Performance evaluation in the arts

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From The Margins of Accounting to The Core of Accountability

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Unifying arts and management may appear natural in the *life-world* of someone who has studied and practiced as a pianist and as a business engineer. Nevertheless, this becomes a challenging endeavor in the *system-world* of the current academic and cultural fields, not so much from a substantive point of view, but rather from an organizational one. The first challenge was to place my research project within the institutional context of a PhD program and to get the research financed. The second challenge was to convince opera 'institutions' to participate in my project. The third challenge was to transform the fragmentary organizational settings of my research into a substantively coherent and relevant contribution to the disciplines of arts management and accounting.

My two supervisors, Jeltje van der Meer and Robert (Bob) Scapens, and my co-supervisor, Kees Vuyk, had different but fundamental roles in this endeavor. Although she had not yet been involved with the artistic field in her previous research, Jeltje embraced my project with enthusiasm and enabled my being enrolled as an external PhD student at the research institute of the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Groningen: SOM. I am very grateful for the support I received from SOM. I was able to attend very relevant courses and conferences and to cover most costs of my empirical research through SOM's support. Since I was not enrolled as an internal PhD student, I had to finance not only my research, but more generally my very existence through other sources. Luckily enough, my teaching in arts management and arts marketing has always been requested by Dutch universities and could indirectly finance my research. Through Kees I finally got a full-time appointment with not only teaching but also research duties at the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University. Later I changed to a similar position at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Amsterdam, where I am currently working. The Faculty of Humanities of the University of Amsterdam also covered a part of the costs of my empirical research and supported my participation in relevant conferences. I am grateful for the substantial financial support that I have received from my current employer despite the financial difficulties it currently faces.

One very difficult task within my research project was to convince opera companies to cooperate with me for a case study. This cost a lot of time and energy. Jeltje helped me substantially with this, travelling around with me to meet with artistic and managing directors. I learned a lot from these meetings, and the lessons learned influenced, more or less consciously, what my research project has finally become. This is the reason why I would like to thank all the opera companies - the ones that agreed to cooperate as well as the ones that did not - and, obviously, their staff, for having substantially influenced my research by bringing it increasingly closer to the actual practice of the opera world.

At a course on case research methodology offered by SOM I had the pleasure and the luck to meet Bob for the first time. The long conversations with him, the literature he suggested to me, his critical (but always very polite) questions, elicited my own personal thinking about the researched topic at its best. Together with the freedom I was given by Jeltje, this offered me an environment where I could develop my own research project in a very personal way. Thanks to my two supervisors Jeltje and Bob, this PhD research project has also been an introspective trip into myself - into my way of thinking and reasoning; into my way of looking at the reality of the investigated topics and objects, but also of the context from which I investigate them, i.e. the academic one. With my co-supervisor

Kees I discussed above all the first two papers of this thesis, which were developed and published at the time of my appointment in Utrecht. These two papers are co-authored by, respectively, Miranda Boorsma and Martin Piber. Miranda has done seminal work on arts marketing, but stopped very early in her career, practically at the moment that I substituted her as a teacher in Groningen when she went on sabbatical leave. I was able to benefit from her work on the first paper and had full freedom to develop it further by my own for publication. I am grateful to Miranda for the opportunity she gave me to start my research from where she had left it. It was also a pleasure to work with Martin, who does similar work to mine, but in museums and not in performing arts. By coincidence, I met him when I first presented my paper with Miranda at a conference on performance measurement and management control in Nice. There we promised ourselves to write a paper together. This happened with the second paper of this thesis. Martin added his expertise on museums to the structure and the content of the paper, making it more interesting for a wider audience than only the one interested in performing arts.

When the research increasingly moved from arts management to accounting, it was above all Bob, who literally read everything I wrote and provided the greatest assistance. The first two papers were proofread by my dear friend Martin Rodden, whom I would like to thank again for this. For the last two, Bob made not only substantive, but also presentational suggestions. For the final consistency check, both of the long and time-consuming fourth paper based on my empirical research, and of the introduction and conclusion of the whole thesis, Jeltje had again a fundamental role. In particular, at the time when my main personal objective was to submit the manuscript as soon as possible, she stimulated me to reflect more on the main practical implications and on the directions for further research emerging from the thesis. This made the introduction and the conclusion of the thesis two more substantive pieces of research than may have happened with a thesis as mine, which consists of a collection of autonomous papers. In addition, her presentational suggestions substantially improved the Dutch summary of the thesis. Although the final responsibility for this thesis is fully mine, both with regard to its substantive and its presentational aspects, I am extremely grateful to Jeltje, Bob and Kees for their personal support and their academic contributions to its realization.

Together with Jeltje, Bob and Kees, my family has been fundamental in creating the conditions for making the *system-world* of the current academic and cultural fields fit in my personal *life-world*. I will always feel grateful to my parents for the education they have given to me: do not passively adapt to the world, but actively adapt the world to yourself! Without this attitude, I would have never been able to complete this research. Ultimately, the challenging undertaking of completing a PhD research project in fragmentary organizational settings was only feasible thanks to the supportive role of my wife Simona, who has always and unconditionally believed in me: in my ideas, in my plans, and in their execution, even when the results have arrived later than planned. Our wonderful son Alessandro and our wonderful daughter Amélie have obviously consumed a lot of my energy in the years of my research. My research was practically born with them. Nevertheless, they have given me back even more energy than they may have consumed; they were my motivation to pursue my endeavor even at times in which this would have seemed to many people the less sensible choice.

Amsterdam, 12 November 2015

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1. Introduction

„A great deal of the conventional manager's control is exercised through formal information. Such information plays a rather limited role for the orchestra conductor. When Bramwell [artistic director and conductor of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra] reads or processes information on the job, it is more about scores than about budgets. For him, musical information provides a much more relevant and direct way of judging performance. Just by listening with a trained ear, the conductor knows immediately how well the orchestra has done. Nothing needs to be measured. How could it be?"

Henry Mintzberg, 1998

1.1. General problem and objective of the thesis

This thesis studies the evaluation of artistic performance as part of the general practice of performance evaluation in publicly funded arts organizations. It does it from both an accounting and an arts management perspective. Accounting is the discipline where the topic of performance evaluation has its roots (see for instance Kaplan 1984). Arts management is the sub-discipline of management that studies strategic management, human resources management, finance and accounting, marketing and consumer behavior specifically in the arts and cultural sector (Evrard and Colbert 2000).

Due to the evidence-based evaluation policies introduced by many European governments since the 1990s, performance evaluation has become a dominant means of government control of the publicly funded arts sector (Lindqvist 2012). Publicly funded arts organizations have been increasingly asked to implement performance evaluation procedures as part of their managerial control practices (Lindqvist 2012). As a managerial control practice, in individual organizations "evaluation occurs when feedback about the system's current level of performance is compared to the planned level so that any discrepancies can be identified and corrective action prescribed" (Atkinson et al. 2004, 283).

Under the quantitative paradigm inspired by the business sector and propagated by the New Public Management (Hood 1991), numbers have become the dominant form of information to express the level of performance of organizations in the public sector in general, and, later, also of organizations in the publicly funded arts sector (Lindqvist 2012). While, in general, to evaluate means "to form an opinion of the amount, value or quality of something after thinking about it carefully" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2015), performance evaluation has largely been reduced to performance measurement, with the process of *thinking carefully* being replaced by the process of *measuring carefully*. By considering measurement a necessary precondition for forming opinions, not only about the amount, but also about the value and quality of something, the focus of policy makers has been on finding the 'best' measures of value and quality, instead of understanding the process of forming opinions about value and quality (Nielsen 2003). For sectors where value and quality have a different nature to those in business, such as the public sector in general and the arts

sector in particular (Caust 2003), this trend might potentially result in a gap between the abstract body of rules and procedures of performance evaluation imposed by governments and the way in which performance is actually evaluated by the managers who are in charge of the individual organizations and who eventually have to maintain and enhance the level of performance of their organizations (Roberts and Scapens 1985).

The objective of this thesis is to shift the focus of performance evaluation research in arts organizations from the technicalities of performance measurement to the process of sense-making about performance, particularly with respect to the artistic performance. This broader and, as seen above, more relevant perspective on evaluation requires an understanding of how performance evaluation rules and procedures are embodied by those organizational actors who are involved in performance evaluation practices. This understanding is a precondition for the development of performance evaluation systems that are able to account for the organizational reality for which they are designed (Roberts and Scapens 1985).

This objective is pursued through four autonomous pieces of research, presented in the form of four papers, each one with its own list of references. The last of the four papers is supplemented by four appendices which give a thorough account of the instruments used for data collection, and the reasoning behind the data analysis conducted in a case study of a publicly funded opera company. The four papers contribute to the objective of the thesis by investigating, respectively,

1. which objectives are at the core of the mission of publicly funded arts organizations and which rationale is adequate for their evaluation;
2. what approaches to the evaluation of artistic performance can be found in the arts management literature;
3. what approaches to the evaluation of artistic performance can be found in the accounting literature;
4. how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations (administrative, artistic, and technical managers) evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations and what their practice of evaluation says about accountability relationships in arts organizations.

Apart from the contribution they all make to the overall objective of this thesis, the four papers are linked together both thematically and methodologically. In the next sections of this introduction I explain the thematic and methodological links between the four papers. I conclude by presenting the outline of the thesis.

1.2. Performance evaluation in the arts: From the margins of accounting to the core of accountability

The four papers of this thesis are thematically linked by Miller's conceptualization of "the margins of accounting" (1998) and by Roberts and Scapens' broad and inclusive view of accountability as "the giving and demanding of reasons for conduct" (Roberts and Scapens 1985, 447). More specifically, this thesis studies performance evaluation in the arts as a practice that has developed at "the margins of accounting" (Miller 1998) but that can only be fully understood by looking at the core of accountability. According to Miller:

> Accounting is most interesting at its margins. For it is at the margins that we see new
> calculative practices added to the repertoire of accounting. It is at the margins that
> accounting as a body of legitimated practices is formed and reformed by the adding of
> devices and ideas of various kinds. It is at the margins that accounting intersects with,
> and comes into conflict with, other bodies of expertise. (Miller 1998, 605)

As will be shown in the third paper of this thesis, in accounting, where the topic of performance
evaluation has its roots (see for instance Kaplan 1984), the interest for the arts sector and,
specifically, for the topic of performance evaluation in the arts, has been minor so far. On the
contrary, as will be shown in the second paper of this thesis, performance evaluation has been a
popular topic in arts management research since Evrard and Colbert (2000) claimed a distinct role
for this sub-discipline of management. Performance evaluation in the arts has become an accounting
topic after a process of problematizing initiated by "outsiders":

> People working within a variety of other disciplines, or at least drawing extensively from
> them, including economics, business strategy, engineering and marketing, have, at
> different times, argued that accounting is lacking in specific respects, that accounting
> needs to be supplemented or modified in particular areas, or that it needs something
> wholly new. (Miller 1998, 606-607)

The first paper of this thesis problematizes performance evaluation, and especially the evaluation of
artistic performance, mainly from an arts marketing perspective. Arts marketing has a prominent
role within the sub-discipline of arts management (Evrard and Colbert 2000). Due to the growing
relevance of a relational view of art as experience, which highlights the importance of the reception
process in the creation of art (Boorsma 2006), arts consumers have not only a quantitative role
within the objectives of arts organizations (e.g. number of visitors reached by the organization) but
also a qualitative one (e.g. what meaning is given by the audience to the artistic work of the
organization). Consequently, such traditional accounting measures as financial figures, and such
traditional marketing measures as audience numbers, cannot account for the contribution of arts
marketing to the achievement of the artistic objectives of the organizations. More generally, they
cannot account for the artistic performance of the organization, which is at the center of the mission
of publicly funded arts organizations and should be consequently at the core of performance
evaluation in these organizations (Rentschler and Potter 1996).

The attempt to better account for reception as a fundamental process within the creation of art is,
again, a typical case of developing accounting at its margins:

> Management consultants, textbook writers, academics and commentators of various
> kinds are appealing increasingly for a more direct and immediate way of grasping and
> making visible the product and production processes. Once again, management
> accounting is being modified at the margins. (Miller 1998, 618)

Based on a further development of the Balanced Scorecard model (Kaplan and Norton 1992), the
first paper shows the primacy of artistic-mission-related objectives in publicly funded arts
organizations and, consequently, the necessity of evaluating such qualitative aspects as the nature
and intensity of artistic experiences in order to adequately account for the performance of the
organization. In this way, an arts marketing problem becomes an accounting problem. The proposed
model helps to clarify the centrality of artistic experience within the objectives of publicly funded

arts organizations as well as the urgency of its evaluation; however it cannot solve the problem of how to evaluate it.

As it can be read in the second paper of this thesis, contributions to the topic of performance evaluation in the arts come, apart from arts marketing and, more generally, arts management, from many other disciplines: leisure studies, cultural policy, public administration, organization studies, marketing management, cultural theory, and music. This multidisciplinary concern for an accounting topic is also covered by Miller's conceptualization of the margins of accounting:

> […] a concern with the margins of accounting makes apparent the extent to which accounting is permeable to other bodies of expertise. Accounting has been made and re-made by borrowing calculative technologies and rationales from a disparate range of knowledges and associated ideals. Accounting, one might say, has a low epistemological threshold. (Miller 1998, 618)

However, this low epistemological threshold can also form a barrier to knowledge sharing between the different and diverse disciplines involved. This is also the case within the young field of arts management, where different disciplines and research traditions coexist (Rentschler and Shilbury 2008).

The second paper of this thesis builds on the idea that research traditions influence the relevance of evaluation approaches for the organizations and communities for which they are developed. Indeed, the second paper shows that most approaches proposed in the arts management literature are based, often unconsciously, on a positivist research tradition. These approaches do not take into account the organizational and institutional complexity of the individual organizations in which they are supposed to be used. Instead, they search for general validity, under the legitimating umbrella of scientific method. As a result, they neglect the role of human agency in performance evaluation; they enhance the gap between theory and practice of performance evaluation; and they purposively avoid considering the ethical implications of the use of the proposed performance evaluation approaches in the practice.

With the conclusions of the second paper there is a shift in the focus of the thesis. The invitation to investigate the (artistic) values shared within individual organizations and communities as well as the interests of the organizations' stakeholders in performance evaluation has still echoes of Miller's conceptualization of the margins of accounting:

> […] it is at the margins that accounting comes to be linked up to the demands, expectations, and ideals of diverse social and institutional agencies. (Miller 1998, 605)

Nevertheless, the 'remaining' questions which are formulated in the conclusions of the second paper take the focus of the thesis beyond "the ways in which the calculative practices and rationales of accounting have been assembled" at the margins of accounting (Miller 1998, 619). The invitation to investigate what practices of evaluation are organic in artistic processes, their relation to managerial procedures of evaluation, and their impact on the way in which arts are produced and consumed, moves the focus of the thesis away from the technicalities of evaluation. It is their embodiment in the different organizational and societal actors of the arts sector that becomes central.

The study of performance evaluation in publicly funded arts organizations moves consequently from the calculative practices that are added at the margins of accounting to the impact that those practices have on the core of accountability, that is, as seen above, on "the giving and demanding of reasons for conduct" by the different organizational and societal actors (Roberts and Scapens 1985, 447). The urgency of this move is incisively pointed out by Munro in his discussion of accountability as a key concept in critical management studies:

> To counter the neoliberal dogmas in circulation […], more grounded understandings of how accountability works in everyday practice are badly needed. (Munro 2011, 10)

The third paper of this thesis reviews the accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector in a search for that critical attitude to the study of performance evaluation in the arts that, as the second paper shows, is absent from the arts management literature. By critical attitude I mean a shift of the research focus away from the technicalities of evaluation rules and procedures and towards their embodiment in the different organizational and societal actors of the arts sector. The third paper shows that recent accounting contributions on the performing arts, a sub-sector of the arts sector, all approach, at least partially, the topic of performance evaluation, and that they all do it from a critical perspective. These contributions do not yet form a thorough theoretical framework; i.e., a coherent system of concepts, and logical links between them, which is able to explain the practice of performance evaluation in the arts sector in general. Nevertheless, they form an important analytical framework for field research on the practice of performance evaluation in performing arts organizations. Indeed, they offer a specific analytical lens that helps to structure both data collection and analysis. Consequently, the fourth paper of this thesis studies the practice of performance evaluation, in particular with respect to the evaluation of artistic performance, in a performing arts organization: a publicly funded opera company.

The third paper also shows how most contributions on accounting in the arts and cultural sector point to the necessity of discussing the role of performance evaluation from an accountability perspective. Considering also the potential offered by the adoption of an accountability perspective for a deep understanding of accounting in general (Roberts and Scapens 1985), in the fourth paper, this perspective is consequently embraced to discuss the findings of the case study of the practice of evaluation in a publicly funded opera company. In this way, the study of performance evaluation in the arts, which had begun in this thesis as a study of a practice that has developed at the margins of accounting, ends by highlighting the importance of an understanding of what this practice says about accountability relationships in publicly funded arts organizations. These relationships are specified by Zan in the context of his study of the impact of managerialism on the arts and cultural sector as follows:

> To speak of accountability presupposes that someone is called upon to be accountable for something to someone else. There are therefore two premises, one which is informative (the information that allows some kind of representations of something), the other organizational-institutional regarding governance, the identification of that 'someone' who will take responsibility for managing 'something'. (Zan 2006, 6-7)

The fourth paper represents a beginning of the process of understanding of these relationships. While the thesis, through its four papers, departs from the study of performance evaluation in the

arts as a practice of accounting at its margins, it is only a first, modest step towards an understanding of the core of accountability in arts organizations.

1.3. Performance evaluation in the arts: A new pragmatic approach

The four papers of this thesis are methodologically linked by Wicks and Freeman's (1998) interpretation of new pragmatism and their call for its application to organization studies. Since Wicks and Freeman's 1998 article, the pragmatic tradition has become increasingly relevant within organization and management studies (see for instance Surie and Ashley 2008; Wagner et al. 2008; Blindheim and Langhelle 2010; Singer 2010; Ruwhiu and Cone 2010; Fendt and Kaminska-Labbé 2011; Keleman and Rumens 2012; Ruwhiu and Cone 2013; Jensen and Sandström 2013; Farjoun et al. 2015) and within accounting and information systems research (see for instance Nørreklit et al. 2006; Goldkuhl 2012; Micheli and Mari 2014; Ter Bogt and van Helden 2014; Baker and Schaltegger 2015).

In order to go beyond the paradigmatic debate between the positivist and anti-positivist research traditions, Wicks and Freeman suggested giving moral and practical questions a more central role in organization studies:

> Pragmatism allows researchers to put this [positivist /anti-positivist] debate to the side and, in the process, develop research that is focused on serving human purposes - i.e., both morally rich and useful to organizations and the communities in which they operate. (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 123)

Consequently, research programs should be 'justified' by the extent to which they are able to serve human purposes (124). It then becomes secondary what research methods and techniques are used to pursue this objective, and whether they are typical of the positivist or the anti-positivist tradition. Wicks and Freeman called for the application of more diverse and multifaceted research methods and techniques, and for integrating qualitative, quantitative and humanistic research approaches. The choice should be the most appropriate in order to provide "a compelling and reliable answer to a given question" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 136).

