience among participants. Discussion suggests that the keyword here is "feeling": people were not thinking of physical cures, but an improved sense of well-being, often related to increased levels of confidence, activity and social contact' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 64).

Madden and Bloom investigate how the functioning of culture and art, which occurs at the affect level, influences psychological and physical health. They review literature on arts therapy in order to understand the relationship between artistic creation and human affect. Their article thus focuses on creation rather than reception, although they claim that this type of approach does not conflict with promoting attendance at art events (Madden and Bloom, 2004, p. 137). Their analysis is relevant for the present research, although it should be born in mind that arts therapy is usually directed at people who are in a problematic situation because of physical or mental health disorders. The present research focuses on the benefits of arts attendance for the general public.<sup>10</sup> Two conclusions stand out.

First, artistic activities are viewed as healing and cathartic in themselves. The work of Csikszentmihalyi where he describes 'flow experience' is quoted to support a link between artistic processes and human affect. In the model of aesthetic experience described in Chapter 6, this type of link has also been found, inasmuch as participation in the arts helps in the sublimation of affects and needs and the fulfilment of such sublimated needs. Madden and Bloom indicate that a lot of research has been done into the effects of music on mood, and on the direct physical manifestations of artistic therapy, again pertaining to music, as it may be applied to produce tranquillity across a variety of physiological indicators, such as neurological activity, blood pressure, peripheral temperature, heart rate, respiratory

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<sup>10</sup> The authors indeed acknowledge this fact and suggest (1) that the effects of arts activities on clinical populations work through the same mechanisms as for non-clinical populations, and (2) that not all effects that are found for clinical populations will occur for the general population.

influences and synchronizing respiration, and other motor activities. For the plastic arts, there is research in such physiological indicators as well (*ibid.*, p. 140).

Second, artistic activities in art-therapy literature are considered as clinical tools for diagnoses, prognoses and treatment. Artistic creation is seen as a means of self-communication,

of tapping into the 'inner self' or of expressing emotions and thoughts that may be otherwise inexpressible. (...) Artistic processes are consequently portrayed as facilitating the emergence and release of inner experience and feelings and the breakdown of defences (...) Both conscious and unconscious expressiveness can thus be heightened, which has a number of effects. Self-expression is strongly linked to emotional health (...). Greater expressiveness facilitates the re-experience and resolution of inner conflict (...) and may promote personality integration by harmonizing a subject's perception of fantasy and reality, their unconscious and conscious, and their inner self and outer world (...). Greater expressiveness is also seen as a bridge to improve self-esteem, self-empowerment and self-respect. (Madden and Bloom, 2004, p. 139)

The same processes are indicated as have been discussed in the previous sections and Chapters 6 and 7 because the concepts described here for arts creation can be closely linked to the concepts linked to aesthetic experience in this research.<sup>11</sup> Once again affect-regulation is mentioned as a function of artistic activity. Furthermore, the experience of inner conflict (which may lead to adjusting one's schemes of perception) and the experience of already established identities are also mentioned. This last aspect needs some further elaboration: Blokland (1995) has argued the right to cultural amenities as a means of widening one's perspective on life in order to develop a personal identity. In much the same vein, Matarasso (1997) uses the concept of self-expression as a means of emancipation of underrepresented groups.

In short, Madden and Bloom conclude that a brief review of art-therapy literature supports the claim that the affective responses to art assist in furthering psychological and physical health, and thus may have a social impact. They do not specify this social impact explicitly but the following impacts can be found in their overview of literature:

1. Art helps us to 'feel better' (Madden and Bloom, 2004, p. 140) because it reduces stress and anxiety (or – such is the case with popular music – it induces stress and excitement which in turn can be followed by a sense of release, which is the active involvement Shusterman and Van Stokkom have put forward as a viable way to experience art). Thus the effects of aesthetic experience in the area of health relate to the non-artistically aesthetic function of sublimating needs and relieving sublimated needs which helps one to feel better. The active involvement that occurs during aesthetic experience is key here. Feeling well is thus an intrinsic function of aesthetic experience which should be included in a theory of the functioning of culture and art

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, harmonizing a person's perception of fantasy and reality within the framework of this research certainly rings a bell. In clinical settings, the fact that aesthetic experience may invite a person to use his or her power of imagination in order to compare their fantasies to actual life appears to be a helpful mechanism. For non-clinical subjects, arts participation may be a 'normal' way to reconcile fantasy and reality. Thus, their participation in aesthetic activities may be a partial explanation for why they are not clinical patients.



in the social domain. However, from the discussion of arts-therapy literature, it has not become clear which further outcomes can be related to this function.

2. At the same time 'feeling well' can be the result of the extrinsic values of performing-arts attendance. The break from routine, which attending performing arts provides, also relieves tensions. The effect here can be achieved through other leisure activities as well, such as dining out and holidays.
3. Art is a means of self-expression and self-representation. Artistic creativity can be a means to develop and promote identity, and, through this, may be a source of empowerment for the individual or group participating in the performing arts. This is an aspect stressed by Blokland (1995). Matarasso (1997) also suggests that empowerment is an important function of artistic activity. However, this effect is mostly related to participatory arts. It will be taken up in Section 9.4.

#### **9.3.4. City Regeneration**

As described in the previous chapter, the regeneration of (areas in) cities is an aspect of cultural policy. Revitalizing (part of) a city involves strengthening its economic performance, and cultural interventions can be instrumental in this. Of course, social policy includes reinforcing the economic position of underprivileged citizens. It was established that there is a link between the self-awareness of city (borough) inhabitants of derelict areas and the economic functioning of such areas (Section 8.4). Thus, city regeneration can evidently be considered as a part of both economic and social policy issues. With regard to social policies, the fact that people's views on themselves and their surroundings can change is crucial, while with regard to economic policy, the influence of such changes on their economic behaviour is relevant. Therefore, city regeneration need not be studied as a separate issue in the social policy domain when developing a model to evaluate the social impact of cultural policies.

#### **9.3.5. Summary**

The foregoing indicates that the social policy domain is a wide one. Therefore it is difficult to pinpoint exactly which policy goals are being referred to. The social policy aims related to aesthetic experience range from improving the (mental) health of the population (or specific groups), cultural diversity, allowing under-represented groups scope for authentic expression, to preventing crime and promoting district revitalization. All such aims either focus on the position of people in society (such as the rehabilitation of youth offenders) or groups in society (such as cultural diversity or borough revitalization) in order to ameliorate their social and/or economical position. To make things more complicated, such aims cannot be considered independently, they are mutually related. It is easy to see how health issues and district regeneration, for instance, can be connected. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how aesthetic experience contributes to a specific social policy goal. But - as stated in the introduction to this chapter - the question can be approached from the other direction. This means that it should be ascertained from the functions that have been related to aesthetic experience:

- (a) The way in which the subject perceives his or her situation within a community.
- (b) The way in which the collective nature of experiencing the performing arts relates audience members to one another and to the community.
- (c) The way in which these experiences may generate outcomes for the community.

This is the approach taken in the remainder of this chapter.

Furthermore, it appears that research into participatory activities can be useful for the present research, although the difference between participants and audiences should be taken into account. It has been suggested that the specific artistic functioning related to these activities may be the same, but outcomes related to participants taking an active interest in their community differ for audiences and participants.

Finally, health issues can be considered as both a non-artistically aesthetic type and an extrinsic type of functioning in the social domain.

#### **9.4. Personal Development and the Community: Knowledge, Skills and Personal Identity**

This section discusses the work of two theorists who put personal development at the centre of attention.

##### **9.4.1. Blokland: Positive Freedom or Personal Autonomy**

Blokland has published a book on Dutch cultural policy (in the broad sense of the term, thus also encompassing education policy), approaching the topic from a political scientific angle. He has introduced two conceptions of personal freedom into the cultural policy debate: negative freedom and positive freedom, or personal autonomy, a concept which he derives from the work of Isaiah Berlin.<sup>12</sup> Negative freedom can be described as 'the area in which a person can do whatever is within his or her capabilities without interference by others' (Blokland, 1995, p. 19). The concept of negative freedom entails that the government should intervene as least as possible. Only when the actions of individuals can cause harm to others is intervention by the government allowed. On the other hand, positive freedom, or personal autonomy, is 'a much more all-embracing and more fundamental value than its negative counterpart. It involves the capability of people to steer their lives independently, or to be master of their own existence' (*ibid.*, p. 19). Blokland argues that this conception of freedom stems from the desire to be able to make one's choices for oneself, and to justify these choices based upon one's own thoughts and purposes. In short: 'the desire to be *someone* and not just everyone' (*ibid.*, p. 20), which is the desire for a personal identity in the sense that has been used in the present research. Both liberal and socialist political 'families' share the humanistic cultural ideal of personal autonomy or positive freedom (*ibid.*, p. 20; see also Boomkens, 2008 as discussed in the Introduction).

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<sup>12</sup> Blokland himself uses the word 'autonomy' and not 'personal autonomy'. Here 'personal autonomy' is used to distinguish from the discussion of art's autonomy in Chapter 5.

According to Blokland, the key problem for cultural policy is the dilemma between positive and negative freedom. People will choose the cultural forms with which they have become accustomed through their socialization, but they might opt for alternatives if they knew them. But they may choose (their negative freedom) not to know these alternatives (Blokland, 1995, p. 21).<sup>13</sup> Two aspects are important: *self-determination*, 'when a person's actions depend on individual choices which are an expression of his identity' and *self-realisation*, 'when a person develops his capacities, talents and abilities in making "the best of oneself"' (*ibid.*, p. 257). Both are dependent upon each other. These aspects show how closely positive freedom is linked to a person's identity. Positive freedom or personal autonomy entails that a person can develop and express his or her identity through self-determination and self-realization. Although positive freedom entails 'an independent search for alternative values, ideas and knowledge (which) requires that one dares to put existing and learned conventions up for discussion' (*ibid.*, p. 259) it is clear that not everything need be doubted. One needs a point of departure in order to be able to evaluate various alternative courses of action. The existing culture, which in the model of aesthetic experience used in this research is represented in the schemes of perception of the subject, provides such a point of reference.

Thus Blokland's theory of positive freedom or personal autonomy can be related to the description of aesthetic experience in Chapter 6. It is also obvious that, within the social domain, aesthetic experience has two intrinsic functions:

- For all aesthetic experiences, it holds that the subject will experience his or her connection to the (sub)culture to which the aesthetic product belongs. This is a form of aesthetically-intrinsic functioning.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Blokland writes: 'In this way, (people) must develop their capacity to judge if they want to be properly capable of making choice: they ought to learn to discern alternatives, evaluate them and to choose. To make an autonomous choice, people must also be up to date with the options. Any one who has been faced with 'popular' music his whole life long has no real choice between Mozart and Springsteen' (Blokland, 1995, p. 20). The argumentation about the ability to make independent choices is valid, but the example of Mozart versus popular music is weak. From this quote it may be implied that Blokland values experiences of Mozart's music more than those of popular artists such as Springsteen. However, it cannot be excluded that so-called popular art forms generate non-artistically and artistically-aesthetic values just as classical music does. Thus Blokland's remark can only be understood in the sense that people who are unfamiliar with the aesthetic codes of classical music might be willing to choose this type of music if they had become acquainted with it. Blokland here underpins the importance of cultural education, in which making acquaintance with various forms of aesthetic expression is crucial. He implies that people should be offered alternatives and that they should be equipped to recognize them as viable options and to evaluate these alternatives. This comes close to Bourdieu's concept of personal cultural capital. In fact, Blokland does refer to Bourdieu in this respect.

<sup>14</sup> From the discussion above it might be inferred that Blokland focuses on the artistically-intrinsic functioning mostly. This is not the case. He also recognises the importance of aesthetically-intrinsic functioning. See e.g. page 259 where he discusses the importance of experiencing the existing values which are embedded in civilization. In Blokland's view art is important to actively experience the justification of ethical issues in society (he here comes close to Davies' 'propositional knowledge'). Aesthetic experience does not only provide alternative visions on reality but – perhaps even more importantly – provides an active experience of the reference point against which such alternatives can be evaluated. Thus culture is an important precondition for positive freedom or personal autonomy,

- When the experience becomes artistic in nature, the subject will be challenged to question the (sub)culture to which he or she belongs. Such questioning may lead to reinstating the dominant values of this (sub)culture, but it may also lead to rejecting these values – thus changing the scheme of perceptions – which, in turn, may lead to the person acting differently in society, thus changing his or her social position. This is an artistically-intrinsic type of functioning of the performing arts.

Blokland's theory of positive freedom fits with the description of personal development and confirms the suggestion made in Chapter 6 that social policy issues are closely linked to the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience. This means that it can be assumed that when aesthetic experience has occurred for individuals, social development *can* follow (see Blokland, 1995, p. 275).<sup>15</sup> For the present research, a problem of causality exists here because the different actions of people in society may very well be attributed to their cultural participation but may also be attributed to other factors. Thus when intrinsic functioning of the performing arts takes place, the consequences in the social domain in a good case scenario can be only partly attributed to cultural participation. This means that cultural activities may not be the most efficient way to achieve social goals. Education is an important way to encourage personal development. However, cultural activities might be specifically successful with people who drop out of the regular education system. The fact that aesthetic experience occurs at the level of perception is important because this is a type of personal development that is specific to aesthetic activities. Personal development in education and journalism occurs at the level of cognition although it may, in turn, have impact at emotional and perceptual level as these forms also shape people's perception schemes.

Thus far, the discussion of Blokland's theory has merely confirmed the assumptions in Chapters 6 and 7 about the functioning of culture and art in the social domain. For the present discussion, however, a shift from the personal level to the collective level is needed. Blokland makes this shift in the following manner. In two articles (Blokland 1992 and 1994) he applies his approach to art policy. He argues that people who are personally autonomous can be considered as a collective good, because people need others in order to develop their own capacity to influence their own life in a truly autonomous way. Thus the more people that develop personal autonomy, the more others will be able to develop the same autonomy. Participation in the arts is a particularly important way to develop personal autonomy because aesthetic experience when artistic in nature enables the subject to develop

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not only to provide alternative visions on reality but also to develop one's capability for evaluating alternatives. By spreading culture one will by definition spread the possibilities for personal autonomy, though culture is not a sufficient precondition for personal autonomy (Blokland, 1995, p. 275).

<sup>15</sup> Note that here the societal organisation of aesthetic experience is an intervening variable within the institutional frame. Reception may be organised in such a manner that it limits aesthetic experience to specific groups – in fact it is, see chapter 5 – although it cannot be argued that the same values will never occur in non-canonised reception situations which may attract more diverse audiences.

the point of reference on which to base one's decisions.<sup>16</sup> Thus Blokland's theory of positive freedom demonstrates how closely the concept of identity is linked to social functioning of the performing arts. Positive freedom for individuals is dependent on the positive freedom provided by the collective. Therefore, if personal development for the individual does occur, this also has effects at collective level.

#### 9.4.2. Matarasso: Personal Trajectories of Participants

Matarasso's *Use or Ornament* (1997) is the first large-scale research that attempts to document the social impact of participation in the arts, community arts projects in this case. In total, 16 projects have been monitored, their results (in terms of production) have been described, and participants interviewed. The research methodology rests upon the assumption that participants can articulate the benefits they experience from a project. The researchers do recognize that the outcomes are mostly intangible and specific to the circumstances of the projects, and thus may be hard to compare. Furthermore, they are aware that there is a problem of causality: it is hard to link these intangible outcomes to participation in a single project. They tackle these problems by interviewing a vast number of participants. The outcomes differ from project to project and participant to participant, and resist generalization except in the broad sense of 'changing lives'. But when one moves beyond 'the story of a young man saved from a life of crime by dance (...), consistent themes emerge' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 14). The outcomes that the participants report can be categorized around six themes, although the researchers in no way claim that these are the only relevant categories and that overlap does exist (*ibid.*, pp. 12-13). These categories are:

1. Personal development
2. Social cohesion
3. Community empowerment and self-determination
4. Local image and identity
5. Imagination and vision
6. Health and well-being<sup>17</sup>

The researchers regarded only the fifth category as being specific to cultural activities (they do not distinguish between culture and art). Because the research was only aimed at investigating whether or not social outcomes can be measured, no efforts have been made to further categorize the outcomes and to investigate how they can be linked to one another. It is easy to see that the categories correspond to the functions as mentioned in the policy documents, with the exception of health and well-being.

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<sup>16</sup> Therefore Blokland is extremely critical of Dutch theatre in particular, where hardly any classical repertoire is staged. The extreme focus on artistic renewal leads to a lack of performances which enable culturally less competent audience members to develop knowledge of theatrical traditions. (It is a matter for debate whether or not this extreme focus on experiment is still present in subsidized theatre.) Thus, they are deprived of their positive freedom to choose to go to or to abandon the theatre, whereas research has shown that knowledge of classical genres is a prerequisite to be able to follow more modern forms (Blokland, 1994). Blokland is here referring to Maas, Verhoeff, and Ganzeboom (1990) who conducted one of the most comprehensive empirical researches into the audience for the performing arts in the Netherlands at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>17</sup> This category has already been discussed in Section 9.3.3.

*From personal benefits to collective benefits*

Only categories 1 and 5 relate to outcomes at personal level, the others involve the collective level. Unfortunately, the researchers make no effort to link the outcome categories to one another. As will be shown below, personal development (here regarded as skills development) can be regarded as the starting point for the occurrence of societal impact. The researchers under 'personal development' quite specifically refer to the fact that participation in the arts widens the participants' horizons (*ibid.*, p. 16), an issue which has already been encountered in the present research. Under 'personal development' they also categorize issues such as confidence-building with regard to personal creativity, which might be considered as specific for aesthetic activities. They also mention confidence-building through the act of co-operation in a project. This is clearly a specific outcome for participatory arts projects, but may also arise from other communal activities, such as building a local children's farm.

The researchers only link the fifth category to the artistic nature of participatory art projects. 'All other effects can also be attained by good community development work or involvement in sports or volunteering' (*ibid.*, p. 56). However, this does not indicate that only category 5 is intrinsic, as defined in the present research. The researchers link many of the effects that have been described to the fact that people take an active interest in their own environment or community. Through participatory arts projects they become more actively (and more equitably) involved in local affairs (*ibid.*, p. 74). This is specific to community arts, although a similar effect can be imagined with regard to attendance at the professional performing arts. By participating in the performing arts, one (usually) adheres to the social codes that govern such activities (e.g., arriving on time, queuing to get in, listening to the music or focusing on the play or rather actively dancing to the performance). Jeannotte (2003) denotes this as 'buying in to the norms of the community' which seems a more apt description than Matarasso's.

Because personal development is the category that corresponds most with the view taken on aesthetic experience in this research, investigation should be carried out concerning whether or not the benefits mentioned by Matarasso can be divided in benefits that accrue to participants and benefits that accrue to audience members. This also involves distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes (as Matarasso does not make the distinction). The only intrinsic outcomes in personal development he mentions are the development of artistic skills and the widening of horizons.<sup>18</sup> The first obviously relates to the participatory nature of the projects studied. It can be assumed that, with regard to audience members, their skills in deciphering aesthetic codes will be developed when attending performances (cultural competence). However, this is not a function of aesthetic experience; it is a prerequisite for the occurrence of (future) meaningful experiences. What remains is the widening of horizons. Furthermore, under 'personal development', Matarasso mentions various

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<sup>18</sup> He also mentions that teachers reported the development of creativity and imagination for children participating in arts projects, but this can be summed up under 'artistic skills'.

outcomes that range from the development of organizational and social skills, extended involvement in social activities, stimulating interest and confidence in the arts, help build new skills and work experience, to promoting people's employability, etc... . These are not very specific categories; obviously there is overlap. However, they all stem from the fact that people take part in social activity; they do not relate to the aesthetic nature of the activity.<sup>19</sup> They relate to the fact that people take an active part in their community by participating in a communal project. These outcomes are all about the development of social or organizational skills which can be considered as typical for participatory projects. From the perspective of this research, the development of such skills is an extrinsic effect. This is not without merit entirely. Although it may be questionable as to whether or not the skills of an audience member will be developed by means of individual attendance at the performing arts, to the extent that greater employability may ensue, it cannot be ruled out that, due to the fact that attending performing arts is a social activity – which entails joining in society – attendance may lead to specific extrinsic outcomes that can be relevant for the present research.

A closer look at the category of 'imagination and vision' is necessary as well. This is the only category Matarasso regards as being intrinsic to arts projects. It is easy to link the development of *imagination* to the artistically-intrinsic functioning of the performing arts. By *vision*, Matarasso means that the art project becomes a symbol of what the community can achieve. This is specific to participatory projects, but not entirely irrelevant to the present research. The performing-arts activities can become a symbol for the cultural relevance of a city. The fact that specific performing-arts events are staged in a city, or a district, lends identity to the location. This is the same effect that arises for cities with a soccer team or putting in a bid to organize the Olympic Games. It relates to city image and identity, a subject covered in the previous chapter.

Matarasso's general conclusion is a strong defence of participatory-arts projects:

Participation in the arts does bring benefits to individuals and communities. On a personal level, these touch people's confidence, creative and transferable skills and human growth, as well as their social lives through friendships, involvement in the community and enjoyment. Individual benefits translate into wider social impact by building the confidence of minority and marginalized groups, promoting contact and contributing to social cohesion. New skills and confidence can be empowering as community groups become more (and more equitably) involved in local affairs. Arts projects can strengthen people's commitment to places and their engagement in tackling problems, especially in the context of urban regeneration. They encourage and provide mechanisms for creative approaches to development and problem-solving, and offer opportunities for communities and institutions to take risks in a positive way. They have the capacity to contribute to health and social support of vulnerable people, and to education. (...) there is more than evidence to show that participation in the arts offers us, as

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<sup>19</sup> Possibly with the exception of 'providing a forum to explore personal right and responsibilities' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 14). This involves a participant questioning his or her identity, here defined as his or her position in society or the community, through the aesthetic activity. This involves challenging one's schemes of perception. However, this kind of research into one's position in society can also occur when participating in schooling; only then, the inquiry is not at the level of perception but at the level of cognition. Unfortunately Matarasso does not elaborate on what he means exactly.

people and communities, a wide and valuable range of benefits which we would be foolish to disregard. (Matarasso, 1997, p. 74)

This quote first of all makes clear how the benefits of aesthetic experience at personal level transfer to collective level. New skills that can be developed through cultural activities have an empowering effect, and promote individuals to take an active part in their community and community groups in society. However, cause and effect should be seen as interlinked here: being empowered promotes social activity which, in turn, builds confidence and thus stimulates them to take part in social activities. Thus it can be inferred that the social outcomes of aesthetic experience start from the values and functions at personal level, more precisely the development of skills:

- 'Artistic' skills which may lead to more creative problem-solving (artistic) and to connecting with one's surroundings, place and community (aesthetic).<sup>20</sup>
- Organizational and social skills which are not specific to cultural activities but can arise from all other forms of communal activities as well.

In short, Matarasso argues that positive outcomes of aesthetic experience do exist, and can be assessed and planned.<sup>21</sup> The last assumption may be true of participatory art projects because, in the design of the project, the specific social benefits for the specific groups that are being targeted can be established in advance. This is not the case for the social impact that arises for audiences from regular performing-arts activities. A further remark is important:

One problem with management-oriented evaluations of arts projects (...) is that they usually confine themselves to reporting what happened up to the end of the project. As a result, even when they touch on outcomes rather than outputs, they do not allow for the fact that all such events are part of a sequence, affected by what occurs before and after. A positive outcome can easily become a negative one as a result of subsequent events. The greater the impact of a project, especially in terms of empowerment and raised expectations, the greater the potential for things to turn sour if promises are not delivered. (Matarasso, 1997, p. 70)

This refers to the problem of causality that has already been encountered before. The effects of a challenging experience may not be lasting. Matarasso points to the fact that this also holds true for extrinsic effects, such as the building of confidence through working together on a project. This implies that measuring the effects is difficult, not only because of the question as to how the effects should be measured, but also when: immediately after the

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<sup>20</sup> The use of 'artistic' is problematic. Matarasso does not distinguish between 'aesthetic' and 'artistic'. Furthermore, his research is specific to participatory projects. The artistic skill developed is the use of the power of imagination. The skill of deciphering cultural codes is also developed, but this skill is merely aesthetic.

<sup>21</sup> He certainly recognizes that this is not always the case. Not all community arts projects are planned and executed carefully and professionally, and accordingly fail or underachieve. From the research methodology used, it can be inferred that good project designs include a description of which effects are aimed at whom and how such effects can be evaluated (see Matarasso, 1997, p. 88). Furthermore, it should be recognized that the social impact of participatory arts projects is one of many factors that influence people's lives. Moreover, the effect may be negative for the participants: they can experience personal costs, the relationships of their existing social network may be put under pressure, for instance, especially when their lives do change (*ibid.*, p. ix). Such negative effects should also be considered when examining the impact of non-participatory arts projects.



performance or later on when such effects might have come to fruition but also might already have turned sour? As a result of such problems, Matarasso tried in later publications to develop an index to evaluate the culture of a community (see Matarasso, 1999), arguing that the effects should be measured at community level rather than an individual one.

Four observations conclude the discussion of Matarasso's work:

- The intrinsic functions that can be deduced from Matarasso's research coincide with the description of aesthetic experience in the present research.
- Though the societal outcomes of aesthetic experience can be assessed, a problem of causality exists: it is hard to determine when, where and how these effects should be measured.
- The development of organizational and social skills is important in evaluating the outcomes of aesthetic experience in the social domain. These outcomes are a type of extrinsic functioning.
- The development of personal skills (both intrinsic and extrinsic) translates into wider social impacts as people and communities become empowered to take active part in their society. Especially the artistically-intrinsic functioning is relevant here as it entails a change in perception schemes, in this case, a change in the self-perception both of the individual community members and of the community as a whole as a result of the development of their perception. Their heightened capacity for imagination may lead them to connect better to society in general, as they recognize better futures for themselves and their community and act differently to seize these opportunities.<sup>22</sup>

### 9.4.3. Summary

The conclusions to be drawn from Blokland's theory are quite straightforward. His conception of positive freedom is concurrent with the description of aesthetic experience when the background against which an individual weighs alternatives is considered to be the schemes of perception of an individual. Developing the schemes of perception and exercising the ability to change these schemes – as is done when invoking the power of imagination – will lead a person to a more autonomous position in society. Note that not only the artistically-intrinsic type of functioning is at stake here: aesthetically-intrinsic functioning is also important, for it enables a person to experience the preconceptions of the culture or community to which he or she belongs. Aesthetic experience is an important way to develop one's skills of perception and thus the ability to evaluate alternative courses of action. Furthermore the chances of for developing personal autonomy increase when one lives in an environment of people who are more autonomous themselves. Thus aesthetic experience is important in developing personal identity.

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<sup>22</sup> Note that this only applies when things go right. When things go wrong, artistic functioning may lead a community to perceive (i.e., to feel and possibly understand) the hopelessness of their situation even better, thus in fact limiting the possibilities for change.

Though Matarasso does not distinguish clearly between what in this research has been called 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' outcomes (nor between artistic and aesthetic), his work is nevertheless helpful. The transition from the personal level to the collective level occurs through empowerment of individuals who, through cultural activities, develop aesthetic skills on the one hand and social and organizational skills on the other. Skill development leads to empowerment, which helps social activation, which feeds skills development again. Note that at least a large part of the skills development can occur through other than cultural communal activities, or does not depend on the cultural or artistic nature of the activities. The fact that the activities are a social activity occurring at the level of a specific community seems most important. Aesthetic activity can be seen as a way to 'buy in to the norms and values' of one's community and society, but so can sports events or reading a newspaper. However, what is specific to cultural activity is that it is a way to critically assess such norms and to be involved at the level of perception. Therefore, it is specifically suited to developing one's identity, although lasting effects on the social level are dependent on more than only cultural activities. The effects can turn sour if they are not built upon.

### **9.5. From the Personal to the Collective Level: Community Identity and Development**

To make the transition from the personal to the collective level, two types of questions are relevant. The first is how a performance influences the identity of audience members; i.e., the perception scheme in the performance challenges the perception scheme of the spectators. Thus development of individual audience members is realized. The next step concerns the way in which this personal development becomes relevant for the collective level of the community and for social policy issues most specifically: community revitalization, which McCarthy et al. relate to social capital theory. This will be researched in this section. However, there is a second question within this domain that is relevant. This question deals with the relationship between the identity that is present within the performance (i.e., it is encoded in the aesthetic language of the performance) and the identity of the audience *as a collective*. This is the topic of the next section where the work of Fischer-Lichte, already encountered in the first chapter, will be discussed in more detail.

#### **9.5.1. Collective Identity: Art and Culture as Representations of Community Identity**

In art philosophy, much attention is given to the disruptive power of artistic expression. Artistic creation has been described as development of the expressive materials (Eldridge, 2003). But there is more at stake than development. Madden and Bloom (2004), for instance, point to the fact that art is also about reproducing traditional forms and thus perpetuating (aesthetic) traditions. This is an important function of culture and art: the confirmation or reconfirmation of the traditions of the community one belongs to. A closer look at the relationship between audiences and the performances themselves is needed to establish what happens between performers and audiences. The process has been clarified by Fischer-Lichte (2002), who regards the history of theatre as a history of identity in which theatre is a means

for a community to become aware of itself. For this proposition, she uses the work of Helmut Plessner who:

determined the *condition humana* as the distance of the self from the self, as man's de-centred position. Man confronts his self/the other in order to form an image of his self as an other, which he reflects through the eyes of another, or sees reflected in the eyes of another. Or, to put it another way, man finds himself via the detour of another. (...) In this Plessner describes the basic anthropological condition as a fundamentally theatrical one (...). The actor seems to be a magical mirror for the spectator, reflecting the spectator's image as that of another, that is, the image of another as his own. (...) Through actions carried out by the actors with their bodies and language, and through the role being played, the actors stage aspects and scenes which the spectators perceive and understand as representative of society in terms of their identity as members of a particular society and as themselves. This means that it is only the distancing of man from himself (...) which allows him to cultivate his identity in any way. It follows that (...) the actor is understood to be the very symbol and embodiment of the *condition humana*. (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 2)

Thus theatre as an art form symbolizes the process of man becoming aware of himself or herself because it consists of performers distancing themselves from the collective in order to represent this collective – as a mirror for the identity of individuals *as members of this collective*. The crux of aesthetic experience thus is not merely the grasping of the identity that is being represented (in Bourdieu's terms 'deciphering' the performance, in Shusterman's terms 'understanding' it) but the experiencing of the process of distancing one from oneself. This is a unique quality of aesthetic experience which it does not share with other social activities, such as sports, journalism and science. These activities can also influence one's self-image and thus eventually one's identity: one's identity is influenced by means of developing skills (e.g., logical reasoning, physical abilities) which may lead a person to feel more secure in a variety of social situations. But only aesthetic experience makes a person aware of this development of identity. Thus, the performing arts can be a very effective route to social change because it has a liminal quality (like *rites de passages*) where someone or a group is first separated from everyday life and social milieu, then experiences a liminal phase, a phase of transformation 'between all possible states', and then is reintegrated into the community, welcomed and explicitly confirmed in his or her identity (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 3).<sup>23</sup> Thus, for Fischer-Lichte, the functioning of performing arts in the social domain

is (...) to be understood as an integrated and integrating element of social reality, changes in which it can decisively influence by a permanent dynamization – for example, by offering a critique of the current concept of identity or by proposing alternatives, perhaps even by initiating them. Since theatre is a social institution which is realized in the organization of public performances, it is guaranteed the possibility of public effect as long as its critique and new alternatives are not neutralized by the censor. (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 5)

Thus the function of culture and art which has been defined as 'formulating critique on society' in cell A of Table 4.6 is very closely linked to the development of personal and of

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<sup>23</sup> It even seems possible that culture and art and not only theatre have this quality, though theatre is the only art form that symbolizes it. Fischer-Lichte recognizes that the fundamental theatrical situation is present in all types of cultural performance, a term with which she also includes weddings, temple ceremonies, etc... Fundamental is that one or more members of a community present themselves for this community as representatives of the community. This representation may even be done for members of other communities (see Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 3).

collective identities. However, in the above quote, formulating critique is presented by either explicitly formulating critique or offering alternatives, and seems to presuppose that the performing artists have formulated their view on society before making the performance. As discussed in Chapter 6, this usually is not the case. Furthermore, it is not only the artist-creator of a performance who is able to formulate the critique, but the audiences themselves when, for instance, they read certain intentions into a performance that were not conceived by the creator (see Section 5.1.2).

This means that (both actors and) audience members can become aware of their individual and collective identity through the performing arts. This can be considered as a first step in community development. This first step is intimately bound to the aesthetic nature of the experience, thus is intrinsic. Following the model outlined in Chapter 6, the experiencing of a specific group identity (be it an ethnic or regional identity or an identity based upon one's line of work), as embodied in the work of art through the use of aesthetic codes which can be specific to the group (such as the verbal prowess of black underprivileged city populations, expressed in rap music), is an aesthetically-intrinsic type of functioning. In experiencing the culture of the group one feels one belongs to, one's identity can be strengthened. When the identity is put up for discussion in the experience, the experience becomes artistic. This means that, by definition, strengthening and building social structures are intrinsic types of the performing arts' functioning in society, and cultural policy is thus immediately related to social policy. In policy debates, social policy and cultural policies are usually separated on the basis of the concept of artistic *quality*. Social policy aims at fostering the social climate or social quality of a city, whereas the cultural policy fosters the artistic climate or artistic quality. As a result of the (incomplete) processes of autonomization of artistic activity, social and cultural policy thus part company here. From the perspective taken in this research (where the functioning of culture and art is being related to specific values and functions of the experience and not to artistic quality as such), it should be concluded that such a separation is not necessary. Artistic quality and social quality, or rather developing social quality, can coincide.

In short, for the present research, the societal functioning of the performing arts is intrinsic when it relates to the representation and/or development of identities. Furthermore, the experiencing of the distancing from oneself – which is needed in order to examine identities, both for individuals and groups – is fundamental to the human condition and an indispensable part of aesthetic experience. This experience will add significance to the conceptions realized through aesthetic experience. When the existing identities are being put up for discussion, the ensuing functioning is artistically-intrinsic. The confirmation of existing identities is aesthetically-intrinsic. Note that this can also be attained through other interventions, such as sport. The fact that the experience is a social one or the fact that a certain geographical identity can be strengthened through regional or national teams (though never questioned) is important, as the team players represent their community *to the community*. For the present research, these extrinsic values and functions are relevant as well;

they can be useful side-effects of cultural activity. However, theatre in particular has a liminal nature that is experienced both in aesthetic experience of theatre, which cannot be said for sports.

### 9.5.2. The Notion of Social Capital

Around the turn of the century, the concept of social capital started to receive much academic attention (see Franke, 2005, and Field, 2008, for an overview) and later on the concept also was studied extensively in relation to public policy in the United Kingdom, the OECD, and the World Bank (see Field, 2008, pp.147-51) and also in Canada (Franke, 2005). This interest was instigated by the publications of Putnam (1993 and 2000). His article and the later book sketch the steady decline of social capital in the United States from the fifties until the turn of the century.<sup>24</sup> For Putnam social capital refers to 'the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). People use social capital to achieve their goals in life. They turn to their friends, neighbours and relatives for help (mending a fence, baby-sitting, etc...), comfort and emotional support. But social capital can also have more far-reaching outcomes that veer into the realm of economics: many people use their social networks to search for job opportunities. Typically this last goal is pursued through types of social relations that differ from the first. Emotional support and help in the practicalities of daily life are typically solicited from close friends, neighbours, relatives and co-workers – generally people with similar characteristics. Putnam denotes this type of social capital as bonding: ties between people that are alike. Usually bonding ties are ties with people who have similar resources at their disposal and because of the close nature of the ties they are willing to share these resources. A job search however is more successful when access is gained to resources that are not readily available to the individual. Thus, they are not likely to be available to the close friends and relationships either. Here, bridging social capital – ties between different people in different circumstances – is more effective.<sup>25</sup> In general, the ties with people with different characteristics are weaker and thus the other may not be as eager to make resources available, but with more bridging social capital the resources available to the individual will be more diverse and thus he or she may be more successful in goal attainment. In this respect, Granovetter speaks of 'the strengths of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973). Note that the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital need not always be clear. Most social groups mix bonding and bridging capital, they can be bonding on some characteristics and at the same time be bridging on others (Putnam and Goss, 2002, p. 12). For instance, ethnic

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<sup>24</sup> Putnam symbolizes the decline in social capital by mentioning the misfortunes of amateur bowling leagues in the United States. Where people once went to bowling allies as teams to play against each other, they now bowl alone, hence the title of this book *Bowling Alone*.

<sup>25</sup> Woolcock (2001) distinguishes three types of social capital: *bonding* (as it is used here), *bridging* (ties between similar people who are geographically distant, e.g. work relations and acquaintances rather than friends), and *linking* (ties between different people in different circumstances). However, the distinction between bonding and bridging is usually made, and the geographical proximity of people is less relevant for the distinction, although Woolcock is certainly right in assuming that geographical distance usually leads to weaker ties. However, strong and weak ties can exist in bonding and for bridging capital, although usually bonding ties are stronger.

organizations may bond on the characteristic of race and bridge differences in education levels. Both types of social capital should be invested in to gain their rewards. Hence the word 'capital' is used as in the economic sciences. Putnam identifies five reasons why social capital is beneficial to individuals and to society:

1. Social capital helps to resolve collective problems. The norms of reciprocity invite people to take part in collective problem-solving and, at the same time, the social network that sustains these norms can be used as the vehicle to implement collective action.
2. Trust reduces the costs of social transactions and thus social capital translates into financial (or economic) capital.
3. Social capital is conducive to widening the awareness that people's fates are linked and thus produces tolerance in society.
4. The social networks that sustain social capital serve as conduits for the flow of information that people use to achieve their goals, such as finding a (new) job for instance.
5. Social capital helps to cope with traumas and sickness (see Putnam, 2000, pp. 288-9).

Apparently social networks are the core of social capital. Here Putnam's theory parts company with Bourdieu who used the term earlier. Putnam is aware that his use of the term is not new, he even traces its origins as far back as 1916, when Hanifan wrote on the importance of community involvement in local schools (Putnam, 2000, p. 19, see also Putnam and Goss, 2002). He does acknowledge his debt to Bourdieu in this respect.<sup>26</sup> To Bourdieu, capital is something which is instilled in individuals. The major classes of conditions of existence can be distinguished on the basis of the differences in the distribution of economic, cultural and social capital – understood as the set of 'actually usable resources and powers' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 114). Thus Bourdieu defines social capital as

the sum of the resources, actual and virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. (Bourdieu interviewed by Wacquant, reported in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119)

In Bourdieu's thinking, social capital is an asset of an individual (or a group), it implies that a person, through a network of social relations, has access to resources. For Bourdieu, this is relevant because he is interested in questions of distribution of different capitals, and thus power, in society.<sup>27</sup> For Putnam however, social capital is a characteristic of social relations or

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<sup>26</sup> Putnam also mentions Coleman as an important influence. For the sake of brevity the specific approach of Coleman will be left aside because it does not relate to cultural capital (see also Field, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Besides social capital, Bourdieu distinguishes cultural capital, which has been discussed in Chapter 5, and economic capital, which should be understood as the possession of money or other forms of productive capital. Furthermore, Bourdieu distinguishes symbolic capital which is a very complex notion (see Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119) which can take any of these forms: cultural, economic or social capital. The specific of symbolic capital is that it is attributed to an individual by others. One cannot invest in it oneself. Incidentally, Bourdieu's definition of social capital cited here seems to imply that social capital is somehow a precursor of economic capital. This is no surprise as

a community as a whole. He does not analyse power relations – and thus misses out on reasons why some individuals have access to a wider variety of resources than others – but rather uses social capital to describe levels of trust in communities.<sup>28</sup> However, both stress the importance of social relations for gaining access to resources. In Bourdieu's definition, the resources to which an individual has access constitute his or her (individual) social capital. For Putnam, social capital relates to the social networks with their inherent norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness *and* the benefits these networks generate for both the individual and the community. His definition comprises both cause and result. On the one hand, this seems right, because it can be assumed that the one follows from the other: the more relationships, the more access to resources and the more trust; at the same time, trust and relationships can be regarded as a basis for establishing more relationships thus enlarging the networks and possibilities for its associated benefits. On the other hand, this obscures a clear picture of how social capital produces its benefits for individuals and communities.<sup>29</sup>

Field (2008) has reviewed the literature and policy documents that have come out since Putnam popularized the concept of social capital. He argues that, theoretically, the concept has not matured yet (Field, 2008, p. 157). None the less, the concept is valuable because it brings to social theory an emphasis on relationships and values as significant factors in explaining structures and behaviour. It proposes a focus on the meso-level of family, neighbourhood, voluntary associations and public institutions as mediating between the individual and society. Moreover, the concept combines structural elements (networks), behaviour (participation in society) and the cognitive dimension (norms) in its analysis of behaviour and society (*ibid.*, p. 160). Social capital is viewed as a resource available to individuals through networks. It therefore

must be understood as a relational construct. It can only provide access to resources where individuals have not only formed ties with others but have internalized the shared values of the group. For this reason, it is important to treat the concept as a property of relationships (Field, 2008, p. 161).

Thus Field integrates the visions of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam and, with an emphasis on shared values of the group, also incorporates what Jeannotte (2003) has denoted as 'buying into' the institutional rules. She has tried to link the concept of cultural capital as it has been developed by Bourdieu to the development of sustainable communities. Because of

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Bourdieu holds that all forms of capital can ultimately be converted into economic capital (e.g., objectified cultural capital attained by a university diploma usually 'translates' into economic capital through the ability to gain access to higher-paying jobs). Bourdieu is not very precise in how one form of capital can be transformed into the other.

