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The Economization of the Arts and Culture Sector in Germany After 1945

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Historical Background

The public cultural policy system of Germany differs significantly from that of most of the other European countries. In Germany, it is the federal states (*Länder*) that are primarily responsible for legislation and administration in the field of arts and fine arts.¹ The *Länder* decide on all matters of cultural policy, from museums and libraries to theaters and operas (Burns and Will 2003, 134). But according to the *Subsidiaritätsprinzip* (principle of subsidiarity), some of their power evolves downward and many museums, theaters, and libraries are, therefore, in fact governed by the municipalities. In addition, the German cultural field includes also institutions and organizations that are managed and owned by private sector actors.

This cultural federalism is an historical heritage. For centuries, Germany consisted of many autonomous feudal states and municipal republics that

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realized their own cultural policies by creating a large number of cultural institutions. With the unification of the German Empire (*Deutsches Reich*) in 1871, these autonomous cultural traditions were not leveled out. The newly established imperial government was simply held responsible for cultural foreign affairs. In the constitution of the Weimar Republic (1919–33), public responsibility for the funding of arts and culture was shared between the imperial government, the parliaments of the Federal States, and the local councils. During National Socialism (1933–45), this traditional diversity was forcibly centralized and culture was exploited for political purposes. After the end of World War II on May 8, 1945, Germany was split into three western zones, which later became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and the Soviet occupation zone, the later German Democratic Republic (GDR). Forty years of separate development followed in the field of cultural policy in Western and Eastern Germany (ERICarts 2013, D-2; Bendixen 1997, 172–73).

The GDR did not return to the tradition of cultural federalism after World War II; instead, it practiced a state-run cultural centralism. Culture was seen as a political instrument of state control. Traditional cultural institutions, cultural centers (*Kulturhäuser*), youth clubs, and company-related cultural activities were maintained by the government and the unions, and were controlled by party politics (ERICarts 2013, D-2; Göschel 1994, 46). One major task of the cultural policy of the GDR was to implement a so-called *Breitenkultur* (broad culture) in the GDR. The idea was to achieve the intellectual and cultural rise of the *Arbeiter und Bauern* (working people) as a finite realization of humanist ideals. The image of the “singing workers” in the cultural center represents this idea. At the end of the 1980s, more than 10,000 broad culture circles, over 1000 houses of culture, 800 clubs for working people, 4200 youth clubs, 4500 village clubs, and so on were to be found in the GDR (Groschopp 2001, 15–16). This manifold cultural landscape could unfold only in the frame of suspicious censorship. Many artists, writers, and directors became skillful in expressing critical thoughts by evading censorship. And the audience was trained to understand the hidden criticism between the lines. Quite a few cultural workers paid for their desire for freedom with persecution, forced departures, or expatriation (Bundesregierung 2014, 82–83).

The collapse of the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*/ Socialist Unity Party of Germany) dictatorship in 1989 led to a fundamental reorganization of the cultural field. With the accession of the GDR to the scope of West German Federal Law on October 3, 1990, almost all cultural activities in the GDR were temporarily suspended. It was agreed in the Unification Treaty that cultural federalism would be installed in “the acceding territory” (*Zutrittsgebiet*). The previously orchestrated culture should no longer be used to convey Marxist–Leninist ideology. The organizational structure of cultural life in the GDR, General Management, came to an end and a rapid change of personnel was initiated.² The autonomy of the municipalities was reinstalled and the ensembles became artistically independent. The municipalities could now decide on the amount and distribution of cultural subsidies and about how to deal with the cultural institutions that had been inherited from the GDR. Renaming would be the first step (Höpel 2015).

In 1991, many major cultural institutions were converted into public undertakings fully integrated into the municipal administrative structure (*Regiebetriebe*). Some minor institutions were converted from municipal institutions into either private sector enterprises or foundations receiving modest municipal funding. From the mid-1990s onward, the major cultural institutions were allowed to conduct their own business planning, accounting, and financial reporting.³ The cutting of the red tape was meant to install more flexibility and economic efficiency. This transformation process took place all over Germany and was not specific to the eastern states. It was accompanied by a clear shift toward the funding of classical bourgeois culture despite the optimistic announcements to equally promote high culture and *Breitenkultur* (broad culture) in the 1990s (Höpel 2015).

After the Berlin Wall came down, cultural policy efforts focused mainly on the preservation of the cultural substance of the new states and on reviving the dilapidated cultural institutions. Nearly 217 theaters, 87 orchestras, 955 museums, 112 music schools, 9349 libraries, 250,000 individual monuments and monument complexes, and around 180 town centers of national significance made up the cultural inventory of the GDR (BNL 2014, 76). Most of them were found to be in urgent need of

renovation, as they had been left to decay for decades. Since it was expected that the restoration of the cultural infrastructure would be too demanding for the new states and the restructured municipalities, the federal government transitionally cofinanced many projects in order to prevent any harm occurring to the rich *Kultursubstanz* (cultural substance) of the new states. In between 1991 and 1993, the federal government provided roughly €1.3 billion for the transitional funding of culture. By means of different investment programs, the federal government still today supports the modernization of cultural institutions and the increase in the international reputation of top institutions in the new states.

Today, the cultural policy of the newly formed German states is not very much different from that of the old FRG. The idea of *Breitenkultur* (broad culture) is nowadays—despite its very different ideological background—quite similar to that of *Soziokultur* (socioculture). Both in eastern and western parts of Germany, cultural policy is strongly related to the ideas of Idealism and refers to a common glorious cultural past⁴ (Wesner 2010, 444; ERICarts 2013, D-2).