Due to the low epistemological threshold of accounting knowledge and of arts management research, drawing from multiple methods and forms of evidence which are inherent in the different research traditions seems very appropriate. Consequently, the four papers of this thesis apply a diverse set of methods and techniques. The first paper is conceptual; the second uses textual analysis; the third is a systematic literature review; and the fourth a case study.

The first paper builds on Boorsma's relational view of the arts (2006) and on the literature on performance management in not-for-profit organizations. It proposes a model which serves as a new rationale for the evaluation of the performance of arts organizations. Evaluation should focus on the artistic value created for their stakeholders by these organizations, and give the experience of art a central role. In general this type of conceptual, theoretical contribution (Whetten 1989) might give a pragmatist the impression that "researchers simply sit around and come up with fairy tales about how life in organizations might look in the land of make believe" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 130). Nevertheless, by suggesting a new rationale in an academic debate dominated so far by the positivist research tradition, the theoretical contribution offered by the first paper is an example of what Wicks and Freeman call a "creative spirit [which] might prove an important starting point" to

change direction in an area where change is required to better serve the community. In this case, a radical change was required to come up with a performance evaluation rationale that is "useful to organizations and the communities in which they operate" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 123).

The second paper analyzes arts management research approaches to the evaluation of the artistic performance of arts organizations. The textual analysis of the articles in which the approaches are presented focuses on the three main categories used by Wicks and Freeman (1998) to distinguish the positivist, anti-positivist, and new pragmatic research traditions. These three categories are: view of reality; methods and techniques; and the role of ethics. The use of textual analysis, which is a technique coming from humanistic research (see for instance McKee 2003), allows for a systematic scrutiny of the approaches and for the identification of the research traditions behind each approach.

The third paper offers a systematic literature review of contributions to the arts and cultural sector which have appeared in accounting journals. The review is systematic with respect to its objective, the criteria used for the selection of the reviewed contributions, and the structure of the analysis (see for instance Denyer and Tranfield 2009). The objective of the review is to understand to what extent accounting contributions on the arts and cultural sector are able to offer a critical perspective on the study of performance evaluation practices in arts and cultural organizations. The selection of the accounting journals for review was purposive (Randolph 2009), combining a bibliographic approach with a personal-contact approach (Cooper 1986). Every journal included in the selection was searched for articles on the arts and cultural sector over the last 30 years consistently with the objective of the literature review. Thirty years separate the conclusion of my literature review, at the end of 2013, from 1983, the year of the publication of Hopwood's seminal article "On Trying to Study Accounting in the Contexts in Which it Operates", which was a milestone in redirecting accounting research towards new and more critical perspectives. Finally, the literature has been reviewed in chronological sequence in order to relate the development of accounting research on the arts and cultural sector to specific historical contexts, including both the organizational and the institutional settings in which the research was conducted and published.

The fourth paper is based on a single case study. The second and the third paper show the importance of contextualizing research on performance evaluation, respectively in arts management and accounting research. A case-based approach is considered appropriate for the study of the practice of accounting, and consequently of performance evaluation, in its organizational and institutional context (Bruns 1989). In particular, a case-based approach offers the opportunity to understand accounting beyond procedures (Scapens 1990; Otley and Berry 1994) and "to obtain a better understanding of accounting practice and of the role and functioning of accounting in organizations, including the pressures which accounting exerts and has exerted on it, and the interests it serves and undermines, and to compare the claimed potential of accounting with its practical achievements and consequences [...]" (Humphrey and Scapens 1996, 86-87). In line with the objective of the thesis, which is, as seen in section 1.1, to shift the focus of performance evaluation research in arts organizations away from the technicalities of performance measurement and towards the process of sense-making about performance, particularly with respect to artistic performance, a case-based approach offers the "capacity to move away from managerialist notions of accounting and to provide more challenging reflections on the nature of accounting knowledge and practice" (Humphrey and Scapens 1996, 86).

1.4. Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured in six chapters. After this introduction, which presents the general problem and the main objective of the thesis as well as its thematic and methodological settings, chapters two to five present respectively each of the four papers that contributed to the achievement of the main objective of the thesis. In chapter six, by means of a conclusion, the main contributions of the individual papers will be briefly summarized, while room will be given to more general considerations about the main contributions of the thesis as a whole. These include: the theoretical contributions to the two disciplines from whose perspectives the topic of evaluation of artistic performance in publicly funded arts organizations has been studied, i.e. arts management and accounting; the practical implications for the managers of publicly funded organizations and for their main funder, i.e. the government; and suggestions for further research.

As the four papers are four autonomous pieces of research, for the readability of the thesis it has been decided to include the respective list of references and appendices at the end of each chapter.

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2. Arts marketing performance: An artistic-mission-led approach to evaluation[1]

ABSTRACT:

Marketing in the arts sector has evolved during the past decades from a functional tool to a business philosophy. At the same time, a relational view of art as experience has emerged in contemporary arts philosophy, highlighting the role of arts consumers in the creation and reception of arts. As a consequence, arts consumers have gained a central position within the artistic mission of arts organizations, posing new challenges to the role of arts marketing both as a practice and as an academic discipline. Against this background, financial figures and audience numbers are insufficient indicators of the contribution that arts marketing makes to the functioning of arts organizations. This article suggests evaluating the performance of arts marketing based on the contribution made to the achievement of the arts organization's artistic mission and proposes a model based on Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard to guide the artistic-mission-led evaluation of arts marketing performance. By paying attention to the new strategic role of arts marketing within the emerging relational view of the arts and by integrating recent literature on performance management in nonprofit organizations, we make a theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge on arts marketing performance evaluation.

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[1] This chapter is based on the article with the same title, co-written with Miranda Boorsma and published in December 2010 in *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 40 (4): 297-317.

2.1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, a fundamental change in managerial culture has occurred in the nonprofit and public arts sector. That is, arts organizations have shown a growing interest in managerial practices and ideologies stemming from for-profit business. The increased pressure on arts organizations to be more accountable for their behavior, to become less dependent on public funding, to stimulate audience participation, and to compete with the entertainment industry has, more specifically, resulted in a widespread adoption of marketing principles. The proliferation of arts marketing has been accompanied by an increasing number of academic publications on this subject (Rentschler 2002). Rentschler's examination of these publications shows that the focus in the arts sector during the past decades has evolved from marketing as a functional tool to marketing as a business philosophy and strategy. Arts marketing as a discipline has thus matured and become integrated into the organizational strategies of arts organizations.

A sign of maturity is the emerging research into the performance of arts marketing, a common next step within the maturing process of a managerial discipline. Recently, a few first studies on arts marketing effectiveness have appeared (see for instance Voss and Voss 2000; Gainer and Padanyi 2002; Rentschler et al. 2002; Arnold and Tapp 2003).[2] The increasing acceptance of marketing strategies among arts organizations increases the pressure for an investigation of subsequent effects on organizational performance and the search for adequate performance indicators to monitor such strategies. Although arts organizations want to implement arts marketing strategies for the viability of their organizations, they are not yet supported by a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between marketing decisions and organizational performance. It is thus a task for arts marketing researchers to investigate how organizational objectives can be translated into arts marketing objectives, and to find adequate indicators of arts marketing performance. Research into these issues is becoming an increasingly important academic challenge.

Research into the relationship between arts marketing and organizational performance is closely linked to the discussion on the strategic role of marketing within arts organizations. Once performance indicators are decided upon they will go on to set the agenda. The indicators and the theory behind them may sooner or later determine what is considered good or bad marketing practice. This implies that the selection of performance indicators should be based upon a well-thought-out concept of the strategic role of arts marketing. After reviewing the existing literature on the relationship between arts marketing objectives and performance evaluation, we explain our choice of the concept of arts marketing based on a relational view of the arts proposed by Boorsma (2006). Consequently, we propose a performance management model for arts organizations based on this concept and built upon the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton 1992), which serves as a guide for an artistic-mission-led evaluation of arts marketing performance. Finally, limitations of the model are discussed and areas for further research are suggested.

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[2] There are a number of other publications on the measurement of the performance of cultural organizations, for instance Gilhespy (1999; 2001) and Towse (2001), but these studies are not focused specifically on the effectiveness of arts marketing.

2.2. Arts marketing objectives and performance

In their textbooks on marketing for arts and cultural organizations, Kotler and Scheff (1997), Kotler and Kotler (1998), Kolb (2000), Colbert et al. (2001), and Klein (2001) offer systematic and practical overviews of how marketing principles can be applied to the arts and devote several sections to the formulation of marketing objectives, goal setting, and performance evaluation.

Kotler and Scheff (1997, 54-55) as well as Kotler and Kotler (1998, 87-88) state that nonprofit organizations pursue objectives other than maximizing profits and propose the following set of possible management objectives for nonprofit museums and performing arts organizations:

- *Surplus maximization* (maximizing revenues minus costs);
- *Revenue maximization;*
- *Usage maximization* (maximizing attendance numbers);
- *Capacity targeting* (encouraging or discouraging demand so as to align it with existing capacity);
- *Full or partial cost recovery* (breaking even or putting a maximum on the annual deficit);
- *Budget maximization* (maximizing the size of the organization and the number of programs offered);
- *Producer satisfaction maximization* (maximizing the staff's own professional interests).

In order for them to be able to evaluate performance, the chosen objectives ideally have to be restated in the operational and measurable form known as goals. This is possible for tangible objectives. For example, a museum's objective of increased attendance has to be turned into a goal, such as a 10 percent increase in the next twelve months (Kotler and Kotler 1998, 89). As to intangible objectives, e.g. *producer satisfaction maximization,* the formulation of operational and measurable goals is much more problematic. This might explain why the authors suggest that marketing performance be evaluated on the basis of three common quantitative control tools - revenue analysis, expense analysis, and ratio analysis - and two qualitative indicators for which different forms of operationalizations are available - customer satisfaction tracking and review of marketing effectiveness-efficiency (Kotler and Kotler 1998, 337-341; see also Kotler and Scheff 1997, 456-460). Colbert et al. (2000, 226, 236) look at sales figures, market share, and contribution to profits. In general, marketing objectives and performance evaluation tools proposed in the textbooks mentioned above focus on easily quantifiable aspects and are thus defined mainly in terms of audience numbers and financial results. Nevertheless, the authors warn of the necessity to be careful in applying the criterion of cost-effectiveness. They realize that the arts organizations' missions might "dictate" carrying on with activities and programs that are not cost-effective (Kotler and Scheff 1997, 460; Kotler and Kotler 1998, 341). Audience numbers and financial results are thus generally considered proper indicators for evaluating marketing *effectiveness* as long as *efficiency* considerations do not interfere with artistic decisions.

Measuring financial results and attendance numbers is also the dominant methodology in research focusing specifically on arts marketing performance evaluation. Voss and Voss (2000) measured the impact of product-orientation and customer-orientation in professional theaters on subscriber ticket sales, total income, and net surplus/deficit and found that customer orientation exhibits a negative association with these performance indicators. Rentschler et al. (2002) propose a mathematical model to assist arts managers to decide whether to focus their efforts on audience attraction or retention in order to maximize earned income. Arnold and Tapp (2003) investigated the influence of

marketing efforts and direct marketing implementation by nonprofit arts organizations on sales performance, fundraising performance, and season-ticket subscription. They concluded that marketing efforts are effective and that direct marketing is an especially efficient way to increase season-ticket subscriptions.

The emphasis on financial and audience results in arts marketing textbooks and research is not consistent with the dominant approach found in the literature on performance evaluation in the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit researchers claim that because nonprofits have multiple constituents, it is essential to examine performance on the basis of a variety of different stakeholder-related constructs and warn that it is necessary to be careful with the use of financial outcomes or attendance numbers (see for instance Herman 1990; Herman and Renz 1997; 1999). Evaluation on the basis of such outcomes can generate pressure to engage in inappropriate practices such as "creaming," which occurs when only the most eligible recipients are selected and served by the organization (Herman and Renz 1998, 121); a practice that is clearly in conflict with the outreach goals of many nonprofit arts organizations and those of publicly funded ones. In their study of the impact of the application of the marketing concept on the organizational performance of nonprofit arts organizations, Gainer and Padanyi (2002) thus explicitly chose not to evaluate performance on the basis of financial indicators. Instead they used self-reported judgments based on three dimensions - client satisfaction, resource acquisition, and reputation among peers.[3] Although this approach goes clearly beyond the common use of financial indicators, it still lacks a clear link between the evaluation of arts marketing performance and mission achievement.

There are several reasons that can explain the preponderance of financial data and audience numbers among arts marketing objectives and performance indicators. Arts organizations in Continental Europe are currently facing one of the largest managerial challenges in recent history. For a long time, they could rely on public subsidies and were protected from pressures to respond to market changes in order to ensure their existence. The system of public subsidies made arts organizations less alert to changes in consumer behavior and to competition from the ever-expanding entertainment industry. Since the 1980s relevant changes have occurred. In most Western countries increasing audience participation has become one of the primary objectives of arts policy. At the same time government funding has been put under pressure and competition for the consumer's leisure time has increased steadily. These changes have forced arts organizations to become market-oriented, to respond more to market forces, and to develop strategies in order to stabilize and diversify funding sources. As a result, arts organizations are increasingly turning to marketing as a way of raising attendance and revenues (see Kolb 2000; Rentschler 2002; Burton 2003). This context partly explains why financial data and audience numbers became the cornerstones of arts marketing goal-setting and performance evaluation.

Another explanatory source is formed by the assumptions underlying arts marketing theory, according to which the role of arts marketing is to support the accomplishment of the arts organization's mission without influencing the mission directly (Kotler and Kotler 1998, 322). Kotler and Scheff (1997) describe arts marketing as the efforts of an arts organization "to sense, serve, and satisfy the needs and wants of its clients and publics within the constraints of its mission" (36).

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[3] Measuring client satisfaction is not new. Arts marketing scholars like Kotler and Scheff (1997) and Kotler and Kotler (1998) also consider client satisfaction a suitable control measure, but only when based on the assumption of a clear cause-effect relationship between client satisfaction and long-term revenues.

Colbert et al. (2001) state that the artistic product plays the key role in any cultural organization and see the arts marketer's task in seeking a sufficient number of consumers who are attracted to a product that is "consistent with the mission of the cultural enterprise" (15). These authors define arts marketing and artistic creation as independent tasks, each maintaining its own logic and responsibilities (see also Boorsma 2006). This view of arts marketing is based upon the conception of art as a self-contained autonomous phenomenon, as it has developed under the auspices of Enlightenment philosophy.

From this point of view the choice of financial figures and attendance numbers as performance indicators is understandable. Moreover, who could be against more attendees and funds for the arts, especially when it is promised not to compromise the artistic mission? This line of thinking seems plausible and hard to refute. There are, however, opponents like Caust (2003), who claim that this way of thinking will ultimately lead to the production of safe, consumer-orientated arts products anyway. Caust does not question the importance of audience building for the arts, but makes a case against business-based performance evaluation. We agree with the argument that the adoption of business language and evaluation methods inevitably increases the risk that artistic sacrifices will be made. It is utopian to think that the implementation of financial evaluation will not affect the artistic functioning of the organization. In theory it is easy to promise that autonomy will be guaranteed, but in practice there will be constant pressure for this promise to be compromised. What happens if the artistic team proposes a fundamental shift in artistic policy with regard to a more experimental but less popular program? Will the practice of "creaming" that we described above occur, for instance, when an arts organization offers a popular as well as an experimental program and marketing efforts are mainly directed at supporting the popular program in order to meet financial targets? Of course this can be a way for internal financing to keep the experimental program alive indirectly, but from an artistic point of view it might be preferable to expand the audience for the experimental program, which financially is seen as an unattractive choice. These kinds of managerial dilemmas are difficult to deal with and might become more apparent as arts management becomes more institutionalized and the position of arts marketers more influential. These dilemmas result from the gap that exists between the objectives formulated in the artistic mission of arts organizations and the approach adopted to evaluate arts marketing performance.

At the beginning of the arts marketing era, that is, in the 1980s and early 1990s, it seemed practical and unproblematic to use business-based indicators. In the transition phase there was much to be gained from this turn toward marketing. There was no direct pressure to sacrifice elements of the artistic program. There was a lot of leeway resulting from the time when arts organizations did not have to worry about reaching larger audiences and generating funds. But after more than two decades of arts marketing there is not much leeway left. Nowadays arts organizations have to deal with the harsh reality of turning a dollar. They have to live with constant financial pressure on the artistic program. This increases the need for an approach that closes the gap between mission and performance indicators.

2.3. Organization's mission and arts marketing according to a relational view of arts

The autonomy of art is a modernist concept. Under the assumption of autonomy, the arts organization's artistic mission is likely to be defined in terms of the works of art that the organization wants to create, present, collect, and/or distribute. According to Novitz (2001), modernists tend

toward the view that the arts exist independently of particular cultures and times, that art can be defined on the basis of intrinsic properties, and that there are clear boundaries that distinguish art from life. A modernist formulation of the artistic mission describes what the artistic team wants to produce or present and not what they should achieve in relation to their audience or at a societal level. The assumption of the modernist boundary between art and life makes it possible to define the arts marketing task of finding and building audiences as an independent strategic task and to assume that marketing principles can be applied to distribute artworks without affecting or changing the artistic results. From a managerial point of view this is a convenient standpoint, but unfortunately it can no longer be considered generally valid within the contemporary arts scene.

Since the postmodern wave that was rampant during the second half of the twentieth century, the concept of art seems to have moved further and further away from the modernist view (see for instance Schaeffer 1998). The arts are no longer seen as a phenomenon that exists independently of the general cultural practice; instead they are now seen as a culturally or socially embedded phenomenon. Works of art and their valuation are considered to be the product of social interaction. Recent thinking within the philosophy of art has favored the view that the experience of the arts - and not the artifact itself - is the final criterion for artistic value (Shusterman 2001). Schaeffer (1998), for example, remarks that the question of experience is somewhat irrelevant as long as art is supposed to be only about art, but that in the present day, where the arts are seen as an "intrinsic part of the ongoing construction and transformation of society," the experience of the arts can "no longer be ignored or considered extrinsic to the core of art" (47). The emphasis on experience implies that the role of the arts consumer has become a crucial link in the arts production and reception processes: the arts consumer is not considered only as a passive recipient but as a sort of co-producer (Boorsma 2006). This is what we call a relational view of the arts.

The idea that the arts and artists are directly dependent upon their capacity to induce artistic experiences leads to formulations of arts organizations' missions in terms of the experiences that the organizations and their artists want to provoke and of the relationship between their work and everyday human life, and, even more generally, in terms of the place of their work in society. For instance, The Northern Dutch Theater Company (NNT) presented itself in its *Strategic Plan 2005-2008* as a producer of theatrical performances "that challenge spectators and make them aware of their doubts, angers, prejudices and fears; theater that actually says something about the world" and considered theater "a perfect means to analyze and unmask human and societal processes" (*Strategic Plan NNT 2005-2008*). The "challenge" is directed in the first instance to the "spectators" who directly experience the work of art. They are a bridge between the artists or arts organizations and the community in which they live and in which the artists or arts organizations operate. In this sense, the "challenge" is meant to reach the community in order to assure the functioning of arts within society (Boorsma 2002). In addition to the "challenge" to audience and community, artists and arts organizations also aim to "challenge" their respective art forms and their professional field. The NNT, for example, wanted to cross the borders of the dramatic discipline by "including a mix of music, cabaret, stand-up comedy, and musical" in its performances and wanted to work with a close-knit and motivated group of actors that "creates its own distinctive language" and "fights" to achieve professional quality as well as "recognition by the audience" (*Strategic Plan NNT 2005-2008*).