<sup>28</sup> Although Putnam does argue that 'social capital is accumulated most among those who need it least' (Putnam, 2002, p. 415).

<sup>29</sup> Furthermore the inclusion of trust in the definition of social capital obscures measurement methods to track the phenomenon. Because trust is a contextual variable, it influences the extent to which individuals are inclined to rely on social network members to obtain a certain resource, as opposed to mastering a certain skill oneself (which means using individual capital) or using resources that are institutionally available, e.g. through government agencies and social security (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004, pp. 202-3).

lack of precision in her definitions, her article does not shed a new light on the matters discussed here. However, she argues that

cultural participation helps to connect individuals to the social spaces occupied by others and encourages 'buy in' to institutional rules and shared norms of behaviour. Without this 'buy in', individuals are unlikely to enter into willing collaboration with others and without that co-operation, civic engagement and social capital – key components of social cohesion – may be weakened. (Jeannotte, 2003, p. 47)

This 'buying in' to the institutional rules and shared norms of behaviour is obviously an important first step in community development. Aesthetic experience can be a first step to acknowledging that one indeed sees oneself as part of a certain community. The focus of further research into social capital should therefore be the relationships and the shared values that can lead to benefits both for individuals and communities.

A further criticism of Putnam is that social capital cannot be regarded as positive everywhere and anytime. It also has a dark side, for the existence of tight intra-group social capital may work against the existence of strong ties at wider community level (Field, 2008, p. 75). In other words, bonding social capital in particular can be exclusionary in its nature and thus produce negative effects for society. This criticism is not entirely justified, for Putnam himself devotes an entire chapter to what he calls 'the dark side of social capital' (see Putnam, 2000, chapter 22). None the less, his account of social capital and his obvious concerns about its supposed demise do focus on the positive side of things. His first effort seems to have been to document the decline of social capital in the United States (in *Bowling Alone*, 2000) and other Western democracies (in *Democracies in Flux*, 2002). Rather than analysing the dynamics of social capital at work in society, his efforts have been to describe changes in social capital. His main empirical evidence relies on what can be called formal social capital: records of memberships in social institutions such as parent-teachers associations, sports clubs (amongst which the exemplary bowling leagues), unions and political parties and in declining levels of trust. Rather than declining levels of social capital, this may only be documenting a change from formal forms of social capital to looser forms (informal) that suit people's current needs better. In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam already rectified his stance by showing that membership of organizations that are less demanding is rising. For instance, Greenpeace solicits memberships through mailing rather than through personal contact. 'Newer forms (of social capital, QLvdH) may be more liberating but less oriented to solidarity – representing a kind of privatization of social capital' (Putnam, 2002, p. 412).<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, in the conclusion to *Democracies in Flux*, he argues that traditional formal associations, such as unions, political parties and churches, are aimed at alleviating social inequality and differences in social capital. The new social associations that have replaced them, such as sports associations and the environmentalist movement, are more homogenous in composition and attract mainly the higher-educated, younger and middle-

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<sup>30</sup> In no way does Putnam present a definite answer here. In sociology, this issue is known as the 'community debate' in which the question is raised as to whether or not the loss of formal social ties is compensated by the gains in informal ties and proliferation of impersonal contacts through internet (see Völker, 2005, p. 12).



class social strata. Thus changes in formal social capital do indicate a decline in bridging forms of social capital (*ibid.*, p. 415).

The most important criticism levelled at Putnam is the circularity of his definition. Cause and effect are part of the definition of the phenomenon. The relationships between the elements of the definition – social networks, norms of reciprocity and trust – are not clear. Which causes which? Field argues that trust should be regarded as an effect of social capital rather than as a constitutive element of it, as Putnam holds. Furthermore, the theory does not make clear how social capital can be built and sustained (Field, 2008).<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless the concept is important for the present research because of its considerable popularity in policy research (see Franke, 2005) and because it has been used in arts advocacy specifically (see McCarthy et al., 2004, discussed in the next section).

Field argues – like Putnam – that policies to increase social capital in society should focus on building bridging kinds of capital. However,

building bridging social capital may prove a greater challenge than at first appears. After all, the capacity to co-operate across weak bridging ties rests very substantially on people's *ability* to deal with others who are not similar to themselves, and who therefore bring resources that are not otherwise easily available from close connections. People involved for the first time in extended contacts with bridging ties may need to learn a 'command of variety'. A study of dining out among British businesspeople showed that the 'cultural omnivore' was able to draw on more sources of conversation in order to build wider networks and thus benefit from a wider circulation of knowledge. (Field, 2008, p. 153, italics QLvdH)

This quote is of interest for two reasons. First, it is claimed that, although bridging social capital may be harder to build, the rewards it brings to the individual and community may be substantial in terms of access to resources hitherto unavailable.<sup>32</sup> Second, a 'command of variety' may be interpreted as a 'wide mental scope', an asset of individuals that can be built through aesthetic experience, more specifically when the experience is challenging. The artistically-intrinsic value of testing one's views and insights thus is directly linked to generating bridging social capital.<sup>33</sup> All in all this suggests that clues for measuring the

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<sup>31</sup> Further criticisms are less convincing: Field argues that Putnam pays no attention to the influence of politics on social capital and that he ignores the fact that our common withdrawal from civic involvement is an active choice rather than something resembling a natural catastrophe befalling us. However, Putnam does provide reasons why civic involvement declines: pressures of time and money, especially in two carrier families; suburbanization, which resulted in sprawl and commuting, and electronic entertainment (television) and the privatization of leisure time and generational change (see Putnam, 2000, chapter 15). He also mentions political influences on social capital in contemporary democracies (Putnam, 2002), but his analysis here is hypothetical.

<sup>32</sup> Concurring with Granovetter's (1973) argument.

<sup>33</sup> It is not unusual to connect social capital to aesthetic experience in this manner. Putnam himself devotes attention to the arts in *Bowling Alone*, where he states that besides the fact that 'art manifestly matters for its own sake (...) art is especially useful in transcending conventional social barriers. Moreover, social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely aesthetic' (Putnam, 2000, p. 411). However, he does not elaborate the point as has been done in this chapter, and thus he seems to agree with policy documents that classify the social functioning of the arts in society as purely extrinsic. He goes on to enumerate a host of community and outreach art activities by American cultural institutions that 'produce great art, but all of them produce great

effects of aesthetic experience may be found in the efforts to measure (changes in) social capital. The literature on social capital will therefore be used in part IV of the research to develop measurement instruments for the functioning of culture and art in society.

### 9.5.3. Community Development: Building Social Capital through Aesthetic Experience

In 2004, RAND Corporation published a study of the benefits of the arts which was commissioned by the Wallace Foundation (McCarthy, et al., 2004). The study reviews a vast number of American and several European studies on the benefits of the arts. The reviewers conclude that the arts advocacy debate has focused on the instrumental benefits of the arts (both economic and social functions) rather than on the intrinsic benefits.<sup>34</sup> They have produced two models to describe the effects of the arts at personal and social level.

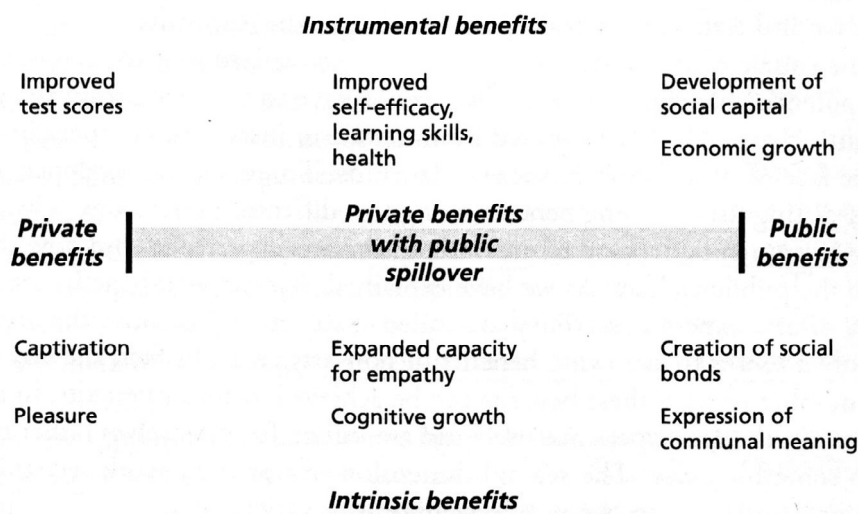


Figure 9.2 Framework for understanding the benefits of the arts (reprinted from McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 4)

They relate the functions of art in society (they use the term ‘benefits’) to aesthetic experience (they use the terms ‘artistic experience’ and ‘participation’). Although they do not discern between non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values and functions, their approach resembles the approach of this research. They distinguish between private and

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bridging capital – in some respects an even more impressive achievement’ (*ibid.*, p. 412). The fact that his enumeration only includes community arts and specific outreach programmes by professional institutions warrants the question as to whether or not the social functioning of performing arts in society is more easily demonstrated for these types of activities rather than for the ‘regular’ programming by professional theatres for the general audience. See Section 9.6.3.

<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the researchers claim that the empirical evidence on art’s functioning in society (including economic functioning) is lacking, specifically for the instrumental functions. First, there is the problem of causality; many studies do not specify how the claimed effects are produced and how they relate to different types of arts experiences. Second, there is the problem that many studies do not account for the fact that the benefits found can also be attained through other than cultural activities. Furthermore they question the methodological and analytical techniques used in the studies (McCarthy, et al., 2004, p. 68).

public benefits on the one hand and intrinsic and instrumental benefits on the other (see Figure 9.2).

The words in the lower part of this framework – which the researchers regard as the intrinsic benefits of aesthetic experience – can be easily related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience as described in Chapter 6 and 7 of this research. Their approach adds two notions to the present research:

1. There is a sphere between private and public functioning of the arts where the two overlap. This sphere consists of private benefits that have public spill-over effects. Here the transition between personal and societal functioning of the arts is made: functions that occur for the individual are of value to society (such as cognitive development which, in this research, has been identified as development of schemes of perception).<sup>35</sup> Thus, functions of aesthetic experience at personal level are values of aesthetic experience at societal level. These values lead to subsequent functions on societal level: creation of social bonds and expression of communal meaning. These two can also be related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience as described in Chapter 7. Affirmation of one's identity and establishing social structures is the same as the creation of social bonds. The expression of communal meaning is the collective mirror of a value of aesthetic experience, as identified from the perspective of the artists: expressing ideas and perceptions. Thus it also relates to the representation of community identity as discussed in the previous section: cultural activities stimulate not only individuals become aware of their identity (which is part of cognitive growth), but communities as a whole experience this too.
2. There is a transition from the private and public intrinsic functions to private and public extrinsic functions. The researchers have not focused on these linkages because, in their view, arts advocacy should not be based upon these instrumental benefits. However, they suggest that there is a link. It can be assumed that the higher test scores, improved self-efficacy, learning skills and health at least partly result from the cognitive development of subjects. Furthermore, it is easy to imagine that the expanded capacity for empathy leads to the creation of social bonds which might lead to further instrumental social benefits.

In the appendix to their overview, McCarthy et al. do discuss theoretical research into the linkages mentioned under 2. From literature in those disciplines that examine learning and behavioural change at individual level and social and economic change at community level, they developed a model for community revitalization. The model is represented in Figure 9.3 and can be described as follows:

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<sup>35</sup> See McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 77, where they discuss the learning process as a process of synthesizing what one experiences into scripts or schemata. 'These scripts not only provide a framework within which to make sense of particular pieces of information or experience, they are also modified when that information or experience does not fit the model' (p. 77). They refer to Piaget for this, which is also an important source used by Van Maanen. Their approach therefore fits the approach taken in the present research.

The first stage involves the development of social capital. It begins with the promotion of social interaction that leads first to the formation of social cohesion through bonds and bridges and then to the formation of social capital. Social capital is both an output of the increasing social cohesion and community identity at the community level (stage 1) and an input to the second stage of the process: the development of the organizational and leadership skills that seem to be required for building successful community coalitions and other forms of more structured collective action. The final stage of the process, community revitalization, requires a more advanced form of collective action entailing sustained intergroup co-operation and more intense and long-term forms of civic engagement, and involves economic and political as well as social processes. (...) Significant social benefits can be recognized at each stage of the process. Each stage is important in and of itself, and one stage will not necessarily lead to the next (nor necessarily should it); but each stage must be built on the stages beneath it. (McCarthy et al., 2004, pp. 86-7)

It seems that aesthetic experience can aid in the first stage of community development by promoting interaction amongst group members (attending the performing arts is, in itself, a social activity that links members of a group to one another – which is an extrinsic function of aesthetic experience), by representing personal and community identities (and thus strengthening them and instilling them in group members – which is an intrinsic functioning of aesthetic experience) and promoting social cohesion (through the strengthening of existing group identities or questioning of such identities). Bonding ties are created between community members both when their community’s identity is being represented and affirmed (when the experience becomes artistic) and when the community’s identity is being questioned. Bridging ties are created when the audiences (or participants) of cultural activity come from various backgrounds and present their community’s identity to one another or represent an altogether new but common identity. It seems that, in both these cases, the experience immediately becomes artistic in nature, for the experience forces one to question one’s identity.



Figure 9.3. Model of the theory of community revitalization (reprinted from McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 87)

Figure 9.3 sheds light on how (individual and communal) aesthetic experiences can contribute to developing sustainable communities and promoting collective action. Four issues should be recognized:

1. Aesthetic experience does not necessarily result in strengthening social cohesion. It can question existing social structures when the experience becomes artistic in nature. However, through questioning them, social bonds can be strengthened as well as weakened.
2. Aesthetic experience is not the only factor in making collective action happen. Much more is needed, such as the development of organizational and leadership skills. Such skills can be developed through the collective activities of specific groups. Thus, they can be regarded as the specific result of community arts; in fact they frequently are seen as such (see Matarasso, 1997). None the less, in order for organizational and leadership skills to develop, the collective action from which they accrue need not be aesthetic in its nature. Other types of activities, such as sports or residents' meetings in urban housing projects, can be just as successful. This means that the second stage is not linked to the aesthetic nature of cultural activities. These functions thus are extrinsic.
3. The specific nature of aesthetic experiences is that they operate on the level of perception. Thus they are specifically prone to occur in the first stage of community development because this is the stage where individuals relate themselves to certain groups. Particularly in a situation where bridges are needed to strengthen social links, the arts can offer an effective playground, for – when generating *artistically intrinsic* values – they are conducive to examining perceptions, an activity which is needed to form bridges. Thus, rather than establishing social connections themselves, aesthetic experiences seem to create the capacity of individuals to connect to others by strengthening their existing identities as a basis for responding to others in a more open way.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, subjects can widen their mental scope or capacity for empathy through aesthetic experiences that involve the use of the power of imagination.
4. The process described has a long-term perspective. This means that extended involvement in the arts by certain groups is necessary to produce collective action. Furthermore other community activities or learning abilities are needed to build on the results of aesthetic experiences. Without this, the effects can be lost or may even turn sour; matters can even be worse than prior to the cultural activity (see also Matarasso, 1997). Thus it is not possible to develop a causal link in terms of empirical research to link individual aesthetic experiences to social change (defined as collective action).

This last point in particular explains why McCarthy et al. focus on the effects of cultural education. They see the benefits of the arts accruing only when prolonged cultural participation occurs. In their view, the focus of cultural policy should not be on the supply of

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<sup>36</sup> Putnam also holds that bonding social capital is needed to generate bridging social capital.

cultural goods but on cultural education, i.e., fostering the ability of all members of society to benefit from cultural participation.

With the first framework, McCarty et al. draw attention to the fact that the values and functions of aesthetic experience for the individual accrue in much the same manner as Blokland has identified: the development of personal schemes of perception leads a person to be able to develop a sense of personal identity that manifests itself in individual determination.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, there is the development of social links (bonds and bridges). Thus the personal function is a value from the collective perspective. Some of these collective values are thus intrinsic as well: when people relate themselves to groups (community identity) or question these bonds and bridges. The theory of community revitalization sheds light on the relationships between the intrinsic and extrinsic functions as they have been identified in the present research, and on the way in which such functions also occur for people not involved in cultural activities. The artistically and aesthetically-aesthetic functions of aesthetic experience are relevant in the first stage of community revitalization: the development of networks between individuals and the benefits that these networks generate for the community. In the further stages, where community organisation capacity is being built, the functioning is extrinsic, for the development of such community capacities does not depend on the aesthetic nature of the collective experiences that foster them. In short, building social bonds and bridges is an intrinsic function of the performing arts in the social domain, while building community capacity and community action is extrinsic. The causal relationship is weak here, because many other factors influence such a development. Cultural activities may lie at the beginning of such a development of communities, but other types of activities (such as regular tenants meetings) can be the root of the development as well. None the less, in the first stage, the causal link may also be weak. Behavioural change is not caused by a single activity or influence but is always the result of many influences. Aesthetic experience may have specific influence on the level of attitude of individuals because it operates at the level of perception. Therefore, when considering possibilities to measure performing arts' functioning in the social domain, two routes are open for measurement:

- Measurement of the capacity of individuals to engage in social relations.
- Measurement of the social networks of individuals present in communities and the resources to which these networks may give access.

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<sup>37</sup> McCarthy et al. use the term self-efficacy which 'is concerned with judgements of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with perspective situations' (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 79) as opposed to Blokland's 'positive freedom' or 'personal autonomy'. Their term has been derived from theories on individual learning and thus differs from Blokland's. Furthermore, their term is broader: it also alludes to the self-empowerment which is prominent in Matarasso (1997) as a value of aesthetic experience.

## 9.6. A Theory of Arts Functioning in the Social Domain

As a conclusion to this chapter, the values and functions associated with aesthetic experience should be related to functions in the social domain. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, values of aesthetic experience at personal level lead to functions at personal level. The functions at personal level can have 'spill-over effects' at public level (McCarthy, et al., 2004). This means that these intrinsic functions at personal level can be regarded as values at societal level. These values at societal level may subsequently lead to functions at societal level.

### 9.6.1. Intrinsic Functioning in the Social Domain

The intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience in the social domain are depicted in the upper part of figure 9.4. The non-artistically aesthetic values at personal level are 'excitement due to the experience of non-present worlds' and 'empathizing with imagined emotions'. These may lead to the sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs. This function should be elaborated in the context of social policy. Because this function reduces stress and anxiety, it can be related to mental health: it leads a person to feel better. Furthermore empathizing with imagined emotions develops the skills of participants: it develops their capacity for empathy. Feeling well and improving one's capacity for empathy are aesthetically intrinsic functions of aesthetic experience at personal level. They are intrinsic values of aesthetic experience at societal level which may lead to intrinsic functions at societal level.

The artistically aesthetic values of aesthetic experience are the 'delight of the use of one's power of imagination', the 'experience of new perceptions' and the 'testing of one's views and insights'. This may lead to the artistically aesthetic function of changing one's views or insights, or reconfirming them. Examining or testing one's views and insights has also been described as widening the mental scope of the audience member. For instance, Blokland's theory indicates that a person may be able to make more autonomous choices because he or she is familiar with more alternatives than before the experience. Matarasso's story of community arts indicates that participants may feel that they are able to accomplish more than they had thought previously, thus changing their conception of themselves, changing their identity. Testing one's views and insights in the same manner leads a person to understand more positions or options.<sup>38</sup> Thus they can relate to other people (with different identities or schemes of perception) more easily, in other words: their capacity for empathy has been improved.

Feeling well, an improved capacity for empathy and having a wide mental scope all are important in interactions between a person and others. Thus, these intrinsic values at societal level aid in social bonding and social bridging. It can be argued that specifically the artistic-

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<sup>38</sup> 'Understanding' here should not only be interpreted as 'cognitive' understanding. Here understanding is meant at the level of perception, see the discussion on Shusterman's understanding-interpretation cycle in Chapter 6.

intrinsic value at societal level of having a wide mental scope aids in social bridging: crossing divides within society or between societies. However, feeling well (i.e., also feeling secure) and having empathy for others are important in this as well. Thus, there appears to be no difference between aesthetically and artistically aesthetic functioning, although it can be argued that artistically-intrinsic functioning in the societal domain is stronger in developing social bridges, and non-artistically aesthetic values facilitate this process. In addition, social bonding occurs as a result of both non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values at societal level. Social bonding (establishing social structures) and social bridging (developing tolerance in society) build up social capital. This can be regarded as the first stage in the functioning of culture and art in the social domain. From this description it can be concluded that it is correct to assume that the functioning of culture and art in the social domain is so closely related to the intrinsic nature of aesthetic experience that this functioning should be regarded as intrinsic. However, it should be borne in mind that the above only paints the sunny picture. It is easy to imagine social bonds and bridges being broken because of aesthetic experience:

- The sign languages or social customs used in the production may be unknown to diverse audiences. This can result in a part of the audience not understanding the performance, which means that no meaningful perception will take place. This may lead to a widening of social divides, although it may strengthen their mutual bond from the perspective of the part of the audience that does 'get' the experience.
- If a person's scheme of perception changes in the sense that he or she views social divides as just and correct as a result of the experience, bridging ties become even harder to forge. However, once again from the perspective of the audience member, this will be an experience that strengthens the social bonds with other members in the community he or she feels related to.
- Factors other than the intrinsic qualities of the performance may adversely influence the ensuing process. This is what Matarasso refers to the effects of participation turning sour, when the development achieved cannot be built upon because of socio-economic circumstances for instance (Matarasso, 1999). Therefore a closer look at the other factors influencing the experience is necessary, see Section 9.6.2.
- The organization of aesthetic experience in society may prevent functioning at community level. This is why attention should be paid to the organizational setting, see Section 9.6.3.

### **9.6.2. Extrinsic Functioning in the Social Domain**

The extrinsic values of attending performing arts that are relevant in the social domain lie in the fact that it is a communal activity: one will meet other people (at least the performer(s)). Also attending the performing arts is typically an activity that involves going to a certain location, thus being outdoors. These values can immediately be understood as being socially active, and as what has been described as 'buying in to the norms and values of a community' (Jeannotte, 2003). These are functions at personal level and values at societal level. In conjunction with the effects of other activities in the community, and influenced by



the economic conditions of the community, this may lead to extrinsic functions at societal level of community organization and development of leadership within the community. This represents the second stage of the functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain. Community action and revitalization can result from this, which is regarded as the third stage of the functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain. Because other factors influence the second and third stages, these stages cannot be causally linked to aesthetic experience. Therefore, the specific contribution of aesthetic experience to the social domain is the building of social capital, specifically providing social bridges. The extrinsic functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain is represented in the lower part of Figure 9.4.

### **9.6.3. The Organizational Setting and Functioning in the Social Domain**

The above account presents a scenario in which personal values and functions seem to translate automatically into collective values and functions. However, matters are not that simple. Two points should be considered.

First, the question of multiple identities – as already discussed in this chapter – hinders the translation of personal functions to collective benefits. The existence of multiple identities leads to a situation where there are no longer dominant identities, only many identities alongside each other. On many occasions, individuals adhere to several identities at the same time. The power of imagination in itself is necessary to navigate this contemporary condition, but this should be regarded as a personal benefit (though with public spill-overs) rather than as a functioning of the performing arts at collective level.

Second, one should look at the organizational setting in which the performing arts events are embedded in society. Performances are organized, stages are arranged and audiences are recruited within an organizational setting. Thus, this organizational setting, especially the distribution system, greatly influences the societal functioning of the performing arts. The current conditions where audience members buy their tickets individually (usually in small numbers as to go with partners or close friends) does not encourage meeting other people during the visit – although undoubtedly for some going to a theatre or concert can be a form to engage with others. However, the collective nature of the performing arts is hardly ever organized in the Netherlands. This raises the issues of how the experiences become more than private experiences, and whether or not these experiences should be contextualised in the organizational setting to encourage the transition from private to public benefits.

The community arts are at an advantage here as they are usually directed towards specific groups in society. This means that the participants will also meet one another outside the community arts activities, and thus private benefits may more easily be transferred to the collective level. Community arts have the property that they build social capital by boosting individuals' ability to engage on civil terms and by building organizational capacity. This is not a feature of the professional performing arts. This is specifically accomplished as community arts:

- create a venue that draws people together,
- foster trust between participants,
- provide an experience of collective efficacy and civic engagement,
- may be a source of pride for residents of the areas targeted (participants and non-participants) increasing their connection to the community,
- provide an experience to learn technical and organizational skills (apart from the aesthetic skills involved),
- increase the scope of participants' networks, and
- provide an experience for the professional organizations involved in setting up community arts projects, which enhances their ability to link to the community in question (Guetzkow, 2002, pp. 6-7).

Thus the conditions of community arts are more conducive to stimulating the transition from private to collective benefits. However, the occurrence of these transitions for the professional performing arts cannot be ruled out entirely.

The above might suggest that, in order to encourage functioning of performing arts in the social domain, city administrations should focus entirely on community arts activities. This is a matter for debate because the professional artists engaged in community arts will need an artistic environment of professional artists in order to develop their artistic skills. It can be assumed that artists function best when they can tap into an artistic 'biotope' in which they can go to plays, concerts and exhibitions themselves, and in which they meet other professional artists to develop working methods and ideas and ways of expression. This refers to cell A of Table 4.6: artistic development which is assumed to occur more easily with artists inspiring one another. The professional field and the community arts field therefore need each other in order to be resilient.

#### **9.6.4. Cultural versus Non-Cultural Social Activities**

A further issue is whether or not the effects described in this section can also be attained through other than cultural activities. In other words: can building social capital only be attained through aesthetic activities? As shown above, social bonding and bridging are intrinsic to aesthetic experience, thus they are part and parcel of it. However, this does not mean that other social activities, such as attending a football match between two national teams, for instance, can have similar effects. Therefore, the more apt question concerns the specific aesthetic aspect of the functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain. This type of functioning cannot be found in other activities such as sports. Three things stand out.

- Cultural expression is, by nature, an expression of identity because it employs sign languages which are unique to certain identities. Thus cultural expression has the ability to 'represent' a certain identity, whereas sports events do not. Sport events rely on everyone adhering to the same rules of the game, which can be learned by any community, and then comparing one's ability to achieve a stated aim in accordance with these rules. The same holds for science and journalism, where reality is assessed in accordance with the same rules (in science: logic, in journalism: one

should hear all sides). In culture and art, the same rules do not apply. Here the epiphany involves the way in which the same common truths can be expressed through the use of different sign languages and codes. This is the liminal capacity Fischer-Lichte (2002) points at.

- It is important that aesthetic experience operates at the level of perception. All other forms of expression operate at the level of physical ability (sports) and cognition, excluding emotional aspects here (science and journalism).
- The only attribute that is unique to aesthetic experience is the ability to invoke the power of imagination.

These three points indicate that challenging aesthetic experiences can be powerful, especially in producing social bridges. Aesthetic experiences, because they operate at the level of perception, may be conducive to social policy aims especially when the perceptions of certain participants are at stake. But these perceptions can also be changed as a result of the development of other skills, such as the ability to work together (community organization) or cognition itself through education.<sup>39</sup> It is important to note that this discussion is not entirely relevant to the research question. As has been shown, the social functioning of culture and art is not regarded as the core reason to execute a cultural policy; it is considered a side-effect. This means that it is not necessary to compare the effects of cultural activities in the social domain in the same way as the effects of welfare policy. The dotted arrows in Figure 9.4 indicate that the functions can follow from the values/functions in the previous stages, but the causality becomes weaker moving from left to right in the figure.

#### 9.6.5. Measuring Points for the Functioning of Culture and Art in the Social Domain

The last issue that needs to be investigated is where and how art's functioning in the societal domain can be measured. The foregoing discussion strongly indicates that measurement should be executed at several levels.

##### *Level 1a: Occurrence of personal benefits that can have public spill-overs*

This level actually coincides with the personal experience level in which the occurrence of aesthetic values and functions for individual audience members is researched in order to track the functioning of the performing arts. In addition, extrinsic values and functions of the experience are relevant to the research of functioning in the social domain. The following should be studied:

- Intrinsic personal development: the realization of intrinsic functions at personal level (see Chapter 7) which relates to positive freedom (Blokland) and aesthetic skills development (Matarasso).

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<sup>39</sup> Here the problem of definition of the term 'culture' becomes apparent. Journalism, science and sport events can also be considered as cultural activities. However, they do not generate aesthetic experiences. Although the functioning of culture and art – as shown above – is not only dependent on the artistically-intrinsic values of aesthetic experience, but also the non-artistically intrinsic values, it cannot be denied that only the artistically-intrinsic values are specific to aesthetic experience (see Chapter 6).

- Extrinsic personal development: social activation by going outside and joining in communal reception practices (Jeannotte: buying in to the norms and values of the community). Furthermore, feeling well as a result from a break from routine is relevant here.
- Personal Efficacy: as a result of both the intrinsic and extrinsic functions at personal level, the self-efficacy (McCarthy et al.) of individuals may rise, which is extremely relevant in the social domain.

Matarasso's research indicates that the personal trajectories of audience members can be traced to follow such developments. It involves recording the importance people attach to aesthetic experiences in their personal lives and relating these experiences to changes in their lives, changes which, however, may also result from other than aesthetic activities. Audience research using focus groups is therefore a required step. As it cannot be predicted when the functions on personal level will occur, longitudinal research is necessary.

#### *Level 1b. Communal Experience*

This level is closely linked to the inherent collective nature of performing-arts experiences. The experience and values realized through it may be a collective experience for all audience members present. This involves:

- The sense of belonging, created by being in a location at the same time and witnessing the same event (extrinsic).
- The sharing of the same perceptions offered in the performance (intrinsic). This can involve talking to other audience members about these perceptions.
- The representation of a community and the sense one belongs to this community (Fischer-Lichte).

This stage is influenced by the physical organization of the meeting between audience members and performance. Audience research (both quantitative and qualitative) and participative observations can reveal information on this type of functioning.

#### *Level 2. Community organization*

At this level, a 'spill-over' of effects of the performing arts from attendees to non-attendees may occur. It involves the development of organization within (pre-existing) communities and the development of social capital. As explained above, this level should be regarded as extrinsic as other experiences in both the personal life and the trajectory of the community strongly influence this type of functioning. The development of community organization can be traced through observation of predetermined communities and focus groups with community members. Changes in social capital can be measured quantitatively by researching the number of social relations and nature of these relations within communities. Measurement can occur at the level of pre-existing communities (targeted in community arts for example) and at the level of the general population, though measurement is here is more difficult (see Chapter 12).

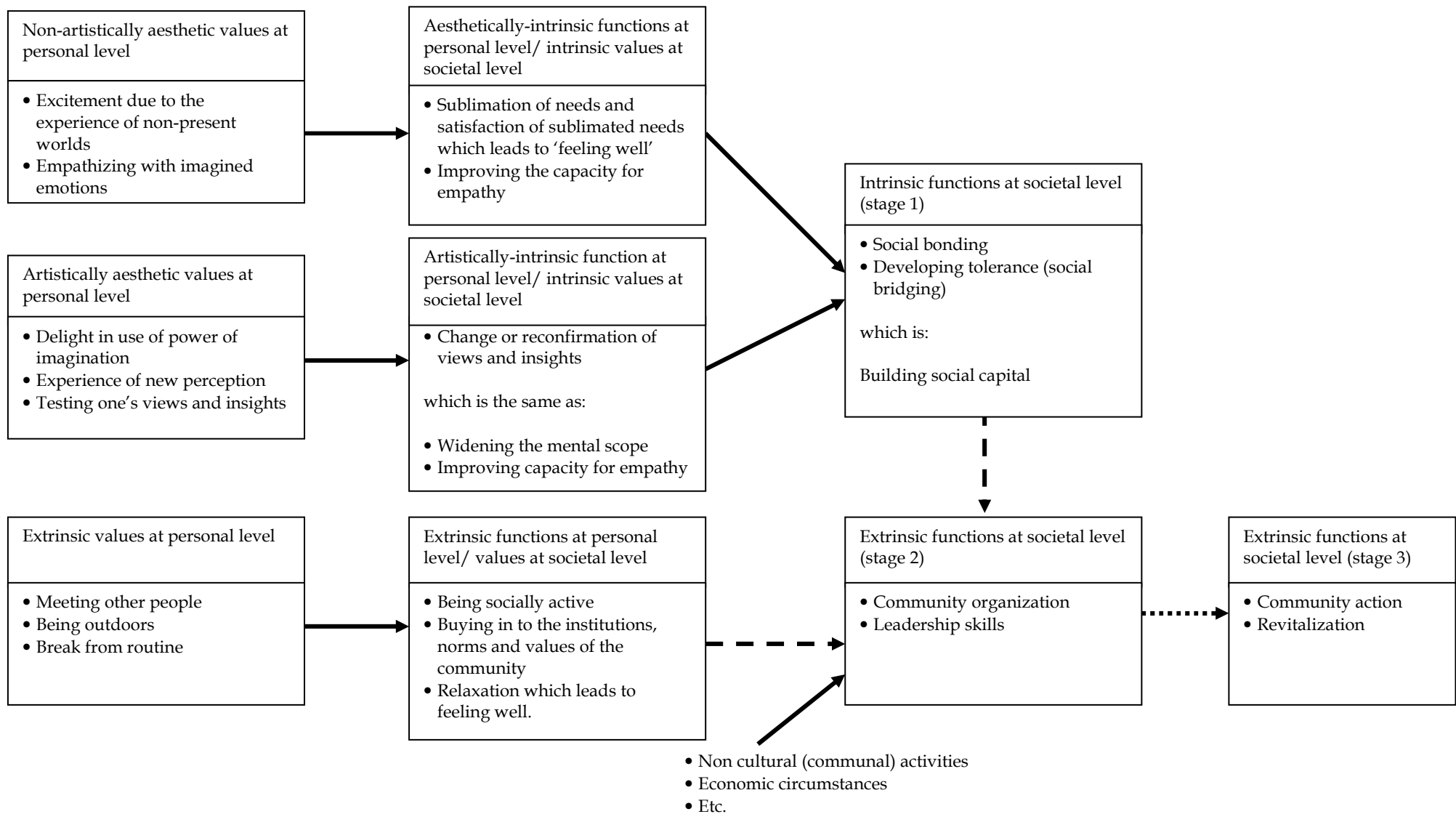
*Level 3. Community Action*

This level involves a community acting differently as a result of changes in terms of the raised self-efficacy of its members, community organization, and changes in social capital. This level of functioning of the performing arts in society cannot be measured other than the economic performance of the community in question (see Chapter 8).

In summary, the following measuring points for the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain are relevant:

- Skills development of attendees
- Feeling of well-being of attendees
- Changes in personal efficacy
- Communal nature of the experience and sense of belonging
- Organizational development (of predetermined communities)
- Changes in social capital within communities or the general population

Methods to measure these will be discussed in Chapter 12.



**Figure 9.4 Values and Functions of Aesthetic Experience in the Social Domain**

# 10. Towards a Framework to describe the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society

## 10.1. The Framework for Describing the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society

### 10.1.1. From the Simple Model to the Framework

Part I of this research investigated the functions that politics in the Netherlands associate with the performing arts. A detailed analysis of the cultural policy documents yielded a list of expected functions at personal and societal level. These functions have been divided according to whether they occur from the perspective of artists and of audience members at personal or collective level, and whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic in their nature. Table 10.1 reflects these distinctions.

The core of the legitimization of Dutch cultural policy rests upon the effect of aesthetic experience for audience members and for society at large. The tasks and functions mentioned in cells A and B are less prominent in the policy documents. Therefore Part II of this research covered the way in which the functions from the audience's perspective relate to the specific nature of aesthetic experience. A distinction was made between values that are instantly created in the experience itself and subsequent functions that may arise from these values, either during the experience or afterwards. Thus, the functioning of performing arts for audience members on personal level was explained (cell C) and the way in which these functions relate to the collective level (cell E) through processes of identity building was also explained.<sup>1</sup> In Part III, the step to the extrinsic functioning was made, i.e., to cells E and F. Although usually regarded as extrinsic to cultural policy, it turned out that, in both the economic and social domain, there are types of functioning that are so closely related to the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience that these should be regarded as intrinsic.

In the research, extrinsic values and functions have not received much attention until now. They have been qualified as not being intrinsic because they do not relate to the intrinsic values and subsequent functions of the aesthetic experience. As a consequence, they can also

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the functions in cell A have been related to those in cells C and E through the concept of the critical role of the arts in society. The tasks in cell A will be taken up in Chapter 11, when cultural systemic resilience is discussed in relation to policy evaluation.

Functioning from the perspective of	Intrinsic Functioning	Extrinsic Functioning
<b>Artists</b>	Functions: Expressing ideas and perceptions Artistic development (A)	Direct employment (B)
	Tasks: Producing for specific audiences Producing with amateurs Development/training of professional artists (A)	
<b>Audience members individually</b>	Personal Experience Personal Development Identity (C)	Relaxation (break from routine) (D)
<b>Audience collectively</b>	Identity and Debate (E)	Economic functions Social Policy Issues City Image (F)

**Table 10.1 Categorization of functions of the performing arts in society as found in Dutch policy documents**

be found in other social activities such as sports. However, this is not a correct way to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic values and functions because some of the values that are produced through sports policies, for example, resemble the non-artistically aesthetic values and subsequent functions. At this point in the research, it is interesting to be more precise. As indicated in Chapters 6 and 7, the extrinsic values relate to what has been denoted as the 'organizational setting' of the aesthetic communication; i.e., the characteristics of the physical location of the meeting between the audience and the performance, organizational frame, and the institutional relation in and between arts organizations,



institutional frame.<sup>2</sup> It is within the organizational setting that an audience for the performance is arranged. This arrangement provides the extrinsic values related to the experience (meeting other people, providing a break from daily routine and being outdoors). These values of the experience have consequences for the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain. The organizational frame consists of the actual organizations which act in the legal and economic sphere by adhering to the rules of society, paying their staff, procuring needed materials and services for their operations, and sustaining their buildings (or arranging for new buildings). These activities of the organizations have consequences for the functioning of the performing arts in the economic domain.

This chapter presents a framework for the functioning of the performing arts in society. This type of framework clarifies how the different values and functions of the experience of performing arts are related to one another and how functions for individual audience members 'translate' into functions at societal level. In presenting the framework in this chapter, the second and third research questions are answered:

2. How can the functioning of the performing arts in an urban society be described in a coherent system of functions (framework)?<sup>3</sup>
3. How does the specific artistic nature of the performing arts influence this functioning? In other words, which types of functions are dependent on the specific artistic nature of the performing arts?

In doing so, the scene is set for further investigations into the evaluation of cultural policy, which is the topic of Part IV of this research.

Figure 10.1 is a graphic representation of the framework for describing the functioning of the performing arts in society. On the one hand, the figure is composed by combining Figure 7.1 (on the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience), Figure 8.1 (on intrinsic and extrinsic functioning in the economic domain) and Figure 9.4 (on intrinsic and extrinsic functioning in the social domain). On the other hand, the organizational setting of aesthetic experiences and the values and subsequent functions to which this setting gives rise have also been added. The framework makes clear that the functioning of the performing arts in society can be described as occurring at three levels:

1. The values at personal level: These values arise from both the aesthetic experience offered to the audience members (intrinsic values) and the organizational setting within which the experience is organized (extrinsic values).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Apart from the organizational and institutional frames, Van Maanen (2004) also distinguishes the societal frame. The present research questions the way in which the values and functions realized in the communicative, organizational and institutional frames influence the societal frame.

<sup>3</sup> As it was assumed that the various functions of the performing arts that can be distinguished in urban society are interrelated. The aim of this research is to describe not only these functions but also their relations to one another. The word 'framework' is used to denote this type of coherent system of interrelated functions.

<sup>4</sup> Note that there are also extrinsic values that arise from the sheer existence of the arts organizations and not from the aesthetic experience.

2. These values give rise to subsequent functions at personal level. The intrinsic values lead to intrinsic functions. The extrinsic values lead to extrinsic functions.
3. The functions at personal level can be regarded as values from the societal perspective giving rise to subsequent functions at societal level. Again these functions can both be intrinsic and extrinsic.

These levels will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections.

### **10.1.2. Values and Functions of the Performing arts at Personal Level**

In Section 6.3, aesthetic experience was described as an experience that is not separated from daily life; in contrast, it is an important building block of people's lifestyles. Cultural consumption is one way to express and explore one's identity. Aesthetic experience not only requires knowledge of the sign systems used in a performance in order to be able to have a meaningful experience. It also requires knowledge of the appropriate attitude to experience the work, and a willingness to adopt such an attitude. For instance, in the performing arts, it is necessary to be on time in the auditorium and, for the more classical forms of music and theatre, one has to be silent and concentrate on the performance. For more popular forms, such as rock music or rap, being silent and sitting motionless may not be required. One could even say that these forms can be experienced better while moving or dancing to the music. The knowledge of the sign systems is multi-layered, and involves general knowledge to be able to understand what is being represented, iconographical knowledge, and knowledge of the specific codes used in the art discipline concerned or in the subculture(s) within which the work is presented or from which it stems. Such knowledge can be denoted as 'cultural competence'. The match between the sign system used and the cultural competence of the audience member largely influences the pleasure gained from the experience. In order to aesthetically experience a work of performing art, the subject should focus on the object and allow the formal arrangement of the work to guide his or her perception; in other words the subject should be sympathetic to the work. Furthermore, there are many factors that influence the experience (see Section 6.3 for a summary of these) and thus its outcomes. Therefore, the aesthetic experience of the performing arts can never be studied in isolation, although it was necessary to theoretically 'isolate' the aesthetic experience for the purpose of the research, and to identify the effects it gives rise to.