After World War II, Western Germany had returned almost immediately to cultural federalism. This was a “prophylactic response” by the Allied occupying forces to the centralized “total” cultural policy of the Nazis, and partly a return to the historically constituted distinct political identity of the regional states (Ahearne 2003, 127). In the postwar years of the 1940s and 1950s, the main objective of cultural policy in the newly constituted Federal Republic was to connect to the prewar German and the postwar Western cultural traditions, and to rebuild the cultural infrastructure, entailing extensive reconstruction of schools and universities, churches, theaters, libraries, museums, and opera houses (Burns and Will 2003, 141). Due to the experiences with National Socialism, cultural policy was supposed to be “nonpolitical,” and restricted to only administration issues (ERICarts 2013, D-2; Sievers 1995, 24). The arts, and especially fine arts, were seen as the most preferable means to cultivate and educate people, and an haute-bourgeois concept of culture as “high culture” was applied. It incorporated the idea of the autonomy of art at its very center⁵ (Zahner and Karstein 2014, 192–93; Kösser 2006; Ruppert 1998). It is the idea of the autonomy of art on which the state

support for the arts has rested in Germany until today. Article 5, paragraph 3 of the German Constitution (*Grundgesetz*) states: “Art and science, research and teaching are free” (“Kunst und Wissenschaft, Forschung und Lehre sind frei”). This provides the legal grounds for state subsidy of the arts (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 57, 333–34).

The Cultural Reform Policies of the 1960s and 1970s

In Western Germany, the political reform movements of the 1960s and 1970s strongly turned against the bourgeois understanding of culture which had been dominant in the late 1940s and 1950s. From the mid-1960s onward, it appeared not only to the young university intelligentsia but also to some political and administrative prominence that postwar Germany had not sufficiently reflected on its involvement with Nazism and its crimes, and that culture had not been conceived as anything other than an arcane aesthetic realm remote from the everyday needs of ordinary people (Burns and Will 2003, 141). Thus, embedded in the social discourses on the democratization of society, new reform movements called for an extension of the field of cultural policy. The concept of culture was now substantially extended through the integration of *Soziokultur* (socioculture) and the independent cultural scene. The *Neue Kulturpolitik* (New Cultural Policy) of the 1970s wanted to make the arts accessible to a wider scope of people. The need to extend culture into all niches of society was now stressed (Burns and Will 2003, 142).

New concepts of a more active cultural policy were introduced to build the conditions for a “culture for all” respective of a “culture of all” (ERICarts 2013, D-2; Sievers 1995, S.24–27; Glogner-Pilz 2011, 100).⁶ In the 1970s, this call for a “civil right for culture” led to a huge extension of the number of cultural institutions⁷ and to the establishment of many new fields of cultural policy. The goal of culture was now to generate emancipated citizens empowered to think critically about themselves and their position in the contemporary world (Burns and Will 2003, 143). Cultural policy became more and more social policy. But despite this massive increase on the cultural supply side, no significant growth

on the demand side could be observed. Even though the number of visits to cultural institutions increased, the number of visitors remained mainly constant (Glogner-Pilz 2011, 101–105; Sievers 2008). Hence, one central concern of the New Cultural Policy, the participation of enlarged social groups in society's cultural life, could hardly be realized. Yet, the expenses for the cultural sector at the municipal level grew constantly. Their share in the overall budget increased from 3.8% to 4.2% between 1981 and 1991, and it rose from DM 5.96 billion to DM 10.26 billion, an increase of more than 70% (Röbke 1995, 135; Heinrichs 1997, 34).

The 1980s and 1990s: The Convergence of Culture and Economy

In the 1980s, an understanding of culture as an economic factor and a location factor began to prevail in Western Germany. Profitability calculations were now used to legitimize public expenses on culture. Additionally, culture as an economic branch gained ever-growing public attention. From 1982 to 1986, one could see a 28% increase of taxable companies in the cultural industry sector—companies of music and theater industry, the publishing sector, art market, film industry, the broadcasting industry, and architecture and design industry⁸—and a growth in turnover in this sector of 32% (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 333–36; ERICarts 2013, D-3; Rauhe 1994, 21). Since then, the culture industry has been regarded as an extremely dynamic and important economic branch that is a “source of inspiration” to other economic branches. The percentage of the culture industry within the German gross domestic product (GDP) was 1.6% in 2004; together with the creative industry, it even reached a percentage of 2.6%. In 2009, this sector produced services and goods to a value of €60 billion and thus reached the magnitude of the automotive or electrical industries. In addition, the sector was not, essentially, affected through the recession in 2008 (Deutsche Bank Research 2011).

In 1991, Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen) published the first cultural economic report in Germany, and other states followed it.

In 2007, there were 25 cultural economic reports available. This development is accompanied by claims that culture is not an autonomous sphere, separated from other areas of society and opposed to economy, but is an integral part of society and society's economy. However, even though cultural industries are a major issue in cultural debates at present in Germany, it is very unlikely that the whole arts sector is going to be discussed in these terms. This is because of the still-dominant idea of "cultural exception" or "cultural diversity" in Germany. According to this, "cultural goods and services cannot be considered in the same way as other commercial goods and services" (Ahearne 2003, 128).

The theme of culture as a location factor obtained increased significance in this context. From the 1990s onward, a lively cultural city life is now being perceived as an important argument within the location decision of economic companies. Consequently, towns and regions would start to market their cultural life in order to boost the image of their region, as well as to attract tourism and to provide an interesting background for conferences, fairs, and events. Cultural megaevents were staged to systematically push the economic performance of the region, that is, its service sector. All these efforts promote the eventization of culture (Florida 2002; Rauhe 1994, 21; Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 335–56).

