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.1 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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1 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.
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,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functioning from the perspective of</th>
<th>Intrinsic Functioning</th>
<th>Extrinsic Functioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artists</strong></td>
<td>Functions:</td>
<td>Direct employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing ideas and</td>
<td>(B)</td>
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<td>perceptions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Artistic development</td>
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<td>(A)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tasks:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Producing for specific audiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Producing with amateurs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development/training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of professional artists</td>
<td>(A)</td>
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<td><strong>Audience members individually</strong></td>
<td>Personal Experience</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>(break from routine)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
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<td>(C)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Audience collectively</strong></td>
<td>Identity and Debate</td>
<td>Economic functions</td>
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<td>(E)</td>
<td>Social Policy Issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>City Image</td>
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<td>(F)</td>
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Table 10.1 Categorization of functions of the performing arts in society as found in Dutch policy documents
Towards a Framework to describe the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society

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)?

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).

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2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 legitimimize 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. 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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5 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.
Part III: Extrinsic Functioning of the Performing Arts

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. Towards a Framework to describe the Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society

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. 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. 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. 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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6 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.

7 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.

8 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 form 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. Bonding social capital relates to the aesthetically-intrinsic function of establishing individual

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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.\(^\text{10}\)

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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\(^{10}\) 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
Part III: Extrinsic Functioning of the Performing Arts

according to this timeframe. 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. In some cases, they are adverse to policy objectives. 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. 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

11 Note that this does not solve the problem at all. It only serves to facilitate the debate between policymakers 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.

12 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.

13 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.

14 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 *habituses* 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. 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. 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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15 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.

16 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?’