A closer look at aesthetic experience of the performing arts reveals that the experience generates certain values (during the performance itself). In themselves, these values are gratifying and explain why people seek out a performing-arts experience. The values can give rise to certain functions, either during the performance itself or afterwards. A distinction was made between:

- Non-artistically aesthetic values (and subsequent functions), which derive from the aesthetic nature of the experience. These are intrinsic values and functions.
- Artistically aesthetic values (and subsequent functions), which are dependent on the imaginative power of the audience member being invoked, in order to generate a

meaningful experience. The use of the power of imagination distinguishes between non-artistic and artistic aesthetic experience. These are intrinsic values and functions as well.

- Extrinsic values (and subsequent functions) which are not related to the aesthetic nature of the experience, such as the fact that experiencing the performing arts is usually a social activity which occurs outdoors.

#### *Intrinsic values and functions*

The non-artistically aesthetic functions and the extrinsic values and functions can be attained through other means than aesthetic experience, such as attending a football match. Only the artistically aesthetic values and functions are unique to aesthetic experience. This leads to the question as to whether or not the aesthetically-intrinsic functions should be included in efforts to evaluate cultural policy because they need not necessarily be achieved through cultural activities. The position taken in this research is that they should be included because:

- In the policy documents, these values and subsequent functions are described as relevant in society and legitimize the cultural policy in themselves.
- Whether an aesthetic experience has been artistic in nature cannot be ascertained beforehand. It can only be ascertained on the basis of the actual experience of the performances realized with (or without) the subsidy.

In other words, this research does not aim at legitimizing cultural policy. It only aims to identify the effects of the performing arts in society and the way in which they can be evaluated.

The aesthetically-intrinsic values of aesthetic experience (empathizing with imagined emotions and excitement due to the experience of non-present worlds) can aid in the sublimation of needs and the satisfaction of sublimated needs, which is an aesthetically-intrinsic function of the performing arts. The artistically-intrinsic values (experience of new perceptions and the delight in using one's power of imagination) can lead a person to test one's existing views and insights, and may subsequently lead a person to change his or her views and insights. The artistic nature of the experience is related to the use of one's power of imagination. Testing and maybe changing one's views and insights may or may not follow. However, this does not render the experience itself non-artistic in its nature. The aesthetically-intrinsic values of the experience will add a feeling of importance to the change in views and insights realized.<sup>5</sup> For the performing arts in particular, such values and subsequent functions can be communal, as the performing arts are (usually) a collective activity. Audience members can feel they belong to a collective because they have had the same experience as other audience members. They may also talk to other audience members about these experiences. Furthermore, the performance can be viewed as a representation of

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<sup>5</sup> Note that the new views and insights may not be very new to the subject at all. Merely changing the order of one's perception scheme, which means that already held perceptions that had receded into the 'background' of one's mind now come to the fore as poignantly true, also counts as artistic functioning, see Section 6.2.

the community from which it stems. This communal nature is largely influenced by the extrinsic values which are generated by the organizational setting in which the aesthetic communication takes place.

Chapter 7 demonstrated that the values which have been derived from theory (mainly arts philosophy and cultural sociology) can be related to the list of functions that was generated through the close examination of Dutch cultural policy documents (see Table 7.1). The key point here is that personal identity – expressed in personal views and insights – can be confirmed and developed through aesthetic experience, which occurs when the experience is artistic in its nature. It was established that the policy documents turn out to be written with ample knowledge of arts philosophy. Because of this, the framework presented here can be used as a basis for cultural policy evaluation. The next step is to relate these personal-level intrinsic values and functions to the societal level.

#### *Extrinsic values and functions*

Furthermore, aesthetic experiences of the performing arts include some extrinsic values. They involve the audience members venturing outdoors and meeting other people, although the question can be raised as to whether these values are strong within the Dutch theatre system, since the ‘coming together’ of audience members seems to be not at all organized, and performing-arts attendance has become a ‘collective individual activity’. None the less, there are forms of performing arts where the meeting of audience members is more prominent, specifically in the community arts (see Chapter 9). The fact that people gather in a certain place results in their being socially active and buying in to the institutions, norms and values of the community. Furthermore, the break from routine provided by attending performing arts leads to feeling well, as it may reduce stress. These functions are important for the subsequent functioning of the performing arts in the social domain.

The existence of performing-arts institutions themselves leads to some further extrinsic values. The operations of the institutions represent a value in society by employing artistic and other staff members, they spend money on materials needed for the productions and the upkeep of buildings and facilities, and the buildings they use may have a specific value, certainly in the case of historic buildings and/or monuments, but also in the case where spectacular modern architecture is used for venues. These values have relevance specifically within the economic domain, although subsequent functioning in the social domain cannot be excluded. For instance, the fact that cultural institutions adhere to the (legal) norms on employee relationships also strengthens these norms in society. This constitutes a value at societal level, as will be discussed in Chapter 11 where the Public Value approach will be introduced. In the economic domain, the fact that artists and other staff members are employed by the performing-arts institutions provides them with a source of income which can be regarded as a function at personal level.

### 10.1.3. Functioning at Societal Level

As discussed in Chapter 9, the functioning of the performing arts in society can be considered to occur in three stages. In Chapter 8, on the economic domain, these three stages were not used. However, as shown in Figure 10.1, they can easily be applied to the economic domain as well, although their inclusion does not add the same analytical clarity as in the social domain. In the following, the stages will be used for both the economic and the social domain.

#### *Functioning in the economic domain*

In Chapter 8, the functioning of performing arts in the domain of economics was studied in more detail. It turned out that, although the economic functions are considered to be extrinsic in the policy documents, matters are more complex in reality. The ability of the performing arts to stimulate changes in people's views and insights and thus identities (stage 1 of functioning at societal level) may lead them to make different choices in life, and may also influence their economic behaviour (stage 2 of functioning at societal level). This changed economic behaviour may influence the revitalization of communities or cities (stage 3 of functioning at societal level). However, it should be noted that these changes may not be positive. It may lead people to behave less sensibly economically (or ecologically). In addition, changing people's views and insights influences the image of a city (again, stage 1). This is relevant for generating a tolerant climate towards different types of people, which is important in attracting the creative class (Florida, 2002) (stage 2) and thus influencing the economic performance of a city or region (stage 3). Furthermore, city image or the image of a district as 'cultural' can generate a process of gentrification. Because, inasmuch as these influences on the economy occur as a result of the artistically-intrinsic function of aesthetic experience, this influence on the economy should be regarded as intrinsic.

There are truly extrinsic economic functions to the performing arts as well. First, the subsidized performing arts institutions provide a source of income for artists in a city (direct employment). Second, if the performances attract visitors to a city, these visitors may spend money in the city: they incur transportation costs in travelling to the theatre or concert hall, they may illicit child-care services and they may spend money on other products or services in the city. These expenditures have indirect employment effects. Usually indirect employment effects are related to museums more than to the performing arts, though they are not entirely irrelevant. Furthermore, the performing arts institutions in a city may contribute to the diversity of recreational amenities in a city and thus contribute to attracting the creative class, which not only favours a tolerant living climate but also is interested in a diverse array of facilities to spend leisure time. Authentic scenes (cultural heritage), sports facilities and natural facilities like mountains and a sea near the city and a vibrant and diverse cultural scene in the city are highly valued by the members of this class. It should be noted that these functions are generally associated with the city as a whole but they can also be attributed to cultural facilities in city districts that contribute to regeneration of these districts. Furthermore, it is important to note that these functions are associated with the

performing arts institutions rather than with the aesthetic experiences they provide for their audiences.<sup>6</sup> Although these functions of the performing arts in society may not legitimize cultural policy in themselves (see Van Klink, 2005), they can be considered as favourable side-effects of the performing arts in a city, and therefore should be included in efforts to evaluate cultural policy. The ability of performing-arts institutions to contribute to the diversity of amenities and to attract visitors may be regarded as the first stage in functioning at societal level, the direct and indirect employment effects and attraction of the creative class can be considered as the second stage leading to economic revitalization of the city or a city borough which is stage 3.<sup>7</sup> One final remark should be made. The positive effect of the arts on the image of a city or a city district may set a process of gentrification in motion, which leads to a rise in attractiveness of the city (district). This is reflected in the real-estate prices of the city (district). Marlet (2009) demonstrates that rises in property prices can be linked to the supply of (subsidized and commercial) performing arts in the city.

#### *Functioning in the social domain*

Some of the city cultural documents have suggested that the positive effects of culture in the social domain should be regarded as intrinsic. For instance, a relationship has been assumed between artistic quality and functioning in the domain of welfare. A closer examination in Chapter 9 showed that aesthetic activities indeed bring a specific advantage to welfare policies as they operate at the level of perception.<sup>8</sup> A first step in describing the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain is to recognize that identity can be ascertained and developed through cultural activities. Not surprisingly, the policy documents describe cultural experience as personal development. This is first and foremost the development of identity, which may lead a person to act differently in society and therefore improve his or her position in society as a result of higher self-esteem. Thus, with Matarasso (1997) we might agree that the effects of performing arts be assessed through studying the personal trajectories of audience members. The concept of social capital proved to be helpful in

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<sup>6</sup> In the case of the diversity of recreational amenities, this type of functioning is related to the total of cultural facilities in a city rather than to individual institutions.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the impact of cultural facilities on economic performance through attracting the creative class is a feeble legitimization of cultural policies, as the direction of the suggested causal relation is not clear. Thus (standard) impact analysis is most suitable to measure the economic functioning of the performing arts in society. Multivariate analysis of rises in real estate values can also be used as an indicator.

<sup>8</sup> However, this does not mean that aesthetic activities are always better suited to achieve welfare goals. Because sports activities have a wider appeal, they may be more suited as tools in community regeneration programmes. Here is not the place for a debate on this issue. It would involve a thorough investigation of the functions that sports activities may have in society and a comparison with the effects of cultural activities as they are presented here. An obvious difference might be that sports activities contribute to the physical health of participants, whereas this is not the case for all kinds of cultural activities. In this research, however, only passive aesthetic experience is considered, which should be compared to watching sports rather than actively participating in them. When health problems are an important factor in explaining social deprivation, participatory sports activities are obviously more suited to tackle these issues than attending performances. But when health problems are related to self image – when obesity coincides with low self-esteem for instance – attending the performing arts might be more appropriate than watching a football match.

examining the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain as well, as it turns attention to the collective level and the transition from attendees to non-attendees can be made.

Social capital is defined by Putnam as the social ties between individuals in a community, the norms of reciprocity, and the trustworthiness that arise from them. A community that is low in social capital will find it hard to establish collective action. Putnam's concept has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. Its usability has also been scrutinized by policy advisors (see Franke, 2005, for an overview of such efforts). One important aspect shared by many authors is that there are two kinds of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding capital consists of ties with people who resemble each other and leads to cohesive (and sometimes exclusionary) groups in society. Bridging social capital refers to ties between people who are different. Although bonding social capital results from stronger ties (family relations, neighbours, close friends) it is bridging social capital in particular (work related acquaintances, casual friendships) that is of interest in social policy because it offers a possibility to bring people together despite their differences. Bonding social capital can be related to non-artistically aesthetic values, bridging to artistically-aesthetic values. McCarthy et al. (2004) use the concept of social capital to distinguish three stages in community regeneration:

1. Building social capital (both bonding and bridging capital)
2. Community organization and leadership
3. Community action and revitalization

In the first stage, performing-arts activities may be especially helpful in generating bonding and bridging social capital. However, the second and third stages are dependent on both the extrinsic values of the performing arts (meeting other people, being outdoors) and on other than cultural activities, and thus should be regarded as extrinsic functioning. This contrasts with the economic domain where intrinsic functioning does exist in the second stage of functioning at societal level. Tenants' meetings may be more helpful in developing community leadership than attending a play together, although experiencing the play may invoke the idea among the audience members that community leadership is indeed necessary to them. Thus only in the first stage of community development does the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain prove to be intrinsic in its nature, because the functioning depends on the ability of the performing arts to intervene at perceptual level. Its distinctive characteristics are that it can generate insight into one's current situation (one's identity) and that the subject within perception can reflect upon this situation (functioning: change of views and insights). Taking action upon this type of realization is considered as extrinsic functioning for it depends on many other factors.<sup>9</sup> Bonding social capital relates to the aesthetically-intrinsic function of establishing individual

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<sup>9</sup> As they organize some of these factors – such as the regular meetings of participants and further skill development (e.g., organizational skills) – it can be assumed that community arts have more social impact than passive participation in the professional performing arts.

and group identities. However, this can also be achieved through other than cultural activities. Aesthetic experience when artistic in nature may be especially helpful for building bridging social capital because it helps in altering personal and group identities by putting existing perceptions up for discussion.

It can be concluded that the assumption in the policy documents that the economic and social functioning of the (performing) arts in society is extrinsic in its nature is only true to a certain extent.

In the light of the search for a policy evaluation instrument, it is worth pointing out that, although cultural policy focuses on generating the values and functions of aesthetic experience from the perspective of the audience, the values and subsequent functions for artists and society that arise as a result of the sheer existence of cultural products and cultural institutions are relevant as well; i.e., cells A and B in Table 10.1. These are:

1. The cultural products 'embody' the society of a certain era and are thus valuable regardless of the effects they generate in their consumption. Therefore, they may be considered valuable to preserve from a cultural heritage perspective.
2. The direct and indirect employment effects of performing arts in a city relate to the performing-arts institutions and not to single performances.
3. The ability to attract the creative class to a city relies on the total array of amenities in a city and cannot be related to single institutions.

Only the first might be considered as an intrinsic function. This implies that the evaluation of cultural policy involves a multi-layered measuring instrument that not only considers the effects related to aesthetic experiences but also to the performing-arts institutions and the total of the cultural amenities in a city.

#### **10.1.4. The Value of the Framework**

This research is not the first to attempt to describe the effects of art and culture in society. Matarasso (1997) already claimed that the effects of culture in society can be assessed, and McCarthy et al. (2004) provided a description of what they called 'the gifts of the muse'. While the work of McCarthy et al. is clearly a step-up in providing an analytic account, neither of these researches considers the specific contributions of art rather than culture to society. The present research introduces a strict distinction between artistic and non-artistic functions and describes how individual benefits translate into benefits at societal level. The lack of clarity as to what either art or culture contributes to society mystifies the debate between policy-makers and cultural institutions. The framework presented here offers a possibility to accurately describe which functions may be expected to be realized as a result of subsidizing art institutions. Although the non-artistically aesthetic functions and the extrinsic functions can also be attained through other than cultural activities, cultural activities do bring something unique to the development of society:

1. Aesthetic experiences operate at the level of perception and, when artistic in nature, offer the opportunity to reflect upon one's perception. Therefore, the changes in



identity (which result from changes in perception schemes) are a powerful instrument in personal and social development because of the felt immediacy of the experience.

2. Cultural achievements embody or represent (groups in) society. Therefore they are a symbol of that society and provide a point of reference for individuals. Fischer-Lichte (2002) argues that specifically in theatrical experience one can experience what she calls the *condition humana*: the act of man looking at himself or herself as an outsider.<sup>10</sup>
3. Cultural amenities, although they may not be the only factor in attaining societal effects, are a necessary precondition for some of the societal effects identified in this research. This is poignantly the case for economic functioning as described through the concept of the creative class (Florida, 2002). Although other amenities, such as a diverse natural landscape and sports facilities are important factors, the core of the creative class will not be attracted to the city without the *cultural* amenities in a city, and linkages between the cultural institutions and other sectors of the economy are crucial in capitalizing on creativity.

Because the framework is able to identify this specific contribution of cultural activities to the development of society, it is helpful for cultural policy-makers in the era of *evidence-based policies* and it supports managers of performing arts institutions in formulating the goals and objectives of their institutions. Furthermore, the framework can be regarded as a common vocabulary for cultural managers and officials. With the framework described in Parts II and III, research questions 2 and 3 have been answered.

The evaluation of cultural policy should focus on assessing whether or not the values and functions described in the framework have indeed occurred in a city. However, this poses requirements on policy formulation. For one, because the framework describes abstract values and functions that can occur for anyone in society, it would be helpful if policy makers formulate the values and functions they expect to occur for which groups in society. Second, the question can be raised as to whether or not all cultural institutions are able to deliver all types of functioning. Some will be more valuable in attaining values in the social domain, others – specifically larger ones – are more valuable in attaining economic functions, e.g. indirect employment. Still others will not be focused on attaining the values and functions on the part of the audiences but will focus specifically on studying ways of expression. Therefore the emphasis policy-makers place on specific values and functions should differ for each cultural institution. It is up to the managers of cultural institutions to demonstrate the values and functions they can give rise to; it is up to the policy-makers to demonstrate that the total of these outcomes meets the legitimization of the cultural policy.

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<sup>10</sup> It is a subject for further research how the societal effects of culture and sports can be compared and where they differentiate. Crucial is that in theatre the act of representing one's own culture on stage can be experienced. It should be researched whether other (performing) arts might not have the same nature. It seems obvious that here sports and theatre part company: though a national soccer team might be construed as a representation of a nation, a football match does not provide the opportunity to experience this distancing from oneself.

## 10.2. Implications for Policy Evaluation and Measurement

### 10.2.1. Assessing at Various Levels

The framework for describing the functioning of the performing arts in urban society, as described in the previous sections, has implications for cultural policy evaluation in general and for the measurement of the values and functions that can be expected to occur. It focuses policy evaluation on the intrinsic values and functions to which the performing arts give rise, while not disregarding the extrinsic values that result from the performing arts at the same time. It clarifies where intrinsic and extrinsic values and functions are dependent on each other, and it clarifies how functioning at individual level translates to societal level. Furthermore, it integrates the values and functions that result from the perspective of the audience members (as a result of the generated experience) and for artists and art organizations (as a result of the existence of the artwork and art organizations themselves) in a convincing manner. Consequently, the functioning of the performing arts in society should be measured or assessed at various levels:

1. the occurrence of individual values (intrinsic and extrinsic)
2. the occurrence of personal functions (intrinsic and extrinsic)
3. the occurrence of societal functions (intrinsic and extrinsic) which should be divided into three stages:
  - a. stage 1, where both intrinsic and extrinsic functions can occur. Because the causality here still is strong, the occurrence of these functions can be integrated into cultural policy evaluation.
  - b. stage 2, where some intrinsic functions can still occur for the economic domain, whereas these are extrinsic for the social domain. Because the causality here is weaker, measurement should be done for specific groups in society.
  - c. stage 3, where other policy measures and societal activities have such a large impact that measurement of the impact of cultural policy is difficult. It can only be established whether or not cultural policy *contributes* to societal effects.

It is debatable whether or not all the values and functions described in the framework should be present in order to evaluate cultural policy positively. Ultimately, the answer depends on the values and functions that are identified as important effects by the city implementing a cultural policy. In general, it does not seem fair to expect that all functions will entail from every aesthetic experience at any time for all groups in society. This is for a number of reasons:

1. The relationship between intrinsic values and functions is not direct. If a value is realized, it does not automatically mean that the subsequent function will occur. Especially in relation to the functions occurring at collective level and the extrinsic functions (which are not only dependant on aesthetic experience and artistic values and functions), aesthetic experience contributes to reaching some socially desirable goal but cannot be seen as the only factor responsible. Therefore, policy documents

should not state that culture and art *lead* to economic and social development; they *contribute* to it. However, aesthetic experience, when artistic in nature, leads to questioning existing identities at perceptive level.

2. Although the intrinsic values and functions derived from experiencing the performing arts may not seem to be distinct for specific groups in society and/or for specific art forms (as the description of aesthetic experience in this research suggests), this needs to be researched in more detail, especially with reference to members of non-Western cultures. Thus the same functioning need not result not for every group in a city (see Section 10.2.4).
3. Some cultural forms may be prone to generating a certain type of values and subsequent functions. This needs to be researched in more detail. This is why, in the present research, the diversity of the supply of cultural amenities has been stressed as an important policy aim.

Furthermore, there is the question of timing of the policy evaluation. Although the framework answers the question as to which values and functions can be associated with aesthetic experience, it does not indicate *when* these values and functions will arise. For the values, this is quite straightforward. They are present within the experience itself. This means that they occur instantly. However, the subsequent functions may (or may not) follow immediately, but they can also occur over time. As explained in Chapter 6, the change of one's views and insights may only occur after a long period of deliberation and as a result of a multitude of influencing factors (including new aesthetic experiences). Therefore it seems safe to say that, for the intrinsic functions, the most important factor is that the intrinsic values indeed arise from an experience. If these can be somehow measured, it might be assumed that the intrinsic functions will follow. The same problem arises for the extrinsic functions in the economic domain. Some of the values and subsequent functions will arise immediately, such as providing an income for artists and additional expenditures in the city, for instance, which may occur during the rehearsal period and during transportation to the performance location, i.e., even before the actual aesthetic experiences take place. However, attracting certain types of inhabitants to a city will only occur over time, as will urban regeneration effects. They may only occur several years after building a new facility, or after the production that generated the aesthetic experiences. The timing problem for the effects in the social domain is even greater. Here again, the extrinsic values (being part of a collective experience outside the house) are present within the experience and thus buying into the norms of the community may occur instantly. However, social bonding and bridging may take longer to occur and this is certainly true for community organization and action.

The question as to *when* this should be measured thus becomes just as important as the question as to *how* it should be measured. This strongly suggests that policy-makers provide a time frame within which they expect certain functions to occur, and evaluate the policy

according to this timeframe.<sup>11</sup> The further one moves from left to right in Figure 10.1, the more sensible it is to choose longer timeframes.

Finally, before turning from the framework to policy evaluation itself (in Part IV), three issues that have arisen earlier in the research and their implications for cultural policy evaluation should be discussed: the autonomy of the arts, artistic quality and functioning of performing arts in society, and the value of aesthetic experience for different groups in society.

### 10.2.2. Autonomy and Policy Evaluation

Although some legitimization of cultural policy is related to the production of artworks and the existence of cultural institutions themselves, the core of legitimization relies on what art 'does' in society. This is not a negation of the autonomy of the arts in society. Nor is it a question of politicians 'ordering' certain societal effects from an artists' community. On the contrary, it is because of the autonomy of the artistic community that the values and functions of aesthetic experience can be realized at all. The effects cannot be planned.<sup>12</sup> In some cases, they are adverse to policy objectives.<sup>13</sup> Thus autonomy is regarded as a necessary precondition for the (performing) art's functioning in society but, at the same time, it also seems to limit art's functioning in society. This issue has been dealt with in Chapters 5 and 7 of this research, where the functioning of the performing arts in society under conditions of autonomy has been described. It was established that the freedom of artists to choose the subject matter, the expressive media, and the way in which they explore these media are necessary for the elements of creativity, fantasy, surprise and/or bewilderment which are associated with aesthetic experience.<sup>14</sup> It cannot be denied that the professionalization of artists has entailed that proper ways of experiencing works have been indoctrinated in performing artists and audience members alike. None the less, the discussion has indicated that the professionalization is far from complete and new forms and artists cannot be denied entry to the field. Furthermore, the advent of multiple fields with their own *doxa* and

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<sup>11</sup> Note that this does not solve the problem at all. It only serves to facilitate the debate between policy-makers and cultural institutions because, when the evaluation shows that the functions have not occurred after a specified period of time, there is still the possibility that the measurement was done too soon and that the effects may still occur in the future.

<sup>12</sup> Although by considering which institutions and therefore which venues to subsidize, politicians indirectly decide for which groups in society the values and functions of performing arts should be realized, because the location and design of a venue limit the public appeal of the performing arts presented there.

<sup>13</sup> The question should be raised as to whether or not art policy is unique in this respect. Organizing a football match between Muslim and gay sportsmen as part of a welfare policy aiming at promoting tolerance for diversity may very well have adverse effects too. The same can be said for the professional soccer competition where local teams and stadiums are supposed to boost city image but, because of rioting soccer fans, a city's image may deteriorate.

<sup>14</sup> Note that these qualities of aesthetic experience have been described as 'emotional experience' in Chapter 4. The emotional engagement with the performing arts is associated both with non-artistic aesthetic and artistic aesthetic experiences. The emotional engagement follows from the non-artistic aesthetic values (experiencing imagined emotions and following a non-present world) and from the use of the power of imagination because this use itself gives rise to delight.

appropriate *habitués* for experiencing has seriously damaged the ability to distinguish between 'proper' and 'improper' art forms and ways of experiencing them. This is why the functioning of the performing arts has been related to the nature of the experience they generate, regardless of the context within which the experience is generated. Therefore, the conclusion is that non-subsidized cultural forms generate aesthetic and artistic values and functions as well. Every aesthetic experience is framed by organizational, institutional and societal conditions (Van Maanen, 2004) that influence the outcome of the experience. Furthermore, research has been performed on the ways in which the values and functions of aesthetic experience can function in society for those who do not attend. This means that, although autonomy is an important issue, it does not preclude functioning of culture and art in society altogether, as some have suggested (see e.g. Carey, 2005).

In policy practice, the autonomy of art is guaranteed by use of independent advisory boards or councils. These councils either distribute subsidy funds themselves (as is the case in Groningen for project subsidies and has been the case in Rotterdam with its *Rotterdamse Kunststichting* which existed until 2005) or they advise the board of mayor and aldermen on subsidy decisions. This ensures that aesthetic considerations take precedence over political considerations or personal tastes of politicians with regard to subsidy allocation. For the present research, it is therefore necessary to clarify the role of such advisory boards in Dutch municipalities. A second feature guaranteeing the autonomy of arts is the fact that cultural institutions draw up their own policies that include their artistic or aesthetic goals. This means that it is the artists themselves who decide the directions they wish to explore. They leave it up to politics to decide whether or not these directions concur with public policy. Therefore, the policy process of the cities should be researched to establish how they provide scope for the independent development of artists and their institutions. The results of these inquiries are described in Chapter 11.

### 10.2.3. Artistic Quality and Policy Evaluation

Some policy documents suggest that there is a relationship between artistic quality and the functioning of culture in society in the economic and social domains, areas usually described as 'extrinsic'. Based upon the analysis in this research, this assumption can be put into perspective. The extrinsic functions are dependant only to a certain extent on intrinsic values and functions that may arise from aesthetic experience, rather than on artistic quality as a property of the artworks. However, a case can be made for the influence of artistic quality, as a property of the product, on societal functioning.

In the economic domain the relationship can be described as follows:

- Specifically unique performing artists or unique productions that are not readily available in other cities attract visitors who otherwise might not have come to a particular city. Although attracting visitors is usually related to museums rather than to the performing arts (see e.g. Marlet and Van Woerkens, 2007) specific festivals for the performing arts or performances by international (pop) artists are indeed able to

attract visitors. The uniqueness of a performance or artist – which can be considered as a part of the definition of artistic quality in the sense of a property of the production – is crucial here.

- Even in a ‘low strategy’ towards generating visitors (see Noordman, 2004), artistic quality, as a product property, is important to economic functioning (in this case city image) because one has to generate a diverse supply of performances.

Therefore it can be argued that the uniqueness of a production and the diversity of the total amount of productions are important aspects of artistic quality, in the sense of a product property influencing the functioning of art in society.

In the social domain, the relationship between artistic quality and functioning in society is more complicated. The ability to stimulate changes in people’s views and insights is a starting point for changing their social position. This means that the starting point of social development is closely linked to artistic-intrinsic functioning as described in this research. However, artistic quality as a property of the production can be both instrumental and detrimental to the functioning of art and culture in the social domain:

- Just as in the economic domain the diversity of productions realized in the city is at stake. The more diverse the supply of productions, the larger the chances that different people will experience art and therefore the larger the chances of functioning in the social domain because of the sheer volume of people that can have aesthetic experiences.
- Large groups may not feel at ease with the reception habits of institutionalized art, and may be put off by the aesthetic sign languages used because they are not familiar with them. This severely limits the functioning as no meaningful experience may take place. From a general public policy point of view, this is extremely relevant because specifically socially marginal groups – those who could benefit most from aesthetic experience – are hugely under-represented in audiences for subsidized art. However, it cannot be excluded that these groups do find valuable experiences in commercially produced art.

Thus artistic quality, as a property of the productions realized, is not the same as the extent to which the productions fulfil their potential to realize aesthetic and artistic functions in society. This means that evaluating cultural policy based upon expert assessments is not enough, although such assessments are indeed valuable for policy evaluation purposes. This is necessary because experts are needed to evaluate the performance of cultural institutions (or artists), as described in cell A of Table 10.1:

- Expressing ideas and perceptions: experts can evaluate whether artists (intend to) express profound messages and how they express them on the basis of the manipulation of the expressive possibilities of the medium (these are two aspects of artistic quality as identified in section 5.5).
- Artistic development: this involves research into the expressive possibilities of the medium used, as well as the question concerning whether or not the developments

envisioned are important for the cultural sector as a whole. It is precisely here that the advisory boards are an instrument to guarantee the autonomy of art.

Both entail a judgement on the artistic quality as a property of the product and the position of the artists concerned within the professional field. The tasks identified in cell A of Table 10.1 are relevant here:

- Producing for specific audiences: experts can assess which types of audiences the artists or cultural institutions are aiming at and whether or not they have developed plans guaranteeing that they will reach these types of audiences. Here it is a question of whether or not the city administration asks advisory boards to take these considerations into account. They involve not only a judgement on the merits of the artistic plans but also a judgement on the organizational circumstances that can allow or impede reaching the targeted audiences.
- Producing with amateurs: in their overall assessment of the institutions policies in a city, advisory boards can judge whether or not there are enough links from the professional to the amateur sector in the city. Such judgements are only relevant when the city's policy requires such links, or when these links can contribute to the resilience of the cultural system of the city as a whole.
- Development/training of professional artists: experts can assess whether or not cultural institutions in the city have policies that allow the development and training of new artistic talent.

Thus advisory boards can shed light on the position a cultural institution fulfils within the cultural system of a city from both a professional and a general-public point of view.<sup>15</sup> This entails a professional judgement on both the artistic quality and the position of the artists/institution within the cultural system and the organisational conditions in which they intend to work.<sup>16</sup> It is a matter for further investigations whether or not advisory boards indeed do so.

Although the expert opinions on these matters are important for cultural policy, these assessments by independent advisory boards do not suffice from a policy *evaluation* point of view. Their findings should be complemented with:

- Surveys of the public of subsidized cultural institutions that can shed light on the nature of the experiences afforded by these institutions and the societal reach of such institutions.

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<sup>15</sup> Note that in the Dutch theatre system, with its strict division between production and reception facilities, theatre companies and music ensembles are evaluated by different advisory boards than the venues. The production institutions are usually evaluated by national advisory boards. As the venues have little influence on the productions, they are usually not evaluated by independent (municipal) advisory boards. However, such boards could also pass judgement on the aesthetic values that the venues realize in a city. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 11, this is only done in a few cities.

<sup>16</sup> Artists frequently object to the inclusion of such 'organizational' rather than artistic criteria in the independent advice for subsidy allocation (the author here refers to his experiences as a city official). However, from a public policy point of view such considerations are perfectly legitimate. In Chapter 11 further methods to assess the quality of the *organization* of cultural enterprise rather than artistic quality will be assessed.

- General-public surveys to assess the use of cultural amenities – both subsidized and non-subsidized – by the entire population. Such surveys could be complemented with focus groups to assess the values generated by the use of these amenities.
- Surveys of specific groups targeted by the cultural policy, in order to assess the use of cultural amenities by these groups and the values that this use generates for them.

#### 10.2.4. The Value of Aesthetic Experience for Different Groups in Society

Section 5.4 addressed the issue of differences between social groups in society. It was established that the social composition of the audiences reached should be a measuring point for the evaluation of cultural policy. This is not because the values and functions that can be derived from aesthetic experience differ for different groups in society. The values and functions have been described in such a generic way that they apply to all groups in society. None the less, it is important to bear in mind that different groups in society will have different motivations for attending cultural activities. Moreover, they will do so in different settings. Such organizational settings will facilitate specific modes of engagement with the artworks. There are differences between groups with regard to cultural capital and knowledge, and experience with different ways of reception. However, this does not entail that the experiences will yield other values and functions than those identified in this research. Chapter 6 demonstrated that there are various modes of reception that allow spectators to regard works of art *as art*. Although the motivation for going to the performing arts and the ways of engaging with the performances may differ from group to group (and individual to individual) and therefore their choice of kinds of performing arts and type of settings they go to, this does not imply that the types of values and functions generated are different.

But it is stretching the argument too far to suggest that there are no differences at all. It can be assumed that certain types of performing arts and reception habits generate some of the values and functions identified more easily than others do. Research should be carried out into the relationship between the aesthetic properties of various disciplines and modes of theatricality and reception circumstances on the one hand, and the values and functions as described in this framework, on the other. Different genres and disciplines may generate different values, and may result in a different sense of immediacy that accompanies any artistic value realized by the experiences. This type of investigation, however, falls outside the scope of the present research.

The democratic disposition implies that the (beneficial) values and functions of aesthetic experience be accessible to all the citizens in a city. Therefore information on the use of subsidized cultural facilities by different groups in society is necessary in cultural policy evaluation. However, if certain groups are able to experience intrinsic values in non-subsidized settings, this is also relevant information for policy evaluation. Although the values and functions as described in this research should be available to all citizens in a democratic society, this does not imply that all forms of the performing arts need to be



available to all members of society. The city government should guarantee that different groups in society are able to express themselves and have access to aesthetic experiences, (either by subsidized producers or through private enterprise) because of the values aesthetic experiences can generate and the functions they serve. Therefore, in evaluating cultural policy, there is a need for information that can only be generated by surveys of the general public. The great drawback of this approach is that, although public surveys may generate information on the use which different social groups make of cultural amenities in a city, it is hard to generate information on the nature of the experiences they have.

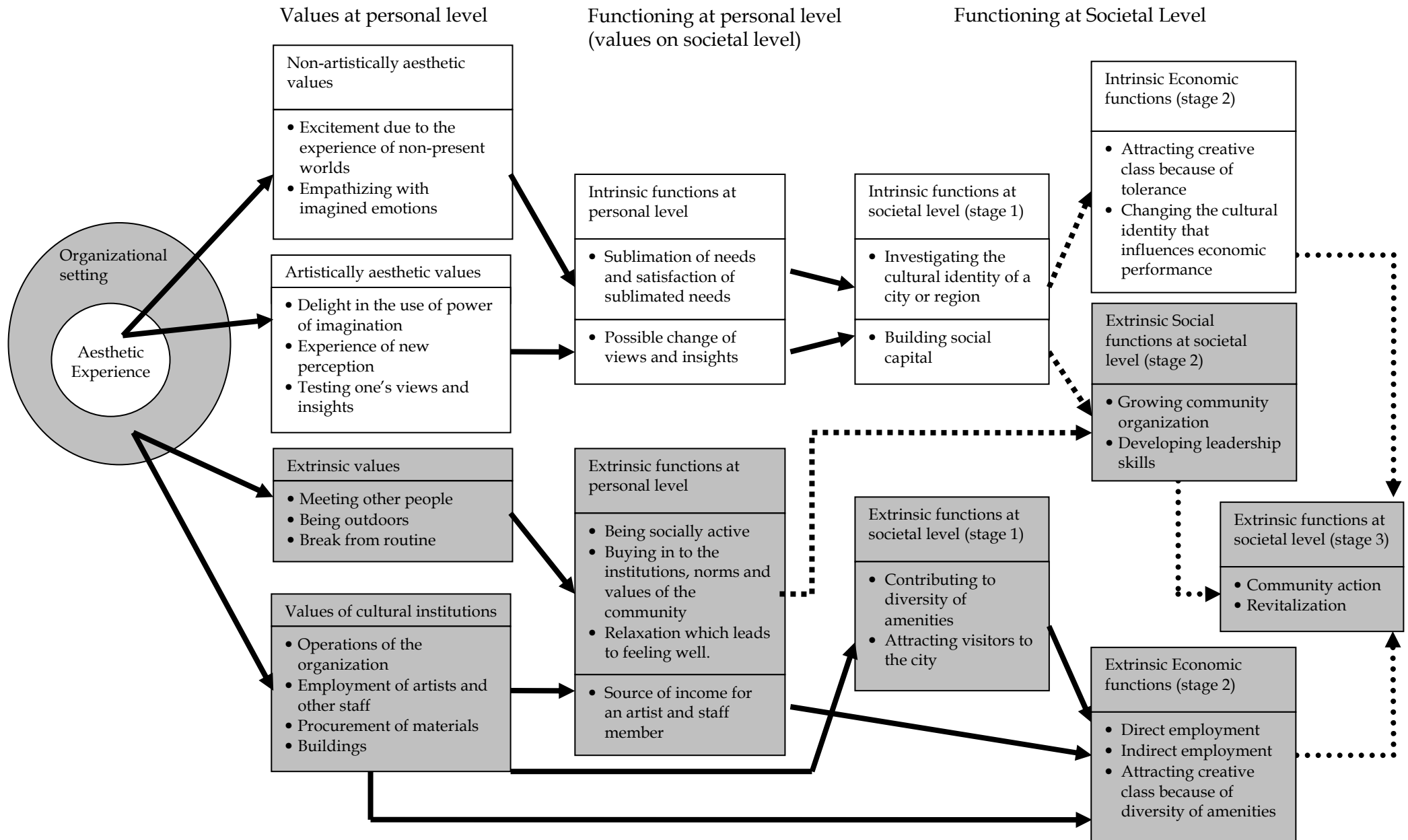


Figure 10.1 The Framework for Describing the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Urban Society (the grey boxes contain extrinsic values and functions)

## PART IV: POLICY EVALUATION

### **Introduction to Part IV: from the Framework to Policy Evaluation**

With the framework presented in Chapter 10, the first four research questions have been answered. The aim of the last part of this research is to answer the last two research questions regarding how the framework can be used to evaluate cultural policy, and how Dutch cities can improve their current evaluation practices. Therefore, Chapter 11 devotes attention to the current evaluation practices of Dutch municipalities. To paint the picture of current cultural policy evaluation, the eight municipalities included in the research (see Chapter 3) will be revisited. Their efforts at evaluation will be discussed. Furthermore, the chapter presents some theoretical approaches that have been applied to the evaluation of cultural policy. This involves the use of performance indicators (which is the core of New Public Management), Components of Organization Effectiveness (which has been applied to American arts institutions), Balanced Scorecards (adaptations of which have been applied in cultural policy evaluation in Berlin and Groningen) and Public Value (which has been adopted by the Arts Council England. The chapter closes by relating these methods to the framework and by specifying the shortcomings of current evaluation practices. Chapter 12 presents a model to evaluate municipal cultural policies for the performing arts. The chapter deals with the questions ‘What should be measured?’, ‘How can this be measured?’ and ‘How should policy evaluation be organized?’



# 11. Evaluation of Cultural Policy: Current Evaluation Methods in Practice and in Theory

## 11.1. How Dutch Municipalities currently evaluate Art Policy

In order to establish how Dutch cities currently evaluate their arts policies, the eight cities in the sample of the present research were investigated. First, their evaluation practices were researched through the city's website. Then the cities' cultural departments were contacted in order to verify the results from the website search and to ascertain whether or not further evaluation actions that do not appear on the city's website had been undertaken. The investigation focused on the evaluation practices of the policies for the period 2005-2008, because this is the most current policy evaluation moment (the investigation took place in the period from November 2008 to March 2009).

The cities differ in the extent to which they formally evaluate arts policy. Typically the policy evaluation can consist of several actions:

1. Yearly budget and account cycle: the budgeting cycle of municipalities in the Netherlands is structured by law around programme budgets (*programmabegroting*) and programme accounts (*programmarekening*), as mentioned in the Introduction.
2. Arts policy can be evaluated by examining the cycles in cultural policy. Usually the introductory chapter of the new policy documents contains an evaluation of the previous period.
3. Arts policy can be evaluated through separate 'mid-term reviews' and/or 'end term' documents within the policy cycle.
4. Policy cycles usually include independent expert advice on the subsidies to institutions. These independent advisory boards can perform evaluations of past performance of the institutions that were subsidized in the city.
5. Some cities conduct surveys of their population which include questions relating to cultural and arts policy.
6. Some cities have conducted specific research on the effects of cultural policy, specifically within the economic domain.

These evaluation mechanisms are used in the following discussion on the arts-policy data that are collected and reported with the aim of establishing how these data dovetail with the framework presented in Chapter 10. The policy-evaluation practices of individual municipalities will not be described in detail. The documents on which the analysis is based are listed in the reference section.