In the aftermath of the German reunification in 1990 the new challenges of a reunited Germany requested in addition a strengthening of cultural policy at the federal level. In terms of globalization and the integration of Europe, the multivoiced system seemed less and less able to cope with shifts due to the new position of a reunified Germany (McIsaac 2007, 372). In 1998, the position of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media Affairs (*Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Angelegenheiten der Kultur und der Medien*) and the parliamentary Committee for Culture and Media (*Ausschuss für Kultur und Medien im Deutschen Bundestag*) were established. In 2002, the German Federal Cultural Foundation (*Kulturstiftung des Bundes*) followed (ERICarts 2013, D-16).

Berlin—the new capital of reunited Germany—was facing the task of amalgamating and integrating the representative cultural institutions of East Berlin with those of West Berlin, while giving a proper symbolic

expression to the capital's political iconography and topography. As a result, the *Hauptstadtkulturfonds*, a treaty between Berlin and the federal level, was installed to finance cultural facilities in Berlin that were clearly charged with a national, rather than a regional, mission. Until today, an ever-growing proportion of Berlin's cultural budget is being shouldered by the federal budget (Burns and Will 2003, 148).

From the mid-1990s onward, the public authorities have been strongly hit by the massive financial costs of the German reunification and an ever-expanding cultural sector (ERICarts 2013, D-3, D-46–47; Scheytt 1994, 142–43). Rising levels of unemployment and the high costs of the welfare state placed new financial pressures on the public authorities and led to a cut in the cultural budgets for the first time since World War II⁹ (Giese and Göke 1999, 60; Sievers 1995, 29; Wagner 1999, 188; Schnyder and Jackson 2013, 330). Noticeable transformations of the cultural sector were the result: institutions were closed or confronted with massive shortages.¹⁰ The independent scene suffered most, as short-term project funding decreased disproportionately.¹¹ Since that time, the German cultural policy discourse has been shaped by lively argumentations in favor of or against the liberalization of the cultural sector (ERICarts 2013, D-15). On the semantic level, culture is now often being addressed by means of economic concepts: the discussion on culture in terms of “cultural goods” and “demand and supply” is gaining more and more importance (Giese and Göke 1999; Bechler 1991). There are different positions within this discourse that need to be identified.

Radical liberal laissez-faire positions demand the complete restructuring of the arts sector toward an open market. Their argument is that only a radical liberalization of the arts will be able to democratize the prevailing cultural policy system and to counteract observed state failure. In the course of this argument, there is a democratic deficit identified in the practice of the state-dominated funding system. The criticism is that this system promotes an evaluation of the arts by politicians instead of empirical audiences. This system of funding is seen to be patronizing the citizens, while a free market represents consumers' decisions in a direct and, thus, more democratic way. Along the lines of this argument, a free market would thus develop distinguished, consumer-driven cultural services (Giese and Göke 1999, 64–68).

In contrast, some believe that the increasing market orientation of the arts sector results in a far-reaching loss of quality in the arts. Thus, these positions conjure the autonomy of art and see it guaranteed only by the existing state-run subsidy system. According to this position, the existing system has to be maintained by all means, and any form of commercialization of the arts has to be prevented. This line of argument often follows the assumptions of the “Cultural–Industry thesis” (*Kulturindustriethese*) of Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer (2012), conceptualizing art in opposition to light entertainment and decoration. Following this argument, it is authentic art that prevents mankind from relapsing into “barbarism.” Thus, by no means should art adapt itself to the taste of the masses or to profit calculations. Instead, the freedom promises of the market have to be unmasked as sheer ideology, as it is *Kulturindustrie* that subjects all human creativity to the dictates of economic usability. Under market conditions, the true, the good, and the beautiful will lose their intrinsic, emancipatory values (Giese and Göke 1999, 60–61; Bechler 1991; Friedrich 1991).

Less radical positions consider a certain amount of convergence toward economic procedures as necessary to preserve the German cultural sector in an adequate form. These positions hold at the same time that the autonomy of the arts is threatened by the overly far-reaching processes of neoliberalization. Therefore, the arts should not be, under any circumstances, subordinated to a pure cost–benefit dictate, as this might result in the simultaneous loss of uneconomic cultural activities (Sievers 1995, 35–36; Detert-Weber 1997, 162; Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 142–43; Scheytt 1994, 147–48). Hence, this position recommends a moderate adaptation of economic strategies in cultural policy and cultural administration, as well as in the work of cultural institutions. It aims at sharing funds more effectively and wants to make the arts sector more flexible and efficient, while still keeping its autonomy (Röbke 1995, 136; Eichler 1995, 157). The introduction of new controlling tools provided by “New Public Management” (NPM) was to perform this balance act¹² (Sievers 1995, 31). Furthermore, in times of short budgets, a professional cultural management¹³ should be securing the efficient use of temporal and financial resources by drawing on economic methods of organization and planning (Rauhe 1994, 6–7). While a complete opening of the cultural sector

to the market is rejected, the adaptation of methods and techniques taken from economics should balance the deficits, largely developed by declining public subsidization. With reference to the United States, it is proposed that cultural institutions and projects should search for alternative, private funding and generate substantial income of their own (Giese and Göke 1999, 68; Siebenhaar 2001, 155–57).