Embracing a relational view of the arts, it can be assumed that artists and arts organizations perform three kinds of artistic functions for three main stakeholder groups: customers, community, and professionals. More specifically, they create three kinds of artistic values (Boorsma 1993):

1. *Customer value* by providing customers with artistic experiences;
2. *Societal value* by adding to the ongoing (re)construction of culture;
3. *Professional value* by adding to the development of the professional field of the artistic discipline concerned.

These three functions are interrelated. For instance, the contribution to the (re)construction of culture depends, among other things, upon the nature and number of artistic experiences, but also upon the distinctive quality of the artwork in relation to the works of other artists in the field.[4] In this paper, this set of functions will be referred to as "*the strategic triangle*."[5] This triangle can be used as a basic structure for the formulation of the arts organization's mission. Filled in and completed with a clear specification of the selected audience groups and the products and services offered to them, it forms a clear point of departure for the organization's strategy.

Besides the triangle of artistic functions, arts organizations perform non-artistic functions as well. From a consumer point of view the arts also fulfill social and entertainment needs and can satisfy educational interests. Non-artistic societal functions include, for example, social harmony, quality of rural life, national identity and prestige, and economic impact. Fulfilling these functions can help to strengthen the relationships between the arts and key stakeholder groups, but within a relational view of arts their relevance is secondary when compared with the primary artistic functions of the arts organization.

The adoption of the relational view of art as experience has fundamental consequences for the presuppositions of arts marketing theory. Under the modernist assumption of autonomous art - as mentioned before - arts marketing can be defined as a strategic task focused on creating audiences and generating funds within the constraints of artistic choices. On this view, it helps to accomplish the arts organization's mission, but only in an indirect manner.

If the autonomy of art no longer forms the point of departure for arts marketing theory, then artistic objectives and marketing objectives can no longer be considered to be independent of each other. The relational view of the arts forces a redefinition of the role of arts marketing. The idea of the arts consumer as a co-producer of art puts the arts marketing task in a different light: marketing activities aimed at influencing the behavior of arts consumers interfere with artistic performance by definition. Under the relational view, arts marketing has a direct influence on the achievement of the arts organization's mission and is responsible for the co-creative role of arts consumers (Boorsma 2006). Arts marketing should primarily aim to optimize the consumer's co-creative role. This implies that the success of arts marketing depends upon its capacity to support and reinforce artistic experiences. In

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[4] See also Van Maanen (1998a) who proposes a model with which the functioning of a theater system can be studied. He makes a distinction between the production domain, the consumption domain, and the domain of dissemination into mental or ideological systems. A refined version of this model can be found in Van Maanen (2001).

[5] In Boorsma (1998) a similar concept is used to discuss the notion of total artistic quality based upon the "magic triangle" developed by Staudt and Hinterwäller (1982) in order to analyze the total quality of products in general. We prefer the term "strategic triangle."

order to optimize the consumer's role, the marketing department should develop supportive services, create a trustworthy and open atmosphere for communication, and assist consumers in developing the necessary skills and attitudes. This new logic for arts marketing is summarized by Boorsma (2006) as follows:

> the stimulation of exchange with selected customers, by offering service-centered support for the co-creation of artistic experiences and by building and maintaining relationships with these customers for the purpose of creating customer value and achieving the artistic objectives simultaneously. (Boorsma 2006, 87)

The artistic experience is thus the core customer value to be co-created.

The artistic experience, as mentioned before, is not the only benefit the arts consumer receives. The artistic experience is part of a "total package of experiences" also including recreational, sociable, and learning experiences that provide the consumer with artistic value as well as a variety of non-artistic consumption values (see for instance Kotler 1999; Botti 2000; Kotler and Kotler 2000; Radbourne 2002; Rentschler and Gilmore 2002). From the arts marketing point of view, the creation of non-artistic values is relevant too. Customer satisfaction with the full package of offerings can play an important role in the competition with the entertainment industry and in building up tangible and intangible assets, enabling the organization to continue the creation of artistic values in the future. An established reputation with the audience and durable relations with customers form important intangible assets that can be created by a strategy focused on overall customer satisfaction. The same holds for the generation of financial assets through earned income from customers. Building up these kinds of financial and nonfinancial assets is a relevant marketing task as well. Compared to the co-creation of artistic value, however, the generation of assets is of secondary importance within a relational view of arts. Assets play first and foremost an enabling or constraining role.

The adoption of the relational view has consequences for the evaluation of arts marketing performance. The artistic experience and the co-creative role of (potential)[6] customers should form the primary basis for performance evaluation. This can be supplemented with secondary indicators monitoring the ability to build up tangible and intangible assets.

2.4. An artistic-mission-led approach to arts marketing performance evaluation

Our basic proposition is that arts marketing should provide a valuable contribution to the achievement of the organization's artistic mission. This implies that models and indicators of arts marketing performance should be derived from the way overall organizational performance is defined and evaluated. In this article, overall performance of the arts organization is defined by how effectively and efficiently it creates the values for the stakeholders expressed in the arts organization's mission and strengthens the ability to create these values over the long term. Arts marketing performance is defined by how effectively and efficiently arts marketing efforts contribute to the creation of these values and to the ability to create them over the long term. Currently, no model for the evaluation of arts marketing performance that is explicitly based on both these ideas and a relational view of the arts is available (Toepoel 2008). In this section, we present a performance management model for arts organizations based on our relational view of arts and built upon the Balanced Scorecard by

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[6] For the role of incidental and non-specialist arts customers see Boorsma (2002).

Kaplan and Norton (1992), which serves to guide an artistic-mission-led evaluation of arts marketing performance.

2.4.1. A performance management model for arts organizations based on the Balanced Scorecard

An arts organization's mission which is defined according to a relational view of the arts is characterized by the objectives of creating artistic values for the key stakeholders expressed in the strategic triangle (see section 2.3). These values are difficult to evaluate; they are intangible and hard to operationalize, and the necessary data cannot be obtained easily. The literature on organizational performance in the nonprofit sector shows that the difficulty of operationalization forms an important concern for nonprofits and nonprofit researchers in general (see for instance Herman 1990; Forbes 1998; Herman and Renz 1999). Most of the authors agree that financial measurements by themselves are inadequate to evaluate performance. In addition, they claim that performance evaluation in nonprofit organizations cannot rely on a limited or singular indicator, since organizational effectiveness in these organizations is a multidimensional concept. This multidimensionality reflects the role of multiple stakeholders as well as the use of different perspectives like outcomes, internal processes and resources (Herman 1990; Herman and Renz 1997; 1999; Kaplan 2001; Speckbacher 2003).

Some researchers (see for instance Kaplan 2001; Speckbacher 2003) advocate a performance management model that is based upon the ideas that underpin the Balanced Scorecard that was developed in the 1990s by Kaplan and Norton (1992). The Balanced Scorecard is a well-established concept that uses financial as well as non-financial indicators and monitors the organization's ability to build up tangible as well as intangible assets like the skills of employees and market knowledge. Performance indicators are derived explicitly from the organization's mission and strategy, using four different perspectives that are connected by cause-effect relations: *financial*, *customer*, *internal process*, and *innovation and learning*. Financial indicators are related to profitability, e.g., return on investments, sales, operating income, and cash flow. Customer performance indicators focus on customer acquisition, satisfaction, and retention. The internal process dimension addresses what the organization must excel at in order to achieve its financial and customer objectives. It includes, for example, employee skills, customer information systems, and unit costs. Innovation and learning performance indicators are related to the ability to make continual improvements to the offerings and processes. The scorecard brings together, in a single management report, the performance in these four areas and is designed in such a way that performance objectives, indicators, targets, and results are presented simultaneously along with the initiatives taken to achieve the objectives.[7] The rationale behind the Balanced Scorecard model is to put mission and strategy - and not control - at the center of the evaluation of the organizational performance (Kaplan and Norton 1992; 2001).

The Balanced Scorecard was originally developed for the private sector. It is an interesting concept that meets most of the requirements of nonprofit performance management. According to Kaplan (2001), the standard model is easily transferable to nonprofit organizations by moving the financial perspective from the top to the bottom and by putting the customers on top. Speckbacher (2003) argues that this simple adaptation is not sufficient. He claims that it is particularly important for

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[7] Performance reports have the following structure: objectives (derived from mission and strategy), performance measures, targets, and initiatives (Kaplan 2001, 355; Kaplan and Norton 2001, 91).

nonprofit performance management to define clearly what key stakeholders have to give to the organization in order to fulfill the mission, and how to satisfy these stakeholders in return. The Balanced Scorecard model acknowledges the existence of different stakeholders, especially customers and shareholders, but presupposes that shareholders form the "primary stakeholder group with unanimously definable goals at the top of the hierarchy" (277). Speckbacher offers the suggestion of redesigning the model by skipping the primacy of shareholders and placing the key stakeholders - including customers - on top of the Balanced Scorecard for nonprofits.[8]

Speckbacher's suggestion forms an interesting point of departure for the development of a performance management model for nonprofit arts organizations, especially for arts organizations that have adopted the strategic triangle as the basis for their mission and strategy. As argued earlier, arts organizations perform three kinds of artistic functions for three types of key stakeholder groups: customers, community, and the professional field. It is important for arts organizations to be able to monitor their relationships with these key stakeholder groups. First of all, the performance management model must facilitate the evaluation of the achievement of the primary objectives; that is, the creation of highest artistic value for key stakeholder groups as expressed in the arts organization's mission (see the first row of Table 2.1). To achieve these primary objectives, and to continue achieving them in the future, it is important to strengthen the relationships with these stakeholders and to build a strong and trustworthy reputation and competitive advantage. These kinds of objectives are important not in their own right, but because they support the achievement of the primary objectives and form important intangible assets that drive future performance. Atkinson et al. (1997) advocate distinguishing explicitly between primary and secondary objectives with respect to the evaluation of the relationships with stakeholder groups.

Furthermore, it is advisable to adopt those elements of the Balanced Scorecard that have proven to be of practical value, especially since the mission- and strategy-driven rationale that underpins the model has demonstrated its success (Kaplan and Norton 1992; Kaplan 2001). The four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard - financial, customer, internal, and innovation - should be incorporated, too, but in a different form. Customers form one of the key stakeholder groups. The key question is how to deal with the remaining three perspectives. The organization's performance in these areas is very much connected with how the organization manages its relations per stakeholder group. For example, each stakeholder group forms a separate source of financial assets. When evaluating the financial results, it is best to distinguish the financial contributions per stakeholder group. The same holds when evaluating innovativeness; arts marketing innovativeness cannot be evaluated by comparing it to artistic innovativeness. Therefore we propose to evaluate the financial, internal, and innovative performance not at the aggregate level, but separately for each stakeholder group. Financial, internal, and innovative objectives fall into the category of secondary objectives.

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[8] Atkinson et al. (1997) argue that the undervalued position of stakeholders is a general shortcoming of the Balanced Scorecard model and claim that for-profits also should monitor their relations with stakeholders.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS		KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS		
		CUSTOMERS	COMMUNITY	PROFESSIONAL FIELD
P r i m a r y	**Arts organization's mission** *How to fulfill the artistic functions expressed in the mission by creating the highest artistic value for key stakeholder groups, and how to support their co-creative role*	**Primary customer value:** Nature and intensity of artistic experiences per artwork per audience segment, and the influence of supportive services	**Primary societal value:** Total number of artistic experiences, spread amongst social groups, and the dissemination within general culture	**Primary professional value:** Nature and number of artworks and role within the professional art field
S e c o n d a r y	**Stakeholder relationships** *How to build a strong reputation and durable relationships with stakeholder groups and how to beat the competition*	Total customer value (including non-artistic benefits); Customer education, satisfaction, acquisition, and retention; Reputation among the audience and competitive advantage	Total societal value (including non-artistic functions); Reputation among the general public; Relationships with and reputation among subsidizers, philanthropists, sponsors, and volunteers	Reputation, relations, and competitiveness in the professional art field
	Financial assets *How to manage the contribution of stakeholder groups to the financial assets that are needed to continue to create artistic values*	Revenues from customers	Subsidies and funds from governments, philanthropists, and sponsors	Prize money and scholarships
	Internal and external processes *How to optimize internal processes and the cooperation with external partners, in order to support mission accomplishment and to optimize the tangible and intangible contributions of stakeholder groups*	Skills of marketing and education staff to acquire, support, educate, and bind customers; Customer information systems; Capacity planning; Cooperation with suppliers and/or distributors; Connected budgets, costs and efficiency	Public relations and publicity skills; Marketing skills to increase total reach and support dissemination; Fundraising skills; Connected budgets, costs and efficiency	Artistic skills; Artistic cooperation with other art producers in the field; Connected budgets and costs
	Innovation and learning *How to learn and improve to support mission accomplishment and to optimize the role of stakeholder groups*	Development of innovative services to acquire, support, educate, and bind customers; Satisfaction and career development of responsible staff	Development of innovative activities to increase total reach and support dissemination; Improve public relations and fundraising efforts; Satisfaction and career development of responsible staff	Development of innovative contributions to the professional field; Satisfaction and career development of artistic staff

Table 2.1: Basic structure of a Threefold Balanced Scorecard for arts organizations

To complete the model, we want to suggest a final minor refinement. Many arts organizations depend heavily on the efforts of external partners in order to be able to create and deliver the values expressed in the mission. In the Dutch theater system, for example, the domains of production and distribution are widely separated. Most theater venues are completely maintained by local authorities and do not have their own theater company. State-subsidized theater companies travel daily from place to place and from venue to venue to present their productions (Van Maanen 1998b). This implies that theatrical companies need to cooperate with venues to build structural bonds with their audience and vice versa. It is important that the performance management model adopted helps to monitor the quality and results of these forms of cooperation too. In this article, the internal process dimension is extended and renamed *internal and external processes* in order to address explicitly the cooperation with external partners in one of the existing categories of the Balanced Scorecard.[9]

The resulting performance management model has the form of a matrix, with the stakeholder groups on one axis and a number of primary and secondary performance dimensions on the other. This results in a model that consists of three Balanced Scorecards in parallel - one for each key stakeholder group - with the artistic functions expressed in the mission on top. The basic structure of this threefold Balanced Scorecard is presented in Table 2.1. Each cell of the matrix represents a separate, but non-independent, performance domain, containing objectives/critical success factors, for which performance indicators have to be defined. Although not all relations have been empirically proven yet, the main idea is that these domains are vertically connected by cause-effect relations between secondary and primary objectives/critical success factors, and horizontally by the interdependence of the artistic functions expressed in the mission and possible conflicts and trade-offs between the needs and roles of stakeholder groups.

2.4.2.   Using the model to evaluate the contribution of arts marketing

The main purpose of the proposed performance management model is to give a new direction to the evaluation of the performance of arts marketing. This should be based on the contribution made by arts marketing to the achievement of the artistic mission of arts organizations; that is, to the creation of the artistic values expressed in the strategic triangle (see section 2.3). The possibility for individual organizations to use the model in order to implement their own performance management system would constitute a natural development of the model, but is not the focus of our article. Thus, we will only discuss this possible development in the final section of the article. When it is known which department is responsible (or partly responsible) for which cell/performance domain – or, even better, for which objective/critical success factor - the model provides information about the performance of specific business functions like marketing. Some cells fall almost fully under the responsibility of the marketing department, particularly the cell that concerns the relationships with customers (see Table 2.1, *Customers* column, *Stakeholder relationships* row).[10] For others there is a shared responsibility, as with the cell that concerns the creation of primary (artistic) value for customers (see Table 2.1, *Customers* column, *Arts organization's mission* row). This value is co-created by the artistic staff and by the customers

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[9] An alternative might be to add a fifth category, called, for example, *external cooperation*.
[10] Audience education could be the task of a specialized education department. In that case, the marketing and education departments would have to work closely together and would both be responsible for building and maintaining audience relationships.

themselves and is partly influenced by the efforts of the marketing department to support the customer's co-creative role. Finally, there are cells that fall outside the realm of marketing, for example the cell named "professional value." Nevertheless, in order to have a thorough picture of the contribution of arts marketing activities to the achievement of the artistic mission, the proposed model is to be adopted integrally and cannot be split into independent subsystems. In fact, the cells form an interrelated complex. Overemphasizing some of the cells because they are more explicitly related to marketing activities or neglecting others might lead to sub-optimization and hide indirect but relevant contributions made by arts marketing.

While the structure of the model, with its logical links between the cells along the different categories per each stakeholder group, gives clear directions about the general approach to the evaluation of arts marketing performance, the content of the cell presents several unresolved challenges for researchers. Objectives - and, above all, artistic objectives - in the model are generally formulated in qualitative terms. Their translation into performance indicators and corresponding operational targets is an essential step for the use of the model. This topic is complex (Chiaravalloti and Van der Meer 2007) and cannot be exhausted within this article. Nevertheless, a few issues must be noted.

At first, a premise for the use of performance management models built upon the Balanced Scorecard is that it is important to minimize information overload by focusing on the most relevant objectives/critical success factors per cell, and, consequently, to define just a handful of performance indicators. Whether parsimony of information is compatible with the complexity of artistic processes and results is a question for further research. Examples of useful performance indicators, particularly of societal performance, can be found in Gilhespy (1999; 2001) and Towse (2001). Secondly, although it seems practical to search for indicators that are easy to obtain, it is argued that they do not always provide the best information (Chiaravalloti and Van der Meer 2007). Audience numbers and revenues, for example, are relatively easy to obtain. They can provide a rough indication of customer satisfaction, but together form a surrogate measure that is biased and focused on the past. It would be better to evaluate customer satisfaction on the basis of surveys, interviews, or the number and nature of complaints. In particular, evaluating the artistic values created for key stakeholders is difficult and problematic. In the case of the investigation of the quality judgments by theatrical arts consumers in relation to a drama production of the Northern Dutch Theater Company NNT (Boorsma and Van Maanen 2003), one of the aims was to evaluate the attainment of the artistic goals formulated in the company's strategic plan. By using surveys, the study provided useful information about the role of occasional theater attendees and the effectiveness of marketing communications. Nevertheless, if the customer value consists of the consumer's experience of the artistic product, surveys do not seem adequate to get the process aspects involved in an artistic experience. Qualitative methods and techniques might offer better insights for research in arts consumer behavior and inspire the use of new forms of indicators (Chiaravalloti 2008). Reactions of consumers on the Internet and observations of consumer reactions by the staff can be valuable indicators, too. Many of these indicators do not meet the "SMART criteria" (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Based, and Time-Specific) that are commonly prescribed for the operationalization of organizational objectives. The same holds for indicators of professional value, professional reputation, public reputation, or dissemination of the arts products in general culture. Suitable indicators of professional value include, for example, newspaper reviews and reports of arts councils. Discussions in the media and audience reactions can also provide an

indication of the level of dissemination. These soft indicators cannot be translated precisely into SMART targets. Nevertheless, the use of soft data and indicators should be preferred to not evaluating anything at all, or even worse, evaluating the wrong surrogates just because they can be quantified. Finally, it might be possible to quantify these subjective performance judgments afterwards. The literature suggests to express them in quantitative terms by using, for example, a 100-point scale running from very poor performance to excellent performance (see for instance Roberts et al. 2004). Sometimes it can be useful to use this sort of scale to standardize all the performance results in a second round. This offers the possibility of computing (weighted) average results in order to create a comprehensive overview and makes it easier to compare the results of different periods or organizations. Nevertheless, and above all with respect to the artistic objectives, one should be careful before translating qualitative information into quantitative indicators. The risk is that a large part of the potentially rich, qualitative information offered by soft data and indicators might get lost through their quantification. In fact, one might tend to discuss only the final numbers and to forget the original, qualitative information those numbers are meant to express.