### 11.1.1. Yearly Budgets and Accounts

The programme budgets (*programmabegroting*) reflect the policies deployed by a municipality, and contain figures on the goals to be attained. The city council decides on the programme budget each year on the basis of a concept drawn up by the board of mayor and aldermen.<sup>1</sup> Each year, the board of mayor and alderman justify the implementation of the policies to the city council by means of the programme account (*programmarekening*). The results of this account are used to draw up the new programme budget. Cities in the Netherlands are at liberty to develop their own formats for the programme budgets and accounts. This leads to very different documents being drawn up. Cultural policy can be accounted for as a separate policy area. However, in some cases, it is subsumed under a broader city policy programme to enhance city attractiveness or liveliness in conjunction with sports policies for instance (e.g. Arnhem and Groningen) or within the social policy (*sociale pijler*, e.g. Zwolle). Furthermore, the level of detail differs widely. For instance, Breda formulates a very broad goal for the cultural policy (*taakveld 10* in the annual report of 2007) which is split up into sub-goals which in turn are split up into no less than 104 objectives. For each of the objectives there is an indication whether or not it has been attained, whether attainment is still in progress, or whether it has not been realized at all. The sub-goal of ‘consolidating things that have proven themselves’ (Breda, 2008a, p. 138) is made operational by indicating that the current cultural infrastructure has been maintained and developed (goal has been attained) and that there is attention to reaching new audiences (goal has also been attained). The sub-goal of stimulating participation (*ibid.*) is made operational by indicating whether or not a new supply has been developed (attainment is not indicated) and whether activities in city boroughs have been developed (both objectives have been attained). Furthermore, the report contains mentions of numbers of visits to the largest cultural institutions (Chassétheater and pop venue Mezz, and the number of members of the public library). On the other hand, Apeldoorn only reports broadly on cultural policy in the city annual report, by indicating numbers of visits and by furthermore referring to the valuation of the cultural assortment by the general public (on a scale of 1 to 10) and some further rankings of the city in comparative studies such as that by Marlet and Van Woerkens (2007). Other cities, such as Groningen, only repeat the goals as they are stated in the four-year policy documents and use almost no indicators to assess goal attainment in the programme budgets and accounts. They report on the spending of subsidies rather than goal attainment. Maastricht assumes a middle position where the goal of the cultural policy – ‘a creative and dynamic city with an eye for the productive relationship between Arts and Culture, Economy and City development’ (Maastricht, 2008c, p. 79) – is related to developments in the economic, social and physical policies of the city. The cultural policy has three effects: maintaining and strengthening the production climate, enhancing the reach of cultural facilities, and maintaining and strengthening cultural heritage (*ibid.*). The relationship between the other policy areas and these effects is not discussed in any way. The

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<sup>1</sup> In some of the municipalities in the research the yearly program budget is not only the budget for the coming year but for the coming years. A *meerjarenprogrammabegroting* is drawn up annually. This is the case in Apeldoorn and Arnhem for instance.

accounts proceed by specifying, through the use of indicators, the policy actions that may or may not have been achieved. Furthermore it should be noted that the inclusion of specific figures in the budgets and reporting on them in the accounts does not mean that this has severe consequences when expectations are not met. Some officials reported that these are merely targets but that there are no consequences when they are not met. The indicators found in these documents are listed in Table 11.1. The indicators used can be grouped in five clusters.

The first cluster focuses on the number of visitors to performing arts institutions and the number of performances realized in these institutions. These output figures appear to be the most widely used. They are additions of the figures provided by subsidized institutions through annual reports they send to the city administration to account for spending of the subsidies. The provision of such reports is a common requirement for receiving the subsidy.<sup>2</sup> Thus the yearly accounts drawn up by cultural institutions are a major source of information for policy evaluation purposes. However, this does not paint the whole picture of policy evaluation for these cities. The annual reports of the cultural institutions may comprise more information than is gathered for the programme account. These annual reports frequently comprise not only a financial statement but also a description of the productions realized. Such descriptions may be accompanied by copies of press reviews. Thus the cultural institutions report on the artistic quality as it is reported by professional reviewers. Sometimes the institutions also include data they have gathered from audience research. It should be remarked that, in the Dutch theatre system with its division between producing and distributing organizations, such elaborate annual reports are handed in by the producing companies. The distributing venues only provide figures on the shows programmed and their attendance. Their policy plans (if formally written) include statements about the programming decisions. Most of the cities in the research sample have so-called 'A-theatres' that programme 60% commercial productions and 40% more risky productions by the subsidized companies, their aim being to provide a complete overview of Dutch performing arts in their city. Therefore they usually programme all travelling productions of the major subsidized theatre, dance and (classical) music companies as well as the full programme of the regional orchestra (which is subsidized by the state). As demonstrated in Chapter 8, pop music venues usually have more specific programmes specializing in certain musical areas and sometimes allowing local musicians access to the stage. As the major theatres and concert halls in the Netherlands are locally funded organizations (or part of the municipal bureaucracy) that do not produce performing arts but only present these, and they receive the bulk of performing arts attendance, the largest part of performing-arts activities in a city is only reported in terms of number of performances

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<sup>2</sup> In the case where cultural institutions are part of the city bureaucracy (such as the Theater aan het Vrijthof in Maastricht or the city theatre and concert hall of Groningen), these organizations are usually an independent unit with a director who decides autonomously on most issues concerning the theatre. This autonomy is gained in much the same way as private subsidized institutions: the director draws up a yearly budget and the deficit of this budget is approved by the board of mayor and aldermen.

Indicators	Sources *
Number of visits to institutions	Arnhem (2009, p. 100), Apeldoorn (2008), Breda (2008c, pp. 94-5), Utrecht (2008b), Maastricht (2008b, p.4; and 2008c, p. 85), Zwolle (2007a, p. 35; 2008, p. 33; and 2009, p. 41)
Number of performances (in subsidized institutions)	Apeldoorn (2008) Utrecht (2006, p. 125, and 2008b), Zwolle (2007a, p. 35; 2008, p. 33; and 2009, p. 41)
Number of stage performances in the city	(Arnhem, 2008, p. 96)** Utrecht (2006)
Number of festivals in programme of the city concert hall	Maastricht (2008c, p. 85)
Number of institutions subsidized	Utrecht (2006) Maastricht (2008b, p. 3)
(Number of) positive evaluations by the <i>Raad voor Cultuur</i> or successful applications for national subsidy based in the city	Utrecht (2006) Zwolle (2009, p. 40) Maastricht (2007, p. 91; and 2008b, p. 3)
(Positive) evaluation by the municipal advisory board on structurally funded institutions	Maastricht (2008b, p. 3)
International position as attractive city based upon the cultural offering	Utrecht (2008b). Note that the city admits that it does not know how to measure this indicator
Number of cultural projects with more than local image	Breda (2008c, p. 95)
Valuation by the population of cultural facilities in the inner city (as expressed in a number between 1 and 10)	Arnhem, 2008, p. 96 Apeldoorn, 2006a and 2008 (goal: from 5.8 in 2003 to 6.5, the figure currently is 6.4 (2008)***
Evaluation of quality of city cultural supply	Maastricht (2007, p. 93) researched biannually through a general-public survey
Percentage of citizens agreeing with the statement that the cultural facilities add to the living climate	Maastricht (2007, p. 93) researched biannually through a general-public survey
Number of visitors to city district venues	Rotterdam (2008a, p. 157; and 2008b, p. 97)
Realizing facilities for youth	Maastricht (2009, p. 7)****

\* Note that Groningen is the only city not reported in this table. This is because the city does not report on output figures in the programme budgets and accounts. These are included in the mid-term review documents, although the programme budgets and accounts do contain figures on library lending and visitors (see e.g. Groningen, 2009, p. 198).

\*\* Arnhem reports being number 7 in the national ranking of municipalities, referring to research by Marlet and Van Woerkens (2007).

\*\*\* The figure is regularly researched in a general-public survey.

\*\*\*\* It has been concluded that this indicator has been reached because structural subsidies have been awarded to several youth festivals and rehearsal space for pop music

**Table 11.1 Indicators on cultural policy implementation relating to the performing arts, as found in the programme budgets and accounts**



and attendance.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, municipal governments may have information on the artistic quality of productions that are produced by local producers as reported by professional reviewers. Although this information is not aggregated in the programme accounts, it may play a further role in cultural policy evaluation (see the section on the advisory boards).

The second cluster of indicators concerns the evaluation of the cultural quality of the institutions by either the local advisory board or national advisory institutions. The number of institutions (when growing) is an indicator of the resilience of the cultural system in the city. The number of institutions receiving national subsidy is an indicator of the success of cultural policy, specifically in those cities that have growth ambitions in their cultural policy, most notably in Utrecht and Maastricht, not surprisingly the two cities in the sample that have voiced an ambition to become Cultural Capital of Europe. For Maastricht, there is an extra reason to focus on the advice of the national *Raad voor Cultuur*. As the financial contribution of the national government to these institutions is far higher than the city subsidies, it is logical that artistic quality is evaluated by the national rather than the city advisory board. Thus the city prevents doubling of independent policy advice. Breda regards institutions with more than local appeal as an indicator of the success of the policy. These indicators clearly regard the cultural standard of a city within the national (or even international) perspective.

The third cluster of indicators regards the evaluation of cultural institutions by the general public. Some cities include evaluations gathered from general-public surveys in their programme budgets and accounts. Rotterdam mentions a specific indicator of city policy. The new small-scale venues in the city districts (*Locale Cultuur Centra*) should encourage participation in culture for those with social-economic disadvantages. The public of these city district venues should grow by 3% from 2006 to 2007 and by 10% per year for 2009. However, there is no mention of whether or not lower social-economic groups indeed visit these centres and what they might gain by visiting these centres in terms of personal or societal value. A 10% rise in audience numbers is what the city evaluates (see Rotterdam, 2008a, p. 157, and 2008b, p. 97). The number of visits here is certainly not an irrelevant indicator. However, the socio-economic background of these visitors seems more accurate.

Finally, for Maastricht, the number of facilities realized for youth culture serves as an indicator because the city has a policy focus on strengthening the assortment of youth culture. Again this indicator focuses on the supply side of the cultural sector.

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<sup>3</sup> The VSCD (Association of Theatres and Concert Halls in the Netherlands) collects data on numbers of performances and visits to locally funded venues. They estimate that 60% of all performances and 70% of all visits to the performing arts in the Netherlands occur at venues funded by municipalities; see VSCD (2007, p. 6).

Furthermore most cities mention investments in the cultural infrastructure in the annual reports and the accounts, such as building new facilities. For instance, Arnhem mentions the new National History Museum which will be built in this city (Arnhem, 2008, p. 9) and the realization of a new pop music venue (Arnhem, 2009, p. 99). Other examples include the renovation of the city theatre in Apeldoorn (Apeldoorn, 2008), renovation of the Vredenburg concert hall in Utrecht (Utrecht 2006), building a new library, museum and film facility (Groningen, 2009, p. 198), a pop music rehearsal facility, rehearsal space for the symphony orchestra and theatre venue (Maastricht, 2008b, p. 2), and a new library, a pop music venue and facilities for amateur artists (Zwolle, 2007a, p. 34). Furthermore, specific policy aims such as implementing a new subsidy scheme or research into the privatization of city theatres (Arnhem, 2009, p. 98) and the ambition to become Cultural Capital of Europe (Maastricht, 2008b, p. 2) are mentioned. These are not policy aims referring to the functioning of arts and culture in society, they relate to the facilities (which is a specific municipal responsibility in the Dutch system) and administrative procedures, not to the actual aesthetic activities and their effects in society. In the case of European Cultural Capital, this policy aim relates to the perceived quality and quantity of cultural facilities in the city as well as the city image.

Groningen makes an interesting remark in the annual budget for 2008. During this year, a new policy plan for the period 2009-2012 will be drawn up. 'It is to be expected that a clear relationship will be established here between the policy aims and the measurable results, either in the form of figures or in the form of tangible qualitative developments' (Groningen 2007b, p. 137). Here, the city acknowledges that both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to evaluate cultural policy. Furthermore, the quote expresses a concern that current evaluation practices lack a connection between policy goals and the data being collected.

### **11.1.2. Cultural Policy Plans and their Evaluation**

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, all the cities in the research sample publish cultural policy plans in addition to the annual programme budget and account. The policy plans contain the vision on cultural policy for a prolonged period of time: Breda (2008b), Utrecht (2007a), Maastricht (2001) and Arnhem (2002) have published documents that span a decade or more. Other plans are produced every four years in accordance with the national government's policy cycle. In the case of longer-term plans, these are translated into the annual budget. This means that the budget for cultural policy and the subsidies awarded to the cultural institutions may vary on a yearly basis. The four-year policy plans have the characteristic that they not only state the goals of the cultural policy but also fix the budget for the cultural institutions for this period (see Rotterdam, Utrecht, Groningen and Maastricht).<sup>4</sup> It would seem logical that such policy plans are evaluated either in the course of writing a new one or

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<sup>4</sup> Although Utrecht has a longer-term document, this is translated into four-year subsidy plans conforming to the national policy cycle. As of 2005, Groningen has conformed to the national four-year cycle but in the period prior to 2005 it also used a four year-cycle; however the city used to be one year ahead. Maastricht had conformed to the four-year cycle as of 2009.

on the basis of an evaluation method that is specified in the policy plans. However, only the policy plan of Groningen (2005-2008) specifies how it will be evaluated, namely, through a mid-term review document and the use of an independent advisory board to evaluate the performance of cultural institutions. The new cultural policy documents (for the period after 2009) of all cities have been read in order to establish whether or not these documents contain an evaluation of the previous period.

- As Groningen and Rotterdam both produce mid-term review documents (see section 11.1.3.) the new policy plans (Kunstraad Groningen, 2008 and Rotterdam, 2007b) do not comprise many evaluative remarks. The new document in Rotterdam lists attendance numbers (Rotterdam, 2007b, p.15). More importantly, the city administrators comment on the link between city policies and the indicators used to evaluate these. The desire to make this link more obvious is expressed (*ibid*, p. 4). An interview with city officials revealed that the city is still developing methods to do so more accurately.
- Breda produced a new policy document in 2008 (Breda 2008b). A draft version of the document had already been published in 2007. The new documents do not look at the policy with hindsight. The only evaluative effort consists of a series of deliberations with representatives of the cultural sector in the city. The consultations resulted in the continuation of the same policy goals, i.e., increasing reach, creating more chances for talented artists to work in the city, and creating a city image. This last point is particularly interesting because the document (Breda, 2007) comments that the image is still good, but it does not support this with research. Here, the sector has apparently been asked to evaluate itself. The new policy document (Breda 2008b) furthermore lists the existing and new cultural institutions in the city. In light of the focus Breda has put on visual culture, the advent of design institutions and an educational facility for game design are important milestones for policy evaluation in Breda. Apparently the size of the sector as represented by the number of institutions is an important figure. In drawing up the new document, Breda has not used an independent advisory board, although an independent expert has been hired to conduct the consultations and write the draft version of the new document on policy vision (Breda, 2007).
- Utrecht has published a vision document for the period 2008-2018 (Utrecht, 2007a). This document does not evaluate the past period other than referring to the (high) ranking of Utrecht as a creative city in the comparative study by Marlet and Van Woerkens (2007). Furthermore, the document refers to research into the image of the city for tourists.
- The new document of Maastricht (2008a) sketches the historical development of the city's cultural policy and developments in the national cultural policy. The developments lead to an opportunity to formulate a new ambition for the city's cultural policy: to become Cultural Capital of Europe in 2018. This will entail vast investments in the cultural sector in the city to allow for the quality and quantity of the cultural production needed for this type of endeavour. Therefore the document

should be characterized as forward-looking rather than evaluative. Although it does contain remarks on the societal functioning of culture (specifically for the economic domain), it does not review indicators which track such functioning. The document therefore focuses on the development of the cultural sector in the city and not on the values and functions these institutions should produce. A further remark should be made on evaluation practices in this city. Although the ambition to develop a more elaborate evaluation mechanism for cultural policy had been formulated in the cultural policy plan of 2005-2008, city officials reported this has not been done. Therefore cultural policy evaluation amounts to reporting on the spending of subsidies and the outputs in terms of the number of performances and visitors. There appears to be no reporting of the wider values and functions that the performing arts give rise to.

- Zwolle has not yet drawn up a new policy document after the document for 2005-2008. Arnhem and Apeldoorn have longer-term documents and thus were not (yet) evaluating cultural policy at the time of the research.

### 11.1.3. Mid-Term Review Documents

Groningen and Rotterdam produce a document that evaluates the first two years of the four-year policy cycles (Groningen, 2007a, and Rotterdam, 2007a). Furthermore, Zwolle has produced a mid-term document (Zwolle, 2007b), as some policy choices in the policy document for 2005-2008 were undecided. The documents will be discussed in this section.

In Rotterdam the *Cultuurverslag 2005-2006* (Rotterdam, 2007a) sketches the developments in cultural policy. The report was submitted to the city council in May 2007. It consists of three parts. The first reports on the general conditions of the municipal cultural policy, such as the financial perspective, developments in national cultural policy, developments in the city's cultural infrastructure (in this period Rotterdam reshuffled its cultural policy considerably: the library, city theatre, concert hall and two museums were privatised, a new advisory board has been created and the cultural department within the city administration was repositioned), developments in the subsidy process (mainly consisting of new regulations regarding monitoring) and developments in arts practices (growing interdisciplinarity of artists, influence of media and information technologies, changing attitudes towards the role of the artists in society). The second part of the report deals with specific policy efforts such as heritage, cultural education and relationships between cultural policy and other policy areas. Furthermore in this section, the city reports on progress on investments in infrastructure such as plans for a new theatre venue and the remodelling of the experimental *Lantaren/Venster* theatre venue. The third part contains a quantitative assessment of policy execution.

The last part is of specific interest for the present research as it contains an overview of the indices used to report on cultural policy. These are summarized in Table 11.2. In the interview, the city officials commented that these numbers were not taken as representing

the policy goals of the administration. These are the indicators that are available on the basis of the annual reports of the institutions subsidized. The officials stated that they would prefer to link the annual reports more closely to policy objectives in the future.

Developments in the subsidy process are relevant for the present research as well. The city administration is currently working on a new system in which outputs and outcomes of subsidized institutions will be monitored. It is important to note that reporting on this monitoring by the city administration is part of the improvements suggested (*ibid.*, p. 10). The biennial document is a means to do so. Furthermore, the city administration realizes that not only the outputs (number of performances and attendance) and outcomes (the contribution to city policy objectives) are necessary data but assessment of the internal management of institutions is needed as well. The city feels it needs to demonstrate that subsidies are being spent efficiently, and the performance of institutions can be stimulated (*ibid.*, pp. 10-11). Interestingly, the document also reports on the marketing and publicity of the cultural institutions and the role of audience research. The policy document for the period 2005-2008 (Rotterdam, 2003) mentions that the city stresses the marketing and publicity efforts of subsidized institutions in order to maximize reach in society. The annual reports are screened for marketing efforts. In general, the administrators report that smaller institutions usually exhibit fewer professional marketing techniques. The conventional marketing tools (such as websites, flyers and press releases) are used well by the institutions, the smaller institutions lack the means and personnel to use marketing techniques strategically. Pop music venues and museums in the city confer about marketing. It is not clear if this leads to collective marketing efforts, although the report mentions collective marketing activities directed at youngsters. Furthermore, the report mentions audience research which is conducted on an irregular basis by cultural institutions. The administrators express the desire to co-ordinate such actions in order to make research results comparable (Rotterdam, 2007a, p. 21).

In Groningen the mid-term review document was presented in August 2007 (Groningen, 2007a). It refers to the three general goals in the policy document for the period 2005-2008: strengthening the cultural infrastructure, advancing participation in culture, and room for new talent. The document contains a short description (6 pages) of efforts to attain these goals. Investments in facilities (renovation of the concert hall and building of a depot for the museum) are mentioned under 'strengthening the cultural infrastructure'. Furthermore, the document mentions plans for a new building to accommodate the city library, historic museum and film house, and a new formula for the branches of the library in city districts. It also mentions an increase in subsidy for some institutions (including the experimental theatre production venue and a pop music venue). Under 'advancing participation in culture', the document refers to a new initiative for amateur theatre and a host of cultural institutions specifically aiming at youngsters, either in school or outside school. Under 'room for new talent', the document refers to a subsidy budget specifically aiming at new art producers. Furthermore, the document mentions the new advisory board, which has been active since 2005, as well as problems concerning developments in finances related to

Indicators	Sources
Attendance figures	Rotterdam (2007a, p. 34), Groningen (2007a, pp. 10, 11, 14, 15)**
Number of performances	Rotterdam (2007a, p. 34), Groningen (2007a, pp. 10, 11)
Number of productions	Groningen (2007a, p. 11)
Number of institutions subsidized	Groningen (2007a, enclosure: the developments in all of the subsidized institutions are described)
Number of participants in cultural education activities	Rotterdam (2007a, p. 34), Groningen (2007a, p. 10)
Number of subsidies for outreach projects*	Rotterdam (2007a, p. 36)
Number of outreach projects*	Rotterdam (2007a, p. 36)
Attendance at outreach projects*	Rotterdam (2007a, p. 36)
Number of applications for project subsidies	Groningen (2007a, p. 21)

\* within the 'Cultural Reach Action Programme' (*Actieprogramma Cultuurbereik*).

\*\* note that the document refers to the number of people who visit the performances, but in no way makes clear how the number of tickets sold has been broken down to the number of people.

**Table 11.2 Indicators on cultural policy implementation relating to the performing arts, as found in the 'mid-term' review documents of the cities of Groningen and Rotterdam**

changes in social security regulations (which impede use of cheap labour by institutions) and to changes in national cultural policy concerning the financing of the visual arts policy. The general part of the document closes with some remarks on the fiscal health of two institutions. All of this is described in very general terms. The document clearly demonstrates that the city feels that the development of cultural policy is reflected in the development of the institutions implementing the policy. It is not surprising that the enclosure to the document contains short descriptions of the development of each of the cultural institutions subsidized by the municipality. These short descriptions also report the number of performances and their attendances.

The document in Zwolle (2007b) is based on two debate sessions with representatives in the cultural field. The document stresses the need for more co-operation between institutions, good governance and personnel policies by the institutions (*ibid.*, p. 3). Furthermore, some of the ambitions in the policy plan for 2005-2008 are elaborated and the financial problems encountered by specific institutions are expressed. The development of a chamber opera festival (which is subsidized by the national government) and youth theatre production facility (*Gnaffel*, again working with national subsidy) is discussed. The city is interested in continuing such institutions, although no concrete decisions have been made in this respect. The growth of such production facilities is regarded as a success for the cultural policy. The document does not use specific indicators for evaluating the policy.

In conclusion, it can be said that the mid-term review documents contain information on the development of cultural institutions as a reflection of the implementation of cultural policy. Furthermore, some general trends in financial prospects and national cultural policy are reported to the city council through these documents. The indicators used to evaluate cultural policy relate to the attendance or the number of participants in specific projects, the number of performances, the number of productions realized (for producing institutions) and the number of institutions or outreach projects subsidized. An interesting indicator also is the number of applications for project subsidies which the city of Groningen regards as an indicator for the vitality of the cultural sector.

#### **11.1.4. Independent Advisory Boards: Evaluation of Performance of Institutions**

A common feature of cultural policy is the use of independent advisory boards. These boards consist of experts on arts and culture and have two roles: they advise on subsidy decisions and they can have a role in policy evaluation. The role of these boards differs from city to city. Although all cities have advisory boards for deciding on project subsidies, they are not always used to decide on the structural funding of cultural institutions. Typically, the larger cultural facilities, comprising the core of the cultural policy and usually the largest part of the cultural budget, are exempt from independent evaluation. This type of situation can be defended with regard to the Dutch performing arts, because the A-theatres and concert halls present the productions of the nationally subsidized theatre, dance and music producers. The national *Raad voor Cultuur* (and also the national *Fund for the Stage Arts* since 2008) provide independent advice on the artistic quality of these productions. Maastricht uses the advices of these national boards explicitly to evaluate city cultural policy (see Section 11.1.1). Some cities, such as Utrecht, have only temporary advisory boards to evaluate policy plans handed in by cultural institutions applying for structural funding from the municipality. Other cities have permanent advisory bodies with elaborate procedures. Up until July 2005, the *Rotterdamse Kunststichting* (Rotterdam Art Foundation) used to be a fund that not only advised the city administration but also developed and implemented policies and subsidized cultural institutions. The new *Rotterdamse Raad voor Kunst en Cultuur* (Rotterdam Council for Arts and Culture, hereafter RRKC) has a far more limited role, only advising the city administration and promoting debate on culture in the city. In Groningen the reverse has happened: in 2006 the city's advisory boards merged into the *Kunstraad Groningen* (Arts Council Groningen), a fund that hands out project subsidies and advises the city administration on the structural funding of institutions.

There are two strategies employed by these advisory boards. One is where the advice is solely based on the application for subsidy and thus only has a prospective nature. This is the case in Utrecht for instance. The president of the performing-arts committee of the advisory board expressed her dismay that, when the committee was critical of the past performance of an applicant, they were not able to take this into account in judging the future plans of the institution. Retrospective judgement of the performance of institutions should be done by the municipal bureaucracy itself, but she expressed concerns that this was

not always the case. On the one hand, this leads to freedom for the cultural institutions in question when executing their plans. They need not fear that failure to deliver on the plans can lead to restrictions being imposed. On the other hand, the question should be raised as to whether or not the city administration can account for spending public money responsibly. In the end, this seems more a question of politics than of a rational debate about which evaluation measures should be implemented. If the city council agrees with this praxis, there is no need to expand it.

The second strategy is retrospective. Here, the past performance of the institutions is evaluated by the independent advisory board. This is the case in Groningen, where the larger cultural institutions are subject to visitation by experts in their discipline. This visitation is based upon a self-evaluation report drawn up by the institution. The city administration has decided that the self-evaluation report should be structured according to the Balanced Scorecard (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti, 2009) which will be discussed in the following section. Thus past performance is considered in the awarding of subsidies. Furthermore, these evaluations can lead to specific policy measures being recommended for specific institutions. The RRKC also uses retrospective strategies in drawing up their advice to the administration. The RRKC not only produces advice on individual institutions but also draws up sector analyses (for each discipline) and draws up a general advice that summarizes some of the common themes that are present in (almost) all of the sectors (RRKC, 2007). The document will be discussed below.

For the present research, it is of interest to investigate whether or not these types of evaluations relate to the values and functions of aesthetic experience that have been identified in this research. This has been investigated on the basis of the written advice provided by the advisory boards of Rotterdam and Groningen, as these are the most elaborate of the cities studied.

In Rotterdam, the advisory board (RRKC) has a specific role in the policy process. The RRKC publishes its own evaluation document at the same time as the city administration produces the mid-term review document (RRKC, 2007). The 'sector analyses' in this document describe developments in each art discipline.<sup>5</sup> The analyses comprise remarks on (national and international) developments in the sector in general and on the situation in Rotterdam in particular. Attention is paid to venues, producers and the general public. The introduction to the sector analyses contains some general themes that are evident in most of the sectors. The document reads as an enumeration of problems that occur for cultural institutions. Thus the RRKC is a spokesperson for the general concerns in the cultural sector here, rather than an independent advisor to the city administration. For instance, the remark is made that the institutions no longer favour policies aimed at cultural diversity and finding specific indicators to measure ethnic participation (see RRKC, 2007, p. 20). The RRKC does not

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<sup>5</sup> The document thus mirrors the national policy cycle in which the *Raad voor Cultuur* publishes such sector analyses.



analyse whether or not policies and measures aimed at increasing cultural diversity are still justified on the basis of representation of ethnic minority groups in museum programmes or boards of institutions for instance. It simply voices the criticism of the institutions, although it also states that in some sectors, such as youth theatre, including ethnic diverse groups has become second nature. The sector analyses for the stage arts (theatre, classical music, pop music, world music and jazz) focus on the development opportunities for cultural institutions and venues in the city. With regard to the venues, the development of the public also is discussed; the advent of small cultural venues in city districts is welcomed as an important tool to reach more citizens. However, the meaning or value of attendance for the public is not covered.

The *Kunstraad Groningen* published an advice consisting of an evaluation of the larger cultural institutions by a committee of national experts (which will be discussed in more detail in Section 11.2.3) and an evaluation of the policy plans of smaller institutions by local experts (*Kunstraad Groningen*, 2008). In the general introduction to the advice, the *Kunstraad* describes the importance of the cultural sector to the city of Groningen. The diversity of the cultural institutions has led to an international city reputation of fostering independent and innovative artists (*ibid.*, p. 9). The *Kunstraad* is concerned about financial constraints (its assignment is to advise within the city's cultural budget) and this leads to an attempt to limit the number of institutions subsidized. The *Kunstraad* favours subsidizing a smaller amount of institutions substantially rather than spreading the budget among the growing number of applicants (*ibid.*, pp. 9-12). This type of strategy should be accompanied by clear accountability procedures (*ibid.*, p. 12). Unfortunately the *Kunstraad* does not specify which types of procedures it favours. However, the artistic quality of the productions is the first and most important criterion.<sup>6</sup> Other considerations, such as the necessity for structural funding based upon the complex nature of the organization or the necessity to make long-term agreements with (inter)national partners, are secondary (*ibid.*, p. 23). The evaluation of the performance of individual institutions comprises a statement of attendances and the number of performances realized. In some cases specific evaluations are made, such as the opportunities the organization offers to local art producers, see e.g. the evaluation of the *Noorderslag* pop festival (*ibid.*, p. 30) and the contribution to the diversity of the audience for culture in the city, although artistic quality is the most important criterion (see e.g. the evaluation of Urban House, *ibid.*, p. 33). Thus the *Kunstraad* includes the reach of cultural facilities in its evaluations, but it does not consider the values that are generated for audience members.

In some of the cities, independent advisory boards are not involved in policy evaluation at all. In Arnhem, for instance, the city officials stated that they themselves evaluate policy execution by the institutions by comparing the stated goals of the institutions to their actual realization. However, this implies that such goals are agreed upon before policy

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<sup>6</sup> Note that for the largest institutions such as the concert hall and city theatre, the diversity of productions and audiences realized is a criterion as well.

implementation. City officials and the management of institutions both describe the relationship between city officials as 'intimate'. Information gained from these personal contacts is used to draw up new policies and the city officials organize regular plenary meetings in which they discuss problems with representatives of the institutions. Because of these close relationships, managers of institutions indicate that it is easy to arrange things on the one hand, but they find it difficult to be critical of municipal policies on the other. This informal policy arrangement in 2008 turned out to be difficult, leading to political pressure to formally evaluate the visual arts policies of the city using independent experts (see *De Gelderlander*, 10 December 2008). This has not been the case for the performing-arts policies.

An interesting feature of the cultural policy practices in Zwolle is that the city aims at introducing new festivals in the city. The advisory board and the city administration work closely together to evaluate the festivals. As the festival – instigated by the city administration – is aimed at both strengthening the production of the performing arts in the city and promoting participation, both the audience diversity and artistic quality of the productions realized have been evaluated. In close consultation with the festival organization, the city administration has drawn up guidelines for future editions of the festival.

In conclusion, it should be remarked that the evaluations by independent advisory boards focus on the cultural institutions themselves and the values they create from a professional perspective. In some cases, the reach of the institutions is included in the evaluations. The values and functions of aesthetic experience are not evaluated in these documents. No new performance indicators can be enumerated.

#### **11.1.5. General-Public Surveys**

Several cities in the sample conduct general-public surveys that contain questions relating to the cultural policy (see e.g. Maastricht, 2006, and Arnhem, 2007). In Apeldoorn, a document has been drawn up that summarizes statistical data from various sources, including public surveys (Apeldoorn, 2006b). The indicators gathered from these surveys (see Table 11.3) investigate the reach of cultural facilities in the city and evaluations of the cultural facilities in the city by the general public. Furthermore, they also mention the ranking of the city in the national monitor survey.

#### **11.1.6. Impact Assessment**

No specific impact studies were conducted in the period researched. However, specific studies into the impact of the arts were occasionally commissioned by city administrations. Most notable are the economic impact studies conducted in Amsterdam (KPMG, 1996a, b and c) and Groningen (Julien, 1989, and Julien, Ohlsen and De Vries, 1997) that have been discussed in Chapter 8. In their programme budgets and programme accounts, Utrecht and Arnhem refer to general studies that rank cities with respect to culture, such as the *Atlas van Gemeenten* (Marlet and Van Woerkens, 2007).

Indicators	Sources
Percentage of population visiting cultural facilities in general	Arnhem (2007, p. X)
Percentage of population visiting specific facilities in the city	Arnhem (2007, p. X), Maastricht (2006, p. 9)
Percentage of population visiting specific genres (of performing arts)	Arnhem (2007, p. X), Maastricht (2006, p. 8)
Involvement in amateur arts	Arnhem (2007, p. X) Apeldoorn (2006b)
Differences in participation based upon age, ethnicity and gender	Arnhem (2007, p. XI)
Visitors to cultural quarter	Apeldoorn (2006b, p. 10)
Valuation of cultural quarter by inner-city entrepreneurs and inner-city dwellers	Apeldoorn (2006b, p. 10)
Valuation of quality of cultural facilities by the general population	Maastricht (2006, p. 7)
Ranking in national monitors	Apeldoorn (2006b, pp. 10, 91)*

\* ranking in Marlet and Van Woerkens (2007)

**Table 11.3 Indicators relating to the performing arts on cultural policy implementation, as found in general-public surveys of Arnhem, Apeldoorn, and Maastricht**

### 11.1.7. Conclusions

From the description above, it can be concluded that evaluation of art policy differs among the cities in the research. Clearly Groningen and Rotterdam have the most elaborate evaluation practices, with mid-term review documents and formally written independent expert advice on both policy execution and future plans. There is extensive reporting on the number of visits to performing arts institutions and the number of productions and performances realized. This is logical for several reasons, the most obvious being that cultural policy is usually realized through subsidizing cultural institutions for whom distributing (and sometimes producing) performances is their core activity. This means that the number of performances and attendance is what the city administration 'gets' for its subsidy. The attendance figures can also be viewed as an effort to investigate the reach of cultural amenities. However, to evaluate reach, the number of *visitors* is more relevant than the number of *visits*, and information on the socio-economic background of visitors is needed as well. This information is not gathered and reported on a regular basis. When the cultural policy evaluation practices described above are compared to Figure 10.1, it can be concluded that the Dutch municipalities evaluate only a part of the functioning of performing arts in society:

- The aesthetic value of the productions realized is mainly assessed through the use of independent advisory boards. The advisory boards concentrate on evaluations of artistic quality, thus the autonomy of cultural institutions is safeguarded. However, some of the advisory boards do more than solely assessing artistic quality. They evaluate the diversity of the cultural supply in a city and the management of the

institutions is also occasionally evaluated. In these cases, the advisory boards evaluate cultural governance, marketing strategies, staff capabilities and the proposed budgets of the cultural institutions. It can be concluded that the aesthetic values of the productions and the organizational setting in which they are produced and presented to the audience is evaluated mainly through expert evaluations.

- There is no evidence of cities researching the realization of intrinsic values and the occurrence of intrinsic functions at personal level. Although this is the important first step in policy legitimization, these values are not investigated for policy evaluation. Only efforts to assess the reach of aesthetic values in urban society are present through general-public surveys and by the evaluations of independent experts.
- There is no evidence of research into the extrinsic values that are realized for audiences. This is hardly a surprising conclusion as the extrinsic values at personal level were not mentioned in the policy documents.<sup>7</sup>
- In some cases, the functioning of the performing arts at societal level is evaluated through impact analysis. This has only been done irregularly for some cities and for the economic domain. The functioning in the social domain has never been investigated.

Municipal arts policy evaluation thus focuses entirely on the left side of Figure 10.1: the aesthetic value of the productions realized and the organizational setting in which these productions are presented to the audiences. The core of the policy evaluation consists of following the performance of cultural institutions and reporting on aggregate numbers of performances and attendance in the city. The way in which the performance of institutions is tracked differs widely. In some cases, the personal contacts between officials and the management of the institutions is key. The evaluation methods used by Dutch cities apparently leave substantial scope for the professional judgement of managers of subsidized institutions. This can be seen as one of the most important ways to safeguard the autonomy of the cultural sector.

## 11.2. Policy Evaluation in Theory

As cultural policy is mainly implemented through the allocation of subsidies to cultural institutions, this section reviews the literature on the effectiveness of non-profit and art organizations. There is abundant literature on the organisational effectiveness of non-profit and art organizations, and on the assessment of effectiveness through appropriate performance indicators. Since the 1980s, the subject has received much attention, although Schuster (1997) dates the use of performance indicators as far back as the early 1960s. A recent article in the *International Journal of Arts Management* reviews the literature of

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<sup>7</sup> Note that for both the intrinsic and extrinsic values and functions at personal level, it could be that performing-arts institutions evaluate these themselves through audience surveys. Although the cities do not report on the results of such types of research in their policy evaluations, this does not mean that such researches have not been undertaken by the institutions themselves.

performance measurement in the arts sector (Turbide and Laurin, 2009). Because the article focuses on the performing-arts sector, it will be used as a starting point for the investigation. One of the most common statements about assessment of organization effectiveness is that it is a multidimensional concept. Turbide and Laurin advance two reasons for this. First, 'since the mission of performing arts organizations is generally aimed at enriching the cultural environment through artistic achievement, the performance measurement system they use should put more emphasis on the quality of life performances or customer satisfaction than on financial metrics' (Turbide and Laurin, 2009, p. 56). The authors researched whether this indeed is the case for performing-arts organizations in Quebec and have found that, although most managers in performing-arts organizations think artistic excellence is the most important success factor for their organization, they place as much emphasis on financial performance indicators as on non-financial ones. Second, the managers think that the funding agencies are the most important stakeholders in these organizations. The stakeholder's assessment of performance will therefore depend on his or her specific objectives. Therefore performance measurement systems should include the objectives of various stakeholders. This also implies that funders should take an active interest in the performance measurement systems that its donor organizations use (Schuster, 1997). Other authors stress the need for the multidimensionality of performance evaluation in non-profits as well, encompassing measures that balance mission achievement, stakeholder relations, internal procedures and learning and growth (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983); artistic merit, merit for the community and organizational effectiveness (Preece, 2005); mission achievement, artistic merits and financial measures (Krug and Weinburg, 2004); and including both objective and subjective measures (Sowa et al., 2004).

This section will discuss models for the assessment of organization effectiveness. They have a number of characteristics:

- The model has been developed for and/or applied to non-profit arts organizations (or leaves room for artistic dimensions).
- The model accommodates the focus on the benefits of aesthetic experience rather than focusing on an autonomous conception of art.
- The model allows for a focus on outcomes rather than outputs.
- The model allows for different stakeholder perspectives. For the present research, the perspectives of clients, sponsors, the subsidizing government or society (which it represents) and artists should be included (or the model should allow for their inclusion).
- The model should incorporate dimensions that are relevant to external accountability, although they need not be specifically designed for it.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This means that quality assessment models that incorporate solely internal dimensions are not suitable. It should be noted that the implementation of such models can be a form of accountability to sponsors and subsidizing bodies in itself, because these models can be considered as a form of good governance. Benchmarking systems – the *Theater Analyse Systeem* (Theatre Analysis System) is used for Dutch theatres – give insight into the functioning of institutions as compared to similar institutions,

The aim of the discussion is to identify which metrics or indicators are used to assess the effectiveness of the organization within which perspectives. The next step in this research is to ascertain whether these metrics can be used for policy evaluation purposes. This involves relating the measures to the framework presented in Chapter 10 and the current evaluation practices of municipalities presented above. It should be stressed that the following discussion of performance evaluation models cannot be regarded as an investigation into which model is the best for performing-arts institutions. This would entail a different research setup.

The discussion in this section starts with the use of performance indicators for policy evaluation purposes, as suggested by Evans (2000), Towse (2001) and Gilhespy (1999 and 2001). Although their contribution to the research on performance evaluation does not provide a model for evaluation, it does point to some indicators that can be useful for the present research. Their work is specifically on (performing) arts organizations and is aimed at the accountability to the subsidizing bodies, which in itself warrants inclusion in this research. Subsequently three multidimensional models of organization effectiveness will be discussed: components of organization effectiveness as suggested by Kushner and Poole (1996), the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and Public Value Approach (PV). Kushner and Poole's model has been specifically developed for performing-arts organizations. The BSC was developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992) for for-profit organizations but has also been applied to non-profit settings, specifically for opera (Weinstein and Bukovinsky, 2009) and for policy evaluation in Berlin (Birnkraut, 2008). The basic layout of the BSC has been extended to the Threefold Balanced Scorecard (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti, 2009) which was applied for policy evaluation in Groningen. Public Value (Moore, 1995) is a general theory on the management and accountability of publicly financed organizations which has been applied in the US to Arts Supporting Agencies (Moore and Moore, 2005) and by the Arts Council England (Holden, 2004).

### **11.2.1. Performance Indicators**

Performance indicators are basically quantitative measures for the performance of institutions in certain respects. For instance, Schuster mentions some financial indicators, such as cost per audience member, fees paid to performers, cost per number of events, cost per service delivered. In his view, these quantitative indicators are especially useful for comparisons between organizations. But, as mentioned in the introduction, Schuster is wary of the use of quantitative indicators as they solicit strategic behaviour by institutions (Schuster, 1997). Performance indicators are not sophisticated enough to capture outcomes (see also Van der Knaap, 2000, p. 340). Others support the use of performance indicators. Towse points to the relationship between the goals a subsidised performing-arts institution tries to achieve and the generation of data which can be used to evaluate arts policy. Using the Royal Opera House Covent Garden as a case study, she observes that there is 'tension

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and they are frequently used for external accountability (see [http://www.vscd.nl/dossiers/16/Theater\\_Analyse\\_Systeem\\_TAS\\_](http://www.vscd.nl/dossiers/16/Theater_Analyse_Systeem_TAS_)).