It was this moderate position that formed the ideological basis of the restructuring of the arts sector since the 1990s until the mid-2000s in Germany.¹⁴ During the 1990s, the legal form of numerous public cultural institutions was changed. Many institutions were changed from public undertakings that were fully integrated into the municipal administrative structure (*Regiebetrieb*) toward self-maintaining public organizations (*Eigenbetrieb*) or hybrid shareholder organizations (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 96). New models of ownership were implemented which partially disentangled cultural institutions from their previous attachments to budgetary and public service law and the administrative structures of municipalities and state. This mostly took the form of changing the legal form to a limited company (GmbH), association (Verein), or foundation¹⁵ (Höpel 2015). This change of legal identity aimed at implementing a greater flexibility in funds management. The de facto result of these transformations was an increase in the proportion of project-based funding by the public authorities.¹⁶ But, taking all experiences to date into account, the changing of the legal forms could not avert a reduction in overall public funding.

All these initiatives were justified not only with an increase in efficacy. They were also meant to implement a new “activating” understanding of cultural policy in terms of “governance.”¹⁷ This new concept abandons a monopolistic idea of cultural policy and allows for greater codetermination of civil society actors (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 91; Rübke 1995, 138; Sievers 1995, 31–32). It is the strengthening of voluntary work that gains momentum here: by means of voluntary work and private funding, citizens would now actively participate in shaping the future of society. References to the United States are made here, pointing to their higher rate of private funding and their long tradition of voluntary work (Fuchs 1997; Strachwitz 1991, 20–23). NPM was also brought into line with the New Cultural Policy of the 1970s and its concept of “culture for all” (Rübke 1995, 137–39; Sievers 1995, 35–40). It is especially the field of art museums

where these tendencies can be witnessed to an ever-increasing extent until today. Public authorities and private sectors actors increasingly cooperate here in terms of public–private partnership: private collectors donate their collections to the public authorities, demanding their integration into famous museum exhibitions, the extension of existing museums, or even the construction of new ones in exchange. The operating expenses of these new spectacular buildings are often to be covered by the public authorities, worsening their tight budget situation even more.¹⁸ Critical voices sense in these developments a loss of influence on the content of cultural policy by the public authorities (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 93, 101–102).

Looking at Germany's cultural field today, it becomes clear that all of the attempts to strengthen civil society actors in terms of voluntary work or new public–private partnership models or by a new distribution of responsibilities have not turned out very successfully (Höpel 2015). The majority of the cultural institutions in Germany are still integrated into the structures and hierarchies of public administration, and despite the implementation of public–private partnership models and numerous voluntary work initiatives, the level of public cultural funding could not be reduced.¹⁹ Instead, the financial pressure on the municipal cultural institutions remained stable or was even accelerated, while the federal budget for cultural affairs increased since 2006 continuously, with rates between 1.5% (2009) and 9.7% (from 2010 until 2012) to €1.3 billion (ERICarts 2013, D-46–47, 51). The present situation is strongly related to the economic and financial crisis of 2008–09 and to transformations concerning the national/state (*Bund/Länder*) competencies that had been taking place during the period of the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*/Social Democratic Party of Germany) and Green coalition under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (1998–05).

The Present Situation: The High Debt Level of the Public Authorities and Calls for Cuts

The financial crisis of 2008–09 was quickly felt in Germany. The country's economy shrunk by –4.79% in 2009 and banks had to be bailed out by the public sector (Schnyder and Jackson 2013). The level of debt

of the public authorities reached the highest level since the end of World War II. Additionally, private cultural funding decreased massively during the crisis years. The consequences of these developments became only fully visible in 2010 and 2011, placing additional financial burdens on the public authorities. It is the municipalities that suffered most, because, under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, a growing number of governmental responsibilities had been delegated to the local authorities without providing significant additional financial funds for their realization. This, especially, exacerbated the financial pressure on the public cultural institutions predominantly funded by the municipalities. All this led to a massive decline in long-term and institutional funding, as well as to a decrease in employment with social insurance benefits and full-time jobs in the cultural sector (Deutscher Kulturrat 2013, 328–29). The massive increase in the share of project-based funding and fixed-term employment contracts resulted in increasing job insecurity and a lack of planning security in the field of culture²⁰ (Deutscher Kulturrat 2013, 160–61).

The situation is exacerbated still further, as the concept of culture had expanded so massively from the 1960s and 1970s onward. Nowadays, the municipal cultural institutions are faced with highly individualized and differentiated reception habits that they can serve to an ever-smaller extent, given the present financial constraints. It is this situation that provides the underpinning for increasingly vociferous calls for a greater demand and market orientation of the public cultural institutions (ERICarts 2013, D-15–16; Haselbach et al. 2012). The cultural sector has little to respond with here. The objectives of cultural policy have become too heterogeneous. A conceptual basis is missing. This is rather surprising, as initiatives for a more concept-based, strategic cultural policy have existed since the 1970s in Germany and Cultural Development Plans exist in most of the 16 German Federal States (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 93–94; Rübke 1995, 139). But a closer look at these concepts and plans reveal that they only mirror the diversity of cultural policy topics: active citizenship, cultural economy, cultural tourism, audience orientation, regional identity, and so on (Sievers 1995, 23). These Cultural Development Plans serve to reveal the hybrid objectives of cultural policy, rather than to counteract calls for an increasing marketization or

economization of the cultural field. This leads to a situation where neo-liberal concepts of cultural policy are gaining more and more attention within the German field of cultural policy, as they promise rather simple solutions to these complex problems.