2.5. Limitations and further research

Evaluating the contribution of arts marketing on the basis of such performance indicators as financial figures and audience numbers is insufficient and out of step against the background of the recent developments in arts marketing theory and practice. These performance indicators can give misleading signals for improvement; they could, for example, promote behavior that sacrifices mission achievement for financial results. An appropriate evaluation of arts marketing performance is tightly connected with the evaluation of the organizational performance in general and is driven by the organization's mission and strategy. This is particularly true if the artistic mission is formulated according to a relational view of the arts that emphasizes the interdependency between artistic objectives and arts marketing objectives. In this article we have thus recommended evaluating the performance of arts marketing based on the contribution made to the achievement of the arts organization's artistic mission.

In order to support an artistic-mission-led evaluation of arts marketing performance, we have proposed a performance management model that is based on the Balanced Scorecard by Kaplan and Norton (1992) and that puts the artistic mission at the center by explicitly addressing the different sorts of artistic value created by the arts organization for the key stakeholder groups: arts consumers, the community, and the professional arts field. The creation of specific forms of artistic value for each individual stakeholder group is the primary objective of those arts organizations that embrace a relational view of the arts. In order to pursue the primary objectives (primary performance dimensions), a number of secondary objectives has to be achieved. These are divided in four secondary performance dimensions (stakeholder relationships, financial assets, internal and external processes, and innovation and learning) which are based upon the Balanced Scorecard categories and are also defined specifically for each individual stakeholder group.

Our theoretical contribution (Whetten 1989) adds to the extant literature on arts marketing performance by identifying a new direction in this area of research and by proposing a model that can guide this research. Further research should focus on the limitations of our model. As mentioned above, the main challenge is to translate qualitative objectives, and above all the artistic ones expressed in the strategic triangle, into performance indicators that deliver valid and reliable

information on the degree of achievement of the individual objective. One might feel tempted not to take on this challenge and to avoid any risk by relying on traditional, quantifiable marketing performance indicators. We argue that to do so would mean that research would be safer but less relevant, since it would offer no new insight in the strategic role that arts marketing can have in arts organizations.

As to the practical contribution, we think that arts organizations might benefit from the use of our model with respect to the implementation of performance management systems. In this respect, it is necessary to test the level of acceptance of the proposed model within arts organizations and to investigate how the model can be refined or modified in order to facilitate the implementation of effective performance management systems in arts organizations; that is, systems based on the use of indicators that provide the management with useful information about the overall organizational performance. For instance, referring to the three key stakeholder groups used in our model (*customers, community, professional field*), it is plausible that they will assume a slightly different and more concrete shape when the model is used in specific organizations. In the case of publicly funded opera companies in Continental Europe they would probably be translated into the three key stakeholder groups - *audience*, *government*, and *artistic staff* (Chiaravalloti and Van der Meer 2007).

Case-based research offers an adequate methodology both for coming up with innovative forms of performance indicators and for analyzing the potential of the proposed model as a guide for the implementation of performance management systems within individual arts organizations (Chiaravalloti and Van der Meer 2007; Chiaravalloti 2008). Rather than waiting for the moment arts organizations have to adopt a performance management model within the schedule and agenda imposed by their patrons, a few organizations that might be interested in autonomously developing their own performance management systems could be approached. The active involvement of researchers helping to adopt and adapt the model offers the opportunity to test it and to study the implementation process simultaneously, with advantages both for researchers and for arts organizations.

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3. Ethical implications of methodological settings in arts management research: The case of performance evaluation[11]

ABSTRACT:

In this article, we analyze research on the evaluation of the artistic outcome of arts organizations. Inspired by Wicks and Freeman's new pragmatic approach to organization studies, we give an ethical question a central role in our analysis: to what extent is current research able to serve the needs of individual arts organizations and their communities? Our results highlight the influence of research traditions on the ethical implications of performance evaluation research. To serve the arts world, further research should aim at in-depth understanding of the specific complexity of different contexts rather than at decontextualized generalization of simplified universal principles.

3.1. Introduction and objectives

The year 2000 saw the first significant call for the creation of arts management as a new discipline entering the new millennium (Evrard and Colbert 2000). An academic discipline requires shared questions, methods, and critical practices (see Scullion and García 2005). Surprisingly, it is only at the end of the first decade of the 21st century that an increasing interest in methodological issues can be observed within arts management research (DeVereaux 2009; Kirchberg and Zemblyas 2010; Kuesters 2010).[12] The arts management field is an arena of different disciplines and research traditions (Rentschler and Shilbury 2008). On the one hand, this opens up the possibility for rich and diverse reflections and developments. On the other hand, problems of acceptance related to issues of language, methodology, and relevance of findings have arisen among scholars studying arts management from different disciplinary perspectives, preventing this relatively young field from conducting a constructive academic debate aimed at enhancing knowledge of the sector and at improving management and organizational practices in the arts world. The case of performance evaluation is a good example of the heterogeneity of arts management research. Beyond the articles on this topic published in the fourteen journals recognized in the field as arts-management-related journals[13] (see Rentschler and Shilbury 2008), contributions on performance evaluation in the arts can be found in journals in the area of leisure studies (Cohen and Pate 2000), cultural policy (Bailey and Richardson 2010; Belfiore and Bennett 2007; Radbourne et al. 2010), public administration (Gray 2006), organization (Evans 2000; Oakes et al. 1998; Townley 2002; Zan 2000), marketing (Voss and Voss 2000), cultural theory (Belfiore and Bennett 2010), and music (Boerner and Jobst 2008).

In 1998, Wicks and Freeman, two prominent scholars in the field of stakeholder theory, proposed a new pragmatic approach to organization studies. Their central claim was that "organization studies needs to be fundamentally reshaped" (123) and needs to move beyond the paradigmatic debate between the positivist and anti-positivist research traditions by giving ethical questions a central role in research. Any research program should thus be "justified" by the extent to which it is able to serve human purposes (124). Whether this can be achieved through research methodologies typical of a positivist or anti-positivist tradition is of secondary importance. Wicks and Freeman's claim for the application of more diverse and multifaceted research methods and techniques, integrating qualitative, quantitative, and humanistic research approaches through what they call "theoretical integration" (137), seems a promising point of departure for the interdisciplinary arena of arts management for the purpose of establishing its own research tradition.

With respect to performance evaluation in the arts, the rediscovery of the role of ethics suggested by Wicks and Freeman highlights the urgency of asking to what extent current research approaches are able to serve the needs of arts organizations and their communities. Evaluation supports decision making in organizations and thus has an impact on how people work as well as on the

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[12] A similar pattern has characterized the development of the methodological debate in arts policy research (Gray 2010; Scullion and García 2005).

[13] *Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management*; *Australasian Marketing Journal*; *International Journal of Arts Management*; *International Journal of Cultural Policy*; *International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*; *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*; *Journal of Cultural Economics*; *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*; *Media, Culture and Society*; *Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture and Policy*; *Museum Management and Curatorship*; *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Management*; *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*; *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts* (Rentschler and Shilbury 2008).

results of their work. In arts organizations, the evaluation practice is rich and multifaceted. Firstly, evaluations are made by artists as an organic part of their own artistic work and of their colleagues' artistic work. Secondly, evaluations are made by managing staff to ensure the organization's sustainability. Thirdly, evaluations are used by funding bodies to allocate and justify subsidies. If performance evaluation is meant to provide managers and administrators with valid information in order to make informed decisions about the direction to give to their organizations, then the context-related uniqueness of artistic accomplishments needs to be considered (Becker 1982). It is only by doing this that the information will become relevant for the organization and its community (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 129). Hence, in this article, we investigate the extent to which current research approaches to performance evaluation in museums and performing arts organizations are able to face this challenge, focusing on the most controversial aspect of the evaluation of organizational performance in the arts sector: the artistic outcome.

The urgency of our contribution originates in our feeling that most approaches encountered in the literature fail to make sense of the contextual complexity of artistic activities, overestimating the general validity of methods and underestimating the richness and diversity of the contexts in which they might be applied. Since these approaches do not show enough awareness of the consequences they would trigger if implemented within arts organizations, their potential impact on arts practice should be a matter of serious concern. Under the legitimating umbrella of scientific validity of the approaches, managers and administrators might make decisions that actually disguise judgments and sometimes even replace genuine expertise. This might lead to undesired negative effects for the involved communities. For a researcher in the field of arts management in general and for those working on performance evaluation in particular, it is thus necessary to pay close attention to the ethical dimension of one's own action, reflecting on the impact a specific research approach might have on the arts world. Through our analysis, we intend to express our unease about current research on performance evaluation in a systematic and constructive way, aimed at stimulating further research that can better serve arts organizations and their communities.

To conduct the analysis, we refer to three main categories considered by Wicks and Freeman to show the main differences between the positivist, anti-positivist, and new pragmatic research traditions: view of reality, methods and techniques, and the role of ethics (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125). This facilitates a critical understanding of organizational and societal consequences of the different approaches. The criteria for the choice of the approaches and for their analysis are explained in the next section, followed by a detailed analysis of each approach and the results of their comparison. Based on these results, we present three main topics for discussion. Finally, we conclude by suggesting areas for further research.

3.2. Methodology

In this article, we analyze current research on performance evaluation in museums and performing arts organizations that explicitly deals with the most controversial aspect of evaluation of organizational performance in the arts sector: the artistic outcome. This means that we consider both approaches that include evaluation of artistic aspects - often referred to as quality, excellence, or experience - among other aspects of organizational performance and approaches that only focus on the evaluation of artistic outcome. We include approaches that consider the evaluation of artistic outcome as an indicator of organizational performance, regardless of who the "evaluator" is. For

instance, some approaches focus on the audience as evaluator. In this case, we include the approaches if they explicitly consider the evaluation of artistic outcome through the audience - often referred to as customer satisfaction or measurement of visitors' experience - as an indicator of organizational performance to be used by the management to make decisions at strategic and operational levels.

In order to include approaches that explicitly want to make a contribution to arts management research, for our analysis we have selected articles that have appeared in the fourteen journals recognized in the field as arts-management-related journals[14] (see Rentschler and Shilbury 2008). In cases where related articles by the authors of the selected approaches have also appeared in journals other than those related to arts management,[15] we have analyzed these articles as well in order to better understand the adopted approach.

Ultimately, we have isolated seven approaches to be analyzed:

- Gilhespy (1999; 2001);
- Soren (2000);
- Krug and Weinberg (2004);
- Boerner (2004), Boerner et al. (2008), Boerner and Renz (2008);
- Weinstein and Bukovinsky (2009);
- Radbourne et al. (2009); Radbourne et al. (2010);
- Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010).

In order to systematically analyze the approaches, we apply the three main categories considered by Wicks and Freeman (1998) to show the main differences between the positivist, anti-positivist, and new pragmatic research tradition:

1. view of reality;
2. methods and techniques;
3. the role of ethics.

Wicks and Freeman sum up the main differences between the three research traditions as follows:

Positivism is characterized by a "sharp and categorical division across three distinctions (making versus finding; descriptive versus prescriptive; science versus non-science); [it considers] science as the only basis for generating knowledge, concepts/terms as value-neutral (stripped of moral content), [and] reality as unequivocal" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 129).

The anti-positivist research tradition "relativizes, but retains, the categorical distinctions of positivism; [it offers] no basis for determining which accounts are better than others; [it considers] concepts/terms as value-neutral (stripped of moral content), [and] reality as equivocal" (129).

Finally, pragmatism "rejects the categorical distinctions of positivism (no privileged status, as such, to science); can draw useful (pragmatic) distinctions among methods and forms of evidence in terms

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[14] See footnote 13.
[15] This is the case with Boerner et al. (2008), published in *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, and Radbourne et al. (2010) appeared in *Cultural Trends*.

of what is useful [...]; [it considers] concepts/terms as value-laden, [...] and reality as equivocal, but grounded in terms of language, history, culture" (129).

The application of Wicks and Freeman's categorization facilitates a systematic and comparative analysis of the selected approaches that allows us to understand the influence of research traditions on the ethical implications of performance evaluation research in the arts.

Theoretical and methodological frameworks shape research topics as well as research methods and techniques (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). In some cases, frameworks can be easily traced back to a specific tradition, while in other cases neither research tradition nor framework are explicitly given relevance in the research setting. This might not be a problem if a researcher is operating in a research field characterized by an established tradition (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). However, arts management research has not yet established its own methodological corpus. Knowledge in this field emanates from the synergy of the humanities and social sciences (Sicca 1997), whose theoretical traditions, frameworks, methods, and techniques may differ significantly from each other and also within both fields. Thus, through the lenses of Wicks and Freeman's distinctions between positivism, anti-positivism, and pragmatism, for each research project we have analyzed the text of the respective articles and highlighted the way of looking at reality, the methods and techniques used, and the relevance given to ethics. In this way we were able to identify the research traditions (co)existing behind each project.

Finally, by elaborating on the ethical implications of the reviewed projects against the background of the respective research traditions, we can show how methodological settings influence the relevance - or, in Wicks and Freeman's (1998) words, the "usefulness" - of performance evaluation approaches for the arts sector.

3.3. Detailed analysis of approaches to performance evaluation
3.3.1. A model of performance measurement systems

An approach often mentioned in the literature on performance evaluation in arts organizations is the model proposed by Gilhespy in 1999. Gilhespy's contention is "that the model incorporates the objectives of cultural organizations and the requirement for accountability in public expenditure" (50). Gilhespy suggests a list of objectives and indicators ranging from access maximization to excellence/quality to social cohesion. In a later study (Gilhespy 2001), he concentrates on the use of indicators to measure social objectives. He draws the conclusion that some of them are appropriate for measuring access and attendance maximization, but that they are less useful for benchmarking between organizations or for catching the intangible values represented and created by cultural organizations.

With respect to his view of reality, Gilhespy makes a clear choice against anti-positivism: "Judgments of quality are both appropriate and necessary, in contrast to the intimations of relativism contained in some sociological, populist and postmodern theorizing" (1999, 43). The assumption of rational organizations behind the need for the implementation of performance measurement systems as well as the embraced idea of a model as a simplification of reality (40) are in line with a positivist research tradition. Nevertheless, in concluding his first article Gilhespy notices that not every organization in his study behaved according to a rational model (55).

With respect to the methods and techniques of assessment proposed, although no formulas are provided, all of the indicators are meant to be numerical and of an economic nature. For instance, in the case of excellence/quality, Gilhespy suggests using calculations of possible increases in costs caused by the programming of high quality artistic activities (1999, 43). Although he recognizes that this would not be a direct indicator of artistic quality, he considers it a measure of how good the created conditions are in order to produce high quality artistic performance (43). Even though they are negotiated among the management team - which might remind one of the pragmatic idea of value agreement within a certain community of stakeholders (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 131) - quality objectives are referred to as "standards of excellence/quality" (Gilhespy 1999, 43). Remaining stuck at the level of numerical indicators based on measurement of such elements as economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity (40), Gilhespy ultimately shows a strongly positivist tendency.

With respect to the role of ethics, there is a shift in thinking between Gilhespy's two articles (1999; 2001). He starts by reflecting on standardization and benchmarking, proposing a common rating system for cultural organizations (Gilhespy 1999, 40) in typically positivist terms. He then acknowledges that a standardized performance measurement system might induce governments to judge organizations based on the fact that they apply the right system and not on the value they create (49), a rather explicit critique indeed. Gilhespy ends with the suggestion that indicators should be "custom-made" to fit in the individual organizational context and not used for benchmarking purposes (Gilhespy 2001, 55) - ultimately a pragmatic choice in Wicks and Freeman's view.

To sum up, Gilhespy's approach is developed on the premises of positivist assumptions, although at the end he seems conscious of some of its limits and expresses a sympathy for pragmatic ideas of organizational and consumer behavior.

3.3.2. Measuring the impact on audiences

In her article, Soren explores "performance measures that will be useful for museums and performing arts organizations interested in assessing the impact of the experiences they provide their visitors and audiences" (2000, 40). She evaluates the performance of a museum as the intensity of impact on visitors and audiences. In a case study at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, she describes this impact as, for example, a changed mind, enhanced personal skills, a sense of connectedness to humanity, or the wish to call someone else over in order to discuss a piece. She understands cultural organizations as "sites of knowledge and centers of learning and meaning" (44).

The approach is focused on the audience as the central stakeholder of a cultural organization. Soren tries to throw light on how visitors are impacted by the consumption of cultural services. In her case study of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum of History and Science, she wants to understand how the visitors change habits and how she can gain access to the mechanism behind this change. This indicates an anti-positivist view of reality. In order to use the method for other cultural organizations, she proposes a number of questions for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the outcome and the performance of the organization (Soren 2000, 47). The approach is intended to gather evidence on three levels: (1) the immediate impact, (2) the longer-term impact, and (3) the lifelong impact. The first level addresses the impact on actions taken directly on the spot, the second level concerns the change of mental states, and the third level means the alteration of life practices.

In terms of methods and techniques, Soren proposes setting targets and evaluating the desired outcome. In order to collect data she uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, which should illuminate the impact of cultural products on the three levels presented above. A characteristic of Soren's approach is the active involvement of the organization's staff in the development of performance management systems. By means of questionnaires, workshops, and focus groups, she elaborates on the experiences of the museum visitors. Soren thus observes quality through the eyes of arts professionals and not from the perspective of a generally valid theoretical umbrella. On the one hand, this is an indication of an anti-positivist attitude, since the human role becomes central, with the staff being able to assist the re- and co-construction of the visitor's experience. On the other hand, this can be interpreted as the pragmatic attitude of strengthening the theory/practice link (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 136). Nevertheless, suggesting a number of open questions such as "Does the intensity of their [the visitors] emotional responses change, and are they better able to give shape and form to their own experiences?" (Soren 2000, 47), rather than any operationalization of indicators as methods to gain an understanding of the outcome and the performance of other cultural organizations, she returns to the anti-positivist tradition, where interpretative methods and techniques serve the co-construction of a museum experience together with the visitors (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 130).

As to the role of ethics, Soren has a clear view of the impact of performance evaluation on arts organizations and their community and is thus in line with the pragmatic research traditions: "If performance measures are developed in alignment with meaningful organizational missions and goals, they can help to clarify priorities and manage for change. Outcomes and performance indicators can form the foundation of meaningful audience and program evaluation studies. If outcomes, as well as objectives, are clearly articulated during the early development stage of exhibitions and programs, they can provide a basis for assessing whether the exhibit or program is meeting the expectations museum staff have for the visitor experience" (Soren 2000, 44-45). Soren is also knowledgeable about the multidimensionality of artistic quality: "Researchers and evaluators who study the people who visit museums now understand that audiences cannot be defined by overly simplistic, demographic approaches or described by one-dimensional explanations" (41). Soren's recommendations are thus rather modest and based on on-site experience. She consciously avoids fixing stable causal relationships concerning the influence of experience on quality for cultural organizations in general, and she avoids final judgments about quality, leaving the interpretation to the addressee of the performance measures, showing a rather anti-positivist attitude.