Goal	Performance Indicator
To encourage excellence at every level.	Assessment of artistic quality*
To encourage innovation at every level.	Number of commissions of new works by funded organizations (target 2000/01 is 2,375)
To promote a thriving arts sector and support the creative economy.	Statement of progress: quantitative indicators to be developed Amount of commercial sponsorship (target for 2000/01 is £127m) Statement of partnership funding.
To facilitate more participation in the arts by more of the people.	PIs for participation to be developed
To encourage more relevant training for the arts sector.	Arts Council/DCMS support for the National Training Organization of the arts as an entertainment industry
To encourage better use of the arts in education.	Development of quality assurance scheme for arts organization education policies Number of organizations with written strategy for education provision Number of education sessions by funded organizations (target for 2000/01 is 2,134)
To combat social exclusion	Impact of New Audiences fund.
To improve public perception of the arts.	Those agreeing with the statements: 'The arts play a valuable role in my life' 'The arts play a valuable role in the life of the country'
To promote British culture overseas	Statement of progress of international role/co-operation with the British Council.

\* It seems odd that the DCMS does not elaborate where this quality should be assessed when excellence at every level is the aim. The formulation 'at every level' suggests different social strata rather than different cultural sectors.

**Table 11.4 Performance indicators for evaluating cultural policy**

source: DCMS/ Arts Council England as reprinted in Towse (2001, p. 45)

between the proper roles of management of the organization and administration of the subsidy it receives' (Towse, 2001, p. 38). These tensions can erupt periodically and this does not only result in questions on the management of the institution but also on the managing of this management by the subsidizing governmental body. She describes performance indicators as instruments to evaluate the performance of institutions and gives an overview of the indicators that have been put forward by the Arts Council England and the

Department of Culture, Media and Sports in the UK. The performance indicators are related to policy goals (see Table 11.4).

Apart from the fact that several quantitative performance indicators still need to be developed, this overview makes immediately clear that the policy objectives pursued determine the indicators that need to be used for policy evaluation. It is a matter for discussion whether or not DCMS and the Arts Council England have chosen the right goals to evaluate in this overview. However, it is more important to note that, although some of the goals can be related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience as they have been identified in the present research, others – such as ‘to facilitate more consumption of the arts by more of the people’ – cannot. In addition, some of these performance indicators can be linked to individual arts organizations, others clearly refer to the collective of arts producers. Towse is very much in favour of developing quantitative performance indicators as a tool for use by policy-makers (*ibid.*, p. 48). She may be right in favouring such indicators above inquiries into the management of cultural institutions once a problem has arisen. They may even have the advantage of allowing comparisons between institutions (benchmarking) and thus showing the general public that tax money is being spent prudently, which seems to be her main contention. However, because for public policy purposes she limits her evaluation of performance indicators to the cultural economics domain, her approach is limited. For instance, she equates questions of access to cultural facilities to price policy, ignoring the ‘cultural’ barriers (e.g., the division of cultural capital) entirely. Therefore her analysis overlooks the fact that the key question concerns how to relate variables that can be measured in quantitative terms to the goals that a government actually wants to achieve through cultural policy.

Gilhespy (1999 and 2001) has a wider approach to performance indicators. His articles are aimed at evaluating ‘the appropriateness and sensitivity of performance indicators designed to measure the achievement of certain social objectives’ (Gilhespy, 2001, p. 49). His main argument is that management objectives of cultural organizations should be related to the policy aims of the government or subsidizing body. He identifies ten policy objectives for managers:

- Access Maximization
- Attendance maximization
- Diversity/multiculturalism
- Economy maximization
- Education
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Revenue maximization
- Service Quality maximization
- Social Cohesion



He goes on to develop quantitative indicators to measure the social objectives of access maximization and attendance maximization; e.g., total attendance divided by the total population of a region. Gilhespy is not particularly explicit about this because he is cautious about using this type of quantitative approach. First, it presupposes that cultural organizations are rational, goals-seeking and future-oriented and behave in a strategic manner. This – among other things – implies that they have explicit objectives and policy priorities, which is not always the case. In his view companies that are unclear about their objectives are not worthy of receiving public money (Gilhespy, 2001, p. 55).<sup>9</sup> A significant drawback is that performance indicators do not tell the whole story. ‘An indication of attendance is no indication of the experience gained during that attendance. This raises a significant problem for the indicators developed and tested’ (Gilhespy, 2001, p. 55). Although such quantitative measures may achieve a level of usefulness in that they provide sensitive and useful information if the access to be maximized is defined in relation to certain social groups, Gilhespy is very wary of this approach.

Perhaps we should not attempt to prejudge or determine what the outcomes of attending the arts ought to be. If so, the important matter is to ensure that people have the opportunity to experience the arts and to let them make what they will of their experience. Accepting such an argument means that access maximization is the only social objective that matters. Access in this sense is about attracting and educating new users, to empower people to make choices as to whether the arts are for them (Gilhespy, 2001, p. 57).

The fact that the attendance figures may not reflect the nature of the experience of those attendees is a specific drawback of using quantitative performance indicators for policy evaluation. However, the method has a specific advantage. By closing the gap between policy aims and management objectives, it offers a possibility to evaluate cultural policy respecting the autonomy of cultural organizations. If cultural organizations define their management objectives autonomously, they also define the standards by which their performance should be measured. The second step is up to governmental officials: they need to determine which cultural institutions fit the policy aims of the city.<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion it can be said that quantitative performance indicators pose some problems when taken as instruments for policy evaluation. First, they require a standard against which the performance should be measured, and this inevitably leads to questions about how high a score should be to lead to a positive evaluation and to questions about who is in a position to determine these cut-off rates.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore questions of power arise involving the

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<sup>9</sup> Note that the reverse may be true as well: governments that are unclear about their objectives can be considered unworthy of spending public money.

<sup>10</sup> Note that Gilhespy's argument is presented in limited fashion here. He does provide a model for a sophisticated use of performance indicators on three different levels: for management evaluation, for advocacy purposes towards external stakeholders, and as a control mechanism to make strategic choices (Gilhespy, 1999, p. 46). However, his limited list of indicators is the main drawback of his proposals, as he himself is aware.

<sup>11</sup> Schuster proposes the use of indicators to establish whether operations are carried out within an acceptable range rather than the use of cut-off rates. He proposes indicators such as cost per audience member (Schuster, 1997, p. 260). However, this does not solve the problem, as someone has to determine an acceptable range for each indicator.

determination of which performance indicators are relevant and which are not. It is frequently stated that indicators that can be easily measured will take precedence over indicators that are more labour-intensive but capture the values created better. A solution to these problems that respects the autonomy of cultural institutions is to allow cultural institutions determine which items should be measured to evaluate their performance. It follows that it is up to the city administration to draw up general performance evaluations concerning the effectiveness of the whole policy. Second, it turns out that performance indicators are only relevant for policy evaluation when they can be based upon different stakeholder relationships. Each stakeholder relation requires its own indicators to be measured. Third, it appears that quantitative performance indicators in themselves are useful for benchmarking purposes and thus aid in evaluation the efficiency of policies rather than their effectiveness. This is why performance indicators need to be integrated in a more sophisticated system of policy evaluation. Such systems are discussed in the following sections. Last, it can be concluded that relevant measurement points concerning the functioning of the performing arts in urban society cannot be found without audience research on how the public values the arts. In addition, indicators for evaluating access to the performing arts are also useful. Rather than reporting absolute audience numbers, these numbers should be related to the specific groups in society that are targeted by the policies.

#### **11.2.2. Components of Organizational Effectiveness by Kushner and Poole**

Kushner and Poole have researched the relationship between organizational success and organization structure with regard to American non-profit performing-arts organizations. In their research, they introduce a simple model to assess organizational effectiveness based upon multiple performance indicators. They hypothesize that the expertise with which an organization is 'put together' influences its effectiveness, and they indeed prove that this is the case. They found the best performance in those organizations where managers had created and maintained structures to which the varied partners operating in the organization (be they paid workers or artists or volunteers) felt committed (Kushner and Poole, 1996, p. 132). This suggests that organizational effectiveness cannot be measured only in terms of its external outputs and outcomes. Although these are the most relevant characteristics from a policy evaluation point of view, turning attention to internal measures – such as organizational set-up – can provide information on both the success of the organization, as Kushner and Poole predict, and also on the ability of the organization to be successful in the long run.

Kushner and Poole 'deconstruct' organizational effectiveness based upon four components, each of which in itself influences organizational effectiveness and, in a chain, jointly lead to this effectiveness. Each component should be measured using multiple indicators. The components and measures used are:

- *Constituent satisfaction*, which can be regarded as a first cause and as a result of effectiveness. It is based 'on utility received in exchange for resources offered' (*ibid.*, p. 120) indicated by the following measures:

- Breadth of reputation of the organization (from local to international)
- Adherence to aesthetic standards and process innovation and collaboration
- *Resource Acquisition Effectiveness*, which is the ability of the organization to identify the resources needed and to supply acceptable returns (i.e., to those in possession of these resources) indicated by:
  - Success in obtaining artists, volunteers and donations.
- *Internal Process Effectiveness*, which is 'technical efficiency and internal social and technological systems' (*ibid.*, p. 120) indicated by:
  - Conformance to national standard of governance of non-profit organizations
  - Administrative competence
- *Goal Attainment*, which measures 'how well the organization reaches stated objectives' (*ibid.*, p. 120), indicated by:
  - Meeting audiences objectives
  - Meeting budget objectives

These measures were all collected on the basis of an ordinal scale (from 1 to 7). Furthermore, Kushner and Poole measured the financial strength of organizations with a purely quantitative measure which indicated the amount of activities the organization is able to carry out without receiving income. This measure is calculated by dividing the liquid assets of the organization by the total budget. A few criticisms can be levelled at these measures. First, the categories of 'constituent satisfaction' and 'resource acquisition' seem to overlap. The measure of success in obtaining artists, volunteers and donation is not very specific. Second, goal attainment is measured as reaching pre-specified quantitative targets (attendance numbers and realizing the projected deficit). Although these figures can be regarded as outputs of the organizations, they do not relate to outcomes. For instance, they may specify how many audience members were reached, but they do not specify the nature of the experience that was offered to them. None the less, their assessment of the performance of performing-arts organizations is interesting because it includes both internal and external measures. The categories described above all can be subsumed under the perspectives of the BSC discussed below and the emphasis the BSC places on mission achievement.

### 11.2.3. Balanced Score Card

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a management tool developed by Kaplan and Norton in the *Harvard Business Review* (Kaplan and Norton, 1992) and subsequently elaborated in a book based upon their experiences with implementing the BSC in a number of American corporations (Kaplan and Norton, 1996) and further elaborated in later years (see Kaplan and Norton, 2001a and b). The concept of the BSC started as an accounting instrument but it developed into a management tool which focuses an organization on achieving its mission.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Weinstein and Bukovinsky describe this as organizational alignment: 'the process of linking the organization's corporate mission, values, vision and strategy with its plans, processes and actions. It

A BSC is 'balanced' because it complements financial variables on the firm's performance, which, in Kaplan and Norton's view, are the key variables to monitor organizational success, with measures that express how a company relates to its clients and which process developments have taken place, and that relate how the capacities of the organization have been developed. These perspectives indicate how an organization can remain effective in the long run, but they are not expressed within the financial results of the organization. Financial results are only indicators of the success (or failure) of a company in the past (Weinstein and Bukovinsky, 2009, p. 47) and do not reflect the intangible assets of a company such as employee skills, motivation and customer loyalty (Kaplan and Norton, 1996, p. 7).

Kaplan and Norton propose monitoring a company's performance by means of indicators chosen along four perspectives:

- *Financial perspective* measuring the financial performance.
- *Customer perspective* measuring a company's performance with targeted customers and market segments, using outcomes such as market share, customer retention, and new customer acquisition.
- *Internal business processes perspective*, including measures of operational performance with regard to critical processes that deliver value to customers and reduce operational expenses.
- *Learning and growth perspective*, including measures such as employee motivation, retention, capabilities and alignment as well as information system abilities (Kaplan, 2001, p. 357).

A company should choose objectives that relate to the company's vision and strategy. It is surprising how often companies monitor their performance with measures that are not related to their mission. Targets should be determined for each measure, as well as initiatives to reach these targets. It is important to determine who or which department in the organization is responsible for reaching the target (see Kaplan and Norton, 1996, p. 9). They argue that 20 to 25 well-chosen measures are enough to monitor a company's performance (see *ibid.*, p. ix). With wisely chosen indicators, the BSC can focus a company on mission achievement. Through its application, a BSC can help a company to

clarify and gain consensus on its strategy, communicate the strategy throughout the organization, align departments and personal goals to the strategy, link strategic objectives to long-term targets and annual budgets, identify and align strategic initiatives, perform periodic and systematic strategic reviews and obtain feedback to learn about and improve strategy. (Kaplan and Norton, 1996, p. 299)

Linking the monitoring of the performance of a company to its strategy is the key to the BSC's success, which can explain its widespread use in corporations (Weinstein and Bukovinsky, 2009).

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allows for current operations and initiatives to be viewed in the context of whether they advance the organization towards its strategic goals'. (Weinstein and Bukovinsky, 2009, p. 48)

Although developed for the profit sector, the BSC has also been applied in the non-profit sector and to arts organizations. Kaplan and Norton argue that its application is even more useful for non-profit organizations because they should be evaluated on the basis of how effectively they meet the needs of their constituents – which, in most cases, involves intangible outcomes that can be reflected in the BSC – and they are especially accountable because they spend public funds (Kaplan and Norton, 1996, pp.179-81). Financial considerations present themselves to non-profit organizations as constraints rather than an objective. This means that the financial perspective should not be at the top of the BSC for non-profit organizations (*ibid.*, p.179, Kaplan, 2001, p.353). Kaplan suggests two modifications to the original BSC set-up:

- The overarching mission of the organization should be at the top of the BSC rather than the financial perspective. This type of mission may only be achieved over longer periods of time. This is why the BSC for non-profit organizations needs long-term measures to indicate this. The measures in the other four perspectives of the BSC provide short and intermediate-term targets and feedback.
- In the customer perspective, one should include not only the customers who receive the benefits the non-profit organization provides but also the sponsors who provide the funds to do so (Kaplan, 2001, pp. 360-361).

Kaplan also observes that non-profit organizations have difficulty in clearly defining their strategy and thus have difficulty in focusing the efforts of their organizations. Typically strategy statements include a list of activities undertaken by the organization rather than a short description of the outcomes it wishes to realize. Furthermore, people working in non-profit organizations tend to be focused on the product and the process of creating it and not on the outcomes it produces. Without a clear mission statement, the efforts to implement a BSC will focus on local operational improvements rather than on whether or not the strategy is being achieved (*ibid.*, p. 360). To Kaplan, a BSC helps a non-profit organization to achieve greater accountability based upon its mission, to align all personal and efforts to mission accomplishment and to avoid the trap of ‘attempting to be everything to everyone’ (*ibid.*, p. 369).

Weinstein and Bukovinsky see the challenge of policy evaluation as the task to demonstrate how the satisfaction of the consumers’ needs contributes to the goals of a public policy. In demonstrating the impact of their organizations, the managers of publicly funded arts organizations must balance the specifics of cultural activities, the values their activities create for customers, and an efficient and effective operation of their organizations (Weinstein and Bukovinsky, 2009, p.43). They cite researchers who argue that key managers in arts organizations lack the necessary skills for implementing proper accounting techniques because they are primarily trained in artistic rather than administrative capabilities. Weinstein and Bukovinsky regard the BSC as a means to address such challenges (*ibid.*, p. 47) and report that the Boston Lyric Opera regards the BSC as a valuable tool for demonstrating

its efficiency to possible sponsors and donors (*ibid.*, p. 54).<sup>13</sup> Weinstein and Bukovinsky regard the BSC as an instrument for effective relations between funder and funded, which warrants its discussion here.

The development of an effective BSC begins with the organization having a clear mission. The opera's mission statement reads:

The mission of Boston Lyric Opera is to produce artistically excellent productions of a diverse repertoire that entertain and inspire audiences, to feature emerging operatic talent, and to engage and educate the community of all ages about opera. By achieving its mission, Boston Lyric Opera ensures the future of opera in Boston and New England for generations to come. (Weinstein and Bukovinsky, 2009, p. 48)

Note that this mission describes how the institution adds value for the audiences (to entertain and inspire audiences), for the operatic profession (to produce artistically excellent and diverse productions, to feature emerging operatic talent and to engage and entertain the community about opera) and the community at large (ensuring the operatic future of the city of Boston and the New England region). This division will be taken up by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti as well. The next step is that the organization should specify short and long-term action plans that will lead to mission accomplishment and measures to monitor each of these action plans. The list of measures should be limited. A common mistake is to assume that everything is important and thus should be monitored. Developing such measures may prove to be relatively easy; e.g., the artistic reputation can be monitored through the mentioning of the Boston Lyric Opera in specific opera journals or on feature pages of newspapers. Other performance areas are harder to measure; e.g., how to evaluate whether or not one has indeed recruited the best talent available? Weinstein and Bukovinsky's conclusion that implementation of a BSC requires considerable effort seems justified.

#### *Policy Evaluation using the BSC in Berlin*

Birnkrant describes the use of the BSC for the evaluation of performance of cultural institutions in Berlin. It is essential to realize that, in Berlin, the BSC has only been used to evaluate the performance of the institutions, and has not been part of an effort to evaluate the cultural policy of the city. Birnkrant argues that there should not be a direct link between the results of the evaluation and funding decisions at all, because the prospect of sharp budget cuts will reduce the readiness of institutions to co-operate with the evaluation. Furthermore, she states that evaluation approaches should not try to evaluate the art itself but should rather 'assess an institution's position within its own artistic reference system' (Birnkrant, 2008, p. 4). This means developing an approach which

takes seriously institution's responsibility for autonomy and, at the same time, supports the public authority's expectations that the funding will have the desired effect. This procedure is intended to allow a continuous dialogue concerning effectiveness both internally, within the institution, and externally, with the sponsor, thereby establishing the preconditions needed for a continuous quality-management process in terms of a '*constantly learning organization*'. (Birnkrant, 2008, p. 4)

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<sup>13</sup> They use the example of the Boston Lyric Opera as described by Kaplan and Campbell (2001).

Thus the BSC-based policy evaluation instrument is a means to have the administration and the management of cultural institutions 'talk' to each other. The BSC here provides a common system of thinking to evaluate the performance of institutions rather than a common language. This is a valuable contribution towards the goals of the present research. The evaluation instrument is not aimed at deciding on the goal of the institution, but rather at assessing whether or not it pursues its chosen goal effectively.<sup>14</sup> To Birnkraut, this is reason enough to omit the intrinsic values entirely. She constructs the BSC based upon four building blocks:

1. Performance and effect; comprising measures dealing with the services the institutions offer and their effects. This includes the knowledge the organization has of its visitors and how this knowledge is gathered and used. Furthermore, in this building block, she looks at the co-operation of the institution with other institutions and the national profile of the institution based upon artistic 'ratings' such as prizes and reviews.<sup>15</sup>
2. Internal potential; comprising measures on staff development and training and the equipment available to the institution.
3. Financial control; comprising measures indicating whether the organization systematically applies financial monitoring and marketing management.
4. Strategic control and targets; comprising measures for the use of business models for strategic target setting, structured internal communications, and the sustainability of artistic programme planning.

For each of these building blocks, questions are formulated with the goal of evaluating whether or not particular processes are implemented in general and, if so, whether this is done systematically in order to assess the quality of these processes and to establish how well the processes have been integrated universally into the organization, and whether or not they are sustainable, thus providing as broad a picture as possible of their effectiveness (*ibid.*, p 9). These questions are distributed among the management of the institutions. By eliminating all issues concerning the values that have been created for the public, Birnkraut reduces her efforts to designing an internal consistency check on the operations of the institution.<sup>16</sup> Her use of the BSC seems to focus on researching whether or not appropriate

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<sup>14</sup> This seems perfectly suitable for evaluation cultural policy because this is a means to guarantee the autonomy of the institutions themselves: they formulate the standards according to which they want to be evaluated. Thus the dialogue between funder and funded is improved. However, this type of strategy presupposes that politics is aware of the values that *can* be attained through cultural and artistic interventions in society, as they decide which values warrant government support. The discussion of the Dutch policy documents in Part II of this research suggests that these have been written with ample knowledge of the intrinsic values of aesthetic experience. Part II also demonstrated that this knowledge was less extensive with regard to the extrinsic values and that such knowledge is not sophisticated enough for the purpose of policy evaluation.

<sup>15</sup> It is odd that Birnkraut here speaks of performance and effect but in no way makes clear how 'effect' should be incorporated in the evaluations.

<sup>16</sup> A further criticism is that her division of items within the four building blocks is questionable. She includes 'marketing items' under 'financial management' rather than under 'customer satisfaction'.

management procedures are in place rather than focusing on output or outcomes of activities.

*Policy evaluation using a modified BSC in Groningen*

Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2009) distinguish three different types of values for art organizations that correspond to three stakeholder groups:

1. *Customer value* by providing customers with artistic experiences.<sup>17</sup>
2. *Societal value* by adding to the ongoing (re)construction of culture.<sup>18</sup>
3. *Professional value* by adding to the development of the professional field of the artistic discipline concerned. (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti, 2009, p. 7)

This strategic triangle concurs with earlier investigations by Boorsma into the notion of artistic quality where she identified these three 'fields' in which quality judgements should be made, whereas quality judgements in the arts policy usually focus on professional value (see Boorsma, 1994 and 1998). The triangle also corresponds to the three 'fields' that the Boston Lyric Opera included in its mission, and to the emphasis other authors place on assessing constituent relationships for non-profit (performing) arts organizations. Voss and Voss (2000) propose that a theatre company's mission should articulate those values to which the organization adheres which are relevant for customers, funders, artists and peer organizations and with the community at large.<sup>19</sup> The distinction of these three perspectives on value also corresponds to the second adaptation of the BSC suggested by Kaplan (2001). He proposed including both sponsors and clients in the customer perspective. Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's study concurs with this, where 'customer value' refers to the values created for clients, and 'societal value' can be regarded as the reasons why sponsors or governmental bodies provide subsidies. Furthermore, they add the 'professional value' which relates the art works produced to the art discipline and the professional values that are present within the arts community.

It is important to recognize that these groups are interrelated. Customers and professionals are part of the society (or community) and thus these three kinds of values are interrelated. At micro-level, these three groups should be translated into audience, government and professional field (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti, 2009, p. 9). It is important to realize that arts organizations do not only fulfil artistic functions. They also fulfil social and entertainment functions for the audience and can satisfy their educational interests although, with the

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<sup>17</sup> Note that Boorsma and Chiaravalloti do not specify what they mean by 'artistic experience', but because they refer to the pragmatist view in arts philosophy their approach concurs with the approach taken in the present research. Where they write 'artistic experience', aesthetic experience should be read.

<sup>18</sup> Note that in the present research the societal value is defined in a different way, namely, as the values and functions of aesthetic experiences that occur at collective level. However, one can assume that it is through these societal values and functions that the culture within which the experiences originate is reconstructed. The framework presented in Part III of the research seems to be a more sophisticated analysis of these processes than that provided by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti.

<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the three perspectives on value correspond with the perspectives underlying the public value approach discussed in the next section.



emphasis on personal development taken in this research, the question should be raised as to whether or not this is part of the artistic functions as Boorsma and Chiaravalloti define them. For the community, they produce values such as social harmony, quality of life, national identity and prestige, although here again the distinction between artistic and non-artistic functions could have become more clear on the basis of the pragmatist view of arts in society.

While thus expanding his second adaptation of the BSC for non-profit organizations in order to make it useful for arts organizations, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti strictly follow Kaplan's first adaptation, which involves putting the organization's mission on top of the BSC. They distinguish between primary objectives for the organization – which should be present in its mission statement – and secondary objectives which involve the 'regular' perspectives of the BSC. The only adaptation here is to add external processes to the internal processes perspective. These secondary objectives have a cause-and-effect relationship to the achievement of the mission. Thus the BSC becomes 'threefold' as the three perspectives on value are taken into consideration for each 'chain' of primary and secondary objectives. Accordingly, a matrix of 15 boxes can be constructed (see Table 11.5) in which the performance of the organization can be scored. Boorsma and Chiaravalloti argue that performance indicators and operational targets should be established for each cell. Some of these indicators can be easily found (e.g., attendance figures) but may not provide the best managerial information as attendance figures do not reflect the values created for the customers. These can better be evaluated on the basis of customer surveys, interviews, or the number and nature of complaints.<sup>20</sup> For management purposes, the use of surrogate measures is not problematic as long management is aware of this and does not confuse objectives with measures.

From a public policy point of view, this table seems very extensive. Note, however, that it is questionable whether all data reported in the secondary-objective cells are relevant. It seems that only the primary objectives are relevant as they relate to the particular value that is being produced for clients, artists and society, whereas the secondary objectives refer to the way in which such values are produced. One can argue that only when these secondary objectives place constraints upon the ability of the organization to produce the primary objectives on a continuous basis is this information relevant to a subsidizing governmental agency, in cases when, for instance, aesthetic values cannot be realized without specific training of staff members and the costs for this training are high compared to the usual budget for staff training. However, this does not imply that the secondary objectives are not relevant to the management of the organization. On the contrary, this information is extremely relevant.

As mentioned in Section 11.1, the table was used as a basis for the evaluation of the performance of the largest cultural institutions in the city of Groningen in 2008 as part of the cultural policy evaluation. The institutions were asked to fill in the entire table using both

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<sup>20</sup> Furthermore attendance figures are imprecise as they do not reflect the total number of attendees.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS		KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS		
		Customers	Community	Professional Field
Primary	<p><b>Arts organization's mission</b></p> <p><i>How to fulfil the artistic functions expressed in the mission by creating the highest artistic value for key stakeholder groups, and how to support their co-creative role.</i></p>	<p><b>Primary customer value:</b></p> <p>Nature and intensity of artistic experiences* per artwork per audience segment, and the influence of supportive services.</p>	<p><b>Primary societal value:</b></p> <p>Total number of artistic experiences,* distributed amongst social groups, and the dissemination within general culture.</p>	<p><b>Professional value:</b></p> <p>Nature and number of artworks and role within the professional art field.</p>
	<p><b>Stakeholder relationships</b></p> <p><i>How to build a strong reputation and durable relationships with stakeholder groups, and how to beat the competition.</i></p>	<p>Total customer value (including non-artistic benefits). Customer education, satisfaction, acquisition, and retention. Reputation among the audience and competitive advantage.</p>	<p>Total societal value (including non-artistic functions). Reputation among the general public. Relationships with and reputation among subsidizers, philanthropists, sponsors and volunteers.</p>	<p>Reputation, relations, and competitiveness in the professional art field.</p>
Secondary	<p><b>Financial Assets</b></p> <p><i>How to manage the contribution of stakeholder groups to the financial assets that are needed to continue to create artistic values.</i></p>	<p>Revenues from customers.</p>	<p>Subsidies and funds, from governments, philanthropists, and sponsors.</p>	<p>Prize money and scholarships.</p>
	<p><b>Internal and external processes</b></p> <p><i>How to optimize internal processes and the co-operation with external partners, in order to support mission accomplishment and to optimize the tangible and intangible contributions of stakeholder groups.</i></p>	<p>Skills of marketing and education staff to acquire, support, educate and bind customers. Customer information systems. Capacity planning. Co-operation with suppliers and/or distributors. Connected budgets, costs and efficiency.</p>	<p>Public relations and publicity skills. Marketing skills to increase total reach and support dissemination. Fund-raising skills. Connected budgets, costs and efficiency.</p>	<p>Artistic skills. Artistic co-operation with other art producers in the field. Connected budgets and costs.</p>
	<p><b>Innovation and learning</b></p> <p><i>How to learn and improve in order to support mission accomplishment and to optimize the role of stakeholder groups.</i></p>	<p>Development of innovative services to acquire, support, educate and bind customers. Satisfaction and career development of responsible staff.</p>	<p>Development of innovative activities to increase total reach and support dissemination. Improve public relations and fundraising efforts. Satisfaction and career development of responsible staff.</p>	<p>Development of innovative contributions to the professional field. Satisfaction and career development of artistic staff.</p>

\* Note that in this table the term 'artistic experience' is used where 'aesthetic experience' is favoured in the present research.

**Table 11.5 The threefold Balanced Scorecard for evaluating the effectiveness of arts organizations, as suggested by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2009, p. 11)**

quantitative and qualitative performance indicators in each cell. An important feature of this procedure was the fact that the performance indicators in each cell were not selected by the city administration but by the management of the cultural institutions themselves. This allowed them to specify what they saw as the key factors determining the success of the organization. But, to the city administration, the threefold BSC as a whole guaranteed that the performance was presented in a systematic way, enabling comparisons between institutions. The evaluation of the performance of these institutions was part of the larger evaluation of the city's cultural policy. The larger cultural institutions were subject to this type of retrospect performance evaluation, which was conducted by the independent advisory council of the city. This council used a method where the institutions drew up a self-evaluation report based upon the BSC. This report was the basis for discussion with experts on the arts discipline concerned. The experts drew up a final advice, which consisted of policy recommendations for both the city administration and the institutions. Furthermore, the smaller cultural institutions applying for a four-year subsidy were subject to prospective evaluation by the advisory board. The total of these evaluations was presented to the board of mayor and aldermen who decided on the subsidies for the next four years on the basis of this advice. This means that, for the largest institutions, there is a link between the subsidy level of the institutions and the evaluation of their performance, although most of these largest institutions are funded on a continuous basis in the policy system of the city. In 2008, no budget cuts were implemented on the basis of this type of evaluation. Therefore this method should be viewed as a way for politics to influence the implementation of the cultural policy by the independent institutions rather than as a means to decide whether or not to subsidize the institutions at all.

For the present research, it is of interest to examine the indicators used by the performing-arts institutions to document their performance. Unfortunately, the city administration did not coach or supervise the way in which the institutions used the threefold BSC. As the instrument is fairly complex, involving at least 30 performance indicators (two for each cell), some institutions refrained from using it altogether. Only two performing arts institutions filled out the TBSC as it is presented here. The performance indicators used are presented in Table 11.6.

*Conclusion: BSC and policy evaluation*

A major advantage of using policy evaluation methods based upon the BSC above mere performance evaluation is that the BSC presents performance indicators not as single measurement points, but in relation to each other and to the organization's mission. A well-constructed BSC identifies the action within which an organization needs to excel in order to achieve its mission, and reports on progress towards mission accomplishment through indicators that reflect both the long-term (primary) and short and medium-term (secondary) perspective. For the intangible parameters that are concerned in cultural policy, BSC methods allow qualitative assessments to be combined with quantitative measures. Therefore, conceptually, BSC is superior to mere performance evaluation. However, the

	Customer perspective	Community Perspective	Professional Field Perspective
Primary Objectives			
Arts organization's mission	Value of experiences realized (measured through audience surveys, although not explained how) Media attention for acts programmed (pop music venue)*	Uniqueness of the productions/acts programmed* Support of local/regional artists. Percentage of local vs. international artists supported Social composition of audience (estimation of number of coloured audience members)	Expert assessments of the quality of productions programmed
Secondary Objectives			
Stakeholder relationships	Frequent visitors (ration of subscribers to general attendance) Image of institutions for its clients Client satisfaction with performances and educational services	Levels of volunteering Work-experience projects realized	Co-operation with other cultural institutions in the city Reputation amongst peers and competitors
Financial Assets	Numbers of paying visitors Income from catering and rent	Subsidies to the institution**	Prize money won
Internal and External Processes	Support services Specific design of publications	Social reach of publicity material Co-operation between paid and volunteer staff	Staff capabilities in programming and coaching of artists Staff capabilities in assessing potential of artists
Innovation and Learning	***	***	***

\* Note that this refers to evaluations by critics, i.e. professional judgements.

\*\* As a proxy for the financial relations with the community.

\*\*\* No viable operationalizations found.

**Table 11.6 Operationalizations of the threefold Balanced Scorecard by two performing arts institutions in Groningen (see Kunstraad Groningen, 2008).**

evaluation effort required by the cultural institutions is substantial, although such efforts combine perfectly well with management procedures and internal accounting principles. For instance, the management of the institution can use the BSC method to account for their actions to the board of their foundation. This entails that these methods are only applicable to large cultural institutions where the board of the foundations have no executive responsibilities. However, for most smaller cultural institutions, board members combine executive and controlling responsibilities. Furthermore, constructing a BSC is time-consuming. It is important to limit the number of measures and to realize that not everything is important. The threefold BSC suggested by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti certainly seems too extensive for practical use.

In essence, the BSC is a management instrument which has been applied to the cultural sector and subsequently to policy evaluation on two occasions. In the Berlin case, it appears that the core of what cultural policy is about has been left out of the evaluation entirely. None the less, the model can provide city administrators with valuable information about the functioning of cultural institutions. The application of BSC in the city of Groningen met these issues head on. Here, the solution to the autonomy question has been to ask the cultural institutions themselves to specify the values they aim to produce for the professional field, for their audiences, and for the city as a whole. However, the city administrators do not appear to have been very critical of the way in which the institutions have specified these values. In most cases, the managers of the institutions have resorted to their own estimations of the values they have produced for the audiences and the cities without specifying how they make such estimations. It also appears that the definition of the values created for society in the model presented by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2009) is somewhat narrow. They suggest that the societal value can be assessed by specifying the value created for audience members and then multiplying this value by the total attendance figure. However, this overlooks values that can be created through the existence of the cultural institutions themselves, e.g., direct employment effects, volunteer work and experience-building capacities, and does not account for the way in which culture and art have functions in society that accrue to those who do not attend.

#### **11.2.4. Public Value Approach**

The Public Value approach to policy evaluation has been developed on the basis of the book entitled *Creating Public Value* by Mark H. Moore. He introduces a normative theory of how managers in the public sector should behave to create public value (Moore, 1995, p. 1). He presents a well-grounded theory based on literature and a vast knowledge of case studies in the American public sector in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To Moore, managerial success in the public sector should be equated with 'initiating and reshaping public sector enterprises in ways that increase their value to the public in both the short and the long run' (*ibid.*, p. 10). For the present research, the way in which he defines and measures public value is of primary interest. His theory is important because his views have become influential in cultural policy, specifically in the United Kingdom. The *Arts Council England* has applied the

Public Value concept (see Bunting 2006 and 2007 as discussed in the Introduction). There are applications for American Arts Supporting Agencies as well (see Moore and Moore, 2005, and see e.g. <http://www.cac.ca.gov/programs/cpv200809.php>, for the Californian Arts Agency's policy on public value, accessed 18 Feb. 2009).<sup>21</sup>

Moore distinguishes between politics and administration. In the classical doctrine of public management, public administrators faithfully carry out what politics determines as the goals of the government. This classical doctrine is based on the writings of Woodrow Wilson (see Moore, 1995, pp. 320-2, note 10). Moore discerns two problems with this classical doctrine. First, it assumes that policy goals are always stated clearly and that they are translated into mission statements for public organizations, a problem that has already been discussed in Section 1.5.<sup>22</sup> Second, Moore observes that, where policy requires expert knowledge, public administrators who have this knowledge should be deeply involved in the process of politics rather than waiting for the results to be faithfully implemented (*ibid.*, p. 17; see also Radin, 2006, pp. 236-9). Classical doctrine does not encourage such behaviour and restricts the entrepreneurship of public managers (Moore, 1995, p. 20). In fact, classical doctrine exhibits the same straightforward approach to public policy as NPM. Although Moore has his misgivings about the classical doctrine of public management, he does resort to its basics. In his view, public managers have no choice but to trust in the normative power of the preferences that emerge from politics; they should abide by the stated policies. In this respect, the Public Value approach fits well with the approach taken in the present research while still exhibiting the ambiguities of NPM doctrines. However, Moore does take an important step because he states that when public managers act as 'explorers for public value' (*ibid.*, p. 300) this increases the importance of after-the-fact evaluation of the value their explorations have generated. Thus he leaves room for the judgement of professional in implementing public policies.

Perhaps the best that can be said (...) about the moral of obligations of public executives is that they owe a conscientious publicly accountable, effort to search for public value. In that search, they are duty bound to have and articulate a vision. But that vision has to accommodate the aspirations of those in their authorizing environments, as well as what they know or think is important based on their professional or administrative expertise, or what techniques of policy analysis and programme evaluation can tell them. They are also responsible for accurate reporting on what they are doing and what is being produced. The articulation of their purposes and reporting of activities and accomplishments become the crucial signposts that allow them to be held accountable to - and through their accountability, learn from - their overseers. (Moore, 1995, p. 305)

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<sup>21</sup> The indicators presented in Moore and Moore, 2005, and by the Californian Arts Agency will not be discussed in this chapter because they have been developed specifically for arts financing agencies and not for subsidized organizations. The indicators mainly refer to the subsidy-allocation process itself, such as the administrative costs relative to the budget of subsidies granted.

<sup>22</sup> Note that things are usually the other way around in cultural policy: cultural institutions formulate their goals in policy plans which they submit for subsidy to the government, not necessarily incorporating the goals of the government.

In 2003 Moore presented a paper in which he tries to develop a Public Value Scorecard.<sup>23</sup> With this type of card, he provides 'measurement points' for evaluating performance of non-profit organizations. In his view, boards and managers of non-profit organizations should balance their strategies between three – occasionally conflicting – fields:

1. *Values*: the key question here is: 'Which values does the organization ultimately produce (or contribute to through its operations)?' These values constitute the legitimacy for the support of the non-profit organization through either volunteering or prices paid for products and services delivered to the public.
2. *Legitimacy and support*: here the board and management should concern themselves with another type of 'customers', namely, the authorities that grant the organization the means to carry out their operations. These involve governments (that either grant money to the organization through subsidies and/or specific authorities) and private donors.
3. *Operational capabilities*: here the question is whether or not the organization has the ability to achieve the desired goals. Note that the organization does not need to limit its attention to its own operations. It can improve on its operational capabilities through co-operation with other organizations that share its aims.

Therefore, board and managers in the public sectors should direct their attention *outwards* (towards the values they bring about for clients), *upwards* (towards their authorizing environment) and *downwards* (towards their internal operations) to put it in the terms of *Creating Public Value* (1995). Moore argues that performance measurement should include all three sides of this triangle. Figure 11.1 represents the measurement points that should be included in a Public Value Scorecard, although without specifying the way in which these items should be measured.

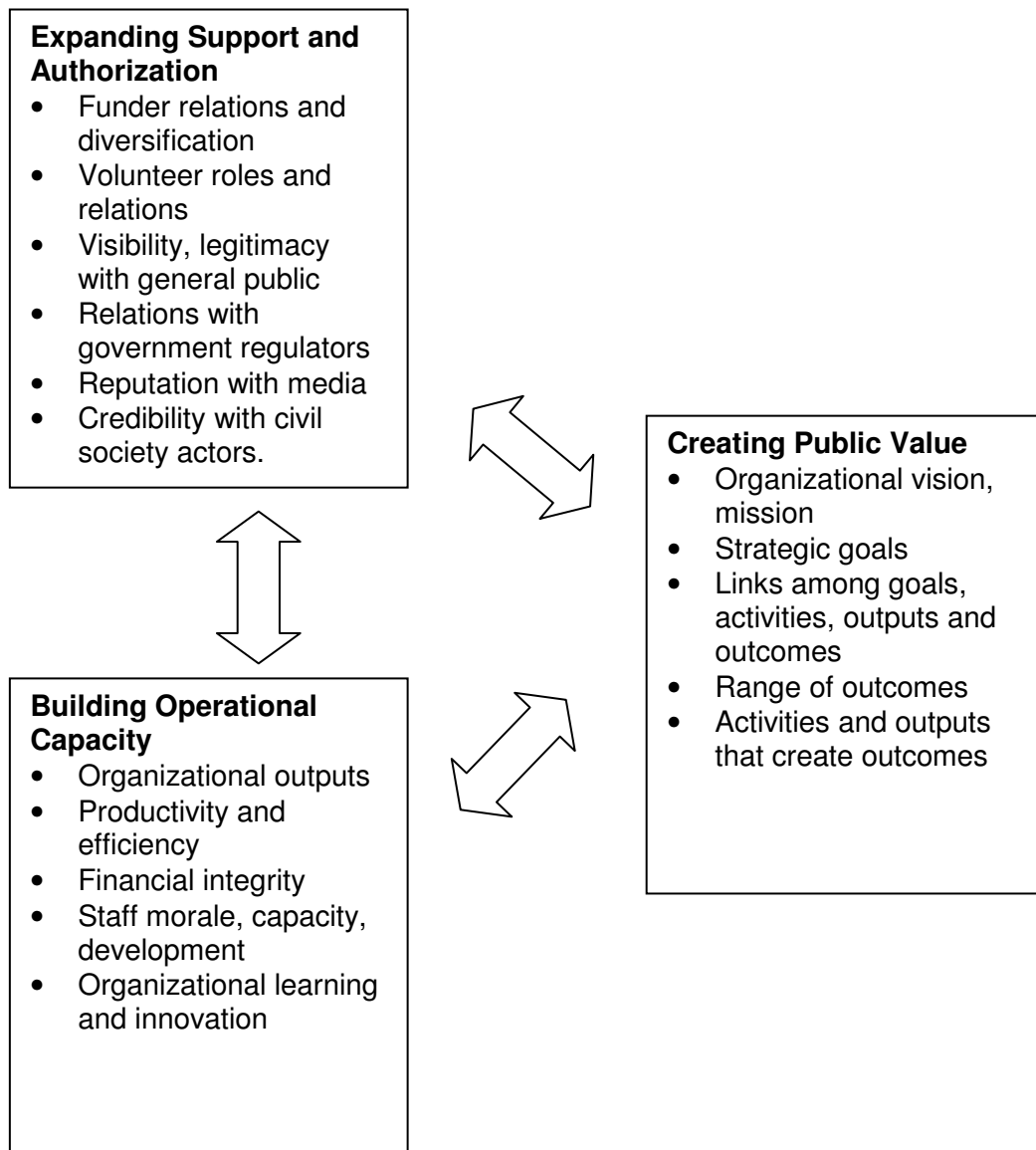
Keaney (2006) voices criticism of Moore as he does not allow the public a role in the public value concept. In his conception, the wishes of the public are refracted through the choices of elected politicians. In Keaney's view, the public preferences should be actively sought and this search is part of the ongoing process of creation of public value by non-profit organizations (Keaney, 2006, p. 13). In fact, this is what Moore himself argues when he sees public managers as 'explorers of public value'. The value of the Public Value concept for the present research is, therefore, that it draws attention to the 'unsought' and 'unexpected' element of cultural enterprise which should be taken into account in policy evaluation. This means two things: (1) values reported by the cultural institutions that are not part of the stated policy goals should not be disregarded easily – although they have a different status than values that correspond with public policy goals – and (2) it should be recognized that aesthetic experience does not always have positive effects in all domains of life. These points concur with Holden's rendition of Public Value, which may not always be the value that was originally intended. He gives the example of an educational space in a gallery that is

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<sup>23</sup> In this paper, he compares BSC-based evaluation methods for non-profit organizations to the Public Value approach. However, because he uses the standard BSC model which is applied to profit

supported by a funder whose aim is to encourage children to visit the art gallery. However, when the school teachers of these children do not find the time to visit the gallery, the space is used by adult amateur artists. In this case, public value has certainly been created, but not the intended value (Holden, 2004, p. 52).