The book *Kulturinfarkt* (Cultural Infarct), published in 2012 by Dieter Haselbach, Pius Knüsel, Armin Klein, and Stephan Opitz, four well-known players in the German cultural field, stands well in line with this trend. Attracting a great deal of attention within the cultural field, the authors argue that the New Cultural Policy of the 1970s—despite all of its rhetoric on democracy—is ultimately undemocratic, as it focuses on educating the citizens in terms of the autonomy of culture. They show how the autonomy of culture is a very specific cultural concept that strongly relates to the historical experience of “mass culture” under National Socialism and Communism. Under conditions of today’s society, they see it as outdated. According to their view, it is for incomprehensible reasons that Germany’s cultural sector is still operating in its spirit. In their opinion, the fixation on the autonomy of culture ignores the needs of a broader audience and hinders effective competition and hence the democratization of the cultural field. The book, then, promotes a concept of cultural policy that is not so much about intervention but more about neutral regulation of markets. The authors argue for a radical change in German cultural policy, suggesting the decommissioning of the existing cultural infrastructure by half and a new distribution of the funds released. These funds should be used to build a new European culture industry and to promote “amateur culture,” which would eventually contribute to cultural integration and the education of the citizens (Haselbach et al. 2012, 24–41, 94–108, 178–214, 227–29, 280–82).

In summary, it can be said that the broadening of the concept of culture since the 1970s in Germany, with its undoubted gain in freedom, was apparently won through the loss of binding rules and standards. Clearly defined cultural policy objectives and fixed criteria for funding simply do not exist. This situation opens door and gates to calls for market liberalization. A similar diagnosis could be stated for the German artistic field.

The Economization of the German Artistic Field

After World War II, artistic life in Germany largely laid low. Many artists of classical modernism—ostracized by the National Socialists—had emigrated, and with them, many of their galleries. The museums were bombed and robbed of their treasures. An artistic metropolis, such as Berlin or Munich, that had flourished in prewar times no longer existed (Gieseke 1996, 124; Thomas 2002, 462).

The rapid economic growth of the 1950s was most pronounced in Rhineland. The industrial production started again relatively soon after the war and high profits were already generated in the early 1950s. It was these profits that created a rapidly growing demand for modern art and gave rise to a vibrant gallery scene. While abstraction and Informel had been dominating the field in the 1950s, there was a fundamental transformation in the 1960s. A multifaceted, lively young avant-garde scene established itself in the Rhineland, Dusseldorf being its center (Posca 1999, 42). Some of these new avant-gardes—Happening and Fluxus—accused the Informel of being elitist and decoupling art from the everyday experience. They claimed that art had to get out of the ghetto of autonomy and question the existing structures of the art field. They took a strictly anti-institutionalist, anti-individualistic position and tried to establish an alternative conception of art beyond the powers of institutions, the art market and art criticism. Aesthetics was replaced by the discussion and analysis of the conditions of artistic production and reception. Art in this conception should no longer be the sublime, the distant aesthetic; it should instead affect social life more significantly (Ermen 2007, 44; Gassen and Scotti 1996, 65; Rothauer 1996, 242–43). Interpretation as a method of dealing with artistic works was now heavily questioned. It was criticized as an act of decoding that referred to bourgeois rule systems. Intuition as a way to deal with art was instead put forward, as it did not presuppose any aesthetic or art historical reference points (Stachelhaus 2002, 162). The result was the consequent delegitimization of aesthetics and art criticism as criteria for evaluating art. This delegitimization of the intellectual pole of the art field led to an

intellectual vacuum within the field that was quickly filled by economic practices.

In 1967, the gallerists Stünke and Zwirner established the first fair of contemporary art, the Cologne Art Fair. Its aim was to provide an overview of the current trends in contemporary art to the general public and to visibly remove art from its elitist sphere. For these reasons, art was taken out of the white-cube presentation context and was presented in a more market-like, fair-like context (Zwirner 2000, 7). The disempowerment of art criticism that had been taking place during the previous years had led to a situation where there no longer was a single reference point for the evaluation of contemporary art but only heterogeneous contexts. This led to a huge uncertainty when it came to judging the quality of contemporary art works. In this situation, the economic criterion “price” gained a significant symbolic importance within the quality ascription process of contemporary art.²¹ It still has this function today. Prices are nowadays important quality markers in art fields or at least in certain spheres of these fields (Velthuis 2003; Zahner 2006). The lack of enounced autonomous cultural or artistic standards leaves an ever-expanding room for the radical opening of the arts and culture sector for market logic. It also intensifies demand for orientation and pricing.

For a long time, it was believed that the growing hybridization of the cultural field and its gained freedom could be dealt with by a tempered appliance of management methods and moderate orientations toward efficacy, taking the form of privatizations, active citizenship, and NPM. Nowadays, the pathologies of this orientation are clearly visible: increasingly precarious working conditions in the cultural sector, tendencies toward event culture, and a growing orientation toward tourism and toward culture’s economic impact on regions are the signs of the times in German cultural policy. All attempts to deal with the precarious financial situation of the public sector by means of a moderate efficiency orientation appear to have failed. In this situation, the calls for radical cuts and extensive restructuring of the cultural field are growing ever louder.

In addition, there is a growing pressure coming from the United States, but also from the European Union (EU), to subject all areas of cultural life to the laws of free market competition (Ahearne 2003, 129). Paradigmatic for these pressures is the repeated debate about the praxis

of fixing book prices in Germany and Austria. An issue that is again publicly discussed on the occasion of the free trade agreement TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) between the United States and the EU. While the United States and some players in the EU want to abolish fixed book prices because they see this fixing as distorting free market competition, Germany sticks to this practice, believing it is crucial for the preservation of the rich German cultural landscape. Similar debates and conflicts can be witnessed when it comes to markets for services related to film and television—so-called audiovisual services. While the United States has a strong interest in gaining access to these markets in Europe, France and Germany believe that these services should be treated differently from other kinds of services, as they are cultural services (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2014; European Commission 2014).