Summing up, while Soren's use of quantitative and qualitative methods as well as the relevance given to ethics are in line with the new pragmatic ideas of Wicks and Freeman, the anti-positivist stance in her view of reality and in her multidimensional understanding of the visitors' experience seems to prevail in her approach.

3.3.3. Mission, Money, and Merit

In their article, Krug and Weinberg (2004) present a three-dimensional portfolio developed on the basis of "interactions with directors and managers of eight American and Canadian museums, art galleries, and aquariums, as well as with program evaluators and other museum professionals" (328). They discern three layers of performance: the first is the financial layer, the second represents the contribution to mission and targets, and the third one the contribution to merit. The approach is

intended to provide a decision base for managers on how to most effectively run their institutions. The model thus merges concerns about both financial logics and quality into the same dimension.

With respect to their view of reality, Krug and Weinberg's choice of language shows a strong positivist influence on their approach. They want to reveal the "*real* performance and *real* contribution" (Krug and Weinberg 2004, 329; italics added) of specific museum programs and "what programs *really* cost" (340; italics added).

Krug and Weinberg's positivist stance is confirmed by their choice of methods and techniques to evaluate performance: "the model is built by converting all elements, both quantitative and qualitative, to numbers" (2004, 330). Although the contribution to merit converges with Holden's notion of "cultural value" (2004) and relates to the aesthetic value and the quality of artistic and cultural activities, Krug and Weinberg's suggestion of taking the average of the managers' opinions and thereby placing it into a metric system does not recognize the complexity of mission statements and their interdisciplinary nature. They suggest simplifying the mission statements of museums and other NPO's, since they are often "fuzzy or too open to interpretation" (332). A further strong positivist legacy is referred to in the summary: "organization-wide decisions cannot be well made without first [...] conducting more rigorous measurements, and fixing missing or fuzzy mission statements [...], and overly subjective or nonexistent performance evaluations" (341).

Concerning ethical implications, the authors directly address the goals of individual organizations by including the mission into their three-dimensional performance model. In a second move, they put the relation of the stakeholders on the table. However, it is not clear if they are also aware of the consequences of this: after analyzing different performance areas, they even conclude that one of the museums studied should close down its core collection, as it fails to make a sufficient contribution to merit: "Core collections may be at the heart of the museum's mission, but the program had become enormously expensive and not one of whose performance the museum can be proud. It is possible that the poor performance is an outcome of inadequate financial support, but as easily it could be that agencies do not see this museum's care of collections as worthy of funding" (Krug and Weinberg 2004, 338). From this example we can see that the authors ultimately impose profitability as the crucial criterion. As the collection and conservation cannot be profitable per se, the manner of the critique of Krug and Weinberg has to be questioned. Admittedly, we can and must investigate the profitability or cost-utility-ratio of any activity taken by an organization. Nevertheless, analyses like these should be based upon good arguments and on not on oversimplified classifications as in the method presented. Although the authors, in their conclusions, emphasize that not only the results but also the rich discussions and the perspective of learning have been important, such conclusions are drawn on a narrow basis, without exploiting the richness and variety of expertise of key stakeholders.

To sum up, looking at the view on reality, the methods proposed, and the way of dealing with ethical considerations, Krug and Weinberg's approach can be classified as positivist. The model proposed raises important questions about various trade-offs between mission, money, and merit. However, the fundamental consequences stipulated by the model deserve a more fundamental analysis that takes into account the expertise of all relevant stakeholders.

3.3.4. Measuring artistic quality

In 2004, Boerner presented "a first concept for defining artistic quality in a non-profit professional opera company" (Boerner 2004, 425), which she considered a necessary "first step toward evaluating artistic performance" (Boerner 2004, 426). Based on an operationalization of her multidimensional concept in form of a "questionnaire for the perception of performance quality in music theater" (Boerner et al. 2008, 32), empirical research to validate this questionnaire as an instrument to measure quality judgment in opera has followed (Boerner et al. 2008; Boerner and Renz 2008).

With respect to their view of reality, the authors carry out research according to a positivist tradition. Their assumption that a definition of artistic quality is a precondition for evaluating a performance means that artistic quality is not the result of an experiential process as suggested by recent studies in arts marketing (Boorsma 2006; O'Reilly and Kerrigan 2010), but something that exists "out there" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 126). The task for researchers is thus not to understand how artistic quality is *made* through the experience of the individuals, but to *find* and *describe* it through the only method that leads to genuine knowledge, that is, according to the positivist tradition, the scientific method (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125). People's interpretations of events and actions, thus the making of reality, are avoided in positivist research (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005, 15-16). For positivist researchers, reality is objective. Laws and principles govern how things work, and their task is to determine "what is really going on" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125), as the language used in the research analyzed here clearly testifies: "we expected to capture the audience's *real* judgment" (Boerner et al. 2008, 22; italics added), or "we discuss the results of this first *real*-world performance evaluation in opera" (Boerner and Renz 2008, 23; italics added).

With respect to methods and techniques, the authors follow the positivist research tradition of standardized, static, and repeatable methods, aimed at finding true and objective results that are statistically generalizable (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005, 15). While their research concentrates on opera performances, the original ambition is to create an instrument that is also "generalizable to other performing arts" (Boerner 2004, 434). Operationalization, measurement, empirical test, and validation of constructs are the keywords of their approach (Boerner 2004, 433; Boerner et al. 2008, 22; Boerner and Renz 2008, 21). Choosing statistical analysis and generalization (Yin 2003, 10) for instruments validation and hypothesis testing, the elements that refer to human intentions and emotions, such as motive, purpose, and meaning, are lost, since the need for precise models and hypotheses is predominant (Gill and Johnson 2002, 44).

With respect to the role of ethics, the authors seem to be in line with the marginality that positivist researchers attribute to them (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125). Affirming that "once *researchers* develop an instrument for the evaluation of artistic quality, *others* can suggest how to use this instrument" (Boerner 2004, 433; italics added), a clear distinction is made between science and life, between the ones - the researchers - that know reality and the ones - the others - that live it. Thus, how knowledge produced through research is used is not a concern for researchers. Nevertheless, the authors seem to contradict themselves on this by mentioning possible areas of application for the instrument they have developed in order to evaluate artistic quality. They conclude that the instrument they have developed is a valid instrument for measuring "an audiences' judgment of the quality in opera" (Boerner et al. 2008, 32), and that, based on this instrument, expert judgments can

be used "to identify the strengths and weaknesses of, for example, the orchestra or individual members of the ensemble" (Boerner and Renz 2008, 34). This means that based on their standardized instrument for the evaluation of artistic quality, decisions affecting individual members of an opera ensemble of any opera company may be made. This possible use of research findings is an example of the ethical implications of a research project.

To sum up, the research tradition beyond the work by Boerner (2004), Boerner et al. (2008) and Boerner and Renz (2008) is positivist. As expected in research set in the positivist tradition, the role of ethics is marginalized here.

3.3.5.   The Balanced Scorecard for art and cultural organizations

Weinstein and Bukovinsky propose "a tool for performance measurement, organizational assessment and operational alignment" (2009, 42) - namely the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) - for arts and cultural organizations (ACOs). They analyze ACOs in general and then illustrate the approach based on primary and secondary sources from the Boston Lyric Opera. The tool is meant to address a multi-stakeholder setting with a special focus on private nonprofit organizations. The key idea is the combination of financial and non-financial metrics in order to assess the performance related to the critical success factors of the organization. Weinstein and Bukovinsky are convinced that with their tool the organizations can better adjust processes, actions, and programs to their corporate missions, values, and visions. While at first glance the approach seems to focus only on non-artistic features of performance, on closer examination the artistic outcome is also addressed with the tool, as indicators are explicitly linked to the organization strategy and the "cultural sector's core values" (42). The performance measures include artistic reputation and standards, revenue, and community support.

As to their view of reality, Weinstein and Bukovinksy use a positivist vocabulary when they explain that their "objective [...] is to show that the BSC process is an effective and proven measurement tool for ACOs" (2009, 44). Indeed, they aim to show general principles of how things work and to describe reality as it really is (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125). At the same time, their vocabulary is strongly normative when they prescribe how organizations should work: "They [the organization under evaluation] *must* reach outward to create understanding and accessibility in order to make art an integral part of people's everyday lives, and they *must* look inward to professionalize their management and marketing and to approach their task strategically [...]" (Weinstein & Bukovinsky 2009, 47; italics added). While the prescription of "what ought to be the case" is considered typical of anti-positivism and speculative thinking by Wicks and Freeman (1998, 125), in the case of Weinstein and Bukovinsky we do not see any elaborated speculation on the reasons why their view of reality might be shared. Their normativity seems rather to be a legacy of the strongly positivist doctrine of what Hood calls "business-type 'managerialism' in the public sector, in the tradition of the international scientific management movement" (1991, 5-6).

As to the methods and techniques proposed, the model of the BSC from the for-profit sector is applied to ACOs without any major adaptation: "organizations should use a mix of financial and non-financial metrics"; "metrics should include a mix of past, present and future indicators, [...] be defined at the highest level of an organization, and cascade down through all levels and functions"; "the target and goals for these metrics should be based on current performance, resource constraints, benchmark and competitor performance"; "the organization will need to operationalize

its strategy through short- and long-term action plans whose progress can be monitored and evaluated through appropriate metrics" (Weinstein and Bukovinsky 2009, 47-48). Standardized, decontextualized implementation directives as well as the centrality of measurement testified by the use of terms such as "operationalization" and "metrics" are typical of the positivist research tradition.

In terms of ethics, the approach confirms a strong bias toward managerial decisions intending to support managers in "sifting through the ideas and deciding which were worthy of its resources" (Weinstein and Bukovinsky 2009, 52). This throws some light on the strong managerial twist of their approach. Although the BSC of Weinstein and Bukovinsky is exemplified in the field of performing arts, and the authors recommend the idea generally for ACOs, they do not include the artistic and cultural missions as a separate performance dimension. In this way, the *raison d'etre* of these organizations remains intertwined in other performance dimensions without any suggested hierarchy between them. The solution of conflicts between objectives and between different stakeholders is left to the user, with the authors taking a seemingly neutral position - a peculiarity of positivist approaches: "[Positivism] posits that the study of organizations can occur through a value-free scientific approach [...]" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125).

To sum up, we draw the conclusion that Weinstein and Bukovinsky's approach is primarily built on the premises of positivist assumptions.

3.3.6. The Arts Audience Experience Index

In 2009, Radbourne et al. suggested and tested the hypothesis of using audience experience as a measure of quality in performing arts. One year later (Radbourne et al. 2010), they presented the results of their action research aimed at developing and testing an Arts Audience Experience Index, which was to be used "to assess the performance of performing arts organizations supported by Arts Victoria, to evaluate the outcomes of their funding programmes, and to demonstrate the public benefit of arts expenditure" (322).

With respect to their view of reality, the authors embrace the idea of making instead of finding reality (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125), since they are interested in how artistic quality is constructed through the experience of individuals: "We propose that the 'quality' of an artistic performance can be defined by the individual audience member's personal definition of quality based on her or his experience of the performance" (Radbourne et al. 2009, 22). Consequently, Radbourne et al. are not interested in finding proof of the impact of the arts but in "trying to understand them" (2010, 308), which can be interpreted as a rather anti-positivist attitude.

Their approach uses a variety of methods and techniques: surveys (Radbourne et al. 2009, 19), focus groups (22), and "deep feedback" (Radbourne et al. 2010, 312), thus embracing the idea of using mixed methods, which is characteristic of new pragmatic research (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 133). Nevertheless, they seem not to be able to definitively leave the positivist idea of measurement behind, since they suggest aggregating the different data found through different methods in a "simple measurement scale" (Radbourne et al. 2009, 27). However, this can also be seen as a pragmatic reaction to the needs of political institutions and funding bodies to compare different cultural projects.

With respect to the role of ethics, Radbourne et al. have a specific community in mind when developing the Arts Audience Experience Index, namely performing arts organizations supported by Arts Victoria (Radbourne et al. 2010, 307, 311). They are conscious of the consequences that the use of their index would have for policymakers, government funding agencies, and sponsors, (Radbourne et al. 2009, 16), as well as for the processes of the individual organizations (Radbourne et al. 2010, 314-315). The cases described as well as the language used in the description suggest the idea that every organization should adapt the Arts Audience Experience Index to its special context and needs (Radbourne et al. 2010, 314). To speak in Wicks and Freeman's words, the authors "scrutinize the practical relevance of a set of ideas as defined by their purposes and those shared by their community" (1998, 129). This is exactly the explanation of the concept of usefulness in Wicks and Freeman's new pragmatic approach: "The key question for pragmatists is whether or not information (scientific data, a novel, a treatise on ethics) is useful - useful in the sense of helping people to better cope with the world or to create better organizations" (129).

To sum up, behind the research by Radbourne et al. there is prevalently a pragmatic tradition, although they seem to be neither thoroughly conscious nor confident of this legacy, since they still pay some tribute to the positivist research tradition that has characterized arts management research so far.

3.3.7. The Threefold Balanced Scorecard for Arts Organizations

In 2010, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti suggested "evaluating the performance of arts marketing based on the contribution made to the achievement of the arts organization's artistic mission" (297). To do this they proposed a performance management model, the Threefold Balanced Scorecard for Arts Organizations, based on Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard (1992) and on the relational view of the arts proposed by Boorsma (2006). The Threefold Balanced Scorecard has the form of a matrix, with the stakeholder groups on the horizontal axis and a number of performance dimensions on the vertical one. Each cell of the matrix represents a performance domain containing objectives/critical success factors, for which performance indicators have to be created (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010, 310). While the main purpose of their model was "to give a new direction to the evaluation of the performance of arts marketing" (311), the authors are conscious that their performance management model could be used to implement performance management systems in individual arts organizations (311).

Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's model is based on a specific view of reality. They first embrace the functional view of arts proposed by Boorsma in 1993, according to which artists and arts organizations perform three kinds of artistic functions respectively for customers, communities, and professionals. Secondly, they embrace the relational view of the arts (Boorsma 2006), which highlights the role of arts consumers in the creation and reception of arts. Their Threefold Balanced Scorecard is based on these two strong visions of the arts world. Thus, they are prescriptive in Wicks and Freeman's sense, as they "talk about how the world can be if one adheres to certain ideals" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 125). A prescriptive view of reality, focusing on "what ought to be the case" (125), is, according to Wicks and Freeman, the typical domain of philosophers and a characteristic of anti-positivist research.

With respect to the methods and techniques, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti develop their model on a speculative basis, which is typical of non-positivist research (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 126).

Nevertheless, if we look at how they elaborate on the use of performance indicators, the influence of different research traditions becomes evident. On the one hand, they suggest diverse and multifaceted approaches for the development of indicators, which would be typical of new pragmatic research (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 133): "If the customer value consists of the consumer's experience of the artistic product, surveys do not seem adequate to get the process aspects involved in an artistic experience. Qualitative methods and techniques might offer better insights for research in arts consumer behavior and inspire the use of new forms of indicators" (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010, 312). On the other hand, they show the pervasive influence of the dominant quantitative approach to performance management when they suggest, although prudently, the possibility of a translation of soft data and indicators in quantitative terms, such as "a 100-point scale running from very poor performance to excellent performance" (312). This might be interpreted as a positivist legacy of their research.[16]

Boorsma and Chiaravalloti explicitly address the role of ethics and tend to be pragmatic on this topic. They are conscious that "indicators and the theory behind them may sooner or later determine what is considered good or bad marketing practice" (2010, 298). While at the beginning of their article they suggest solving this problem by basing the selection of performance indicators "upon a well-thought-out concept of the strategic role of arts marketing" (298) - thus in the typical anti-positivist way of making a clear statement of their own world view (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 128) - at the end they become clearly pragmatic in Wicks and Freeman's sense: "we think that arts organization[s] might benefit from the use of our model with respect to the implementation of performance management systems. In this respect, it is necessary to test the level of acceptance of the proposed model within arts organizations and to investigate how the model can be refined or modified in order to facilitate the implementation of effective performance management systems in arts organizations" (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010, 314). In saying this, they translate their general model to the level of the individual organization and its management systems, recognizing two aspects that are fundamental in Wicks and Freeman's approach to ethics: practical relevance of a set of ideas as shared within a community of stakeholders, and usefulness in helping people to create better organizations. (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 129)

To sum up, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's approach is anti-positivist in its intention to redirect research on marketing performance evaluation, but becomes pragmatic with respect to its possible application in individual arts organizations.

3.3.8. Results

Table 3.1 offers an overview of the results of our analysis.

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[16] This self-criticism is an example of the shift of the focus of this thesis away from the technicalities of performance evaluation and towards the embodiment of evaluation practices by different organizational and social actors.

Approach	Focus	Research tradition	Ethical implications
Gilhespy (1999; 2001)	Common rating system for cultural organizations	Positivist	Limits of standardized indicators for artistic outcome and the need for custom-made ones only mentioned after having developed a list of standardized objectives and numerical indicators
Soren (2000)	Impact on visitor experience	Anti-positivist/pragmatic	Strong reliance on expertise of staff for the generation of indicators; emphasis on multidimensional character of artistic experience
Krug & Weinberg (2004)	Overall: mission, money, merit	Positivist	Including the mission in the three-dimensional model; tradeoffs of different stakeholders addressed; possibly implicit prevalence of financial targets
Boerner (2004), Boerner et al. (2008), Boerner and Renz (2008)	Development of a standardized instrument for the measurement of artistic quality in opera	Positivist	Neat distinction between approach developers (researchers) and approach users (managers and administrators)
Weinstein & Bukovinsky (2009)	BSC-like overall performance evaluation	Positivist	Financial, operational and quality targets are presented with the same weight, which may lead to an overemphasis on operational targets
Radbourne et al. (2009; 2010)	Development of an Arts Audience Experience Index for performing arts	Pragmatic	Users of the index and their needs are central
Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010)	Suggestion of new directions in the evaluation of arts marketing performance	Anti-positivist/pragmatic	Theory on performance indicators expected to determine good practice in arts organizations

Table 3.1: Research approaches to performance evaluation in museums and performing arts

Our results show a predominant role of the positivist tradition in the analyzed approaches. This explains the marginal attention paid to the complexity of arts production and reception, to the peculiarities of individual contexts, and to the impact on individuals and communities. Typical characteristics of the positivist research tradition are reductionism, time- and context-free generalization of cause-effect laws, and the assumption that the scientific method is value-free (Guba and Lincoln 1994). In this sense, positivist approaches to the evaluation of artistic outcome are not able to serve the needs of individual arts organizations and their communities. Although the latter are the final addressees of the approaches, since they are expected to use or implement them in their specific contexts, their role as social actors as well as their human agency component is neglected in favor of a decontextualized generalization of findings. "Avoiding discussion of ethics and trying to remain agnostic on the subject does not allow positivist researchers to make organization studies value-free. Such a strategy entails that they, in effect, do ethics badly" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 124). For instance, although Boerner (2004) explicitly separates the role of researchers from the role of practitioners, she ultimately suggests making decisions affecting individual members of an opera ensemble based on her standardized instrument for the evaluation of artistic quality (Boerner and Renz 2008).