In 2004, Holden wrote a pamphlet on the adoption of the Public Value approach into the cultural sector as an answer to the challenge put forward by the British Secretary of State for



**Figure 11.1 Public Value Framework for Accountability and Performance Measurement**  
(reprinted from Moore, 2003)

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organizations and not the adaptations for non-profit organizations (as Boorsma and Chiaravalloti have done), his critique on BSC will not be discussed here.



culture to develop a new language in order to discuss the value of culture. He agrees with those who argue that a broader method of thinking about the goals and performance or public policy is needed than is conventionally used within the NPM literature. Public Value encompasses more values than can be reported in numbers, and it also addresses broader values such as equity and accountability (see Holden, 2004, p. 41).

At its most basic, Public Value is the **value added** by government and the public sector in its widest sense (...) in other words, it is the difference between what citizens give to and what they receive from public bodies. Citizens recognize value when they give up something in return for it, rather than merely saying that they are prepared to give something up. In the case of culture, on the input side of this equation there would appear direct financial contributions, including buying tickets and making donations, as well as a willingness to see tax revenues spent on supporting the sector. But on top of that, and of particular importance in relation to culture, is the commitment of time and energy by the public. Hours spent visiting, using, enjoying and travelling to and from cultural activities demonstrate that the public values them. A higher degree of commitment is shown in volunteering (...). Volunteering does not have Public Value as an outcome or benefit; rather in itself it creates and embodies Public Value through the development of social relationships and affective attachments to culture. (Holden, 2004, p. 42)

This quote clearly shows that Public Value as a notion is related to business studies. The concept of added value reflects Michael Porter's notion of value chains for instance.<sup>24</sup> It is surprising that someone who so adamantly wants to develop a language that differs from economics or business management (which also is the language of NPM) uses concepts that come straight from the same source. The above quote also is problematic due to the fact that, although it claims to be specifically about the arts, it is not in actual fact. Counting volunteering as part of the public value generated by artistic activities may be a correct way to demonstrate this value, but the same holds for volunteering in other domains of society, even in the world of business where volunteering may occur as part of company's training people who are trying out a new career or who have been unemployed for a long time. Furthermore, counting the investment in terms of both time and money spent by the attendees at the performing arts may seem a viable way to demonstrate their public value. However, such investments also occur in the non-subsidized performing-arts sector, such as people travelling considerable distances to see their favourite performer live on stage for instance, as is the case with most pop concerts. This would imply that the public value of the non-subsidized arts is greater than the subsidized arts sector almost by definition.

Despite such criticisms, the Public Value approach does point to the fact that the value created by cultural or artistic activities is not only reflected in the value that is generated for its audience, though this value forms an important part of public value. Therefore, it is worthwhile to look at the elements Holden suggests that should be included in demonstrating public value and the way in which he tries to measure these elements. Throughout the text of his pamphlet, he mentions several elements that should be included in determining public value:

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<sup>24</sup> Although neither Moore nor Holden refers to Porter. Moore (1995) frequently refers to Peters and Waterman's research into excellent organizations.

- The value created for the public. This value is reflected in time spent in volunteering and money allocated to the arts through taxation.
- The value created for the attendants of performing arts.<sup>25</sup> This is reflected in the money spent on tickets, and time and money spent on transportation and attendance.
- A professional judgement of the value created by the producing and/or financing organization.<sup>26</sup> Public administrators should not adopt a stance of professional neutrality, but should explicitly articulate the values that they in fact promote. Typically NPM offers a vocabulary that appears to be value-free, but actually mystifies the values that are really at stake. Moore and Holden obviously agree here.
- The legitimacy of the political process that leads to the policy that is being implemented. This point relates to the emphasis Moore puts on the 'assignment' that public sector managers receive from the administration as a basis for determining Public Value. Note that Moore adds that public sector managers should be critical of such assignments on the basis of their professional standards and expertise knowledge, which relates to the preceding point.
- The adherence to general values (such as equity and sustainability) by the organization that produces the public goods in question.

Here, Holden clearly adheres to the underlying logic of the BSC methods that rely on a diverse definition of values to be created for different stakeholders. Holden's argument is 'that an essential part of the process of creating [public] value flows directly from the actions and existence of the provider organization itself, as well as from the experience and satisfaction of the citizen' (Holden, 2004, p. 44). Therefore the mission of the providing organizations should be considered as integral to the creation of public value, as well as 'the categories, criteria or public legitimacy of the policy processes that award the funding' (Holden, 2004, p. 44).

Holden elaborates his argument by presenting a table in which he gives an example of how cultural value might be captured from a funder's point of view (see Table 11.7). The values mentioned under cultural value have been derived from literature on anthropology and 'material cultural studies' (*ibid.*, p. 35) where these different aspects of cultural values are often mentioned. Historical value refers to 'a special relationship with the past; a concept resting on particular viewpoints of history'. Social value refers to 'Places and things that tend to make connections between people and to reinforce a sense of unity and identity'. Spiritual value addresses 'aspects of the religious, the numinous and the sublime' (*ibid.*, p. 35). Holden

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<sup>25</sup> Holden himself does not distinguish between the (general) public and attendees at the performing arts. If he had done so, his argument would have been more precise.

<sup>26</sup> Given that his pamphlet has been published in the British arts sector, he does not clearly distinguish between the financing organizations (the *Arts Councils* for England, Scotland and Wales) and organizations that receive grants from these councils and actually produce cultural events. In the British system, grants are not supplied by the government itself but by the arts councils who in turn have an accountability towards the government. In the Dutch case, the state and city governments themselves hand out subsidies, although the use of private funds in Dutch cultural politics is growing. The arguments put forward by Holden can be applied to independent financing organizations and governmental bodies alike.

concedes that aesthetic value is a highly problematic category 'involving dispute about what is beautiful but also about who has the power and authority to take decisions on what is beautiful' (*ibid.*, p. 35).<sup>27</sup> Here his argument obviously lacks precision.

The table may seem complete and demonstrates that the public value created by cultural activities is multi-layered and in fact consists of various types of values. However, the relationship between these values and the specific nature of cultural or artistic activities is not considered at all. In other words, the fact that the aesthetic nature of the activities does or does not contribute to the other values being produced is deemed irrelevant by Holden. He does distinguish between instrumental and intrinsic values, but is reluctant to include the relationship between the two in his analysis. The intrinsic values are represented by the cultural values he includes in the table, but the measuring instruments he lists are vague. The same applies to the values he mentions under 'well-being'. Here, he refers to social capital without really researching how this should be measured (see Chapter 9). Given his misgivings about the NPM's number fetishism, it can be assumed that he favours qualitative descriptions of intangible values of this kind. However, such descriptions are useless for policy evaluation purposes when the causal link between the values produced and the specific nature of the activities subsidized is not clear. When all these values can be attained through other activities, such as sports for instance, there is no argument why public funds should be directed towards art. In that case, the choice should be to invest in activities which have most reach among the population. Holden would reply to this criticism that his scheme clearly includes specific *cultural* values that can only be attained by cultural activities. Excluding them would mean that one only values cultural policy instrumentally. But at this point, his argument is most vague because he does not make clear what these cultural values are – most strikingly the aesthetic values – and how they should be measured. Furthermore, he ignores the question as to whether and how the values mentioned under 'well-being' depend on the realizations of these cultural values for instance.

To summarize, the idea of public value as a rich concept is attractive to evaluating cultural policy. It focuses attention on the values realized for individuals in society and also on values which are realized in the course of producing the performances as a consequence of the existence of performing-arts organizations and which relate to the whole of the cultural sector in a city, such as the values under systemic resilience for instance.<sup>28</sup> However, such a rich notion needs elaboration at several points:

- It should be explained how the various values are dependent upon another.
- It should be explained which values are dependent on the aesthetic nature of performing arts.

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<sup>27</sup> Holden also distinguishes 'symbolic value', which he defines as 'repositories of meaning'. However, for reasons unknown, he does not include symbolic value in his assessment of public value.

<sup>28</sup> The values mentioned under 'cultural systemic resilience' clearly refer to the tasks identified in cell A of Table 4.6. These tasks even provide more precise measuring points than Holden's account. However, the fact that Holden introduces professional judgements for the purpose of policy evaluations is valuable.

<b>Value</b> (defined by mission; generating legitimacy; and manifested in organizational process)	<b>Value recognition</b> (strategy implementation)	<b>Value recorded</b> (accountability)
Enhanced trust in public bodies	% satisfaction among successful and unsuccessful funding applicants, and % intention to reapply  Propensity of opinion leaders to assess organization favourably  Match between funder's aims and public perception of funder's achievements  Public awareness and perceptions of funder	Quarterly customer care surveys  Opinion leaders survey  Strategic objectives, surveys and opinion sampling  Opinion sampling
Equity and fairness	Per capita distribution of funds  % funding to deprived communities  % project delivering access benefits (intellectual and physical)	Funder's database  Evaluations  Evaluations
Cultural systemic resilience	Diversity of size and type of organizations funded  Assessment of cultural value generated (see below)  Adequacy of risk-taking	Funding database  Critical reviews, peer reviews, professional opinion  % financial and critical failures and relationship of the two
Cultural Value	Aesthetic value  Historical value  Social value  Spiritual value	Critical and peer reviews, press comment, opinion sampling  Academic commentary  Opinion sampling  Critical and peer reviews, press comment, opinion sampling
Well-being	Number of communities showing positive relationship between funding and social cohesion	Data on participation rates and diversity of participants  Case studies measuring social capital before and after funding  Secondary evidence showing links between social capital and further well-being benefits, e.g. crime reduction and health

Well-being (continued)	Number of communities showing positive relationship between funding and health	See above for evidence of social capital
Prosperity and employment	Direct income revenue from tourism	Local and regional data
	Change in employment	Employment data
	Evidence of local economic regeneration	Evaluations, opinion sampling, press reports
Learning	Increase in engagements with educational sector and with out-of-school activities; quality assessments	Feedback from schools and partners
	Delivery of generic learning outcomes	Evaluations; link with secondary evidence regarding role of enjoyment in effective education
Value for money	Money going towards administrative costs as % of overall revenue	Management accounts
	Cost of processing funding applications	Management accounts
Recognition of value within the community	Media coverage	Media monitoring
	Community feedback	Opinion polls, focus groups, unsolicited communications

**Table 11.7 Public Value evaluation**  
(reprinted from Holden, 2004, pp. 52-5)

- It should be researched how the various values can be measured or assessed quantitatively and/or qualitatively.

Without such knowledge, the notion of public value remains empty and open to debate, and consequently does not help evaluate cultural policy very convincingly. One may doubt whether or not such a broad concept as 'public value' actually helps in evaluating cultural policy, for critics of such policies will not be convinced by values that are not related to the specifics of cultural activity. They will argue that the cultural activities can simply be supplanted by other types of activity. Therefore, a more sophisticated concept of the values to be considered in policy evaluation is necessary. However, the framework discussed in Parts II and III of this research complements the public value approach on this crucial weakness.

With *cultural value*, Holden introduces the most elusive value of all. Here, the judgement is relayed to professionals, although he also mentions opinion sampling (but neglects to mention from whom). The emphasis on expert judgements is surprising given the premise of Public Value that it resides - among other things - in the value created for the audiences attending the performing arts. However, by pointing to the various ways in which cultural

value should be assessed (aesthetic, historic, social and spiritual), he clearly has a broad concept in mind that involves many different perspectives for assessment. But in no way does he make it clear how this assessment should take place. Furthermore, it appears that social value is an elusive category which theoretically coincides with the value of recognition or value within the community. Although the indicators mentioned here (media coverage and community feedback) are relevant, it seems that they do not entirely reflect the social value. As stated above, Holden in no way clarifies how the wider societal benefits of the arts in society are realized. Under 'well-being' and 'prosperity and employment', he introduces the concepts that have been discussed in Chapters 8 and 9. With regard to 'social value' he suggests indicators that simply cannot be directly related to aesthetic experience.

In short, the concept of public value is useful because it broadens up the evaluation of cultural policy by encompassing different values and not focusing on single performance indicators. However, the crucial *cultural values* are not defined and are left to professional judgement. Therefore, the Public Value approach should be complemented by a narrative of the way in which intrinsic values for individual spectators are translated into wider societal benefits. Furthermore, Public Value points to several indicators that might be included in a model to evaluate performing-arts policies by cities, and consequently taken as a context to describe the functioning of the performing arts in urban society.

#### **11.2.5. The Use of Management Instruments for Evaluation of Public Policy**

The methods described in this section have the distinct disadvantage that they are management tools in the first place rather than policy evaluation tools. Public Value comes closest to a policy evaluation method because it not only includes information on the performance of (private) institutions that execute cultural policy, it also contextualizes this information by focusing attention on the cultural sector as a whole. However, the approach still leaves it up to the city administration to aggregate the results from the public value of each institution. This does not seem unfair, because one can argue that the responsibility of the management of cultural institutions is to their own institution and not to the city as a whole. The advantage of both the Balanced Scorecard and Public Value approaches is that they allow managers to present their performance systematically within a context that may allow the city administration to aggregate the results. The following chapter discusses how this can be done. Furthermore, the application of the Public Value approach has yielded insights into variables such as the resilience of the cultural sector, which allow for a broader approach to policy evaluation than performance evaluation.

However, the concept of public value in no way provides accurate measuring points for evaluating the functioning of the performing arts in society, which is a criticism that can also be levelled at the (Threefold) Balanced Scorecard. In a sense, it seems accurate to base policy evaluation on the implementation of the policy by (private) institutions, because it allows institutions to specify their own mission, which should be framed within the municipality's total policy objectives for public policy evaluation. This freedom for the institutions is an

important aspect in safeguarding the autonomy of artists and arts organizations. However, the scorecard does not specify how the values and functions that a cultural institution claims to be realizing for the audience or for the city as a whole should be reported. The experiment in the city of Groningen has not yielded convincing methods of establishing whether or not the values that can be associated with aesthetic experience have actually taken place. None the less, the method is useful because it distinguishes between:

- (a) values created for the professionals,
- (b) values created for the audience,
- (c) values created for the city as a whole.

Moore would certainly agree with these distinctions. His Public Value Scorecard is structured according to the direction of the energies of subsidized institutions. His outward orientation ('creating public value') regards the products and outcomes of organizations, and here he should have distinguished between the different stakeholders. His *upward* orientation ('expanding support and authorization') is reflected in some of Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's categories, most notably reputation among funders. His *downward* orientation ('building organizational capacity') clearly mirrors Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's secondary objective of internal processes.

None of the methods provides instruments to measure whether or not the values and functions of the performing arts as they have been identified in this research have indeed occurred. In the Balanced Scorecard and Public Value approach, this is left to the discretion of the cultural institutions themselves: they should specify the values they produce for their audiences. The shortcoming of both approaches is that they should not only specify these values but also have to make clear how they evaluate their realization. As discussed with regard to the adoption of BSC in Groningen, this leads to very different arguments. Theoretically, these arguments should be based upon some sort of audience survey. The types of surveys needed will be discussed in the next chapter.

A last issue that should be discussed is the use of quantitative measures to evaluate performance. Towse (2001) greatly favours quantitative approaches of this type because they allow comparisons between cultural institutions (benchmarking). Although benchmarking may yield important management information – only under the condition that the institutions against which the benchmark is carried out are indeed comparable – the question of efficiency is a moot point. Policy evaluation should focus primarily on goal attainment rather than on efficiency. None the less, the use of quantitative data is important in policy evaluation. First, just as it is important to know the number of clients or patients reached in health and welfare policies, it is important to know the number of visitors and the social composition of audiences when dealing with cultural policy. Second, quantitative methods (such as public or audience surveys) can be used to shed light on the values realized through aesthetic activities.

Value assessed	Short explanation	How to assess (as suggested by the authors discussed in this section)
<b>Evaluation of primary objectives</b>		
Nature of aesthetic experience	Assessing the occurrence of the personal values aesthetic experiences can give rise to	Survey of the audience
Influence of supportive services on the aesthetic experience	Assessing how supportive services influence aesthetic experience and the values they give rise to in themselves	Survey of the audience
<b>Evaluation of secondary objectives</b>		
Cultural education and other ancillary services	Assessing the efforts of cultural institutions to enlarge reach in society	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of funds devoted to ancillary services</li> <li>• Number of engagements with educational sector</li> </ul> Data to be collected by the administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of organizations with written strategy for education provision</li> <li>• Number of education sessions</li> </ul>
Internal procedures	Assessing management capabilities of the arts organizations to enhance and retain public	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of funds devoted to marketing</li> <li>• Use of customer information</li> <li>• Staff marketing skills</li> </ul>
External relationships	Assessing the ability of the organizations to engage with their environment in creating their offerings	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation with other cultural institutions</li> <li>• Connected funds</li> </ul>

**Table 11.8 Evaluation of values produced from the perspective of the audience**



*Evaluating values from the perspective of the audience*

The primary objective of arts organizations is to produce artworks that enable aesthetic experiences. The nature and intensity of the experience and the influence of supportive services are the most important evaluation points from the audiences' perspective, according to Boorsma and Chiaravalloti. Holden uses the term 'aesthetic value' here, and his 'spiritual value' can also be linked to the nature of the aesthetic experience. Boorsma and Chiaravalloti suggest that arts organizations should decide how to evaluate these; nevertheless, some sort of survey of the audience is needed to gain insight into the values that have actually been created. Holden points to the importance of opinion sampling, but does not elaborate how this should be done. Holden's conception of social value and historical value refer to issues of identity in relation to different groups in society or to heritage. These can be related to the total customer value that Boorsma and Chiaravalloti describe, because they not only refer to the – in their definition – artistic values but other values of the experience as well. Neither Holden nor Boorsma and Chiaravalloti are specific about the source and nature of these values. However, it is necessary to distinguish between intrinsic values, which relate to the communicative frame during the performance, and extrinsic values, which relate to the organizational setting. Again Holden advises opinion-sampling as a method to describe this value. Furthermore, he mentions the value of learning whereas personal development is used in this research. He suggests evaluating this value by means of the delivery of generic learning outcomes through evaluations, but he does not make clear who should be evaluating and how. He also mentions that a link should be made with secondary evidence. This may be true, but it is hard to imagine how this secondary evidence (presumably he refers to academic achievement in the population) can be directly linked to the aesthetic experiences of this population.

Boorsma and Chiaravalloti turn attention to the fact that value also can arise from ancillary services. They see these services as ways to enhance customer satisfaction, attract new customers and retain existing customers. Holden's values of equity and fairness and learning can be related to these educational and ancillary services because the accessibility of the arts and thus aesthetic experiences is enlarged through these services. From the point of view of this research, these categories relate to the tasks mentioned in cell A of Table 10.1, the tasks that exist for cultural organizations. Particularly when cultural education is part of the goals of the city government, it is important to register the projects that enhance access to cultural facilities (psychological and physical) and to register increases and decreases in engagements with the educational sector by cultural institutions, which are measuring points suggested by Holden. Such information should be available from the annual reports of cultural institutions. It is not clear why Holden also refers to quality assessments here. Note that evaluation through these means is of a different order than the evaluation of the occurrence of non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values and functions. This concerns an evaluation of the efforts to improve the reach of these values and functions in society. Therefore, an assessment method that indicates the nature of the experiences of audience members would seem to be appropriate.

Furthermore, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti mention a host of measuring points for assessing the financial and internal processes and external relationships of cultural institutions. They group these under 'secondary objectives'. None the less, these can give rise to public value and therefore should not be excluded entirely from policy evaluation. Boorsma and Chiaravalloti point to the capability of the staff to retain and enhance their public. Moore (2003) also points to staff capacity as an important part of creating public value. Moore and Boorsma and Chiaravalloti refer to the external relationships of the arts organizations as important ways to create public value. Not only do these external relationships increase efficiency by pooling resources (Holden's value for money), they also indicate that the organizations recognize that the other is creating something of value. The annual reports of subsidized institutions can provide information on these issues. The above is summarized in Table 11.8.

*Evaluating values from the professional perspective*

Boorsma and Chiaravalloti here focus on the nature and number of artworks produced and the role these artworks play in the professional field. Moore points to organizational output, and it can be assumed that Holden's aesthetic value as a concept also includes the artistic merits of the works produced. These are usually reported in the annual reports of performing-arts institutions. The reports list the productions realized (along with the attendance figures) and they are usually accompanied by an assessment of their artistic value (as a property of the production), as can be seen from critical reviews of the work. Copies of such reviews are sometimes included in the annual reports.<sup>29</sup> Boorsma and Chiaravalloti mention the reputation and position of the artists working in the institution and prize money and scholarships they have won as criteria for assessing the artistic quality of the productions realized. For cultural policy evaluation, these issues are important because they contribute to the ability of artworks to provide aesthetic experiences, and boost the image of the arts organization and, through this, the image of the city.

Besides the artworks themselves, the professional reputation of the artists producing them is also important. Usually such reputations are used as proxies for the quality of the artworks they produce. Therefore, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti mention the reputation of the artistic staff members as measuring points for performance evaluation. They and Moore point to artistic co-operation as important evaluation criteria. Holden here refers to the value of cultural systemic resilience. He also mentions the adequacy of risk-taking, which Boorsma and Chiaravalloti describe as 'development of innovative contributions to the professional field'. However it is strange that they distinguish between this item and the position of the artworks produced in the field. It seems that the innovative contribution of a work is what determines its position within the professional field. Therefore this should not be regarded as a separate item for policy evaluation purposes. These are all qualitative indices of the values produced.

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<sup>29</sup> As discussed above, most reception venues in the Netherlands do not report so elaborately but merely state their programming policies.

With the value of cultural systemic resilience Holden has pointed out the importance that cultural institutions have for one another, a theme already encountered in the national policy documents (see Chapter 2). For cities aiming at fostering the production climate in the city (such as Utrecht in the past and Breda currently), this is an important variable to measure. However, with regard to the legitimization of cultural policy in the Netherlands, which focuses on the values that the experience of the artworks produce for audiences and society, these issues should all be regarded as secondary objectives. This means that, from the professional perspective of cultural policy evaluation, the only indicator for primary objectives is the artistic quality of the productions realized and distributed.

Value assessed	Short explanation	How to assess (as suggested by the authors discussed in this section)
Evaluation of primary objectives		
The artworks themselves	Assessment of the artistic quality of the works (as property of the productions)	Expert evaluations through independent advisory boards and critical reviews
Evaluation of secondary objectives		
Position of the artworks in the field of the discipline	Assessing the contribution of the works produced to the development of the expressive possibilities of the medium.	Expert evaluations through independent advisory boards and critical reviews. Jury report on prizes won.
Cultural systemic resilience	Assessment of the contribution of the arts organization or the artists to the development of the cultural system as a whole.	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation with other artists</li> <li>• Peer reviews</li> <li>• Critical reviews</li> <li>• Prize money awarded to the artist/organization</li> <li>• Percentage of funds devoted to experiments or risk full productions</li> <li>• Number of commissions of new work</li> </ul>
Reputation	Assessing reputation of the organizations (rather than the artists working in it)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert evaluations</li> <li>• Mention of the organization in professional journals and media</li> </ul>

**Table 11.9 Evaluation of values produced from the professional perspective**

*Evaluating values from the community or society perspective*

From this perspective, the theories of Boorsma and Chiaravalloti and Holden are least helpful in providing measurement points for the evaluation of cultural policy. Boorsma and Chiaravalloti do mention the community perspective but, as stated above, they resort to a very simple definition of recording this value: multiplying the individual experiences by the attendance figures. This does not shed light on the societal functioning of performing arts. However, their emphasis on evaluating the distribution among social groups does help. This presupposes that the cultural policy stipulates which groups should be targeted at. Once this is the case, the success of the policy can be assessed by recording the spread among these groups. Holden's value of equity and fairness come into play here. He suggests recording the percentage of funds devoted to deprived communities and the percentage of funds devoted to projects that deliver access to cultural amenities (physical and psychological). These may be proxies for the efforts put in by cultural institutions – and this alone may warrant the reporting of such figures by the institutions in the absence of better figures – but these figures do not record the societal functioning of the performing arts, as described in the framework in Part III. Holden mentions the values of well-being and prosperity and employment, which mirror the functioning of the performing arts in the social and economic domains, as described in the framework in Part III. He proposes assessing well-being through the number of communities that show positive relationships between funding on the one hand and health and social cohesion on the other. However, he does not make clear how this should be done.

Boorsma and Chiaravalloti and Moore refer to staff capabilities in the area of fund-raising, public relations, and supporting the dissemination into the general culture. However, because they do not make clear exactly what they mean by 'dissemination', their argument lacks the precision of the framework presented in Part III. These all are secondary objectives in the BSC framework. The values and measuring points mentioned here provide no direct information for evaluating the societal functioning of the performing arts. However, from a policy-evaluation point of view it can be deemed relevant to measure these capabilities because they provide information on the ability of cultural institutions to disseminate cultural products within society on a continuous basis. Therefore, it seems that, although the internal procedures of cultural institutions do not provide information on the functioning of the performing arts in society itself, they are nevertheless relevant to securing the continuity of cultural policy. Moore refers to capabilities of the management to build relationships with the government and sponsors and the diversity of sponsors. This last issue, the diversity of sponsors, can be considered as a proxy for estimating the societal worth of what a cultural institution is accomplishing. In a similar vein, the reputation of the organization in the media can be considered a proxy for its societal worth, as can be evidenced from the coverage on the organization in question and/or its productions. Its credibility with other civil society actors can also be a proxy. This type of credibility can be seen in organizations in fields other than the cultural one, which co-operate with the cultural institutions. All these proxies can be

measured through the annual accounts obtained from the cultural institutions, when these accounts contain full documentation of these links with society.

Value assessed	Short explanation	How to assess (as suggested by the authors discussed in this section)
Evaluation of primary objectives		
Economic impact	Assessing impact on economic functioning of performing arts	Not provided
Social impact	Assessing impact on social capital of the population	Not provided
Evaluation of secondary objectives		
Societal worth	Assessing the number of institutions and individuals that deem the operations of the cultural institutions valuable	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of revenues of the cultural institution (other subsidies, sponsors, philanthropists)</li> <li>• Reputation in the media as evidenced in coverage on the institution and/or its products</li> <li>• Co-operation with institutions outside the cultural field</li> <li>• Number of volunteers</li> </ul>
Cultural systemic resilience	Assessing the diversity of the cultural sector in a city as a proxy of the ability of its productions to function in different settings	The diversity of size and type of cultural institutions in the city (subsidized and commercial) in terms of the types of audiences aimed at
Public Value recognition	Assessing the extent to which professionals and the general public appreciate (the products of) the institutions.	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media coverage</li> <li>• Community feedback to cultural institutions</li> </ul> Data to be collected by the administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General-public surveys, opinion polls, focus groups</li> </ul>
External relations	Assessing the capability of the staff of cultural institutions to provide services on a continuous basis	Data that can be gathered from annual accounts of subsidized organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff credentials</li> <li>• Staff training</li> </ul>

**Table 11.10** Evaluation of values produced from the perspective of the community or society

Holden's value of cultural systemic resilience is relevant as well, as he suggests measuring the diversity in the size and types of organizations funded. This is aggregate information which the city administration can provide. The diversity should be determined not only in terms of size but most specifically in terms of the diversity of the types of audiences aimed at. The more diverse these audience groups, the more reach the aesthetic experiences can have in society, and the greater the chance the city has of attracting the creative class because of the diversity of amenities offered. However, there is no reason why assessing the diversity of cultural amenities in the city should be limited to the subsidized cultural institutions, because the commercial amenities in the city also have a role here, as it cannot be excluded that they provide aesthetic experiences that yield the same values and functions, only for different groups in society.

A last measuring point concerns the recognition of value within the community (Holden), visibility and legitimacy among the general public (Moore), and reputation among the general public (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti). This can be assessed through general public surveys, focus groups and opinion polls. Also media coverage and forms of community feedback to cultural institutions, e.g., comments on the website of cultural institutions by visitors or the general public are evaluation points here. Again these are proxies and not measurements of the social functioning of performing arts. These proxies can be aggregated by the city administration when such information is reported by the cultural institutions.

One final remark should be made. The Public Value approach attaches value to the operations of the cultural institutions themselves when they comply with general views on equity and fairness and value for money. This means that they run efficient operations and adhere to the norms of conduct in society, by abiding by environmental regulations and laws and regulations on employment (minimum wages, work safety, fair employment strategies). Although the employment circumstances in the cultural sector do not always compare favourably to other sectors, and the fact that budget restraints mean that volunteers are an important source of labour for cultural institutions, this type of production of public value will be ignored because this research focuses on the specifics of the functioning of the performing arts in society. This in no way implies that municipalities should never report on labour conditions or environmental sustainability. However, the question can be raised as to whether such issues should be the focus of arts policy evaluation or whether they belong to more generic policy areas. The latter view is supported here

### **11.3. Conclusions: Art Policy Evaluation in Theory and Praxis**

At present, arts-policy evaluation comes down to recording the performance of the cultural institutions that implement public policy. The autonomy of the arts sector prescribes that policy evaluation should support a continuous dialogue between the funder and the funded to ensure that the funding will have the desired effects rather than being a means for the city administration to decide on budget limits (and possibly budget cuts). It is important that the

evaluation addresses the position that cultural institutions themselves choose within the cultural policy of the city, even when these policies are only described in vague terms. This involves evaluating their performances on the basis of the mission the institutions choose for themselves. Therefore, it also involves checking whether or not the performance indicators the institutions choose to report on are coherent with their mission.

Both the BSC evaluation approach and the Public Value approach advocate a broad perspective on artistic quality that comprises the professional, audience and societal perspectives. Currently the professional perspective is dominant in cultural policy evaluation. This approach is not wrong but it needs to be complemented. For policy evaluation to become more effective, two steps need to be taken. First, the recording of the performance of institutions needs to be both systematic and comprehensive in order to record all of the values that have been created in society as a result of the policy. Tables 11.8, 11.9 and 11.10 provide a systematic overview of the information that can be gathered in evaluating cultural policy, although they make clear that, for evaluation of the primary objectives, specific methods need to be devised to measure the functioning of the performing arts in society (see below). Second, it should be realized that evaluating cultural policy also involves aggregating the information gathered from single institutions and assessing the values that can only be contributed to the total of the cultural institutions in a city because both the BSC and the Public Value approaches have their limitations for policy evaluation purposes. They rely on the premise that the policies of cultural institutions align with the public policy. This arguably is not always the case. Nevertheless, both approaches have yielded some important insights that should be included in a cultural policy evaluation method. Furthermore, they point at some indicators that can be included in cultural policy evaluation. They are listed in Tables 11.8, 11.9 and 11.10.

The most important general conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that cultural policy evaluation is a multi-layered process involving a lot of effort from both the management of cultural institutions and city officials. Many data have been reported and evaluated in current policy evaluation practices, specifically in what has been denoted here as 'evaluation of secondary objectives'. The cultural institutions - if they draw up correct and comprehensive annual reports that comprise not only financial data but also management information on customer developments and staff development - already supply this information. It is a challenge for the public officials to aggregate this information and present it in a way that conforms to public policy.

However, the evaluation of primary objectives, i.e., the evaluation of the values that are being generated for the audiences and the city as a whole, presents a totally different picture. The focus of current evaluation practices is on assessment of the values realized from the professional perspective. When relating these findings to the framework presented in Chapter 10, it becomes clear that this presents a very limited picture of the functioning of the performing arts in urban society. Moreover, current evaluation methods do not provide information on the main reasons why governments support the performing arts in the city,

namely the intrinsic part of Table 10.1. For policy evaluation purposes, the currently used methods need to be complemented with measurements of the values and subsequent functions realized for the audience and subsequently for society. The way in which this ought to be measured will be investigated in the next chapter, by means of the framework presented in Chapter 10.



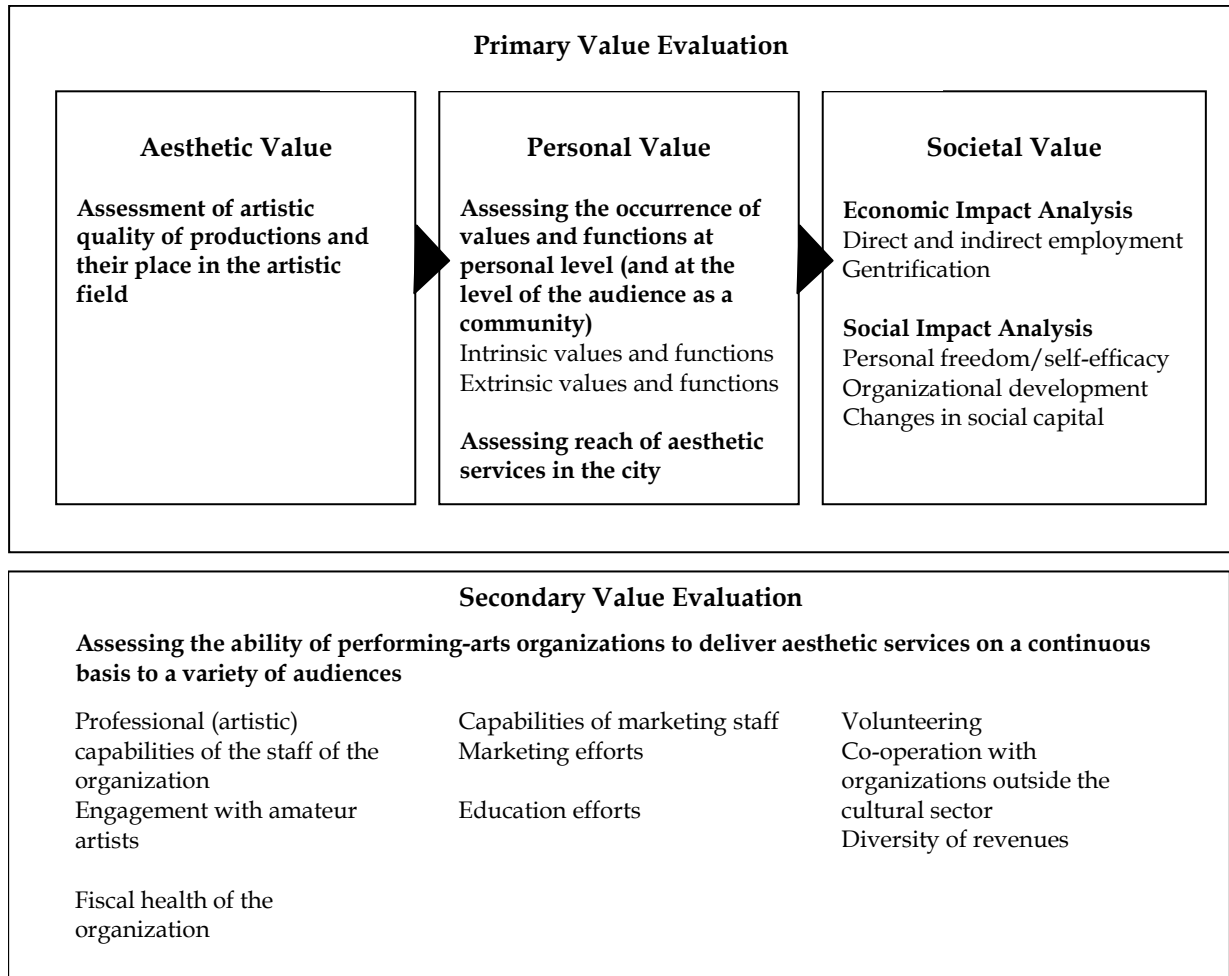
## 12. Policy Evaluation using the Framework for the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society

This final chapter presents a model for the evaluation of municipal performing-arts policy. The model is based upon Figure 10.1, which presents the framework for describing the functioning of performing arts in society. It also incorporates the insights from the previous chapter on current cultural-policy evaluation efforts in praxis and theory. Thus, this chapter answers the last two research questions: the way in which the functioning of performing arts in society can be evaluated and measured, and the way in which municipalities can improve their cultural policy evaluation efforts.

### 12.1. A Model for Evaluating Performing-Arts Policy: What should be measured?

The framework for describing the functioning of the performing arts in urban society (Figure 10.1) represents three instances where the performing arts create values and functions in society: (I) the performance itself (existing within its organizational setting), which represents aesthetic values based upon the aesthetic properties of the performance and the extrinsic values that result from the existence of the cultural institutions in a city, (II) the experience of the performance by audience members, which leads to the realization of values and subsequent functions at personal level, and (III) the functioning at societal level. The previous chapter concluded that current policy evaluation practices of Dutch municipalities hardly address levels II and III, while the legitimization of cultural policy is mainly dependent on level II.

The previous chapter discussed several methods of policy evaluation that were found in the cultural policy and management literature. Although the subject of performance evaluation is far from being a mature scientific field, the discussion of the various methods did yield some useful insights. First, several relevant indicators and methods to measure them have been found. Second, it turned out to be useful to distinguish between primary objectives and secondary objectives – which is not the same as the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values and functions – and between values created for the professional field, audience members, and the city as a whole. These three distinctions correspond to the levels present in the model of Figure 10.1: the aesthetic values of the performing artwork itself, the



**Fig 12.1 Art-Policy Evaluation Using the Framework for Describing the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society**

values and functions for the audience member(s) and the values and functions for society. Thus the following model for policy evaluation ensues.

The model comprises four related fields of value assessment. The experience of the aesthetic values present in the productions enables the personal values and subsequent functions. However, the professional assessment of the aesthetic value of the productions (or artistic quality) in itself is not an assessment of the values at personal level. Personal Value evaluation is a separate field within arts-policy evaluation. It involves assessing whether or not the values and functions associated with performing arts indeed have been realized for individual audience members and the audience as a whole.<sup>1</sup> In turn, the personal functions contribute to the realization of societal values and functions. Evaluating this chain of values and functions (from aesthetic value to personal value to societal value) comprises the primary value evaluation. But more is at stake. It is useful to evaluate the way in which this

<sup>1</sup> The Aesthetic Value evaluation may be regarded as assessing the possibility of aesthetic values being realized for audiences, the Personal Value evaluation involves assessment of whether or not they indeed have been realized.

chain of value creation is organized. This involves assessing whether or not the (performing) arts institutions are able to deliver these values on a continuous basis and to a variety of audiences, preferably those audiences for whom the aesthetic expression is relevant. This comprises secondary value evaluation.

### **12.1.1. Aesthetic Value**

The aesthetic values of the productions relate to the values mentioned in cell A of Table 10.1 (expression of ideas and perceptions and artistic development). They are relevant to cultural policy evaluation. This means that measures for tracking aesthetic value should be included in a model for the evaluation of cultural policy. As discussed in Chapter 11, such measures prevail in the current methods used by cities to evaluate their cultural policy. Measures to assess aesthetic value are also – rightfully – included in most of the theoretical approaches to cultural policy evaluation, most notably in the Public Value approach (Holden, 2004) and the professional perspective used in the threefold Balanced Scorecard as proposed by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2009).

The most important instrument in evaluating the cultural value is the use of independent advisory boards of experts who assess the artistic quality of the artworks produced, their position within the field of the discipline, and the contribution of the organization to the cultural system as a whole. This presupposes that cultural institutions record peer and critical reviews of their productions, and that they include data on prize money won and cooperation with other artists and arts organizations in their annual reports. The percentage of funds devoted to risky productions and the commissions of new works can be relevant measures as well. A remark must be made about the position of the advisory boards. The question posed by the city administration to the advisory board is important. The model presented here presupposes a retrospective outlook, which is not always adopted in cultural policy. This means that the advisory board evaluates past performance of an institution and uses it to formulate advice on future decisions.

### **12.1.2. Personal Value**

The intrinsic *values* of the performing arts at personal level are the ‘excitement due to the experience of non-present worlds’, ‘empathizing with imagined emotions’, ‘delight in the use of the power of imagination’, ‘experience of new perceptions’ and ‘testing of one’s views and insights’. The last three result from the use of the imaginative power, i.e., the artistic nature of the experience. They are unique to aesthetic experience while the other two values can also be realized in other types of social activities. None the less, from the policy documents it follows that all five intrinsic values are relevant in the evaluation of arts policy. Currently municipalities do not assess the realization of these aesthetic values at personal level, although this is the core of what cultural policy is about. Chapter 11 suggested that the nature of the aesthetic experience and the influence of supportive services on the nature of the experience should be researched through audience surveys. For the purpose of policy evaluation, these surveys should uncover whether or not the intrinsic values of aesthetic

experience have indeed occurred for the audience members. The authors discussed in the previous chapter did not provide methods to conduct such surveys. However, within audience research, various methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, have been developed which may shed light on the values generated. These will be discussed in Section 12.2.2.