German Discourse on Cultural Education

In light of these transformations, “Cultural Education” (*Kulturelle Bildung*) emerges as the latest buzzword in the German cultural policy discourse.²² It appears to be the latest attempt to hold on to the idea of an intrinsic value of culture and the arts. Cultural Education emphasizes the intrinsic emancipatory character of culture and the self-empowerment of the individual. Following this line of argument, Cultural Education encompasses

a cultural experience that contributes to enable individuals to a self-determined life, to discover and develop their expressive needs, as well as to take part in culture actively. [...] In a world, in which social, political and economic processes are shaped by a multitude of aesthetic media, cultural/musical-cultural education becomes an important prerequisite for an independent and critical participation in society and politics. (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2012, 157)

In 2012, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*) started the biggest incentive program for

Cultural Education up to now. The aim of the program *Kultur macht stark* (Culture gives you strength) is to support extracurricular education programs for underprivileged children and teenagers. Locally based *Bündnisse für Bildung* (Alliances for Education) were founded. The program will run for five years and has a total budget of €230 million.

But a closer look reveals that the discourse on Cultural Education is not mainly focusing on emancipatory goals. Instead, these goals are often flanked by other objectives. In the statistics report on education in Germany, for example, several different goals for Cultural Education are mentioned: Cultural Education is “an understanding of education as a lifelong process that serves the free development of the individual just as well as its inclusion in social conditions” and helps to preserve the “outstanding cultural infrastructure” of Germany (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2012, 157, 160). Here, Cultural Education is, among other things, taken as a means to generate an ever-growing public interest in the arts and culture, which will help to legitimize its public funding. Cultural Education, according to this line of argumentation, is the necessary prerequisite to develop an interest in the arts (Klepacki and Zirfas 2012, 76; Mandel 2012, 279). Even so, it is often related to problems of an aging society and the increase of cultural diversity in society. In this context, Cultural Education is expected to increase the “cultural integration” of elderly people or migrants. It should help to “strengthen the connective links of society” and “to support the development of creative problem-solving skills” (Emert 2012, 237–39). It is also expected to supply the cultural economics sectors with qualified personnel and to increase the chances of children and teenagers in job markets. Thus, Cultural Education is, to a growing extent, evaluated economically, especially in terms of its position in the value chain (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 566; Göschel 2012, 236; Höppner 2013).

One could say that plurality, diversity, and a lack of orientation do not spare the term Cultural Education. Instead, the discourse on Cultural Education is widening the concept of culture to now even include pedagogy, and it is leading to a further expansion of the number of institutions that can apply for cultural funding in Germany. Thus, the discourse on Cultural Education is extending the multitude of values and objectives of cultural policy even further, playing into the hands of those who

want to apply economic criteria to cultural policy (Haselbach et al. 2012, 210–14). Given this situation, it is at least questionable that Cultural Education will be able to fulfill the expectation to contribute to the society-wide emancipation of the individual—even more so, as Cultural Education is most of the time only taking place in the form of individual fixed-term projects that are not in any sense strategically aligned. It takes this form because of the dominance of project-based funding that has, to a growing extent, established itself in the cultural field since the 1990s.

Conclusion and Outlook

After a short, restorative phase post World War II, the implementation of the *Neue Kulturpolitik* in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s led to a widening of the concept of culture and, thus, to an unprecedented expansion of cultural services. Cultural policy now became more and more social policy and was thus confronted with an ever-growing hybrid system of objectives. During the 1980s, the massive expansion and heteronomization of the cultural field under conditions of stable cultural funds were dealt with by attempts in moderate application of management techniques and temperate efficiency orientation. Legal form changes, introduction of NPM, establishment of cultural management and marketing, and the enforcement of “civic engagement” were the measures adopted. The massive costs of the German unification challenged the public finance sector in the 1990s, resulting in a reduction in the cultural budget for the first time since 1945. The financial situation of the municipalities was worsened by the reforms under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The cultural institutions came under further cost-saving pressure at the time. Against this background, the calls for the liberalization of the cultural sector, its opening in favor of market logic grew louder and louder, resulting nowadays in proposals for a radical remodeling of the German cultural field. These ideas are confronted with the slogan of “Cultural Education,” encompassing a further expansion of the cultural field toward pedagogy. The steadily increasing hybridity of the field adds more water to the mill of those who call for simple, easy-to-evaluate solutions and the democratization effects ascribed to market mechanisms.

The current situation can be seen as symptomatic of a cultural war that confronts the bourgeois idea of a hierarchy of culture with the postmodern notion of horizontal differences and heteronomy. One side of this conflict is shaped by the “offensive despise of the elites by the masses” (Sloterdijk 2000, 57). It is about making the everyday life of the middle class the measure of all things, while getting rid of the contemptuous bourgeois observer. This position confronts the bourgeois concept of the autonomy of art with questions of legitimacy and alternative social functions of art, such as social integration, the preservation of the diversity of the cultural infrastructure, economic interests of the region, and so on. Here, cultural policy is actively shaped toward social and economic policy. The other side is marked by the “contempt of the masses by the last elitist” (Sloterdijk 2000, 57), questioning the subjectification potential of the crowd and identifying the mass and mass culture as threats to the project of enlightenment. The intellectual bourgeois elite sees their goals despised by the mass, suspecting that under conditions of mass culture, all what they care about, namely autonomous art, may come to an end (Sloterdijk 2000, 57). Thus, the bourgeois elitist position sees the autonomy of art endangered by the hybrid orientations of social policy and observes economic interests entering the field unrestrainedly.