The ambition to generalize also affects the partially anti-positivist approach by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti. Although Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010) proceed from the inner artistic *raison d'etre* of arts organizations and explicitly address the ethical implications of their work, they impose the relational view of the arts as a dogmatic umbrella on their approach. A "connection to particular persons and communities with specific values and goals" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 130) is thus lacking. What if an organization does not want to embrace a relational view of the arts, due to a specific time-, tastes-, culture-, and conventions-related context? Does the validity of their approach suddenly and completely disappear? Wicks and Freeman would probably stress the risk of relativism caused by the high level of abstraction of this speculative approach. The fact that Boorsma and Chiaravalloti cannot solve the problem of operationalizing indicators can be seen as a weakness through the eyes of positivist researchers and also from a pragmatic point of view: "the pragmatist alternative is not a suggestion that [...] researchers simply sit around and come up with fairy tales about how life in organizations might look in the land of make believe. While such a creative spirit might prove an important starting point, theorists must always shape their thought so that it can be operationalized in a specific organization in a particular community at a given time in history" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 130). Nevertheless, opening up a new territory for research on diverse ways of conducting artistic-mission centered evaluations of performance in an academic debate dominated so far by the positivist research tradition, Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's "creative spirit" serves as an "important starting point" and impulse to change direction in performance evaluation research in the arts.

More focus on the needs of specific communities is shown in the other two (partially) pragmatic approaches that have emerged from our analysis. Radbourne et al. (2009; 2010) address the challenge of operationalizing indicators of artistic outcome. In their approach, they try to conciliate the need for practical solutions that have explicitly arisen in the community they study, with the necessity of understanding the specific contexts: their Arts Audience Experience Index is the customized operationalization of a multifaceted and diverse array of techniques that they use to understand the audience's experience of the arts. Soren (2000) is also interested in understanding the experience triggered by a museum's visit and in providing performance measures to

organizations that need to assess visitors' experiences. The fact that she does not come up with definitive solutions but with a set of new questions to be asked is a sign of her consciousness of the complexity of production and consumption in the arts as a clearly socially generated process, a legacy of both the pragmatic and the anti-positivist research traditions that share "the view that there are multiple interpretations of events and different concepts and classificatory schemes which could be used to describe phenomena" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 134). The new pragmatic solution proposed by Wicks and Freeman for the possible relativism arising from the coexistence of different interpretations is an ad hoc negotiated agreement on the purpose of a specific research or management program within the involved community (131). The extent to which the results of our analysis can inform performance evaluation research in the arts will be discussed in the following section.

3.4. Discussion

The results of our analysis open the following three main area of discussion on how research on performance evaluation in the arts can better serve the needs of specific communities:

- Role of artists;
- Complexity of arts worlds;
- Value-laden research.

3.4.1. Role of artists: Rediscovering human agency

In the analyzed approaches, there is no explicit reference to the involvement of artists in performance evaluation practices. While this does not surprise with respect to the positivist approaches, where artists and their work, and - more generally - organizations and their performance, are merely considered an object of evaluation, we would have expected more attention to have been paid to the involvement of (living) artists in approaches set in research traditions that explicitly highlight the role of human agency in making evaluations. In the anti-positivist and pragmatic approaches studied, we have found an explicit claim for the involvement of management and the respective organization's staff in evaluation practices, but not for a special consideration of the role of artists as experts, self-evaluators, and peer-evaluators of the artistic outcome.

A characteristic of arts organizations is the direct or indirect presence of artists, whether in charge of production or not. For instance, in the visual arts, a sculptor, a painter, or a social artist frequently commissions individuals or companies with the physical production of his/her works. Others accomplish their work primarily by themselves, but in both cases, exhibitions or other events are organized, put on stage, and designed with support of museum managers, curators, or organizers. Furthermore, marketing specialists may advertise the show. The artists are often not directly in charge of organizational issues, although they are involved in the process of generating the exhibition or the event. In the performing arts we can find similar situations, for instance, when an opera production originally developed and staged by a director is repeated some years later, without the involvement of the original director. In addition, technical and economical functions, like lighting, ticketing, marketing, or funding are usually conducted, at least in the initial phase, away from the 'stage'.

Artists genuinely conduct evaluation as a part of their artistic practice. For instance, violinists constantly compare the intended sound with the sound that they, or their colleagues in an ensemble or orchestra, ultimately emit with their instruments. Actors and stage directors repeat certain sequences if they are not satisfied with the performance. This form of evaluation is difficult to grasp. It is the result of personal and collective sense-making based on unwritten rules and on intuitive forms of evaluation. In order to integrate this "artistic" evaluation in the general evaluation practices at organizational level, the expertise of the artists is required, since their world will hardly be fully accessible to external observers.

Ultimately, the aim is to evaluate the integrated outcome of the organization. Also here the artists play the key role, as it is they who envision a certain idea of the arts. This then necessarily raises the question as to what extent the artists are still involved in the evaluation and what the evaluation practices mean *for* and *to* them: "after all, their work, their careers and even their values are under scrutiny" (Matarasso 2009, 1). In those cases where the artists are still alive, a non-involvement in the evaluation would be a tremendous squandering of expertise. While initial research has appeared on the perspective of other stakeholders in the evaluation process (Matarasso 2009; Youker 2010), the perspective of the artists is still underrepresented. As mentioned above, in the approaches studied we only found an indirect involvement of the artists in the evaluation process. Nevertheless, the anti-positivist approaches recognize the human aspect of evaluation, where the *function* of evaluation is not disconnected from the *subject* that makes the evaluation. In addition, the anti-positivist approaches are explicitly committed to an *understanding* agenda. The qualitative and interpretive methods typically used in anti-positivist approaches have the potential to integrate the intention of the artists, for instance through in-depth interviews or ethnography. In line with Wicks and Freeman, we share the idea that how the multiple stakeholders are treated has to be "a central consideration" in organization studies (1998, 135). Nevertheless, with respect to the role of human agency and, in particular, to the role of artists in performance evaluation in the arts, the "practical relevance" as formulated by Wicks and Freeman (129) will probably have to remain secondary until a rich understanding of the field is available. For this purpose, it is likely that principally humanistic and, more generally, anti-positivist research will emerge in order to act as a counterpart to the positivist hegemony so far.

3.4.2. Complexity of art worlds: Bridging theory and practice

As has emerged from our analysis, only few approaches pay attention to the contextual aspects that make the investigation of the art worlds so complex. Above all positivist approaches tend to suggest that the same evaluation instruments can be applied to different artistic works, organizations, and communities. Metrics and measures, questionnaires and templates impose an umbrella that filters information coming from the field in a predetermined structure, leaving little or no room for diverging or unexpected voices. Yet the latter are often the engine of a sound artistic field. In addition, the experience of art and, as a consequence, its evaluation might be influenced by conventions that are strongly related to the studied context (Becker 1982). Overgeneralized theories that neglect this contextual complexity are frequently condemned to irrelevance. We argue that one reason for the fact that "far too much evaluation rests on audience satisfaction surveys and quantitative measures of audience attendance numbers, production numbers and revenue scores" (Radbourne et al. 2010, 307) is the felt obligation of researchers to fulfill the purported quality standards of the longstanding positivist tradition of research. Rich data from cultural audiences and

other stakeholders obtained from focus groups or "deep feedback" (Radbourne et al. 2010, 312) cannot be easily transformed into one-dimensional figures. Research and practice thus focused on easily quantifiable dimensions of organizational performance. As the intrinsic value of the arts could not be addressed through these measures, art professionals and practitioners became uncomfortable with the situation. Schuster already noticed in 1996 that "in the arts and culture the tensions that arise in implementing such indicators have been rooted less in the theory than in the practice of performance indicators. This has meant that opposition has come not from disagreement in theory but from actual issues arising out of practice" (255).

We see a possibility to incorporate the contextual complexity into evaluation approaches by strengthening the link between theory and practice, as suggested by Wicks and Freeman (1998, 136). Practice is often the trigger for innovation. Bailey and Richardson (2010), for instance, have shown that arts organizations adopt a variety of methods to suit their unique environments. In their study of self-assessment practices in arts organizations, they found the following recursive elements: "a frank culture of feedback, within the organization, and with audiences and external stakeholders; a meaningful engagement with assessment as part of a performance improvement process, and a related aversion to 'box ticking'; a genuine commitment to peer review; and acting on the outcomes of artistic self-assessment to improve future work" (291).

However, understanding the complexity of the practice, which derives from entangled contextual factors and diverse stakeholder structures, requires flexible and profound theorizing. Only the field itself, with its richness of discussion and dialogue across and within art forms, between artists, managers, audiences, funders, and public authorities, contains all the aspects that need to be considered in order to gain the thorough knowledge necessary for evaluation purposes. Adequate theories in the young discipline of arts management thus need to be cautious, recognizing the limited generalizability of theorizing in the field, caused by the fact that the artistic accomplishments of individual organizations are made unique by their own specific time-, tastes-, culture-, and conventions-related context (Becker 1982). In this sense, we argue that arts management research has to focus at first on *depth* rather than on *breadth* of theorizing, by using "multiple methods and forms of evidence" (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 136) coming from different research traditions. This includes the exploitation of the rich knowledge available in the "lowlands of practice" (Schön 1983, 64). However, the caution of contextual theorizing and the additional focus on practice does not mean lowering the high standards of research. In the case of performance evaluation, even if the scope of an approach to the evaluation of artistic outcome is initially limited to a certain context, the approach will nevertheless influence the creation and consumption of arts in that specific context. A cautious attitude toward theorizing thus has to be accompanied by a strong self-consciousness of the need to continuously agree on the purpose and validity of an approach within a community. In this sense, we embrace Wicks and Freeman's idea that being focused on practice does not mean being "a-theoretical or anti-theoretical" (1998, 136):

> Pragmatism reminds us that academic speculation and theorizing must ultimately [...] prove to be of use in how people live their lives. However, it does see the importance and value of theory as a mechanism to help explain and predict phenomena, to order and direct human actions, and shape practice to create sustainable benefits. The mixture of practice and time combine to form a particularly helpful way to help sort out the value of theory. Theoretical wisdom or insights which survive the test of time and

create "best practices" - ways of living or structuring organizations which prove especially valuable - provide model forms of good theory. (Wicks and Freeman 1998, 136)

3.4.3. Value-laden research: Being conscious of research traditions

Potentially, any piece of research can affect people, organizations, and society. Thus, explicitly addressing the ethical implications of a piece of research can help to avoid misunderstandings and a counterproductive use of research results. Our analysis has shown that research conducted in the same research tradition deals with ethical implications in a similar way. For instance, positivist approaches of performance evaluation in the field of arts assume context-neutrality of methods and techniques used and neglect the role of human agency in evaluation processes, while anti-positivist approaches tend to put intrinsic aspects of the individual experience of art at the core of their argumentation. Thus, being conscious of the research tradition within which research is done facilitates the elaboration on possible ethical implications and, consequently, on the relevance of the research for a certain community. We illustrate this with three of the analyzed approaches that we have assigned, at least partially, to the positivist, anti-positivist, and pragmatic research traditions.

Being conscious of doing research within a positivist tradition, Boerner and Renz (2008) might be expected to present more evidence on the advantages arising from the use of their quantitative approach, for instance, in identifying general patterns of (dis)agreement in the judgment of different stakeholders (e.g., experts and non-experts) and possible causalities influencing them. On the other hand, the researchers might be more cautious when presenting their instrument as a tool to be used by human resources managers to make decisions regarding staff. The latter would require a serious confrontation with the individual contexts in which the instrument might be used. In Boorsma and Chiaravalloti's partially anti-positivist contribution (2010), it would have helped to clarify what kind of arts organizations under which contextual conditions would find their model appropriate for performance evaluation practices. In order to provide useful information for their relevant stakeholders, visions of arts different from the relational view might require different performance management models. Furthermore, Radbourne et al. (2009; 2010), though pragmatists, still feel the need to refer to the mainstream positivist research tradition by justifying and acknowledging "the limitations" of their first qualitative study (Radbourne et al. 2009, 28). More consciousness of the research tradition in which they actually operate - in this case the pragmatic tradition - would have allowed them to make a complete opposite statement on the contribution of their study, emphasizing the added value offered by qualitative methods to research on artistic experience.

In this sense, our conclusion - that a consciousness of the research tradition enhances the relevance of research by explicitly addressing the ethical implications for a certain community - is supported by Wicks and Freeman's understanding of usefulness: "the pragmatic value of usefulness simply requires those engaged in research or decision-making to scrutinize the practical relevance of a set of ideas as defined by their purposes and those shared by their community (e.g., within a country, a corporation, a research stream)" (1998, 129). If the "purpose" of a research program is to identify patterns of (dis)agreement in the judgment of artistic quality through different audience segments, a standardized instrument can be "useful" and lead to "relevant" information for the marketing departments of arts organizations as well as for the marketing research "community." Nevertheless, using the same instrument to evaluate the performance of the members of an individual opera

ensemble would diverge from the original "purpose" of the research program risking to provide a different "community" - in this case the artistic staff and their management - with inappropriate information for decision-making purposes.

3.5. Conclusions

On the basis of a systematic and comparative analysis of contributions published in journals in the field of arts management, we have shown that arts management research on performance evaluation largely remains stuck in its ambition to find generally valid approaches to the evaluation of artistic outcome. In most cases, this is done without having previously tried to understand *why* and *how* individual organizations and their communities *practice* evaluation. One explanation of this is the predominant role of the positivist tradition in this research area so far.

Artistic outcomes can only be evaluated with difficulty outside the contexts that give rise to them. Artists often act out of an inner urge to create. Decontextualized evaluation approaches typical of positivist research fail to relate artistic outcome to the inner human urge of the artists, neglecting the role of human agency both in artistic production and reception. The search for overambitious generalizations leads to the oversimplification of highly complex contexts in the case of positivist approaches and to possibly relativistic research findings in anti-positivist research, thus preventing a constructive ethical discussion from taking place and hindering the search for useful results. The New Pragmatism thus seems to offer a fertile platform for developing performance evaluation approaches that serve the specific needs of individual arts organizations and their communities, because it rediscovers the role of human agency, facilitates the integration of practical knowledge into theories from different disciplines, and imposes a consciousness of the ethical implications of research. Approaches that problematize these issues may lead to the implementation of carefully thought-out performance evaluation systems that will enable a better understanding of artistic processes and their embeddedness in organizational and societal contexts.

Our article is intended to inspire further research in arts management at both the micro and macro levels. By micro level, we mean research on performance evaluation in the arts. At this level, research will have to investigate the complexity of the contextual factors influencing evaluation practices and push the limits of performance evaluation beyond definitions and decontextualized analyses. Questions to be answered are as follows: What kind of evaluation practices are organic in artistic processes? To what extent do they coexist *with* or resist *against* managerial forms of performance evaluation? How are artists at the level of the individual organization and arts at the level of the artistic community influenced by performance evaluation practices? What artistic values are shared within an organization or a community? What are the interests of the various stakeholders in performance evaluation?

By macro level, we mean arts management research in general. At this level, it is interesting to investigate the extent to which Wicks and Freeman's New Pragmatic Approach offers a common ground to the different disciplines playing in the arts management arena in order to generate a constructive academic debate aimed at enhancing knowledge of the sector and at improving management and organizational practices in the arts world. We are convinced that openly addressing the epistemological legacy of research programs will enable a better understanding of their potential impact on society. This requires a richer and more diverse debate between the academic world and various fields of practice. A New Pragmatic approach will probably not be able

to produce "refined" theories according to the positivistic dream of measuring the world and generalizing its laws in the realm of the scientific method. Nevertheless, it can offer a platform for promoting an in-depth understanding of the individual context of arts organizations, as well as for generating information that is useful for improving their management practices. One-size-fits-all approaches may give an impression of sophistication and thus an apparent sense of legitimacy to their users, but, as we have seen in the case of performance evaluation in the arts, it is unlikely that they can actually work. Further research should analyze other relevant topics for arts organizations against the background of the centrality of ethics in arts management research as formulated here.

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4. Performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector: A story of accounting at its margins[17]

ABSTRACT

In this article, I present a review of financial and management accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector. My objective is to understand to what extent this literature is able to offer a critical perspective on the study of performance evaluation practices in arts and cultural organizations, as it is currently missing in the arts management literature. Adopting a critical perspective means shifting the focus of research from the technicalities of evaluation rules and procedures to their embodiment by the different organizational and societal actors of the arts and cultural sector.

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[17] This chapter is based on the article with the same title, single-authored by me and published in June 2014 in *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 44 (2): 61-96.

4.1. Introduction

Research on performance evaluation, which has recently gained a prominent role within the academic debate on arts and cultural management,[18] has its roots in the area of management accounting,[19] where the interest in this topic has literally exploded after the publication of Kaplan and Norton's article "The Balanced Scorecard—Measures That Drive Performance" in 1992. Atkinson et al. (2012) define management accounting as "the process of supplying the managers and employees in an organization with relevant information, both financial and nonfinancial, for making decisions, allocating resources, and monitoring, evaluating, and rewarding performance" (26). While financial accounting systems produce financial information for investors, regulators, and other external stakeholders according to rules and standards formulated by national and supranational regulatory bodies, management accounting systems produce information (both financial and nonfinancial) for managers and other internal stakeholders of the individual organizations (Atkinson et al. 2012). General accounting includes both management and financial accounting.

While arts and cultural management research and management accounting research share performance evaluation as a popular topic in their respective academic debates, the development of these two disciplines runs rather separately and even divergently. As early as 1999, Turbide and Hoskin noticed how management accounting and arts management research had developed along two divergent lines in the previous four decades. While management accounting was evolving in a self-critical direction, shifting its focus from the improvement of information systems used to support planning, operating, and evaluating processes in organizations, towards the understanding of the specific organizational and social contexts in which the systems operate, arts management was uncritically adopting managerialism as *the* solution to all challenges arts organizations were facing at the time (Turbide and Hoskin 1999).

Turbide and Hoskin's invitation to arts management researchers "to investigate both how it [management accounting] operates in practice and how it is perceived as operating by organizational participants" (1999, 78) seems to have remained unheard so far, at least in research on performance evaluation. Based on the analysis of research approaches to performance evaluation in museums and performing arts organizations appeared in arts-management-related journals between 1999 and 2010, Chiaravalloti and Piber show that performance evaluation research in the arts and cultural sector has remained prevalently instrumental so far, focusing on the proposal of new evaluation techniques and systems rather than on the understanding of the organizational and societal contexts in which evaluation is practiced (Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011). This trend is observable also in more recent contributions (Zorloni 2012; Badia and Donato 2013). The self-critical attitude which has emerged in management accounting research has thus not touched arts management research, even on a topic that is originally a management accounting topic and that is extensively discussed from a critical perspective in the management accounting literature (see, for instance, Robinson 2003; Hoque 2003; Modell 2003; Bourguignon et al. 2004; Bourguignon and Chiapello 2005; Chang 2009; Arnaboldi and Azzone 2010; Fried 2010; Modell 2012; Saliterer and Korac 2013). Its uncritical attitude prevents arts management research from a

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[18] See Chiaravalloti and Piber (2011) for an overview of research on performance evaluation in museums and performing arts organizations which appeared in arts-management-related journals between 1999 and 2010. For more recent contributions, see Zorloni (2012) and Badia and Donato (2013).
[19] See, for instance, Kaplan (1984).

contextualized, in-depth understanding of evaluation practices in arts and cultural organizations by minimizing the role of human agency, by enhancing the gap between theory and practice, and by neglecting the centrality of ethics (Wicks and Freeman 1998; Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011).