Specifically for the performing arts, the communal nature of the experiences is relevant. At first glance, this hardly seems relevant to our research as this is an integral part of the experience of the performing arts because it is a collective activity by nature. However, audience research should include questions regarding the *experienced* communality. Do the attendees feel they have had a communal experience? Did they talk about the performance with other audience members? And does this make them feel they belong to a community (either the community that consists of the audience members actually present or the community that is represented in the aesthetic properties of the performance)?

The intrinsic *functions* on personal level (the sublimation of needs and the satisfaction of sublimated needs, and the possible change of views and insights as a result of the testing of views and insights) are related to the personal growth of individuals. Unfortunately, from a policy point of view, it is hard to imagine an evaluation method. This is because it cannot be predicted when these effects will occur and, if they do, whether or not they are the result of an aesthetic experience of the individual. It is far more likely that they will occur as a result of many other experiences of the individual as well. So the realization of non-artistic and artistic aesthetic values seems a far more suitable measure than the occurrence of intrinsic functions. This means that, in the Personal Value field, only the potency for the realization of intrinsic functions can be evaluated. Thus, cultural policy evaluation has the following reasoning: when intrinsic values are realized for audience members – which can be assessed by means of audience research – the policy theory suggests that subsequent functions will follow at some point in time.<sup>2</sup> However, this is not researched for policy evaluation purposes. Although the genesis of such personal functions is possible in theory researching (through longitudinal research which tracks the personal development of audience members and assesses the value of aesthetic experiences for this development through in-depth interviews) practical reasons ensure that such research is not conducted for policy evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

The extrinsic values associated with aesthetic experience consist of meeting others outside the home and the possibility to break from routine, giving rise to relaxation. From a cultural-policy evaluation point of view, it is hardly relevant to measure the realization of these values because (1) they can be generated by any type of (outdoor) social activity, and (2) the

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<sup>2</sup> Note that, on the basis of the description of aesthetic experience in Chapter 6 of this research, the policy theory here is too positive, as the functions may not follow even although the values have been realized.

<sup>3</sup> Note that for some types of personal development this is not entirely true. In researching the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain, some functions at personal level will be included in policy evaluation, namely, those that relate to skill development and personal efficacy or positive freedom (see Section 12.1.3).

functions they give rise to are more relevant to public policy. The functions at personal level in the social domain (being socially active, buying into the institutions, values and norms of the community) occur in the activity itself, which means that the sheer volume of attendance is indicative of the extent to which these functions occur. Note that this involves recording the number of *visitors* rather than *visits* to avoid overestimation. However, this is rarely recorded. Furthermore, data on the frequency of visits reveals the significance of the performing arts to the lifestyles of audience groups, which is in itself an indicator for the functioning of the performing arts in society.

In conclusion, it should be remarked that Personal Value creation can be evaluated through the realization of aesthetic values for audience members. Audience surveys can shed light on the realization of these values, but not on the occurrence of intrinsic functions. Furthermore, audience data (number of visitors, socio-economic background of visitors) should be used to assess the reach in society. Data on the frequency of visits to the (performing) arts can reveal information on the importance of the (performing) arts to the lifestyle of people.

### 12.1.3. Societal Value

In the economic domain, the effects of the performing arts come down to three issues:

- Direct and indirect employment effects.
- Attraction of knowledge workers as a result of a diversity of amenities.
- Influence on the image of a city or city district, which can lead to processes of gentrification.

Measuring the functioning of the performing arts in the economic domain thus relies on three types of research. The first type of research is impact analysis using type III multipliers and net multipliers. This is the most important method to measure arts' functioning in the economic domain, both on the side of the extrinsic functions for artists (direct employment) and in relation to society (indirect employment). Second, the development of the number of knowledge workers in the city can be tracked when this is a stated goal of the cultural policy. Here, a problem of causation exists because (a) the relation is not one-sided (creative knowledge workers attract artists to the city as well as the other way around), and (b) knowledge workers will not be attracted by a tolerant climate and a diverse supply of performing-arts facilities alone. Other factors, such as horizontal career opportunities, the presence of venture capital and other leisure facilities such as sport, heritage and natural surroundings are important too. But when a city opts for it, it can commission research to monitor changes in the volume of knowledge workers. The third type of research is specifically relevant to the performing arts. As changes in real estate prices can be linked to the supply of performing arts in a city, multi-variate analysis of the difference in house prices between cities is an interesting way to evaluate performing arts policies. All three types of research cannot be restricted to single performances or institutions as they are done at an aggregate level: that of an entire industry in a city.

Chapter 9 related the functioning of performing arts in the social domain to the concept of social capital. Six measuring criteria for the functioning of performing arts in the social domain were identified:

- Skills development of attendees.
- Feeling well of attendees.
- Changes in personal efficacy (or positive freedom).
- Communal nature of the experience and sense of belonging.
- Organizational development (of predetermined communities).
- Changes in social capital within communities or the general population.

Note that the first four criteria actually concern the performing-arts' functioning at personal level and therefore could also be included in the personal value part of the model for evaluation cultural policy. However, they specifically enable the transition from personal functioning to the functioning of the performing arts at societal level (in the social domain), which is why their inclusion here is more logical. Their evaluation should be based upon longitudinal audience research, which involves asking audience members how their aesthetic activities relate to their personal development. 'Skills development' denotes not only aesthetic skills but also skills in engaging with society (i.e., the skills to form bonds and bridges with other people) and organizational skills.

The development of organizational capacity within (predetermined) communities can be registered through observations. Changes in social capital can best be evaluated through the assessment of the social networks within communities (and society). Methods of doing so are discussed in Section 12.2.5. Note that there is a problem of causation here, as these effects of the performing arts cannot be causally linked solely to the aesthetic experiences of members of the communities under study. Therefore, it is more useful either to investigate the effects of the performing arts on pre-specified groups in society or to introduce an integrated evaluation of the outcomes of cultural, sports, welfare, education, and spatial planning policies.

#### **12.1.4. Secondary Value Evaluation**

As discussed in Chapter 11, secondary values concern the question as to whether or not the organization can effectively support the realization of primary values (its mission). Much of current policy evaluation effort focuses on these secondary values and therefore most measurement criteria and methods are readily available (see Tables 11.8, 11.9 and 11.10). From a public policy point of view, the relevant question is whether or not the arts organizations are able to effectively support the realization of aesthetic, personal and societal value on a continuous basis and for a variety of audiences.

##### *Supporting realization of aesthetic value*

Here, the artistic capabilities of the staff and the position of the art organization in the cultural field are relevant. This is reflected in the vocational education, artistic biographies of

the artists, and the budget for staff training. Engagement with amateur artists is also relevant to the realization of aesthetic value, for it contributes to the resilience of the cultural system in a city and it can create performances with specific characteristics that strictly professional performances may not have. Furthermore, the fiscal health of the organization is relevant as it reflects the long-term potency of the organization to offer its aesthetic services. However, this is only relevant when evaluating structurally funded organizations.

*Supporting realization of personal value*

Here, the ability of the arts organization to engage with its relevant audience is at stake. This involves marketing capacities (reflected in the education of support personnel and the budget for staff training) and marketing activities (which can be reflected in the funds devoted to marketing). Ancillary services are also relevant, most notably educational services, as they can enhance the realization of values for customers.

*Supporting realization of societal value*

This is the most difficult for single art organizations, as the realization of societal value typically relates to the total of cultural amenities in a city and is dependent on other than merely the aesthetic experiences of their audience members. Impact analysis (on an aggregate level) therefore seems most applicable. However, some measures at organizational level can also be conceived. The level of volunteer work expresses societal value, although not necessarily the value sought after in cultural policies. Furthermore, co-operation with organizations outside the cultural sector and the diversity of revenues of the organization reflect its ability to create societal value.<sup>4</sup> Coverage of the organization in the general media is also a relevant indicator.

Note that, with the measures in these three areas, the tasks mentioned in cell A of Table 10.1 are investigated, as these involve the ability of the arts institutions to influence one another as well as amateur artists, and to engage with a variety of publics.<sup>5</sup> Measuring the indicators for secondary value is relatively easy: they should be reported in the annual reports of the funded arts organizations (see Section 12.3.) Systematically gathering this data may considerably improve policy implementation because serious attention to these issues will drive the performance of performing-arts institutions in this respect, and thus stimulate their abilities to engage with their environment, which in itself can boost the functioning of the performing arts in society. Moreover, systematically following these issues should not only give insight into current levels of capacity – e.g., marketing skills measured through education levels of the staff – but also into changes in these levels and whether or not the capacities are actually used.

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<sup>4</sup> Note that the absolute amount of other subsidies and sponsor income are not suggested as indicators. Sponsors may have very different reasons for supporting arts organizations which are nothing to do with art's functioning in society. Furthermore, it can be expected that sponsors will favour aesthetic activities that cater to the preferences of affluent groups in society, which means that sponsor income is not a good indicator. The diversity of sources of revenues is a better proxy for the ability of an organization to engage with its environment.

## 12.2. Measuring the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society for Policy Evaluation

As can be discerned from the previous section, policy evaluation involves several measurement methods at various levels of aggregation. The measuring methods are discussed in this section.

### 12.2.1. Independent Advisory Boards

Independent advice is used frequently in cultural policy. In the model presented here, advisory boards can be used for assessing aesthetic value and for secondary value evaluation, although city administration itself has a role to play here too, as it gathers the necessary data from the annual reports of subsidized organizations. The question posed to the advisory board should be discussed here. As mentioned in Section 12.1.1, a retrospective approach is advocated for the evaluation of aesthetic value produced by the organizations. Apart from the intersubjective judgement of the quality of the productions, reviews of the work and prize money and/or awards are indicators that can be used.

Although artistic considerations are usually pre-eminent in their evaluations, advisory boards indeed evaluate management and marketing capabilities in some cases as well. Some may oppose the inclusion of these considerations. However, it is logical that the advisory boards – specifically for larger institutions – include secondary criteria in their evaluations in relation to the artistic profile of an arts organization and its position within the cultural system of the city. With the inclusion of ‘bestelcriteria’ (establishment criteria) by the *Raad voor Cultuur* and the functional quality criterion by the *National Fund for the Stage Arts*, current advisory board practices in the Netherlands are moving in this direction.<sup>6</sup> Connected to this point is the issue of the composition of the advisory board. Its members should be able to evaluate independently both the aesthetic values and the management capabilities (when asked to do so). When both the city administrators and managers of institutions acknowledge the board members’ expertise in these areas, this improves the support for its advice. Therefore advisory boards can play a role in Aesthetic Value and in Secondary Value evaluation.

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<sup>5</sup> Therefore the model presented here includes what Holden (2004) denotes as ‘cultural systemic resilience’.

<sup>6</sup> Under ‘functional quality’ the Fund uses a set of five criteria:

1. Contribution to diversity, which regards the contribution of the proposed productions to the diversity of the cultural supply; also ethnic diversity is meant by this.
2. Contribution to spread, which is regarded as geographic spread of the supply of the performing arts in the Netherlands.
3. Relationship between creation, production, programming and development of audiences, which is specific to the Dutch theatre system and involves the collaboration between producers and distributors of the performing arts.
4. Audience reach and development, which concern the question as to whether or not the applicant formulates a vision on the type of audience aimed at, and the development of such an audience in relation to the nature of the productions.
5. Cultural entrepreneurship and management, which concern the use of management techniques, guarantees for the continuity of the organization, and evidence of entrepreneurship by demonstrating that successful productions will be receive longer runs for instance (see NFPK+, 2010).

Obviously, with the use of these criteria, the Fund veers into the realm of secondary value evaluation.



### 12.2.2. Audience and Reception Research

As the core of the policy legitimization concerns the values of aesthetic experience for the audience members, it is hardly conceivable to have an evaluation of cultural policy without surveying the performing-arts' audience in the city. Audience surveys should provide data on the occurrence of intrinsic values at personal level and on the personal development of attendees, which is at the basis of the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain. Furthermore, audience research should shed light on the reach of the subsidized arts in urban society, and frequency of visits is an indicator of the significance of the performing arts in the lifestyles of people.

These last two issues can be researched quantitatively. This type of research is denoted as 'audience research' which aims at describing the features of audiences, e.g., demographic background, cultural habits and attitudes towards theatre and other leisure activities (Martin and Sauter, 1995, p. 27), or developing explanations for such patterns when the research takes on a theoretical-empirical approach (Schoenmakers and Tulloch, 2004, p. 18). The types of questionnaires needed are available. However, audience research does not shed light on the spectator's experience in the theatre. This is the domain of reception research (Martin and Sauter, 1995, p. 29; Schoenmakers and Tulloch, 2004, p. 19). Reception research can include observations of the audience members' reactions to performances (the easiest indicators here might be the duration of applause after a performance and laughter or intense silence during the performance). However, such observations do not shed light on the nature of the experiences and their significance in the lives of audience members. A number of methods have been developed 'to retrieve information of a real theatre experience, though filtered through the consciousness, which verbalization necessitates' (Martin and Sauter, 1995, p. 32). Martin and Sauter list methods such as semantic differentials, which involves asking audience members to choose between several adjectives without logical relation to the performance, non-directive probing interviews in which respondents are asked to comment on video-taped fragments of the performance they have attended, Theatre Talks in which a group of people freely chat about the experience, and questionnaires (*ibid.*, pp. 32-3), although they do not describe the latter. For the purpose of policy evaluation, it is necessary to have focus groups in which a small group of audience members are interviewed about the experience, what it means to them, whether or not they feel they have been challenged by the performance, and whether or not they have felt this experience as a communal experience. If such focus groups are conducted longitudinally, they should be able to track the personal development of attendants and they can comment on the contribution of their (repeated) visits to the performing arts to this development, thus tracking the first stage of the functioning of performing arts in the social domain.<sup>7</sup>

Tulloch sees the use of these qualitative methods as a trend in cultural studies towards local, contextualized and situated knowledge production (Tulloch, 2005, p. 19). Although he

clearly does not dispense with these methods, as they generate important knowledge on the relationships between the aesthetic productions and their meaning to audiences in local circumstances, he thinks these methods are limited and that they represent a shift towards the research of alternative productions and venues, as they are smaller and therefore easier to study in depth. Therefore, he advocates the mixing of qualitative research methods with other methods to paint the full picture of the performing arts' functioning in society. Qualitative analysis should therefore be supplemented with a quantitative research method. This is important to policy evaluation, as larger numbers of audience members can be included in the research, allowing more extensive conclusions on the functioning of the performing arts in society.

Schoenmakers and Tulloch (2004) also mention the lack of quantitative reception research methods, though they quote the example of Van der Blij (1995), already alluded to in Chapter 6 (see note 36). She asked audience members at 'well-established' performing-arts venues in the city of Groningen and also at venues that are only incidentally used for the performing arts, such as bars and community centres, whether they found descriptions such as 'full of ideas', 'original', 'aesthetic', 'professional', 'convincing', etc. applicable to the performance. These adjectives had been derived from the criteria used in the city's arts policy.<sup>8</sup> Boorsma and Van Maanen researched the experience of a play by the Noord Nederlands Toneel (North-Netherlands Theatre Company) performed in 2001. They developed a questionnaire with a series of general items based upon art theory (or rather: theories of art consumption) and a series of situation-specific items that reflected the artistic goals of the company and characteristics of the production (Boorsma and Van Maanen, 2003a, p. 166).<sup>9</sup> For the present research, the items relating to art theory are most relevant. For instance, respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with statements that the performance 'is thrilling theatre', 'is innovative theatre', 'is experimental theatre', 'is art', 'challenges one to see things differently', 'is touching', 'is confronting'. Furthermore, they included items related to entertainment and social interaction: the performance 'is entertaining', 'provides a nice/sociable evening', 'offers material to talk about with others' (*ibid.*, pp. 168-70). Although their aim was to identify which items are most relevant to the overall evaluation of the experience and not to the artistic nature of it, their research is certainly interesting, as several items reflect values identified in this research. These examples demonstrate that quantitative

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<sup>7</sup> Note that the perceived communality of the experience is influenced by the organizational setting of the performing arts. Specifically when the communal nature of the experience is organized, such as is frequently the case for amateur and community arts, focus group interviews can yield much information.

<sup>8</sup> Her results corroborate the fact that aesthetic experiences in commercial and amateur arts can yield the same values as those in the subsidized arts, a position taken in the present research as a consequence of pragmatist aesthetics (see Chapter 6). However, her adjectives have been derived from policy documents and reports by independent expert advisors, which raises the question as to whether or not they indeed relate to the artistic nature of aesthetic experience. It seems rather that they relate to artistic quality as a property of productions, now being applied by lay audience members. This severely damages her claim to the equality of the values experienced in both settings.

<sup>9</sup> See also Boorsma and Van Maanen (2003b) where they reported on the same research. Here their aim was to identify the influence or reviews on the experience.

methods can be used to shed light on the nature of aesthetic experiences, i.e., they provide qualitative information.

For the present research a recent study by Wilders is of specific interest as she states that some of the aesthetic values identified in the present research can be found in the questionnaire she used to investigate the influence of theatre buildings on reception (Wilders, 2009, p. 496).<sup>10</sup> She developed a questionnaire 'to measure the outcome of a performance based on the experiences of individual recipients. The [questionnaire] (...) offers an example of how the theatrical experience and the possible values realized through this experience can be made operational and thus measurable' (*ibid.*, p 461). In 2006-2007, she conducted an audience survey among the audiences of several productions performed in a number of theatres across the Netherlands to determine which values the audience members derived from the experience.<sup>11</sup> In Table 12.1, (part of) the items in her questionnaire are related to the values of aesthetic experience used in the present research.<sup>12</sup>

As can be gathered from Table 12.1, her questionnaire items correspond to the values as identified in this research. However, a few problems with the manner in which these values were made operational remain. As Wilders did not distinguish between non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values, the wording of the questionnaire items concerning the use of fantasy or imagination and relaxation or entertainment does not lead to clear conclusions on the artistic nature of the experience. Essentially the questionnaire lacks questions concerning whether or not the experience has been challenging. None the less, it is a promising conclusion that audience members were able to reflect on the nature of their experience in the items suggested by Wilders. Although the questionnaire was not designed to record the values (and functions) of aesthetic experience as they are presented in this research, and only in hindsight appear to do so, it should be possible to modify it to indeed measure the occurrence of intrinsic values of aesthetic experience.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, by means of audience and reception research comprising both focus groups and questionnaires, it is possible to assess the reach of aesthetic services in the urban society, to track the occurrence of intrinsic values of the aesthetic experience, and

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<sup>10</sup> Wilders here refers to a first presentation of these values in Van den Hoogen (2009).

<sup>11</sup> Her research aim is to investigate whether theatre architecture influences the experience of performances. The experience of the architecture of the venues is not relevant to the present research. The discussion of her research is based upon the research items that measure the theatrical experience, not the experience of the building. Note that in researching the performances of five productions (three plays and two modern dance performances) in different venues she was able to control for the aesthetic values that are present in the performances. Thus she avoids a pitfall Schoenmakers and Tulloch identify for audience research: a need to include an analysis of the theatrical work itself (Schoenmakers and Tulloch, 2004, p. 19).

<sup>12</sup> Wilders claims not to have included the functions of aesthetic experience in her questionnaire as they 'are more likely to become apparent over time and to be the result of a combination of [aesthetic] experiences, and (...) therefore require a different methodology' (Wilders, 2009, p. 469). Upon closer examination, one questionnaire item, 'The performance reconfirmed my understanding of the world around me', clearly refers to the artistic-aesthetic function of 'possible change of views and insights' although the wording of the item only represents one of the possible reactions to the challenging of perceptions, namely, where the audience member chooses not to alter his or her views.

Values and functions of aesthetic experience as identified in this research	Items in the audience survey (Wilders, 2009)* (Bracketed items correspond negatively to the values)
Intrinsic values	
Excitement due to the experience of non-present worlds	<p>I thought the scenery (lighting, set design, costumes, etc.) was beautiful</p> <p>I found the behaviour of the characters fascinating / I found the aura of the dancers fascinating</p> <p>I was affected by the style of play/dancing</p> <p>I was impressed by the way the actors used the space</p> <p>I was totally absorbed in the world of the performance</p> <p>I felt the physical tension transmitted by the actors/dancers</p> <p>I had the feeling I was truly addressed by the actors/dancers</p> <p>I had the feeling I truly connected with the actors/dancers</p> <p>I found the performance relaxing ('een fijne ontspanning')**</p> <p>I found the performance entertaining ('vermakelijk')</p>
Empathizing with imagined emotions	<p>The development in the plot/ choreography appealed to me</p> <p>I thought the performance had a satisfactory ending</p> <p>I thought the story/choreography was compelling</p> <p>The theme appealed to me</p> <p>The way the theme was dealt with appealed to me</p> <p>I thought the scenery (lighting, set design, costumes, etc.) related well to the theme</p> <p>I thought the acting/dancing was good</p> <p>I found the performance moving (I found the performance tedious)</p> <p>I empathized with the emotions expressed</p> <p>I could identify with one or more characters/dancers</p>
Delight in the use of the power of imagination	<p>I found the performance surprising</p> <p>I found the performance confrontational</p> <p>I found the performance difficult (I found the performance tedious)</p> <p>(I found the performance not very innovative)</p>
Experience of new perceptions	<p>I found the performance moving</p> <p>I found the performance inspiring</p> <p>The performance triggered my imagination</p> <p>The performance made a profound impression</p> <p>The performance struck a chord (The performance did not add anything to my own experiences)</p>
Testing one's views and insights	<p>The performance offered me a different view on things</p> <p>The performance offered me an alternative view of my own life</p> <p>The performance offered me insight into the human condition</p> <p>The performance challenged my outlook on things</p>

Intrinsic functions	
Sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs	
Change or reconfirmation of views and insights	The performance reconfirmed my understanding of the world around me

\* Items relating to the experience of the theatre venue have not been included in this table.

\*\* Inclusion of this item here is difficult. By stating 'een fijne ontspanning' (relaxing), Wilders clearly does not aim at measuring 'intellectual entertainment'.

**Table 12.1 Wilders' questionnaire related to intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience.**

to assess the first stage of the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain. Note that these techniques can provide institutions with information as to which intrinsic values they generate. Therefore, they might be able to correct their artistic policies according to such data. However, the ability of programming institutions to do so is limited, as they do not decide on the aesthetic properties of the productions staged. None the less, these surveys are as useful to them as to the producing companies, because the programmers have the responsibility to organize the realization of aesthetic values for their audiences. Their role in organizing the right public for the performances and the best possible conditions under which the realization of the values can take place can also be supported by information on the realization of these values. Furthermore, the reception research can generate information on the value of supportive services and provide useful marketing information. Because conducting these surveys can be a costly matter, city administrators should provide the funds for conducting them by allowing for sufficient overhead costs

### 12.2.3. General-Public Surveys

As it cannot be argued that aesthetic experiences in the non-subsidized sector do not yield the intrinsic values and functions that are the focus of cultural policy, policy evaluation should include a more general picture than the subsidized sector alone. The use of all cultural facilities in a city can be assessed by means of general-public surveys. Researching this item involves including, in regular populations surveys, questions on the use of cultural facilities in the city in the last twelve months. Questions can also cover the frequency of use and when questions also concern the socio-demographic background of respondents, a picture of the aesthetic activities of the whole population can be painted, including the particular aesthetic services that appeal to particular social strata. It is not necessary to conduct such research on an annual basis, as aesthetic consumption patterns are generally reasonably constant (see Martin and Sauter, 1995, p. 28). This picture is needed to assess the reach of aesthetic services in society. As demonstrated, some of the cities in the research sample use the general-public survey to gather such data. It seems possible, at least in theory, to conduct the same reception research as presented in the previous section in order to gain insight into the nature of the aesthetic experiences in the non-subsidized settings. In

practice, however, this seems hardly possible. It can be useful when questions arise as to the position of specific groups in society.

Including specific questions in general public surveys might also yield evidence of the functioning of performing arts in the social domain. Van den Broek has used surveys of ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccans and Surinamese) and compared them to data on the general Dutch population. His aim was to measure the contribution of cultural activities to social cohesion, which he made operational through five indicators: identification with (Dutch) society, trust, respect for others, and contacts with other ethnic groups during leisure activities. He regards these indicators as measures for bridging social capital. The parameters were measured by asking respondents to general-public surveys about the extent to which they feel Turkish, Moroccan, or Surinamese rather than Dutch (5-point scale), whether or not they trust people in general (yes or no), how they feel towards other ethnic groups (expressed on a 'thermometer' scale from 0 to 100 degrees), the extent to which they agree with the statement that most Dutch people respect Muslim culture and most Muslims respect Dutch culture (5-point scale) and the extent to which they meet native Dutch and other ethnic groups during leisure time (often, sometimes, never) (see Van den Broek, 2009, p. II.1-3-25). A link between participation in cultural events and social cohesion can be established specifically for the inter-ethnic leisure contact. However, this cannot be considered as a causal link, as a certain openness of mind is needed for both types of activities. Van den Broek suggests that openness of mind is the underlying variable explaining the concurrence of cultural participation and inter-ethnic contacts. For ethnic groups, cultural participation cannot be linked to trust in and respect for other ethnic groups (*ibid.*, p. III.1-3-27/28). This leads Van den Broek to conclude that there is no empirical evidence for a policy theory that assumes that cultural participation will increase social cohesion. However, given the fact that he himself suggests that openness of mind is a common explanatory factor of cultural participation and social cohesion, he might have been less strict in this conclusion. Research into the contribution of cultural participation in developing this openness of mind is certainly necessary. However, this type of research cannot be based upon information from general-public surveys but must be gained from in-depth interviews of participants in cultural events. None the less, Van den Broek is right in concluding that the link between cultural participation and social cohesion is not one-sided and cultural participation in itself can be an expression of social cohesion.

#### **12.2.4. Economic Impact Analysis**

Methods to research the direct and indirect economic impact of cultural facilities in a city have been discussed in Chapter 8. Impact research (using type III net multipliers) should be commissioned to investigate this. This research starts with the salaries paid and expenditures on the procurement of materials by cultural institutions, which are stated in their annual reports. In the research period, none of the cities in the sample commissioned economic impact analyses. Note that the earlier researches on economic impact in Groningen (Julien, 1989, and Julien et al., 1997) and Amsterdam (Hietbrink et al., 1985, and KPMG, 2006a, b and

c) do not use the correct multipliers. This means that, to date, there are no correct assessments of the economic impact of culture in the Netherlands apart from the multi-variate analysis of real estate values (Marlet, 2009). Furthermore, cities can opt to research changes in the proportion of knowledge workers in the city.

### 12.2.5. Measurement of Social Capital

Apart from the questions discussed in the section on reception research, there are specific methods to measure changes in social capital, although measurement is no easy task (Field, 2008, p. 143).<sup>13</sup> Measuring social capital within a macro-perspective involves assessing the total amount of social capital present within a community, and assessing changes through longitudinal research. Several authors discuss the problematic of measurement of social capital in the macro-perspective (see Flap, 2004; Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004; Völker, 2005; and Field, 2008). They conclude that there is a lack of longitudinal data and uncertainty as to the specific indicators that should be included in the research. Flap (2004) therefore suggests that a micro-perspective may be a more promising route for measurement.<sup>14</sup> As the rewards of social capital are causally linked to social relationships, the assessment of individual social capital seems the most valid way to evaluate the impact of the performing arts in the social domain. This perspective also allows for a focus on the question as to the conditions under which social capital is generated. This is important as the origin of social relations and networks is related to characteristics of the individual and social contexts (Völker, 2005, p. 14). Theoretically one could 'map' the social relations of all members of society and thus achieve a total map of the social capital. However, Völker's remark implies that research of the effects of the experience of the performing arts on social capital will be most successful when the research focuses on pre-specified groups whose social conditions can be known beforehand. When it is possible to assess changes in the social capital of specific individuals or communities, at least theoretically, the effects of the experience of the performing arts on social capital can be monitored, although there will be a problem of causality, as changes in the social networks of individuals will be the result of many more influences than only aesthetic experience. Specifically for cultural policy, there is a link between bridging ties and the artistic nature of aesthetic experience. The measurement therefore should focus specifically on these ties.

Measuring social capital at individual level involves charting the social network of an individual and the resources that this network gives access to. However, this is not without problems because the resources that can be accessed are goal-specific. It depends on an individual's goals when considering the resources he or she will access through his or her network. For the purpose of cultural policy evaluation, the goals cannot be specified beforehand. This means that the measurement instrument should cover a wide variety of different social resources (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004, p. 201). Furthermore, individuals

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<sup>13</sup> Putnam, for instance, used no less than 14 indicators to make up a social capital index (see Field, 2008, p. 144).

<sup>14</sup> Although with the introduction of more sophisticated statistical techniques (see Sabatini, 2009), such problems may be overcome in the future, which would mean that data from general-public surveys will become important in assessing changes in social capital.

differ in their command of personal and institutional resources, which leads them to make different choices when deciding about using social capital.<sup>15</sup> These differences necessitate measuring potentially available resources in social networks rather than the resources one actually has accessed through social networks (*ibid.*, p. 203). Methods to measure individual social capital are discussed by Van der Gaag (2005). These networks are assumed to exist between the respondent (ego) and others (alters), therefore they are called 'ego-centred social networks'. They can only be studied by observation in limited settings (e.g., classrooms or companies). In most studies on social capital in the general population, individual respondents mention their network in an interview situation. Highly structured and systematic queries are used. Van der Gaag discusses three interview techniques: the Name Generator, the Position Generator, and the Resource Generator.<sup>16</sup>

The *Name Generator* asks respondents to identify social network members. Several types of Name Generators have been designed, varying in the way the respondent is reminded of the possible existence of social ties. For instance, the interviewer may ask about family relations or affective relations. Van der Gaag, however, favours the exchange relationship generator in which respondents are asked to identify people with whom they have performed, or may in the future perform, various specific types of support exchanges. The relationships thus traced are goal-specific and provide information on the social resources accessible through the relations (*ibid.*, p. 80). In a second phase of the interview, which is called the 'interpreting' phase, the respondent is asked to score all of the relations generated on several characteristics, such as duration of the contact, frequency of the contact, physical proximity (lives under or over 5 km away), perceived intensity of the contact and perceived trust (both measured on a five point scale). Tie strength can be assessed by means of such interpretation. To a large extent, the Name Generator relies on the ability of the respondent to remember all his or her social contacts. This is a problem when it comes to weak ties, therefore the Name Generator seems less suitable for the present research. Also, differences in interpretation between interviewer and respondent limit comparability of the results. Furthermore, much information is redundant because many alters will provide access to the same resources. The instrument can best be used to indicate the size of social networks, rather than the diversity of resources. A final downside of the Name generating and interpreting technique is its time-consuming nature. It is a heavy burden for both interviewer and interviewee to complete the interview especially when larger networks are encountered (*ibid.*, p. 137).

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<sup>15</sup> Individual capital refers to the abilities of the person him- or herself, mostly acquired through education, and institutional capital refers to resources becoming available through social institutions (government agencies, one's place of work) with whom one does not maintain personal relationships (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004, p. 202).

<sup>16</sup> Note that the techniques discussed do not identify existing social ties between different alters. Investigating the structure of social networks would imply also charting these relationships. The methods discussed here however can be used to composite proxies for network density (defined as the amount of ties between all actors in a social network). However, for the present research network density in itself is not relevant. The access to social resources gained through the network is what matters.



The *Position Generator* is an instrument in which respondents are asked to indicate whether or not they know an acquaintance, friend or family member with a certain occupation. The assumption is that occupations with higher prestige will make more resources available to the respondent. Furthermore, it is assumed that the strength of the tie between the respondent (ego) and the person with the occupation (alter) determines the likelihood that alter will make the resources available to ego. Thus, an individual's amount of social capital can be assessed. It should be remarked that the instrument involves a ranking of occupations chosen from regular census studies of the population in question. The esteem attributed to occupations will differ from (sub)culture to (sub)culture. The Position Generator can be used to assess the distribution of social capital in society. However, this involves comparison of data from different studies in which it is crucial that the same occupations have been used and are worded in the same way. The Position Generator has a few weaknesses. For instance, respondents may not know the occupation of all their network members. Therefore the Position Generator will yield an underestimation of the occupations accessed by the respondent. Furthermore, the wording of the occupations is crucial. In general, the more specifically an occupation is worded, the smaller the chance of a positive answer. Therefore, for comparison purposes, the wording needs to be exactly the same. Furthermore, the Position Generator can yield false reporting of social capital, as some occupations, such as doctors, clergymen and teachers, may be known readily, although it is questionable whether or not they would make their social resources available to everyone they know.<sup>17</sup> Finally, for questions regarding health and general well-being, the Position Generator is not the most useful instrument because it leaves emotional support, companionship, and help in times of illness out of the equation. The Position Generator may not be able to reflect the actual network size, because the total number of relations is limited to the total number of occupations suggested to the respondent, although several other measures of the social network of respondents can be constructed. According to Van der Gaag the most obvious measure to use is the number of positions accessed, for this can be considered a proxy for the diversity of resources accessed by the respondent (*ibid.*, p. 131). However, the assumption behind the Position Generator is that specifically higher-prestige occupations give access to more social resources and that lower-prestige occupations give access to different kinds of resources than the higher-prestige occupations. This implies that the logical measure is a combination of the highest accessed prestige and the range of prestige accessed.<sup>18</sup>

The *Resource Generator* combines the characteristics of both the Name Generator and Position Generator in asking about access to a fixed list of resources 'each representing a vivid,

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<sup>17</sup> 'Knowing someone' was made operational by asking respondents if, on accidentally meeting the alter on the street, they would recognize him or her, would know his or her name, and could start a conversation with him or her (Van der Gaag, 2005, p. 104). This, however, does not entirely solve the problem of false reporting.

<sup>18</sup> Van der Gaag makes yet another important remark about the Position Generator. Although the measures taken from the Position Generator have a clear theoretical basis, they contain only indirect information about the social capital accessed. Furthermore, the concept behind the position generator hinges on job prestige and therefore the measurement instrument is slanted towards researching goal-specific social capital, i.e. weak ties (Van der Gaag, 2005, pp. 137-8). For measuring the impact of performing arts in the social domain, this is not a drawback of the Position Generator.

concrete subcollection of social capital, together covering several domains of life' (Van der Gaag, 2005, p. 138). The questionnaire uses the same indicators for the strength of the ties as the Position Generator; i.e., the respondent is asked to indicate whether the resource is available through an acquaintance, a friend or a family member. The selection of items in the questionnaire should result from systematic theoretical considerations about which social resources represent the 'general' social capital of individuals in a population (*ibid.*, p. 138). In an inquiry into the social capital of the Dutch population (performed in 1999/2000), a list of 33 resources was used, ranging from 'someone to babysit', 'someone who owns a car', 'someone who knows people in politics' to 'someone who can help in finding a summer job'. The Resource Generator is able to distinguish between types of social capital that relate to differences in the goals of individuals. This feature makes it suitable for researching resources that cover a variety of sub-domains of life (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004, p. 208). The Resource Generator enables better assessment of the size of social networks, as respondents are asked to identify more than one person they know from whom they could acquire the suggested resource. Nevertheless, there is still a restriction here because the number is limited to a maximum of 5 per resource. Furthermore, the measurement instrument allows the combination of an assessment of network size and types of relations with information on the resources accessed through the network. None the less, several problems with the Resource Generator remain. First, what if the respondent is able to provide for the resource himself or herself, or pay someone to help him or her? This implies that when longitudinal studies are used to track changes in social capital (either of general populations or of specific groups within the population), the results should be controlled for education and income levels.<sup>19</sup> Second, the instrument does not measure the willingness of alters to make the recourse available to the respondent. The assumption is that the strength of the ties is a proxy for the willingness of alters to make the resource available. Third, the instrument is difficult to construct as it involves choosing the items to be included in the questionnaire. The relevancy of certain items may differ widely for respondents. Therefore, the instrument might be especially useful for researching specific populations rather than the general population. For the present research, this does not necessarily present a drawback.

Van der Gaag advocates measuring individual cultural capital through a combination of instruments, as each instrument seems to measure different types of social capital. A combination of the Resource and Position Generator is easy to implement because both methods can be included in one questionnaire and thus are least costly to investigate (*ibid.*, p. 202). Furthermore, both types of research are adaptable to the type of social capital the researcher is interested in, as the positions or resources suggested to the respondent can be manipulated. For the present research, the most important parameters of social capital – in order of significance – are:

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<sup>19</sup> Note that improvements in income and education levels may also be a result of changes in personal lives that are triggered by the social capital the individual has accessed. Therefore these changes in themselves may also be a result of the policies directed towards the individuals concerned.

- The amount of weak ties within a person's network, because it is especially through weak ties that resources that are important to improve one's socio-economic position can be accessed – which is the ultimate goal in social policies – and also because weak ties in particular can be connected to artistically aesthetic experience.
- Diversity of the contacts in the network as a proxy for the diversity of social resources accessed through these contacts.
- Network size as a proxy for the ability of the individual to access specifically bonding relationships.

Changes over time in these variables should be measured in order to evaluate the effect of policies. This implies longitudinal research using exactly the same questionnaires. Furthermore, the changes should be corrected for the development of the personal capital of the respondents which can be monitored through income and education levels.

In Table 12.2, the measurement methods discussed by Van der Gaag are linked to the above-mentioned measurement parameters. The bias of the Name Generator towards strong ties is a specific drawback for the present research. Therefore, the use of a combination of the Position and Resource Generators seems most applicable. However, these techniques still have several weaknesses which need to be addressed in further research aimed at developing measurement instruments for social capital. The following remarks must be made.

First, the most important issue concerns the question as to whether or not participation in the (performing) arts leads to specific forms of social capital, and whether such forms can be measured. The theories presented in Chapter 9 and the measurement methods presented in this section cannot shed light on this. Further research is necessary here, although it seems that a combination of the quantitative measurement instrument presented here and the qualitative longitudinal focus groups mentioned in the section on audience and reception research is most applicable.

Second, it seems that, as the assessment of *the* social capital of a general population is difficult, more insight can be created by researching specific groups in society as the instruments can be geared specifically to the social resources needed and accessed by these groups. For policy evaluation purposes, focusing on specific groups is not problematic. It seems useful to carry out research tailored to these groups, certainly when specific groups are targeted in the policy. Van der Gaag warns, however, that general differences in the distribution of social capital in a population can distort or obscure the results of studies on the social capital of specific groups. In the Dutch general population, it appears that social capital is distributed unevenly: better-educated people and men tend to have access to more diverse and higher-prestige occupations (*ibid.*, p. 130).

	Name Generator	Position Generator	Resource Generator
Weak ties	--  (Typically weak ties will not be remembered by the respondent easily, so the NG is biased towards strong ties)	+  (The nature of the contact is researched through asking whether the contact is an acquaintance, friend or family member)	+  (The nature of the contact is researched through asking whether the contact is an acquaintance, friend or family member)
Diversity of contacts	+  (Can be assessed in the interpreting phase)	±  (Assessed through the range of prestige of contacts of the respondents)	+  (The resources suggested to the respondent should be diverse, covering several domains of life)
Network size	+  	-  (Is assessed through the range of positions accessed. The total number of contacts is restricted to the total number of positions suggested to the respondent and thus total network size is not measured in itself.)	±  (Assessment of network size is limited as a maximum to the amount of contacts per resource is introduced)
Drawbacks of the instrument for the present research	The NG is costly in execution, especially when encountering large networks. The NG is biased towards strong ties.	The PG is least able to assess network size.	The RG is not easy to construct as it involves choosing which resources to include in the questionnaire.

**Table 12.2 Characteristics of measurement instruments of individual social capital for evaluating arts policy**

Third, the question when to measure the effects of cultural policy remains a difficult one, at personal as well as societal level. In the social domain, the question needs to be answered concerning the moment when changes in social capital (of specific groups) may be expected to have occurred as a result of the policies. From a scientific point of view, this question cannot be answered. The time frame for research therefore becomes a political decision rather than a scientific one.

Fourth, these measurement instruments do not remedy the drawback that the causal relationship with aesthetic experience is weak because many other factors influence changes in cultural capital. Using these methods therefore is only logical in two instances:

- When one wants to track the effects of specific cultural policy measures for specific individuals or groups in society. This is only possible for participants in specific cultural interventions, such as the community arts.
- When one wants to track the effects of the combined efforts of cultural, sports, welfare, education and spatial planning policies on social capital. Researching the combined effect of these policies has the advantage of enabling more costly types of research and it overcomes the problems of causality. The drawback is that it will not be able to evaluate individual policy measures. Therefore it is not possible to identify which interventions are most effective. A further advantage of this type of combined effort might be that the concept of social capital may lead to alignment in these different policy areas, each with its own dynamics and, in many cases, implemented by different branches of the municipal organization.

### 12.3. Organizing Art Policy Evaluation

#### 12.3.1. Cultural Institutions and City Government

Arts policy evaluation involves a joint effort by the city administration and the cultural institutions. A large part of the information needed is reported (or should be) in the annual reports of cultural institutions. Furthermore audience and reception researches involve the arts institutions as much as the city administration. In Figure 12.2, the necessary research activities and data to be included in the annual reports is listed in each of the fields for policy evaluation.

