Performing arts and the city
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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2010

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):

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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.¹ 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 explication factor. The political aftermath of the festival was handled by the alderman for cultural policy who took a different line of defence.

¹ 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.  

The above two instances are taken from the world of cultural policy. 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? 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 point?

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2 The author here refers to his experience as an official for the city at that time.
3 ‘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’.

4 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 ‘intelect’ (…) 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) 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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5 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. 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 do 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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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 his 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 burse 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. 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. 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.

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).

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. 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).

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.

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9 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.

10 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.

11 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.12 The methodological weaknesses include a non-representative sample which was not sufficiently large to allow for statistic 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

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

12 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). 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. 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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13 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).

14 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.\(^{15}\) 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.\(^{16}\) 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 intellectuals had lost their belief in the possibilities of science and technology to create a better society).

\(^{15}\) Thus Laermans confirms the above discussion of NPM which entails the introduction of private management practices in public administration.

\(^{16}\) 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.17 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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17 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? 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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18 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 20th 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.  

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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19 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
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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.20 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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20 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
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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.21

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

21 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). 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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22 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 biofuels 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.\(^{23}\) 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.\(^{24}\) 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

\(^{23}\) 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.

\(^{24}\) 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 it 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. 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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25 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. 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. 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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26 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).

27 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. 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:

- 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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28 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.

29 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