The rather surprising thing about this culture war is that it operates on both sides with a rather specific concept of audience. This concept has a rather strong bourgeois undercurrent. A closer look at empirical studies on German audiences reveals that the general public is here often pictured as defective. This is because these studies operate with the notion of adequate and inadequate art reception (Bourdieu 1974, 159–201; Rössel 2009; Behnke 2012), with a concept that actually legitimizes a specific bourgeois knowledge of art as adequate and everything else as inadequate (Zahner 2012, 2014). Thus, these studies produce a rather ideologized picture of broad audiences as a defective crowd that has to be educated in one way or the other. Furthermore, they tend to overestimate the “decoding abilities” of the elite, especially in relation to contemporary art.

What is lacking here are studies that aim at reconstructing the cultural interests and consumption habits of these people that form audiences, by investigating their practice of visiting cultural institutions and engaging with culture and the arts (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2010, 27–33).

Studies that aim at systematically recording subjective interpretations and attitudes of culture consumption as part of everyday life are, at present, almost nowhere to be found in Germany (for an exception see Domantis 2017). This type of research could perhaps reduce existing fears and prejudices and lead to a more fruitful cultural policy discourse beyond antielitism and mass paranoia. Maybe a discourse on the grounds of this knowledge could counteract the calls for the market-based liberalization of the field, which are, at present, growing louder and louder.

Saying this, one has to emphasize that the situation in Germany is still very different from e.g. that in Great Britain. German cultural policy is a social policy in a very specific sense. Its core ideas, in particular, the notion that culture is the basis for all spiritual and imaginary dimensions of mankind, still relate to Idealism (Wesner 2010, 434–36). In this notion, culture needs autonomy to enfold its beneficial function for the individual and society as a whole. This idea of culture and the notion of the autonomy of art are still deeply rooted in German society. These concepts evidently counteract many attempts to implement evidence-based policy-making in the cultural sector in Germany. Having seen what happened to culture under the Nazi and the GDR regimes, wide parts of the German population are convinced that the arts must be protected from the market *and* state and their attempts to functionalize art for their purposes. Statements such as that of Chris Smith, a former Secretary of State and Culture in Great Britain who said on arts funding, “[T]his is not something for nothing. We want to see measurable outcomes for the investments which are being made”, would produce vast storms of public protest in Germany at present. But one has to see that the financial pressures are growing and that the financing of arts and culture is being placed under growing pressures.

Notes

1. Inscribed in the original foundational act of the Federal Republic of Germany and expressed through its constitutional articles, the local and regional authorities are given special emphasis in Article 30 of the basic

law (*Grundgesetz*), stipulating the following: “The exercise of governmental powers and the discharge of governmental functions is the task of the *Länder*, except where otherwise provided for or permitted by this Basic Law” (Burns and Will 2003, 134).

2. In Leipzig, the longtime general manager of the theaters was suspended on December 6, 1989, almost immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the SED Council for Culture was replaced by an elected head of the department for culture, a doctorate in law from the former Federal Republic (Höpel 2015).
3. They were changed into *Eigenbetriebe*. *Eigenbetriebe* remain integrated in municipal administrative structures. They are legally dependent, but organizationally and economically, they act independently. The management of an *Eigenbetrieb* has to present an annual business plan and report regularly to the municipality about its economic actions. The organizational basis of an *Eigenbetrieb* is commercial bookkeeping. See Deutscher Bundestag (2007, 97–98) and Eichler (1995, 157–58).
4. It promotes an understanding of *Bildung* as individual self-cultivation, as originally found in ancient Greece: “Emphasis on this cultural legacy has been articulated since the middle of the 18th Century, when the educated middle classes (*Bildungsbürgertum*) started to dominate State administration. This influential grouping in society, described by Hans Ulrich Wehler as the ‘state intelligentsia’, had no direct parallel elsewhere in Europe. They favored education, highlighted talent in art and science as important within the concept of the humanistic world interpretation.” Poets and thinkers, therefore, became the tools of the educated middle classes, which they had set successfully against the previously privileged aristocracy, who gained access to power via land ownership and birthright but not via their cultural achievements (Wesner 2010, 438–39).
5. During the times of Classicism and Romanticism in Germany, art became an antithesis to rationality and utilitarianism. The economically ambitious but politically powerless bourgeoisie (*Bürgertum*) created art as refuge opposing economy and politics. Moreover, it designed the aesthetic as a place of purely subjective experience, promoting human individuality in a unique way. Art was thought of as autonomous, inasmuch as forming an unique aesthetic normativity beyond the obligations of representation and decoration: “If art played the role of decorating the life of the aristocracy, it received the higher duty in the life of the free-thinking bourgeoisie to become the messenger of the highest and lowest,