As arts management research has so far been unable to propose a theoretical framework for a contextualized, in-depth study of the practice of evaluation in the arts and cultural sector, I wonder whether the accounting literature and, in particular, the management accounting literature can offer one. In this article, I focus on accounting literature dealing explicitly with the arts and cultural sector and on what this literature teaches us about the practice of performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector. Apart from filtering the main implications for the study of performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector emerging from the literature, I analyze the development of the accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector against the background of the general shift of focus in accounting research in general, and in management accounting research in particular, from the study of rules and procedures to the study of their embodiment in specific organizational and societal contexts. The publication of Hopwood's article "On Trying to Study Accounting in the Contexts in Which it Operates" in 1983, which closed an issue of *Accounting, Organizations and Society* devoted to papers originally presented in July 1981 at a conference with the theme of accounting in its organizational context, is a milestone in the redirection of accounting research towards new and more critical perspectives. I consequently include accounting contributions to the arts and cultural sector which appeared after Hopwood's 1983 article. Considering that "the transformation of accounting as a body of expertise takes place within and through an historically specific ensemble of relations formed between a complex of actors and agencies, arguments and ideals, calculative devices and mechanisms" (Miller 1998, 618), I review the literature in chronological order in order to relate the development of accounting research on the arts and cultural sector to the specific historical contexts.

The selection of the accounting journals for review has been purposive (Randolph 2009), and combined a bibliographic approach with a personal-contact approach (Cooper 1986). I started with the *European Accounting Review,* which had recently published a co-authored work by Luca Zan (Mariani and Zan 2011), one of the few accounting scholars who has devoted his work mainly to the study of the arts and cultural sector. Based on the references listed by Mariani and Zan, I selected the following journals: the *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, *Accounting, Organizations and Society, Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, *Financial Accountability & Management*, and *Management Accounting Research*. From the references mentioned in the contributions published in the *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, I selected two additional journals: *Accounting Horizons* and the *Australian Accounting Review.* Then, considering that most of the selected journals represent the critical/interpretive research tradition in accounting, I added *The Accounting Review* to my selection, since it is considered the top journal in accounting amongst those which represent the functionalist/positivist research tradition (Lowe and Locke 2005). Finally, two accounting-related journals, the *Journal of Human Resource Costing & Accounting* and *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management,* were selected based on the information about the publication of two articles in those journals that I received directly by the respective authors. Every journal included in the selection has been searched for articles on the arts

and cultural sector over the last 30 years.[20] Ultimately, I have reviewed twenty articles, fourteen focusing on financial accounting and six on management accounting (see Table 4.1).

Focus / Year	*Financial Accounting*	*Management Accounting*
1988	Mautz (AH)	
1989		
1990		
1991	Glazer and Jaenicke (AH)	
1992		
1993		
1994		
1995	Carnegie and Wolnizer (AAR) Christensen and Mohr (FAM)	
1996	Carnegie and Wolnizer (AAAJ) Rentschler and Potter (AAAJ)	
1997	Carnegie and Wolnizer (AAR) Hone (AAR) Micallef and Peirson (AAR)	Christiansen and Skærbæk (MAR)
1998		Zan (FAM)
1999	Carnegie and Wolnizer (AAR)	
2000	Barton (AAAJ)	
2001		
2002		Zan (CPA)
2003		
2004		
2005	Barton (AAAJ) Hooper et al. (AAAJ)	
2006		
2007		
2008		
2009		
2010		
2011	Adam, Mussari and Jones (FAM)	Mariani and Zan (EAR) Nørreklit (QRAM) Sundström (JHRCA)

Table 4.1: Overview of reviewed articles with year of publication, focus of contribution, and, in brackets, abbreviation of journal title[21]

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[20] The fact that I could not find any contribution on the arts and cultural sector in the two top journals in accounting according to Lowe and Locke's survey (2005) - *Accounting, Organizations and Society* and *The Accounting Review* - confirms the relatively scarce interest of accounting researchers in the arts and cultural sector so far, as recently noticed by Mariani and Zan (2011). In 1996, *Accounting, Organizations and Society* published an article by Preston et al. about the role of visual images in corporate annual reports. Although art theory meets financial accounting in their article, this happens in a business setting and without any reference to the arts and cultural sector.

[21] List of abbreviations of journal titles: AAAJ = *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal,* AAR = *Australian Accounting Review,* AH = *Accounting Horizons,* CPA *= Critical Perspectives on Accounting,* EAR = *European Accounting Review,* FAM = *Financial Accountability & Management*, MAR = *Management Accounting*

To understand the trends emerging from the reviewed literature I embrace Miller's idea of the "margins of accounting":

> Accounting, it is argued, is an assemblage of calculative practices and rationales that were invented in other contexts and for other purposes. To draw attention to the margins of accounting is to emphasize the fluid and mobile nature of accounting. Practices that are now regarded as central to accounting will have been at the margins previously, and practices that are at the margins today may be at the core of accounting in the future. (Miller 1998, 605)

By doing this, I offer three-fold contributions to the literature. First, I present a review of accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector such as has not been available heretofore, neither in the accounting nor in the arts management literature. Second, I show the usefulness and appropriateness of Miller's conceptualization of the margins of accounting through an analysis of the development of accounting research on the arts and cultural sector over a period of thirty years. Finally, I highlight the importance of systematic interdisciplinary research in arts and cultural management by showing how an understanding of the practice of evaluation in the arts and cultural sector can benefit from a confrontation on the part of arts management scholars with the body of knowledge created within the discipline where the studied topic was originally introduced, in this case management accounting as a sub-field of accounting.

The article is structured as follows. In the first two sections, I offer a chronological overview of accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector published from 1983 to date. The first section reviews financial accounting contributions. The second section reviews management accounting contributions. The third section sums up the main trends in accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector emerging from the review, both with respect to the settings (organizational, geographical, historical), the topics treated, and the approaches used. By means of a conclusion, the fourth section elaborates on the main implications emerging from the reviewed literature for the study of the practice of performance evaluation in arts and cultural organizations.

4.2. Financial accounting research on the arts and cultural sector

In this section, I review contributions to accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector whose main focus is on financial reporting to external stakeholders.

The first contribution dates back to 1988, when Mautz published an editorial in *Accounting Horizons* with the title "Monuments, Mistakes, and Opportunities." The editorial discusses whether the Washington Monument should be included as an asset or liability on the balance sheet of the federal government:

> Some years ago, I offered the opinion, publicly, that the Washington Monument should not be included as an asset in any balance sheet of our Federal Government. My stated reason was that the Monument currently, and for the foreseeable future, results in a net outflow of cash for the Government. If the annual cost of maintenance and

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Research, JHRCA = *Journal of Human Resource Costing & Accounting*, QRAM = *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management.*

custodianship exceeds any revenues (my recollection is that no fees are charged for entry), the Monument is a liability. (Mautz 1988, 123)

Mautz suggests speaking about monuments as "facilities" instead of assets:

> Facilities are properties essential to the purposes of a not-for-profit organization that are acquired to facilitate the transfer of resources outward. (Mautz 1988, 125)

The technical aspects of this specific problem quickly lead to a more general issue: the differences between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. In particular, in relation to the topic of performance evaluation, the author is conscious of the differences between these two groups of organizations with respect to the measurement of success. Since there is no natural measure of effectiveness and efficiency in not-for-profit organizations, managers should not evaluate success based on market performance and profitability (124). This consciousness poses challenges to conventional accounting both in practice and research:

> We accountants are so indoctrinated with the idea of matching revenue and expense that we have difficulty in believing that a similar matching is not appropriate for any organization that receives and expends resources. [...] We have difficulty even conceiving of financial statements that do not include an articulated balance sheet and statement of income. Somehow it seems like an assault on the double entry system itself. Perhaps that is why we have such difficulty in visualizing financial statements that appropriately take into account the differences between profit-making enterprises and not-for-profit organizations. (Mautz 1988, 127)

Mautz is convinced that spending more time with the managers of not-for-profit organizations and observing how they evaluate their success, what information they use, and how they form a judgment about the future operations of their organizations is the best way to face these challenges and to discover new solutions for the evaluation of organizational success (127-128).

Glazer and Jaenicke's contribution from 1991 follows a similar line, as the discussion of a technical, financial accounting topic leads to more general considerations about the scope of arts and cultural organizations. Based on a research report commissioned by four American museums, Glazer and Jaenicke analyze some conceptual issues concerning the accounting standards for museums formulated by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) in October 1990. Amongst other accounting standards, the FASB proposed the compulsory capitalization of collection items in the financial reporting of museums; that is, the recognition of museums' collection items as assets by assigning them a monetary value so that the long-term contributions of those items can be recognized as revenues. The central topic of Glazer and Jaenicke's article is the methods used to estimate the monetary value of museums' collections. Despite the initial focus on this technical problem, the nature and purpose of museums emerge as the central issues in the article. Museums objectives do not necessarily include a monetary return on investment, but a service "return" to the community (43). This service return cannot be measured by using accounting information. As a consequence, any measurement of the "investments" of museums in their collections is superfluous (43). According to Glazer and Jaenicke, the evaluation of the organizational performance in museums should be based on the level of satisfaction of the needs of the community served by the museums. The estimation of the value of collection items should consequently be based on the contribution of the individual items to the satisfaction of those needs. In addition, Glazer and

Jaenicke reflect on the usefulness of financial information for the external stakeholders of museums. Their interviews with users of museums' financial statements show no evidence that a monetary evaluation of collections might be of any use to the readers. On the contrary, from the interviews there emerges a fear of "knowledgeable users" - donors, rating agencies, etc. - about possible misinterpretations of information about monetary value of collection items by less knowledgeable financial statement readers (Glazer and Jaenicke 1991, 42).

The reaction of the museum world to the proposal of the FASB to introduce the capitalization of collection items as a compulsory requirement for financial reporting was in line with the criticism expressed by Glazer and Jaenicke. Due to the vehement opposition from museums, the FASB decided finally not to oblige but rather to encourage the use of capitalization techniques in museums (Christensen and Mohr 1995). It is in this context that Christensen and Mohr (1995) conduct their survey of capitalization practices in US arts museums. Their results show that museums that make little use of capitalization of collection items are those with, on average, a larger number of collection items and/or a larger amount of governmental support, those where collection surveys of the museums holdings are already available, and those with a board of trustees (331). The authors' interpretation of these results is that the costs required to obtain the necessary information to capitalize collection items are too high and not necessarily justified by their usefulness. In fact, if the objective of producing more accounting data is to enhance the credibility of the organization, the same objective can be achieved more effectively; for example, by establishing a credible board of trustees (330).

With the publication of an article by Carnegie and Wolnizer in 1995, the discussion about the capitalization of museums' collection items arrives in Australia. Reacting to the new accounting standards issued by the Australian Accounting Research Foundation (AARF) in December 1993, which required the recognition of heritage items as assets, Carnegie and Wolnizer argue against any financial quantification of cultural, heritage, and scientific collections. At first they show that, except for New Zealand, no English-speaking country requires mandatory capitalization of collection items. Second, based on the results of a questionnaire completed by 32 arts institutions across the US, UK, New Zealand, France, and Spain, they show that only seven organizations recognize collections as assets - three in the US, two in the UK, and two in New Zealand - and that only two of them - both in New Zealand - include the financial valuation in the balance sheet (35). The most common reasons for avoiding a financial valuation of collections are that the collections are not held to achieve financial objectives, that the financial value of collections cannot be calculated, and that the costs of a financial valuation of the collections would exceed any benefit deriving from it (35). As with the contributions reviewed above, Carnegie and Wolnizer's reflections on a technical problem of financial accounting lead to the discussion of a broader issue: the nature of not-for-profit arts organizations. The objectives of these organizations do not include the typical financial goals of commercial enterprises such as income generation, profitability, and surplus distribution (37). In other words, collection items are not held in order to achieve financial objectives, but to enrich and educate the community, as well as to preserve history and heritage (38). In line with Mautz (1988) and Glazer and Jaenicke (1991), Carnegie and Wolnizer also suggest that success in not-for-profit arts organizations should be evaluated in nonfinancial terms (38). The authors conclude their article by asking four questions that, according to them, should be answered before any simplistic attempt is made to assign monetary values to collections and their items:

First, what is the commercial meaning of any such financial quantum?

Second, by recourse to what reliable commercial evidence may an auditor authenticate that financial sum?

Third, in what demonstrable way or ways is such a financial quantum useful for enhancing and judging the accountability of those who manage not-for-profit public arts institutions having non-commercial objectives?

Fourth, in what demonstrable way or ways is that financial quantum useful for gauging the financial efficiency with which a public (grant-dependent) arts institution is managed? (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995, 44)

These four questions keep recurring in the further discussion on financial accounting in the arts and cultural sector in the *Australian Accounting Review*. This discussion has to be seen in the context of developments in the accounting practices of Australian public arts and cultural organizations, as testified by the publication of different proposals for accounting standards relating to heritage between 1992 and 1995 (see Hone 1997). The third question explicitly addresses the issue of accountability. As it can be seen in the contributions by Carnegie and Wolnizer (1996) and by Rentschler and Potter (1996) in the *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*,[22] the notion of accountability takes the original, purely financial-accounting-related discussion to a broader dimension, in which both the organizational and social contexts are taken into account. First, I will briefly review the discussion in the *Australian Accounting Review*, and then I move to the two articles on accountability.

In 1997, Hone reacts to Carnegie and Wolnizer's article from 1995 and sets his arguments about the need for the financial valuation of collection items in a public management context. He finds financial valuation of public collections useful since it helps to make decisions about the allocation of funds when different potential uses are competing; it offers a tool to evaluate the performance of managers by making them accountable for the use of public resources; and as such it is an instrument for the control of public expenditure (39). In addition, Hone suggests the use of contingent valuation in order to assign a financial value to the services offered by public collections to their communities. Even though it presents significant problems, this form of valuation is considered necessary for a well-functioning public management (40-42). The public management setting is used by Carnegie and Wolnizer to counter Hone's criticism. Carnegie and Wolnizer's article from 1995 was concerned with the technical possibility of putting financial values of collection items in the balance sheet, an issue which, according to them, is not related to public management (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1997). Valuation of assets for the balance sheet has no relation to allocation decisions between competing uses (45). In addition, since the financial value of collections is not the primary guide for the actions of the collections' managers, they should be evaluated on, or accountable for, the achievement of the objectives of their organizations (46). Finally, Carnegie and Wolnizer see no link between a monetary valuation of collection items and a good monitoring of expenditures, since the latter can be effectively based on the record of "dated financial facts" (47). With respect to contingent valuation, they consider it an inappropriate instrument since the values it produces are purely subjective, and do not fit the purposes of financial reporting (49).

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[22] In the same issue of *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, other contributions relate art and, more generally, humanities to accounting. However, they do not study accounting in the arts and cultural sector and are thus excluded from my review.

Micallef and Peirson (1997) also react to Carnegie and Wolnizer's article from 1995. They cannot find support for Carnegie and Wolnizer's arguments against the capitalization of collections' items. One of their main points of criticism is Carnegie and Wolnizer's doubts about the usefulness of capitalization information. According to Micallef and Peirson, financial information about the collections is necessary for governments to make informed decisions about the allocation of public funds. In addition, by including this information in financial reports, managers discharge their accountability and deliver relevant information for the evaluation of their own performance (1997, 34). By referring to the third and fourth question formulated in their article from 1995 (see above), Carnegie and Wolnizer reply that Micallef and Peirson do not demonstrate the validity of their proposition and that the financial accountability suggested by Micallef and Peirson would be based on outdated acquisition prices that are hardly relevant for present financial decisions about collection items. Considering the organizational and social context of museums, Carnegie and Wolnizer consider a broader notion of accountability more helpful than a purely financial one (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1999, 18).

They explain this notion in their article, entitled "Enabling Accountability in Museums," published in 1996 in the *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* in the middle of the ongoing discussion in the *Australian Accounting Review*. In this article, Carnegie and Wolnizer shift their focus from financial accounting to management accounting and public management, a shift that turns around the notion of accountability:

> Recognizing that the accountability of museum managers lies outside the market, but extends across an array of financial and non-financial responsibilities associated with the acquisition, protection, preservation, conservation and presentation of collection items, we direct our attention in this paper to elucidating a notion of accountability that corresponds with the responsibilities cast on museum managers by the mission statements and published objectives of museums. [...] Apart from the logical impropriety and empirical impossibility of quantifying non-financial (non-monetary) properties of collections, such as their cultural, heritage, scientific and educative values, in monetary terms, the bringing of collections to account for financial reporting purposes may have counterproductive or destructive impacts on the organizational and social functions of museums. For example, such a practice may facilitate the implementation of government-imposed charges or levies on museums that could result in deaccessioning choices of a genre not previously contemplated, and which could irrevocably destroy the integrity of collections - and hence diminish their cultural, heritage, scientific, educative and other values to the community. (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1996, 84-85)

While the four questions formulated in their first article from 1995 were primarily technical questions (see above), in their new article Carnegie and Wolnizer problematize the relation between accounting and accountability and extend their attention from financial to management accounting. Concerning the relation between accounting and accountability, they explicitly doubt the usefulness of financial accounting techniques coming from business, as they do not necessarily fit the context of such publicly funded not-for-profit organizations as museums (87):

> If accounting is to serve the public interest, it must generate information which is meaningful in specific contexts. (94)

An emphasis on standardized financial reporting is linked to a narrow notion of accountability relying only on financial indicators and neglecting the richness, complexity, and diversity of the organizational objectives of publicly funded not-for-profit museums (88-89). The language of accountability in museums, based on "the primacy of international and organizational cultural values" (94), cannot be replaced by a language of accountability based on the primacy of financial accounting (94). In moving the focus of attention from financial to management accounting, Carnegie and Wolnizer propose their Enabling Accountability in Museums (EAM) framework in order to set up not only "effective reporting systems" for external stakeholders but also "effective organizational control systems" for internal use (89). To operationalize their framework, Carnegie and Wolnizer suggest the use of financial and non-financial quantitative information as well as of qualitative data that supports the evaluation of organizational and managers' performance. At the top of the hierarchy of the performance indicators, there should be indicators of the quality of the experience provided to the museums' visitors (91).

Another article in the same issue of the *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* turns around the notion of accountability. While the literature reviewed so far deals with museums and heritage, Rentschler and Potter (1996) study both museums and performing arts organizations. They are not satisfied that the economic and financial-accounting-oriented notion of accountability applies to publicly funded not-for-profit museums and performing arts more generally. Instead, they suggest broadening the notion of accountability to include the objectives formulated in the mission statements of those organizations, which are usually related to the education and enrichment of the public. They claim that this is a necessary condition for the meaningful evaluation of organizational performance (110). Nevertheless, the authors recognize that, for accountability in a broad sense, new measurement techniques need to be developed, as they have been developed for financial accountability (103). If this does not happen, external stakeholders will base their evaluations on financial and economic measures that are not part of the organizations' missions (108), while content-related aspects of their mission will not be evaluated because they cannot be quantified (110).