*Aesthetic value evaluation* can be delegated to independent advisory boards. The city administration should formulate the questions to be put to the board. This involves deciding on the extent to which management and marketing criteria (and thus secondary evaluation criteria) should be included in the independent advice. Furthermore, the city administration should decide on the composition of the board. When city administrators and the management of cultural institutions both acknowledge the expertise of the members of the boards regarding artistic, and management and marketing issues, the acceptance of the advice will be strengthened. Therefore, the city administration should consult the arts organizations before appointing the members of the board. The annual reports of the organizations should include the data needed for evaluating aesthetic value (and management and marketing capabilities). As the city administration gathers the annual reports, it is logical that it will supply this data to the board.

*Personal value evaluation* requires joint effort by arts organizations and the city administration. The arts organizations, as they have access to the audiences, should conduct audience research to provide the data on reach of cultural facilities and the socio-demographic composition of the audience. Furthermore, the quantitative questionnaires that provide

information on the occurrence of intrinsic values should be conducted by the arts organizations. These audience surveys will provide the organization with valuable information to inform management and marketing strategies.<sup>20</sup> Note that, as cultural consumption patterns are fairly constant, such research need not be conducted on an annual basis. The city administration should provide the funds for the audience surveys by allowing for sufficient overhead costs. It is up to the city administration to aggregate the quantitative information on the reach of the aesthetic services, and to report on this aggregated information to the city council and the general public. This data should be supplemented with the information on the reach of non-subsidized cultural presentations in the city, which can be obtained through general-public surveys. Furthermore, the city administration should conduct (or commission) the longitudinal qualitative reception research (focus groups) needed to complement the quantitative data on the occurrence of intrinsic values.

*Societal value evaluation* is totally up to the city administration, except that the annual reports of the arts organizations funded should provide data on the salaries paid in order to assess direct employment. The city administration should commission the relevant research to analyse economic and social impact as both types of research involve expert knowledge of the economic and social sciences. For the social impact analysis, the longitudinal reception research involving focus groups should shed light on the importance of aesthetic experience to the personal development of audience members, which is relevant for changes in social capital.

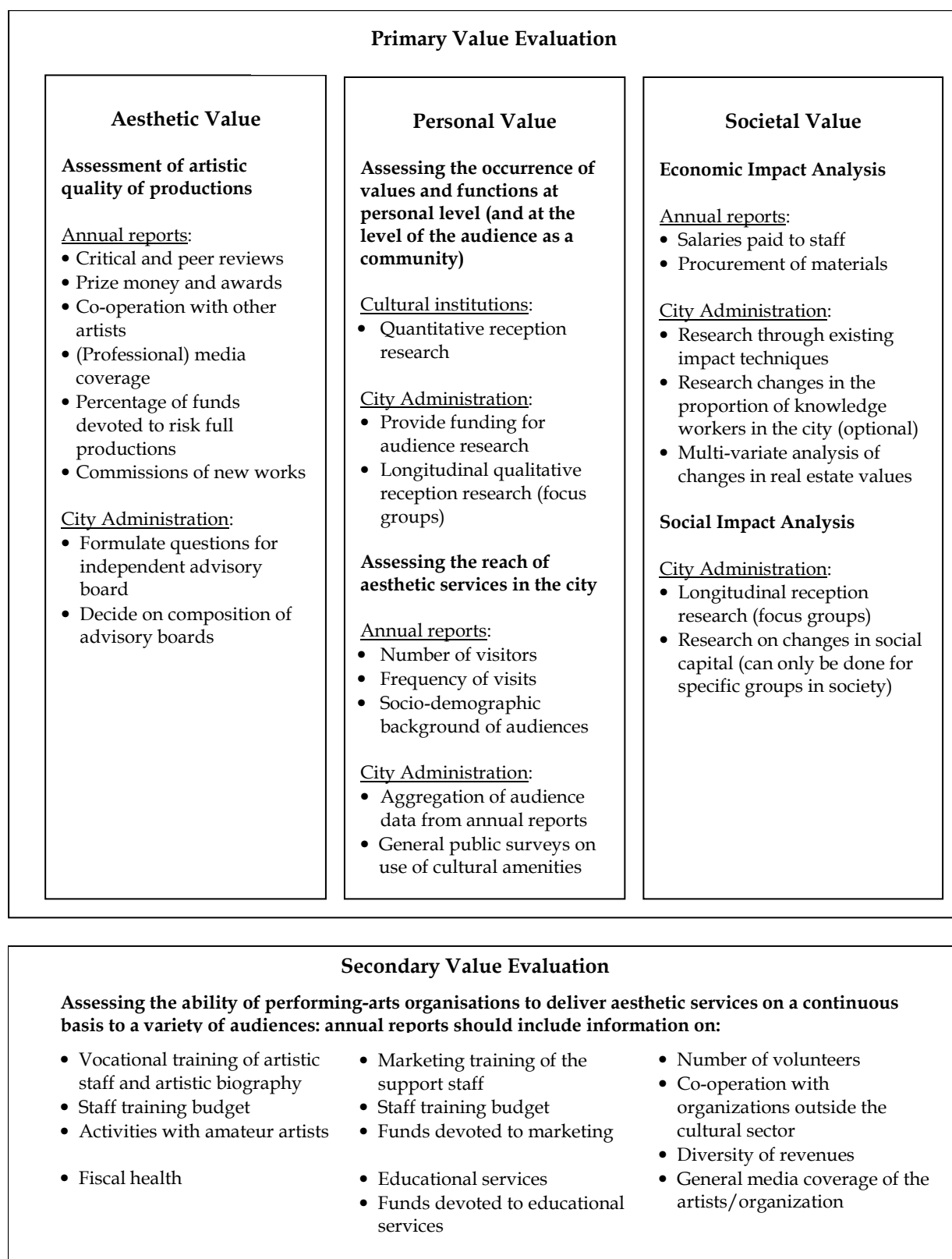
Finally, *secondary value evaluation* can be based upon information which is readily available in the annual reports of subsidized institutions. The city administration and the arts organizations should enter into an agreement as to what information should be included in the annual reports. Such agreements should be made for longer periods of time and not be altered during the process, as this will not encourage adherence to the agreement by the funded institutions.<sup>21</sup> As stated above, secondary value evaluation can in part be delegated to independent advisory boards when they include management and marketing criteria in their judgements.

Thus the cultural institutions and the city administration have a shared responsibility for cultural policy evaluation. However, as it is the exclusive responsibility of the administration to report on the execution of policies to the city council (and a wider public), whereas coordinating the evaluation effort is up to the administrators.

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<sup>20</sup> Note that the assumption of the autonomy of artists presupposes that it is the arts organizations that should decide on the consequences of the outcomes of research on personal value realization for their artistic, management and marketing strategies. This presents a further reason why the arts organizations should conduct such research themselves (see Section 12.4.1).

<sup>21</sup> Note that the evaluation model presented here presupposes that managers of cultural institutions are able to formulate their missions on the basis of notions on the societal functioning of the arts. This may be regarded as a reflection of the growing professionalization of the arts sector. However, as discussed in Chapter 11, managers may lack the capacity to formulate a mission statement in this respect. City officials need to reckon with this and support managers of publicly funded institutions.



**Fig 12.2 Arts-Policy Evaluation Using the Framework for Describing the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society (actions to be done by city administration and subsidized institutions, and information to be included in annual reports of cultural institutions)**

Of the eight cities in this research, Groningen and Rotterdam are evidently the cities with the most elaborate evaluation instruments. Thus, it appears that – just as is the case with arts policy formulation itself – municipal arts-policy evaluation develops in stages. This implies that cities can choose how to evaluate arts policy. Here political considerations will collide with administrative concerns. Politicians might opt for extensive evaluation mechanisms to meet the challenges of the evidence-based policy era, although they also might opt differently and advocate low bureaucracy and simple and swift government. Bureaucrats may view evaluation mechanisms as a way to account for spending of public money and ‘defending’ the cultural budgets within the city administration. But their interests in policy evaluation can be more sophisticated. For one, these techniques presuppose agreement between the administration and cultural institutions on the data that will be collected in the course of policy execution, thus facilitating the relationship between institutions and the city administration. The model for policy evaluation can also be used to align cultural, sports, welfare, education and spatial planning policies. Thus, both city administrators and politicians should find reasons enough to move from one stage of policy evaluation to the next.

### **12.3.2. Stages in Arts Policy Evaluation**

#### *Stage 1: Advocacy*

Key Question: Do the cultural institutions in the city provide a cultural presentation with artistic quality?

In its most rudimentary form, arts-policy evaluation relies on the framework presented in Figure 10.1 and it assumes that, when artistic quality is produced in the city and experienced by citizens, the values and functions associated with aesthetic experience will ensue. This type of evaluation practice can only be characterized as advocacy. It relies on the story the framework tells to legitimize policy efforts. Policy evaluation will be restricted to counting the number of performances and the attendances at these performances. The role of independent advisory boards with experts on artistic quality (as a property of the productions realized) is crucial. Their evaluations will drive policy. Furthermore, the city administration can research the reach of the productions through audience data gathered by institutions.

Though it might seem at first glance that all cities comply with this stage by making use of independent advisory boards, this stage in itself can be a step up from current policy evaluation practices. First, this stage involves systematic use of advisory boards for all institutions in the city (both producing and distributing organizations). Second, it involves retrospective evaluations. This is not the case in all cities. Note that cities using this stage of cultural policy evaluation will be vulnerable to the proponents of the accountability movement, although, when they can demonstrate a structured approach to the evaluation of



artistic quality and research on reach, this may be considered a step up from a mere handing out of public funds to artists.

*Stage 2: Cultural Governance*

Key Question: Are the cultural institutions in the city capable of delivering the aesthetic presentation that provides the benefits associated with art to a variety of citizens in the long run?

The second stage implies that the city administration will supplement the policy evaluation with the secondary value evaluation techniques. This means that the administration chooses to ensure that the benefits of aesthetic activities in the city will be there over a longer period of time. This means that they need to ensure that the cultural institutions are well-run institutions which can deliver these benefits to a variety of citizens over a long period of time. In this stage, the annual reports of the cultural institutions should be more elaborate and include measures that reflect the marketing and management capabilities of the organizations, and more elaborate financial controls can be installed to insure fiscal health over a longer period of time. Adhering to standards within the cultural industry becomes important, through benchmarking and adherence to cultural governance codes for instance.<sup>22</sup> It appears that this stage is often forgotten in policy evaluation because it is not a very visible stage. Adherence to such codes of cultural governance can be checked by the administration and is not usually the subject of heated political debates. The introduction of cultural governance codes in the Netherlands is, however, fairly recent; therefore this stage is a step up from current practices.

*Stage 3: Occurrence of intrinsic values and functions for audience members*

Key Question: Do the cultural institutions in the city provide the personal benefits associated with art to a variety of citizens?

In the third stage, the policy evaluation techniques are complemented with interest in the reception of the performing arts. Where, in the second stage, marketing data on the audience will be collected as a basis for formulating institution marketing policies, audience surveys in this third stage should also include methods to evaluate the nature of the experiences afforded to the audiences. Again, it should be noted that policy evaluation in this stage is still dependent on an advocacy point of view. The assumption here is that, when intrinsic values and functions at personal level are realized and it is ensured that cultural institutions are able to do so on a long term basis, the societal values and functions will follow. But here the advocacy is backed up by real data on the occurrence of personal values. Thus, the core of the policy legitimization is actually included in the policy evaluation. In this stage, the evaluation activities should be complemented with public surveys that shed light on the use of cultural amenities by the entire city population, including non-subsidized cultural

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<sup>22</sup> In the Netherlands, performing-arts venues use the *Theater Analyse Systeem* (Theatre Analysis System) as a benchmark, see [http://www.vscd.nl/dossiers/16/Theater\\_Analyse\\_Systeem\\_TAS/](http://www.vscd.nl/dossiers/16/Theater_Analyse_Systeem_TAS/) accessed on 28 July 2009.

facilities and amateur arts. Until now, reception research seems not to have been included in policy evaluation. As a result, this stage represents a major improvement in arts policy evaluation practices in the Netherlands.

*Stage 4: Integrated policy evaluation*

Key Question: do the combined efforts of cultural, sports, welfare, education and spatial planning policies yield changes in social capital and economic performance in our city?

The most elaborate stage in policy evaluation supplements the previous stages with information on the societal outcomes of cultural policy. These outcomes can only be measured on a higher level of aggregation and involving all influences on social and economic performance of a city. Therefore it is logical to use this stage to evaluate the joint efforts of cultural, sports, welfare, education and spatial planning policies. The evaluation will aid the city administration to align the efforts of these policies. Note that it is possible to conduct more focused research on the impact of aesthetic experience on social capital for specific groups who have been subject to specific cultural interventions, e.g., community arts projects. The only evaluation efforts in this stage are economic impact studies. However, none of these has been conducted with the right methodologies. This stage therefore represents a major improvement in arts-policy evaluation as well.

## 12.4. Summary

### 12.4.1. Current Policy Evaluation Practices versus the Model

The model for cultural policy evaluation presented above is more elaborate than the current policy evaluation methods. According to this framework, evaluation can be considered more intrusive for artists. Although objections to more intrusive evaluation measures have been voiced (see the Introduction), the model can help both policy-makers and managers of cultural institutions in assessing how the arts function in society, and under which conditions, so that art's functioning can be improved. This is exactly how Boorsma and Van Maanen perceive the usefulness of research into the occurrence of aesthetic experience. Such investigations can 'provide important managerial information for arts organizations. It helps to evaluate whether artistic goals are reached, and it can produce insights to improve the conditions that facilitate the reception of their products in the future' (Boorsma and Van Maanen, 2003a, p. 159), provided that the artistic integrity of the organization is not compromised; i.e., that the information is not used to adapt performances to consumers' preferences (*ibid.*, p. 184). The notion of art's autonomy in society stipulates that audience and reception research is carried out by the arts institutions, giving them the first opportunity to interpret the data and to decide on the consequences for an institution's strategies.

The second step is to report the data to the subsidizers. As Birnkraut (2008) suggests, the measures in the model for arts policy evaluation should not be used as cut-off rates that

immediately penalize underachieving institutions. Rather the evaluation techniques suggested can shed light on how the specific contribution of the (performing) arts to urban society can be realized and how its functioning *as art* can be strengthened through better primary (i.e. artistic) and secondary (i.e. management, financial and marketing) strategies of subsidized institutions. It is up to the city administration to use the information from these evaluations for public accountability by presenting the aggregated results.

Therefore it seems that, for evaluating (performing) arts policy - focusing on art's specific contribution to society seriously as the model presented here does -, city administrators can do more than simply measure the output of (performing) arts institutions in terms of the amount of performances, attendees, and an assessment of the artistic quality of productions. However, evaluating cultural policy is a multi-layered activity that can be time and money-consuming. The evaluation model presented here supplements current arts policy evaluation methods in several ways:

- (a) The occurrence of intrinsic values at personal level.  
Information on the values created for audience members is rarely gathered. This means that the core of what cultural policy is about is almost never evaluated. This seems a surprising conclusion but it is consistent with the observation that cultural policy instruments depend on the institutional approach even although the legitimization of cultural policy is based upon the functional approach to art. In the institutional paradigm, the peer judgement of cultural values is crucial. Expert judgements on artistic quality form the core of subsidy allocation and also of cultural policy evaluations. As demonstrated in this research, this is a very limited approach to cultural policy evaluation.
- (b) The occurrence of functions in the social domain  
Although a link between aesthetic values at personal level and functioning in the social domain is frequently suggested in the policy documents, this link has never been researched in policy evaluation efforts. This is surprising because of the emphasis on personal development as a function of the arts and the implications of this development at societal level in the policy documents. However, the lack of a robust policy theory in this domain and the issue of causality can explain the current omission of evaluation efforts in this respect.
- (c) Measuring organizational capacity  
Secondary policy evaluation has been a recent trend in city administration, as can be witnessed in the evaluation efforts of Groningen and Rotterdam. Although many indicators can easily be identified and measured in this area, efforts to report on these issues on an aggregate level should be undertaken by city administrations.

#### 12.4.2. Meeting the Challenge of *evidence-based policy*

In the Introduction to this research, New Public Management has been described as an ambiguous phenomenon. On the one hand, it is positive: who can be opposed to transparent, effective and efficient government? On the other hand, its basic assumptions are simplistic and require intricate social phenomena to be expressed in simple quantifiable indicators, while assuming straightforward cause-and-effect relationships behind such phenomena. The present research also suffers from this ambiguity. The framework for describing the functioning of the performing arts in society (graphically depicted in Figure 10.1) does cover the complexities of society, as it shows how the various values and functions are interdependent in a system of values and functions. But it still proposes an optimistic (or positivistic or modernistic) view of the performing art's functioning in society. The framework should be 'read' from left to right suggesting a clear direction of cause-and-effect relations, even ignoring negative outcomes although not denying them. The discussion of measurement issues considerably qualifies the assumptions of the measurability of societal phenomena. It has been demonstrated that measurement is no easy task; it may even be very costly. But still, the main tenet behind the framework is that – apart from some omissions and with considerable mitigation of the assumed causality – measurement of the functioning of the performing arts in society is possible, providing that some of the evaluation tools needed will be expanded in the near future. Most notably, the questionnaire needed to assess the occurrence of aesthetic values at personal level should be developed on the basis of the now-available techniques. Furthermore, investigation should be carried out into whether or not participation in the performing arts yields specific types of social capital and how these specific types can be measured.

Collectively, the measurement instruments discussed in this chapter can assess the realization of values in society as a result of the aesthetic experience of the performing arts. Although an exact measurement of the 'amount' of values and functions realized is not possible, these measurement activities jointly 'paint a picture' of the functioning of the (performing) arts in society. Rather than having a thermometer to measure the performing arts' functioning in society, these measurement activities provide a barometer to assess developments in the arts' functioning in society.

The present research contributes to the three fundamental issues regarding NPM that were identified in the Introduction:

##### *Can art be an agent of social change?*

The framework for describing the functioning of performing arts in society demonstrates how art – or rather: aesthetic experience – can serve instrumental goals and thus can *contribute to* social change. Specifically, it indicates how the *artistic* nature of aesthetic experience contributes to this. However, the non-artistically aesthetic values and functions are intrinsic as well. Although they are not unique to aesthetic experience, non-artistically aesthetic values and functions are relevant in evaluating the impact of art in society. The

framework demonstrates that the present research falls squarely into the positive tradition regarding art's impact on society.

*Can or should arts policy be instrumental?*

The present research does not provide a clear answer here, as this primarily is a political question. However, it does help in the debate on the evidence base of art's contribution to instrumental goals, as the framework provides a sound theoretical basis for this instrumentality and it provides measurement methods that can be used to start building the empirical evidence base which is lacking at the moment.

*Can or should art's functioning be measured?*

The answer here is Yes, though not without considerable effort on the part of city officials and managers of cultural institutions. The model presented here provides a framework to discuss coherently the impact of the arts. The model also presents limitations to measurement because:

- There is a diminishing causality when moving from left to right in the framework (Figure 10.1).
- Although the intrinsic functions at personal level can be measured (through a combination of quantitative and qualitative longitudinal reception research), the problem of timing of the evaluation research remains.<sup>23</sup>
- Some of the measurement techniques necessary have not been fully developed.

Thus it is questionable whether or not the model for arts-policy evaluation presents a clear enough vocabulary for officials and managers. However, it does provide a common system of thinking in evaluating the performance of institutions in relation to the goals of the public policy.

It should be noted that those who lean towards the modernistic side of the NPM debate may not be convinced by this model for arts-policy evaluation, as it does not indicate how to measure *the extent to which* the values that are relevant actually occur. Nor does it offer a yardstick or cut-off level to be able to say that the functioning is *sufficient* to legitimize arts policy. This, too, remains a political decision and therefore Gray (2007) and Belfiore (2004) are right in being wary of evidence-based policies. This is not particularly problematic for the Dutch situation, as the discussion of the performing-arts policy shows that the policies are primarily legitimized on the basis of the intrinsic values and functions at personal level, and that economic and social impact of the performing arts has a side-effect status.<sup>24</sup> The discussion also showed that the three tendencies Gray (2007) postulates on the basis of his commodification thesis have not fully been materialized in Dutch arts policy during the period researched. The policies are still rather general and not focused on specific groups

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<sup>23</sup> When research delivers no evidence for the occurrence of intrinsic functions at personal level, it cannot be excluded that they might occur at some point in the future.

<sup>24</sup> With the exception of the early stages of arts policies in cities, when policies tended to be legitimized by extrinsic arguments.

and any specific impact.<sup>25</sup> Supply subsidy is still the dominant policy instrument. This leads to the question as to whether or not the arguments against instrumentalism have been voiced in terms that are too general. The anti-instrumental rhetoric also simply claims that art's impact is intangible and does not recognize that art, when functioning *as art*, can indeed contribute to wider societal goals.

Basically, this research shows how, through a functional (or pragmatic) perspective on art – or rather, aesthetic experience –, New Public Management measurement requirements can be met in a way that it respects the specific nature of art. It shows that, by their very nature, arts policies are instrumental because all intrinsic values associated with aesthetic experience ultimately contribute to (not *lead to*) non-aesthetic means, precisely as a result of the aesthetic values and functions of the experience. This is a fundamental ambiguity of arts policy that anyone responsible – politicians and city officials, artists and managers of cultural institutions alike – will have to deal with. Especially in the brave new *evidence-based policy* world we live in today.

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<sup>25</sup> However, one should question whether or not the recent policy attention to folk culture and national history as a means to orient the nation to the Dutch identity (whatever that may be) – which has been accompanied in national politics by a discussion on the new National History Museum that will have shaken the believers in art and culture's autonomy to their very core – and the inclusion of culture as an instrument in the regeneration of the 'Vogelaarwijken' (40 city boroughs across the nation targeted for regeneration) herald a fundamental shift towards stricter specification of targeted groups and impacts.

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## Samenvatting

Het overheidsbeleid in Nederland, maar ook in andere landen, is onderhevig aan een toenemende druk om de effecten van het beleid aan te tonen. De overheid dient te bewijzen dat het beleid de beoogde effecten heeft in de samenleving. De heersende opvatting is dat wanneer effecten van beleid niet kunnen worden aangetoond het beter is het beleid te wijzigen dan wel helemaal niet uit te voeren. Dit laatste vanuit de gedachte dat de overheid dan kennelijk niet bij machte is de gewenste effecten te bewerkstelligen. Deze beweging wordt *evidence-based policy* genoemd. Ook het cultuurbeleid is aan deze druk onderhevig. In zichzelf heeft *evidence-based policy* een schizofreen karakter. Het komt voort uit postmoderne twijfel aan de maakbaarheid van de samenleving terwijl het tegelijkertijd teruggrijpt op modernistische opvattingen over eenduidige oorzaak-en-gevolg relaties en de meetbaarheid van maatschappelijke fenomenen. Ondanks deze fundamentele kritiek op *evidence-based policy* wordt in dit proefschrift de vraag gesteld hoe Nederlandse gemeenten de evaluatie van hun cultuurbeleid, in het bijzonder het podiumkunstbeleid, kunnen verbeteren.

### *Deel I: Het functioneren van de podiumkunsten in het Nederlandse cultuurbeleid*

In het eerste deel van dit proefschrift wordt onderzocht welke doelen de overheid met het (podium)kunstbeleid nastreeft. Hierbij wordt een onderscheid gemaakt tussen intrinsieke doelen – doelen die voortvloeien uit de (kunstzinnige) aard van de podiumkunsten – en extrinsieke doelen – doelen die worden beschouwd als positieve neveneffecten van de kunsten in de samenleving maar niet verbonden zijn aan hun specifieke aard. Ook wordt onderscheid gemaakt tussen doelen die op individueel en op maatschappelijk niveau liggen, gezien vanuit de podiumkunstmakers en vanuit het publiek, zowel de bezoekers van voorstellingen en concerten als de stedelijke bevolking in het algemeen. In dit deel worden de beleidsnota's uit de periode 1992-2005 van de rijksoverheid (hoofdstuk 2) en acht Nederlandse gemeenten (hoofdstuk 3) onderzocht. Het blijkt dat de beleidsnota's de (positieve) effecten van podiumkunstbeleving voorop stellen. Het beleid veronderstelt dat de omgang met (podium)kunst leidt tot een specifieke vorm van beleving en daaraan gekoppeld persoonlijke ontwikkeling die via de ontwikkeling van de identiteit van bezoekers een vertaling krijgt naar het maatschappelijke niveau. De doelen voor kunstenaars zelf (expressie, ontwikkeling van vormtalen en het verschaffen van een inkomen) zijn hieraan ondergeschikt. Extrinsieke effecten op het terrein van de economie en sociaal beleid worden in de nota's wel aangeduid als doelstellingen van het cultuurbeleid maar op het niveau van neveneffecten, niet als de hoofddoelen van het beleid. Daarbij moeten drie kanttekeningen worden geplaatst. In de eerste plaats is het rijksbeleid sterker intrinsiek gelegitimeerd dan het beleid van de gemeenten. Dit is niet verwonderlijk aangezien het rijk een bijzondere verantwoordelijkheid draagt voor de productie van de kunsten en de

gemeenten voor de afname ervan. In de tweede plaats geldt dat gemeenten in de vroegere fasen van de ontwikkeling van hun cultuurbeleid meer de neiging hebben om het beleid extrinsiek te legitimeren op basis van de veronderstelde bijdrage aan de economische en sociale ontwikkeling van de stad. Pas in latere fasen wordt het beleid intrinsiek gelegitimeerd. In de derde plaats verschillen met name de gemeenten van mening over de vraag in hoeverre beleidsdoelen in het sociale domein niet toch afhankelijk zijn van de intrinsieke werking van de kunsten.

Deze constatering maken een nader onderzoek noodzakelijk waarbij het de vraag is (a) of de genoemde legitimeringen op basis van kunstfilosofische en kunstsociologische inzichten hout snijden, met ander woorden: heeft de overheid reële verwachtingen in de richting van kunstenaars en kunstorganisaties, en (b) in welke mate de economische en sociale ontwikkeling van steden afhankelijk is van de intrinsieke werking van kunst in de samenleving, met andere woorden: is er een specifieke vorm van economische en sociale ontwikkeling van steden die niet bereikt kan worden met andere dan culturele activiteiten zoals bijvoorbeeld door het stimuleren van sportbeoefening? Tot slot stellen de beleidsdocumenten het probleem van de autonomie van de kunsten aan de orde. Een strikte opvatting van de autonome positie van de kunsten in de samenleving lijkt het functioneren van de kunsten op maatschappelijk niveau uit te sluiten omdat ervan uit wordt gegaan dat de kunsten alleen voor het domein van de kunsten gevolgen hebben. De groeiende beleidsaandacht voor cultuurbereik en – educatie in de onderzochte periode moet worden gezien als een poging van de overheid om de scherpe kantjes van de autonome positie van de kunsten af te halen.

*Deel II: Theoretische reflectie op het intrinsieke functioneren van de podiumkunsten in de samenleving*  
In het tweede deel van het onderzoek worden deze vragen beschouwd vanuit de kunstfilosofie en de kunstsociologie. In hoofdstuk 5 wordt ingegaan op de autonomie van de kunst. Vanuit zowel de institutionele benadering van kunst, die zijn oorsprong vindt bij Dickie, als vanuit de functionalistische benadering van kunst, die zijn oorsprong vindt bij Beardsley, wordt geanalyseerd welke beperkingen er zijn voor het functioneren van de kunst in de samenleving. De functionalistische benadering sluit het meest aan bij de visie op kunst uit de beleidsnota's omdat deze benadering analyseert welke waarden de ervaring van kunst op kan leveren en welke betekenis dit kan hebben voor (mensen in) de samenleving. Die waarden worden echter alleen gerealiseerd wanneer de institutionele condities waarin kunst wordt aangeboden en de competenties van de kunstconsumenten van dien aard zijn dat zij een esthetisch functioneren, dat wil zeggen functioneren *als kunst*, mogelijk maken. Het is geenszins zo dat dergelijke omstandigheden beperkt zouden zijn tot het officiële, gesubsidieerde cultuurcircuit. Ook daarbuiten kan men spreken van esthetische ervaringen met kunstzinnige waarde.

De esthetische ervaring wordt in hoofdstuk 6 uitgewerkt. Daarbij wordt de Kantiaanse notie van de belangeloze ervaring (die in zichzelf helemaal niet zonder maatschappelijk belang

blijkt te zijn) aangevuld met benaderingen gericht op het wisselen van verschillende perspectieven (Zeglin Brand) en absorptie (Van Stokkom en Shusterman). Met het onderscheid tussen comfortabele en uitdagende esthetische ervaringen als basis wordt een beschrijving van de esthetische ervaring gegeven (Van Maanen). De esthetische ervaring is een ervaring die niet losstaat van de dagelijkse realiteit, zoals het leerstuk van de autonome kunst doet vermoeden. Esthetische ervaringen zijn een belangrijke bouwsteen voor de levensstijl van mensen, zij drukken er hun identiteit mee uit, maar onderzoeken die daarin ook. Het plezier dat mensen aan esthetische ervaringen ontleen is afhankelijk van de match tussen de kenmerken van het kunstwerk en hun culturele competentie. Zij kunnen verveeld of geboeid raken en ook uitgedaagd. Kunstgenot kan leiden tot de realisatie van vijf intrinsieke waarden waarvan er drie specifiek zijn voor de kunsten. Deze waarden kunnen leiden tot functies op persoonlijk niveau. De niet-kunstzinnig esthetische waarden zijn de opwinding door het waarnemen van niet bestaande werelden en het meeleven met verbeelde emoties. Deze leiden tot de functie van sublimatie van behoeften en de bevrediging van gesublimeerde behoeften. Als de kunstconsument uitgedaagd wordt om zijn of haar verbeeldingskracht in te schakelen komen er drie waarden bij: de kunstzinnig esthetische waarden. Alleen deze zijn specifiek voor de kunsten. Het gaat om het genot als gevolg van het gebruik van de verbeeldingskracht, het ervaren van nieuwe percepties en het testen van meningen en inzichten. Deze kunnen leiden tot de functie van verandering (of herbevestiging) van meningen en inzichten.

Deze waarden en functies komen overeen met de intrinsieke doelen zoals die door de overheid worden geformuleerd (hoofdstuk 7). De beleidsnota's blijken dus met een gedegen achtergrond over het functioneren van de kunsten in de samenleving te zijn geschreven. Zowel de niet-kunstzinnig esthetische als de kunstzinnig esthetische waarden en bijbehorende functies zijn voor het beleid van belang en moeten dus in de evaluatie ervan betrokken worden.

### *Deel III: Extrinsieke functies*

In het derde deel van het onderzoek wordt de schijnwerper gericht op de (veronderstelde) extrinsieke functies van podiumkunst in de samenleving en de vraag hoe deze geëvalueerd zouden kunnen worden. Voor het economische domein (hoofdstuk 8) wordt geconstateerd dat het functioneren van kunst in de samenleving voornamelijk afhankelijk is van het bestaan van kunstinstellingen die zich als economische eenheden gedragen en van de aanvullende bestedingen van kunstconsumenten. Deze effecten zijn via impactonderzoek inzichtelijk te maken. Tot nu toe is dat voor de cultuursector in Nederland echter nog niet volgens een juiste methodologie gebeurd. Voorts wordt de betekenis van de creatievelassetheorie, zoals geïntroduceerd door Florida en met graagte opgepakt door beleidsmakers bij het rijk en gemeenten, gerelativeerd omdat de richting van het oorzakelijk verband in deze theorie niet duidelijk is: komen kenniswerkers af op steden met een bloeiende en diverse kunstsector of is het zo dat kunstenaars zich daar groeperen waar kenniswerkers een gewillig publiek voor hun vormexperimenten vormen? Wel is het

mogelijk via *gentrification* onderzoek (Marlet) de invloed van culturele voorzieningen op stadsdelen te onderzoeken. *Impact*- en *gentrification* onderzoek vergen specialistische kennis en kunnen niet zomaar door kunstinstellingen worden uitgevoerd.

In het sociale domein (hoofdstuk 9) zijn de zaken ingewikkelder omdat de persoonlijke ontwikkeling die het gevolg kan zijn van esthetische ervaringen het zelfbeeld en zelfvertrouwen van deelnemers kan veranderen waardoor zij een betere aansluiting vinden bij de samenleving. De literatuur over *community arts* wordt hier nadrukkelijk besproken omdat deze ingaat op de ontwikkeling van vaardigheden van deelnemers aan culturele projecten. In 2004 koppelden McCarthy e.a. de sociaal-kapitaaltheorie van Putnam aan deze discussie over de legitimatie van het kunstbeleid. In deze theorie staan de relaties van individuen en de sociale hulpmiddelen waar deze relaties toegang toe geven centraal. De zelfredzaamheid wordt bevorderd door zogenaamde *strong ties* – verbanden met burens, vrienden en familie. Maar met name de *weak ties* – verbanden met mensen in andere sociale omstandigheden – helpen om toegang te krijgen tot hulpmiddelen die men niet makkelijk zelf voor handen heeft, bijvoorbeeld contacten om een nieuwe baan te zoeken. Ervaring met de kunsten kan, als oefening in de verbeeldingskracht, bijdragen aan de vaardigheden van individuen om *weak ties* aan te gaan. Doordat veranderingen in sociaal kapitaal via longitudinaal onderzoek gemeten kunnen worden, is het in theorie mogelijk de invloed van culturele interventies bij specifieke groepen op hun sociaal kapitaal vast te stellen. Echter, de causaliteit is hierbij een probleem omdat deze veranderingen ook van veel andere factoren afhankelijk kunnen zijn.

In hoofdstuk 10 worden de resultaten van deel II en III samengebracht door een schema te presenteren voor het beschrijven van het functioneren van de podiumkunsten in de samenleving (figuur 10.1). Het schema gaat uit van de esthetische waarden van podiumvoorstellingen en concerten en de (extrinsieke) waarden van de organisatorische setting waarin deze worden aangeboden. Op basis van deze waarden van het product kunnen bezoekers in de ervaring van podiumkunst intrinsieke en extrinsieke waarden realiseren. Deze waarden kunnen functies op het persoonlijke niveau dienen. Deze functies op het persoonlijk niveau kunnen weer gezien worden als waarden op het maatschappelijke niveau. In deze trits van waardecreatie en realisatie van functies neemt de causaliteit af naarmate het maatschappelijke niveau wordt genaderd.

#### *Deel IV: Beleidsevaluatie*

Het laatste deel van het proefschrift richt de schijnwerper weer op de gemeenten. De wijze waarop de acht gemeenten hun cultuurbeleid van de periode 2005-2008 evalueren wordt geschetst (hoofdstuk 11). Ook worden bestaande theoretische modellen voor de evaluatie van beleid en het presteren van culturele instellingen uitgewerkt om te bezien welke prestatie-indicatoren voor het functioneren van podiumkunstinstellingen bruikbaar zijn voor beleidsevaluatie. Het gaat dan met name om de benadering volgens de *Balanced Scorecard*

(Kaplan & Norton) en *Public Value* (Moore). Deze blijken ook in de praktijk van het cultuurbeleid te zijn toegepast.

Gebaseerd op het schema voor het beschrijven van het functioneren van de podiumkunsten in de stedelijke samenleving en de gevonden indicatoren wordt in hoofdstuk 12 een model voor het evalueren van gemeentelijk cultuurbeleid geschetst (figuur 12.1). Het model omvat evaluatie binnen drie primaire velden en één secundair veld.

1. *Esthetische waarde*: dit veld betreft de evaluatie van de esthetische waarden van het werk van de podiumkunstenaars. Deze wordt doorgaans beoordeeld door onafhankelijke adviescommissies van experts. De positie van het werk binnen het professionele veld maakt onderdeel uit van deze evaluatie. Momenteel is deze vorm van evaluatie de kern van de toewijzing van subsidies binnen het kunstbeleid.
2. *Persoonlijke waarde*: dit veld betreft de evaluatie van de waarden die optreden op persoonlijk niveau door de ervaring van het werk. Culturele instellingen dienen hiervoor publieksonderzoek uit te voeren waarbij niet alleen zicht wordt verkregen op de socio-demografische achtergrond van de bezoekers (nu ook al vaak bekend) maar ook op de waarden die zij tijdens de consumptie realiseren. Hiervoor zijn diepte-interviews met bezoekers noodzakelijk. Ook kan - op basis van nieuw beschikbare enquêtes - via kwantitatieve methoden zicht verkregen worden op deze kwalitatieve gegevens. Het is moeilijk om zicht te krijgen op de daadwerkelijke realisatie van functies op persoonlijk niveau omdat niet te beredeneren is wanneer deze zullen zijn opgetreden dus wanneer zou moeten worden gemeten.
3. *Maatschappelijke waarde*: dit veld betreft de betekenis van de esthetische ervaringen op maatschappelijk niveau oftewel de doorwerking van de functies op persoonlijk niveau in de maatschappij. Longitudinaal publieksonderzoek is hierbij van belang zodat via diepte-interviews zicht kan worden verkregen op de betekenis van cultuurbeleving in de veranderingen in het persoonlijk leven van deelnemers. Daarnaast is het door de koppeling met sociaal-kapitaaltheorie mogelijk om kwantitatieve metingen uit te voeren naar veranderingen in het sociaal kapitaal van vooraf gedefinieerde groepen. Om zicht te krijgen op het functioneren in het economische domein dient *impact*- en *gentrification*onderzoek te worden uitgevoerd. Omdat dit veld van evaluatie langdurig onderzoek vergt alsmede onderzoek op geaggregeerd niveau (met name voor het economische domein) is het logisch dat de gemeenten dit onderzoek zelf (laten) uitvoeren en dit niet van individuele kunstinstellingen verlangen.
4. *Secundaire evaluatie*: hierbij richt de evaluatie zich op de mate waarin kunstinstellingen in staat zijn op lange termijn de primaire waardecreatie en -disseminatie naar het maatschappelijke niveau te ondersteunen. Het gaat hier bijvoorbeeld om de financiële gezondheid van de organisatie maar ook om de inzet van marketingvaardigheden en samenwerking met andere instellingen. De jaarverslagen van de instellingen dienen hierover informatie te bevatten.

Het antwoord op de hoofdvraag van het onderzoek, hoe gemeenten de evaluatie van hun podiumkunstbeleid kunnen verbeteren, luidt dat meer systematisch onderzoek naar het functioneren van de podiumkunsten op het persoonlijke niveau en het maatschappelijke niveau tot verbetering van de huidige evaluatiepraktijken zal leiden. Voor het in kaart brengen van de waarden van kunstbeleving op persoonlijk niveau en het meten van veranderingen in sociaal kapitaal blijken er mogelijkheden te bestaan het functioneren van de podiumkunsten in de samenleving beter te meten dan nu het geval is. Daarbij gaat het niet om het vaststellen van absolute niveaus van functioneren maar om veranderingen daarin. Het meetinstrumentarium betreft dus eerder een barometer dan een thermometer. De huidige trend waarbij gemeenten steeds genuanceerdere methoden ontwikkelen om het functioneren van door hen gesubsidieerde culturele instellingen te volgen, moet op basis van dit onderzoek als een secundaire vorm van evaluatie worden aangemerkt waarbij niet meer zicht wordt verkregen op het functioneren van de (podium)kunsten in de samenleving, terwijl juist dit de kern is waar het beleid om draait.

Dit positieve antwoord dient echter van een kanttekening te worden voorzien. Dat het mogelijk is het functioneren van de podiumkunsten in de samenleving in kaart te brengen, wil nog niet zeggen dat dit ook altijd en overal moet gebeuren. Dit vergt namelijk aanzienlijke inspanningen van zowel gemeentelijke diensten als de staf van culturele instellingen. Waar het de realisatie van intrinsieke waarden voor het publiek betreft, is er een verantwoordelijkheid voor instellingen om dit te onderzoeken. Naar het functioneren van de kunsten op het maatschappelijke niveau dienen gemeenten zelf onderzoek uit te (laten) voeren. Het evalueren van cultuurbeleid behelst voor een gemeente dus meer dan het goed volgen van het presteren van gesubsidieerde instellingen. In dit proefschrift worden voorstellen gedaan voor verbetering waarbij verschillende niveaus van beleidsevaluatie worden gedefinieerd. Gemeenten kunnen keuzes maken op welk niveau zijn hun beleidsevaluatie willen inrichten.

Tot slot zij opgemerkt dat dit proefschrift slechts ten dele ingaat op de meer fundamentele vraag of het kunstbeleid geëvalueerd mag worden op basis van inzicht in het maatschappelijke functioneren van de kunsten. Kunstenaars die beweren dat hun prestaties niet beoordeeld mogen worden op criteria die buiten de kunst zelf liggen, hebben slechts gedeeltelijk gelijk. Het is niet onmogelijk – en naar mijn mening ook niet onwenselijk – om de kunsten te beoordelen op hun bijdrage aan de maatschappelijke ontwikkeling als dit maar gebeurt op een wijze die de bijdrage van kunst en cultuur *als kunst en cultuur* centraal stelt, i.e. uitgaande van de intrinsieke betekenis van de kunsten in de samenleving. Dat betekent dat de evaluatie van het cultuurbeleid niet alleen kennis van professionals over ontwikkeling van kunst en cultuur zelf vereist – kennis die in het beleidsproces in de regel via onafhankelijke adviescommissies wordt georganiseerd – maar ook professionele kennis over hoe kunst en cultuur op maatschappelijk niveau betekenis krijgen. Deze kennis dient in het ambtelijk apparaat aanwezig te zijn.