- which urges for expression in the human chest” (Schücking 1961, 27; my own translation.) Therefore, during Romanticism, the theory of the higher truth of art achieved increasing reputation (Zahner 2006, 22–23).
6. One result of these new directions in cultural policy is the foundation of five self-governing, state-financed cultural funds acting as a mediator between the state and the arts sector. The fund “socioculture” is especially seen as exemplary for the successful democratization of funding in culture up to the present. In 1995, half of the 14 states (Länder) incorporated sociocultural associations directly or indirectly in the allocation of funds. See Wagner (1999, 205).
 7. It is estimated that the number of cultural institutions in German decoupled from 1960 to 2008 (Sievers 2008, 1).
 8. Advertising and software/games industry are described as creative industries. Deutscher Bundestag (2007, 335).
 9. In the city of Erlangen, the budget for culture dropped from 1991 to 1994 from 6.29% to 5.42% of the general budget, and in Nuremberg, from 5.14% to 4.40%. In Gelsenkirchen, the share of cultural expenditure within the general budget decreased from 1992 to 1995 from 4.6% to 3.5%, and in Dortmund, from 4.5% to 4.08%. In the mid-1990s in Frankfurt, DM 72 million had to be shaved of the cultural budget, which had been DM 400 million at the beginning of the 1990s. See Röbbke (1995, 135) and Burns and Will (2003, 147).
 10. In 1993, the Senate of Berliner decided to close the Schiller Theatre and discussed cutting down the funding of other theaters in Berlin. Theaters in the cities of Hamburg, Köln, and Frankfurt were forced to achieve significant savings. Management consultants advised the reduction of the funding for theaters in other cities; for example, McKinsey recommended a cutback of the cultural budget of the city of Bremen by DM 45 million within three years. See Giese and Göke (1999, 60–61).
 11. In Frankfurt, for example, the decision was made to cut the funding of the open scene by 10%. See Röbbke (1995, 136).
 12. The discourse on “New Public Management” (NPM) was initiated in the Western industrial states in the 1980s. (See Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 91.) The goal of this new administrative control system was to relieve public services from some of their duties, to improve their performance, and to achieve cost savings. Part of NPM is the decentralized administration of resources, management by objectives, contract management, and replacement of fiscal accounting by double-entry

economic accounting (Doppik). (See Sievers 1995, 30–34; Schrijvers 1995, 45–48; Detert-Weber 1997.) With reference to NPM, extensive privatizations were postulated: public services should be converted into commercial companies resp. public authorities transferred into private legal forms in order to appear on markets to improve their performance. Moreover, massive savings should be realized by “the participation of social groups in the creation of public goods” (Sievers 1995, 30–31; Fuchs 1997, 236) and the strengthening of the cooperation of public and private actors. (See Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 92).

13. In 1983, the *Zentrum für Kulturforschung* (ZfK) (Center for Cultural Research) and the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft* (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) founded the *Qualifikationsverbund Kultur* (Qualification Network for Culture) to develop continuous educational offers for cultural managers on federal, state, and local levels. Hamburg offered in 1989 the first master’s course in Cultural Management in Germany. See (Rauhe 1994, 14–16).
14. It goes along with the overall path of the German consensus-oriented policy system of that time. Even if the influence of neoliberalist ideas increased somewhat under the conservative chancellor Helmut Kohl (1982–98) and a more liberal view of state activities was implemented, there was no aggressive liberalization taking place in Germany compared with Margaret Thatcher’s Britain or Ronald Reagan’s United States (Schnyder and Jackson 2013, 329).
15. More than 60% of the existing cultural foundations in Germany were established from 1980 to 1990, including cultural foundations of public authorities, for example, cultural foundations of the *Länder* (e.g., Stiftung Kulturgut Baden-Württemberg, founded 1986, Stiftung Niedersachsen, founded 1987, Kulturstiftung des Landes Sachsen, founded 1993). The public cultural foundations are provided with one-off assets that they have at their disposal and are therefore no longer bound to public budget regulations. See Wagner (1999, 191–92).
16. For example, the cultural foundation of Sachsen does not offer subsidy on a long-term or institutional basis, but only for projects.
17. “Governance” is an administration concept discussed since the mid-1990s. It extends methods of NPM toward an “activating state,” aiming at integrating social groups and institutions in solving social problems in a more structured way. The cooperation of public and private actors is to

- be increased and improved, and the development and promotion of networks and societies supported. Deutscher Bundestag (2007, 92).
18. A rather recent example for this practice is the Museum Brandhorst, which opened in May 2009 in the Kunstareal Munich. Anette and Udo Brandhorst had been collecting contemporary art since the 1970s and wanted to make their collection available to the public via a newly constructed museum. The state of Bavaria financed the €46 million building, and the *Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung* (Bavarian State Painting Collections) covers the running costs of the institution. See Museum Brandhorst (2014).
 19. On an axis measuring nations' total public expenditure per capita on culture, Germany still figures toward the top of that axis, with \$85 per capita compared, for example, with the United States with \$6 per capita (National Endowment for the Arts 2000). The intervention of public authorities in Germany still vastly overshadows that of private foundations and the market. Governmental sources in Germany still supply roughly 90% of the funding necessary to sustain cultural undertakings compared with only 5% in the United States (Ahearne 2003, 128; McIsaac 2007, 372).
 20. Approximately 815,000 people were employed in the German cultural sector (public and nonprofit sector included) in 2003. Approximately 197,000 of these people were self-employed. With almost 25% of all employees in the cultural sector, this is well above the overall percentage of freelancers in the entire German job market and the tendency is rising. See ERICarts (2013, D-31), Söndermann (2005, 459–77), and Söndermann (2007, 387–406).
 21. This advanced function of prices is illustrated by the practice of the gallery René Block at the 1969 Cologne Art Market. Block priced the installation *The Pack* by Joseph Beuys at the same price as a comparable work by Robert Rauschenberg: DM 110,000. Rauschenberg was one of the leading American Pop Art artists at the time. He had won the “Great Award for Painting” at the 1964 Biennale in Venice and possessed immense prestige within the art field of the time. It was a huge sensation when *The Pack* was sold at that price on the last day of the show to a German collector. Beuys was immediately perceived on par with the first rank of American Pop Art.
 22. The term *Kulturelle Bildung* appeared for the first time in the 1970s and is strongly related to idea of “culture for all and from all.” It only gained momentum within the cultural policy discourse during recent years.

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