After Rentschler and Potter's article, the performing arts again disappear from the accounting literature which focuses on financial reporting issues. With his article from 2000, Barton brings heritage back into focus. Based on economic and political theory, he explains why commercial accounting principles should not be applied to heritage. In line with Glazer and Jaenicke (1991) and Carnegie and Wolnizer (1995), Barton argues that heritage is maintained by governments for purposes other than revenue generation and government administration:

> A nation's heritage is largely drawn from its cultural and natural environments. Public heritage facilities play an important part in the development of a nation's culture. They raise and enhance the quality of life of a nation beyond that provided by everyday commercial activities. They act as a unifying medium to bring citizens closer together as members of a nation, to take more pride in it and to appreciate more fully its history and culture. They can have significant educational and scientific value. Governments

recognize the social importance of these facilities and maintain them for these purposes rather than for their financial worth. (Barton 2000, 221)

As such, financial valuations provide information that has nothing to do with the social value created by heritage (228). Barton offers a compromise solution: heritage can be considered as a public good (222-224) that is entrusted to the government by a nation and thus should not be accounted for as an operating asset of the government, but separately as trust asset (230-232).

Accountability should be discharged not only based on the financial information about the trust assets, but above all based on the other, non-financial benefits these assets provide to society (234). Barton argues that to support performance evaluation in public heritage management, an information system should be developed which also includes non-financial, non-numerical information related to the mission and responsibilities of the managing entity and the nature of the managed heritage goods; customer-oriented performance measures; technical and physical descriptions of the heritage goods and their conservation and restoration requirements (233).

Barton repeats his main points five years later, in 2005, in a note to an article written by Hooper et al. (2005) which discusses the mandatory valuation of museums holdings required by the Institute of Chartered Accountant of New Zealand (ICANZ). Barton's main point about usefulness of accounting information is summed up clearly in the last sentences of his note:

> It is important that the managers of PHAs [public heritage assets] collect information which is useful for the performance of their functions in providing services to the public in an efficient and effective manner and for the conservation of the assets. Useful information must be relevant to their functions and be reliable. [...] This information does not include the financial valuation of the heritage assets on a commercial basis and its inclusion in a statement of financial position because it is both irrelevant and unreliable. The provision of irrelevant and unreliable information frustrates good management of the assets rather than enhances it. (Barton 2005, 438-439)

The lack of usefulness of any financial valuation of heritage assets partly explains the resistance of New Zealand museums to the introduction of such a mandatory accounting practice, as Hooper et al. show based on interviews with representatives of ICANZ and of New Zealand museums (2005). The professional rationality of curatorship, which is more interested in aesthetic, cultural, and social values than in a financial value (410), resists the increasing accountability requirements originating in the rise of managerialism in the public sector:

> [...] the one-size-fits-all mode of managerialism inherent in FRS-3 [the new financial reporting standard required by ICANZ] appears to us as a kind of managerialist overreach. Institutions, we argue, need accounting and management models which are appropriate to their environment, roles and responsibilities. (Hooper et al. 2005, 412)

However, the rationality of curatorship is not always successful in resisting managerial rationality. For instance, the major publicly funded museums in New Zealand opposed limited resistance to the application of the new standards (426-427). Hooper et al. (2005) argue that, in general, the uncritical acceptance of accounting principles derived from business and commercial entities for the evaluation of the performance of not-for-profit cultural organizations is a consequence of the diffusion of a managerial rationality (416). Nevertheless, the authors also recognize the role of the

funding regime for the major publicly funded museums in New Zealand in resisting or adopting mandatory standards that are originally alien to the not-for-profit cultural sector. Being fully funded by the government, the major museums had little choice and had to adopt the new standard, whereas regional and financially more independent museums did not accept it (421). Even though Hooper et al. (2005) recognize that the reasons for resistance to mandatory accounting standards are also practical (no time for such an accounting exercise), technical (heritage assets do not depreciate but rather appreciate), and political (risk of having to sell valuable assets to compensate for declining funding), they ultimately stress the importance of the different rationalities in different communities of practice as philosophical and cultural reasons for resistance:

> It appears then that there are considerable differences in opinion as to the value and utility of FRS-3 [the new financial reporting standard required by ICANZ] in relation to heritage assets. In general terms, however, the parties divide into two camps. Knowing the price of everything, though it might be seen as desirable by some within particular communities of practice (i.e. accountants and auditors - those involved with the New Zealand Treasury, the Audit Office and ICANZ in particular), is not generally seen in the same light by those in the museum community whose professional identity is more strongly tied to notions of intrinsic, aesthetic, social and cultural value rather than economic value or government dictate. (Hooper et al. 2005, 425-426)

This is not only true for museum staff in general, but even for accountants employed by museums. In this sense, the accounting background of museum accountants seems to influence their rationality rather less than the fact of working in museums:

> The behavior of accounting professionals employed by the regional museums can be seen as the outcome of a shared understanding that comes from belonging to a particular community and from embracing the practice of being a good person according to the rules of that community [...], that is a community that subscribes to aesthetic, cultural and social values rather than economic value. For accountants of regional museums, non-compliance has meant employing a logic that may be counter to their own professional training - "a museum logic" which conflicts with norms of compliance with professional accounting standards. (Hooper et al. 2005, 425-426)

Different communities are in conflict with each other because they look differently at the same object (428). It is thus important for researchers to understand the values and norms shared within a certain community of practice and the possible effects of imposing or resisting different forms of accountability. In particular, Hooper et al. wonder "whether arguments and notions of increased accountability will induce new disciplines of either self and/or externally motivated control over the management of heritage assets - and whether these disciplines can ultimately be judged as in the public interest or not." (2005, 428)

While Hooper et al. (2005) focus on the embodiment of accounting procedures and rules, Adam et al. (2011) are only interested in the technical aspects, in particular whether the accounting practices in three European countries (Germany, Italy, and the UK) are in compliance with the norms formulated by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board with reference to the recognition and financial valuation of infrastructure, art, and heritage assets. The authors conclude that, despite the influence of increasing pressure for the adoption of accrual accounting standards in

the public sector, practice varies a lot with respect to art and heritage assets. In addition, skepticism remains about the inclusion of art and heritage assets in the balance sheet (128-131).

To sum up the main results of this section, financial accounting research on the arts and cultural sector has focused so far on technical issues of financial reporting in museums and heritage. Other organizations within the arts and cultural sector are practically ignored by this literature. While the article of Hooper et al. (2005) offers a clear and explicitly critical perspective on the issue of capitalization of collections' items in museums, the financial accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector is, in general, more interested in the study of rules and procedures than in the study of their embodiment in specific organizational and societal contexts.

In the next section, I review the management accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector. As it has been seen in the introduction to this article, management accounting research in general has evolved in a self-critical direction. In particular, the topic of performance evaluation has often been approached from a critical perspective. Thus, I also expect in the management accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector more attention to the study of the embodiment of accounting rules and procedures in specific organizational and societal contexts than has been the case in the financial accounting literature reviewed so far.

4.3. Management accounting research on the arts and cultural sector

In this section, I review contributions to the accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector whose main focus is on financial and non-financial reporting to managers and other internal stakeholders. However, I am conscious that reporting to internal and external stakeholders can overlap in publicly funded arts and cultural organizations - the main object of study in the reviewed literature - due to the influence that governments, in the role of owners, investors, and regulators, can have on the internal structure and on the management systems of those organizations.

The first contribution is Christiansen and Skærbæk's analysis of the fifteen-year process of implementing a new management control system - combining an accounting system and a planning and budgeting system - at the Royal Danish Theatre (1997). In particular, given the different rationalities of the various parties involved in the implementation process (administrators, political bodies, theater staff), Christiansen and Skærbæk want to gain insights into the behavior of each of the parties (405). They are very conscious of having chosen a research approach that is different from the more traditional ones used in accounting research:

> [...] a more traditional accounting approach focusing on the techniques (e.g., standard costing, the design of the budget system, and transfer pricing) might have produced other useful insights (e.g., concerning the design of a new system), but it would not help us understand the complex relationships between the management control system and the organization and its actors. (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997, 433-434)

Their study demonstrates some of the processes of resistance within organizations to the introduction of new forms and systems of control imposed by external regulatory bodies (433). For instance, the top management of the Royal Danish Theatre defended their artistic freedom by insisting that artistic processes, characterized by creativity and innovativeness, were incompatible with budgetary controls based on figures that are planned much in advance (419-420). To do this, they adopted a "strategy of balanced management" (420), consisting of pretending, in front of the

regulatory bodies, to apply the accounting systems, while actually making sure that they did not interfere too much with the artistic processes (420). In this way, the theater could be protected from external criticism, while its artistic freedom was protected from the intrusive financial language (426-427). Top management acted as an intermediary between the external political pressures and the interests of the theater (429-430). At the same time, they also acted as an intermediary between the different groups of staff in the theater. The implementation of the new control system at the Royal Danish Theatre illustrates the differences in rationalities, not only between accountants and other professions, but also between the various groups of theater staff (administrative, artistic, and technical staff) (432). For instance, production managers, although recognizing the incompatibility of artistic creation and standardized planning, were interested in having a new budgeting system in order to reduce the continuous and unforeseeable changes wanted by artists and thereby to ensure that there was some stability in the production process (424-425). The top management recognized that artistic creativity cannot be packaged in a set of calculative practices. First, artistic ideas develop organically through continuous cooperation between artists and production staff. Second, only designers and artists can recognize when their work is really finished. Thus, how can the formalized planning of the production process cope with the creativity of the artistic development? (428-429) The CEO of the theater ended up applying the new budgeting system only to the production units and not to the stage performers (429).

While Christiansen and Skærbæk stress the different rationalities of the various parties involved in the day-to-day life at arts and cultural organizations, Zan is more interested in the possibility of a positive dialogue between them (1998; 2002). Both of his articles look at the role of accounting in arts and cultural organizations, respectively the Imola Academy and the *Soprintendenza* of Pompeii, from a general management perspective. The Imola Academy is a very successful specialist school in advanced piano performance, which aims at turning talented piano graduates into professional concert pianists. Recently, the Academy has also offered tuition on other instruments. In Zan's description, the organization appears as a structurally light and flat organization that makes extensive use of voluntary work. In addition, its accountant is mainly employed at another company and looks after the accounts of the Academy in her free time. Since no form of financial report is required from the organization, accounting systems are very simple, consisting of a cash flow forecast at the beginning of the year and a financial statement at the end, both of which are only for internal use (Zan 1998, 225-226). In this way, the attention to financial issues, such as fundraising and resource allocation, is concentrated in one moment of the year; i.e., when the forecast is produced. For the rest of the year, apart from six to seven board meetings, where financial issues are on the agenda, accounting is largely absent from the core processes of the organization; these are in the hands of the teachers and musicians. Zan interprets this as an example of a positive dialogue between an artistic-musical rationality and a business-managerial rationality. Accounting, which is at the core of the business-managerial rationality, plays a non-intrusive but important role "in protecting the realm of professionals from the world of finance" (229).

An investigation of the interaction between different rationalities is also one of the main motives for Zan's study of the *Soprintendenza* of Pompeii (2002). This study focuses on the issue of accountability, especially financial accountability. While in general, at the time of the study, the debate on accountability in the arts and cultural sector tended to extend the notion of accountability from a purely financial to a broader and more content-oriented perspective (see Carnegie and Wolnizer 1996 and Rentschler and Potter 1996), in the case of Pompeii, where no basic accounting

information was available at the time of Zan's study, adopting financial accountability was still the first priority (93). The only compulsory accounting reports in Pompeii concerned the "ordinary" funding of the *Soprintendenza* (five billion lire a year). However, this is an organization in which extraordinary funding with amounts up to fifty billion lire is dominant, and where the estimated personnel costs per year are around forty to fifty billion lire (113). Zan is not interested in the topic of accountability at an abstract, general, or theoretical level, but he wants to contextualize it through a strong empirical focus. By doing so, he positions his approach as "a critique to generic approaches, of a self-referential use of management rhetoric" (92). The complex situation of Pompeii calls for an in-depth understanding of the organization of the *Soprintendenza* and its operations as a precondition for further reflections on such issues as accountability and responsibility (93-94). According to Zan, this is also the case for the study of accountability in arts and cultural organizations more generally:

> [...] For the management expert however [...] this means a deep contextualist understanding of the organization under investigation, the involvement in time-wasting inquiry of the empirical realm and probably the extensive use of field-work research, in order to couple the process of establishment of managerial attitudes with the development of broad and acceptable forms of accountability. (132)

Zan concludes that, from the organizational point of view, since there is no accounting information in Pompeii, there is no financial accountability either, and that this can be linked to the lack of clear responsibilities for the budgets (112-113, 126):

> [...] to speak of accountability presupposes that someone is called upon to be accountable for something to someone. There are therefore two premises, one informative (the information that allows some kind of representation of something), the other organizational-institutional regarding governance, the identification of that 'someone' who will take responsibility for managing 'something'. (Zan 2002, 93)

With respect to the original motivation for his study of the *Soprintendenza* of Pompeii, that is, the interaction between different rationalities in the process of managerialization of arts and cultural organizations, Zan concludes that the generally assumed conflicting relation between curatorship and management stemming from the different sets of professional values is not fully supported by the case of Pompeii. First, the professional rationality of curators and the managerial rationality of marketers find a balance in the planning process through the concept of "sustainable consumption" (130), as Zan explains:

> The limited 'natural resources', in terms of excavation sites, are steadily eroded by visitors. Given the limited possibility of reproduction (via caring processes and restorations), consumption (in terms of number of visitors and their impact) has to be modelled accordingly. (Zan 2002, 102)

> Within an ecological perspective of 'sustainable consumption', the aim is to identify intervention needs and how much funding they will require. While taking on board the need to make Pompeii more consumer friendly and attractive (by improving the service offered), the plan clearly identifies restoration as the key element and

ordinary/extraordinary maintenance as crucial, drawing attention to the need for an overall plan for Pompeii. (Zan 2002, 127)

Second, there is a "close interconnection between research and marketing orientation" (95-97) with respect to the organization of the many successful temporary exhibitions - some attracted more than one million visitors - where curatorship and marketing interests seem to overlap. The exhibitions are considered, both in internal documents of the *Soprintendenza* and in the interviews conducted during Zan's study, somewhat like research activities which require the expertise of archeology scholars, rather than as "consumption" platforms requiring the expertise of managers and marketers (95).

A lapse of nine years divides Zan's study of Pompeii from the next - and last in this review - of his three accounting publications studying the arts and cultural sector from a management or management accounting perspective. Mariani and Zan (2011) take the discussion from museums back to performing arts. The objective of their contribution is "to model the inner economy and organizing patterns" of live music programs and organizations (116). By "inner economy," the authors mean the structure of cost, revenues, investments, and cash flows (115). Mariani and Zan consider music programs and organizations complex and varied (118). Complexity derives from four main factors: the mix of creative and supporting resources; the uncertainty and uncontrollability of the result happening on stage; the difficulty of evaluating the results; the tensions and conflicts between the different staff groups and between the staff and external stakeholders (118-119). Variety can refer to the components of an individual program, the work arrangements for each program, or the different management activities and systems (119). Furthermore, variety has an impact on performance evaluation:

> The variety of situations/solutions needs to be understood as a prerequisite for reconstructing the inner economy of music programmes and organizations, without reducing the valuation process to a mere identification of simplistic performance indicators. (Mariani and Zan 2011, 119)

One additional problem for the evaluation of financial aspects of performance is that, on the one hand, costs are created by artistic activities and thus generated within an artistic discourse that tends not to include financial considerations. On the other hand, they are controlled by management accountants who do not necessarily understand the artistic motivation that generated those costs. Any assessment of artistic and cultural performance, considering also that these are intangible by definition, is thus very difficult (119). Nevertheless, these difficulties should serve as a stimulus for accounting research to reflect on the use and relevance of accounting systems in a context where calculation and measurement are ambiguous if not even impossible. In this sense, the accounting discipline could learn from the arts (141). A different research approach would be necessary to pursue this objective. Complexity and variety of the arts call for research approaches and theoretical frameworks that are contextualized, as an alternative to the "general, a-specific" ones which are typical of most economics, management, and accounting research (139). The critical stance of Mariani and Zan gets even more explicit in the last section of their article, where they reflect on their contribution to accounting research and theory:

> The arts sector provides an interesting example of a community of professionals and users that are interested in substantive terms in arts discourse. This does not always

provide materials and opportunities for researchers obsessed with theory, modelling, implications, where understanding processes and practice can be quickly labelled as "descriptive." Professional organizations […] could be a good opportunity for refreshing, in new ways, similar stereotypes in accounting research. (Mariani and Zan 2011, 142)

The three main reasons for the scarcity of accounting research in the arts so far are, according to Mariani and Zan, exactly the main characteristics of the arts. The first is "the idiosyncratic nature of the business under consideration, wherein art and accounting professionals make sense of performance in a very dissimilar way" (Mariani and Zan 2011, 141). The second is "the difficulty of understanding and interpreting inputs, throughputs, outputs and outcomes in the arts industries, due to the ambiguity of those concepts in the arts field" (Mariani and Zan 2011, 141). The third is "the specificity of the micro context (the individual music programme) that should be made sense of, measured and assessed." (Mariani and Zan 2011, 141).

With Nørreklit's contribution, the discussion returns to Denmark, this time into the opera world. Based on Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms, Nørreklit (2011) compares the symbolic forms used in mainstream management models, such as the Balanced Scorecard, with the symbolic forms embedded in the tales of management and direction told by Kasper Holten, the former Artistic Director of the Royal Danish Opera and current Director of Opera at the Royal Opera House in London. Nørreklit's objective is to assess to what extent management models can be inspired by a successful manager and artist, as a way of rediscovering the role of the human reality of individual employees in professional organizations. The challenge for management and leadership studies is to answer the following question:

> How can you keep an often multi-professional organization of individuals together so that everybody works towards the overall goal, while at the same time ensuring that the employees are committing themselves to their work as competent, active and innovative problem solvers? (Nørreklit 2011, 266)

The work at the opera is a good case to study, since it is done by many knowledge workers who contribute through their personal commitment (physical, emotional, cognitive) to the achievement of the common goal; that is, the performance on stage (266).

Nørreklit shows that mainstream management models originate in the symbolic form of science. Rationality, objective observation, precision of concepts, and precision of relations between concepts are central. Emotions and subjectivity are neglected (272-273). Essential aspects of individuality are thereby "oppressed" (265) by this form of management as a science (272). Nevertheless, some of those models use language in a way that creates a sort of myth around the topic - and, in general, about being manager and doing business - rather than testable assumptions, as should be the case in science. This is also the case with the performance evaluation model *par excellence,* the Balanced Scorecard:

> […] in the balanced scorecard, metaphors and analogies from the semantic areas of physics and engineering are used to describe features of the business world and how to achieve successful results, but these metaphors and analogies do not provide a very good picture of what they are supposed to illustrate. […] It may be that the model's choice of words is known from the discursive practice of natural science, but the

concepts are not used semantically to specify and describe relations between phenomena, but rather magically to produce effects of a mechanical business world and an action-oriented manager in control. (Nørreklit 2011, 273)

Control, and especially logistic control, as well as good organization and clear frameworks are absolutely essential in the work of the opera, according to Holten (Nørreklit 2011, 275-276). Nevertheless, to be convincing about this, he does not refer to the arguments of science, such as rationality and mechanistic cause-effect relations. He uses the visualizing and sympathetic power of art to speak to the feelings and senses of individuals (276). In his discourse of management, he is thus able to mix the symbolic forms of science - the importance of good organization - with the symbolic forms of art - the importance of the individual human reality (275-276). By mixing humor and drama, he is able to portray the reality of an opera production, which is a joint effort and not a deterministic process, in a much more dynamic and convincing way than is possible with the mechanistic cause-effect relations of the balanced scorecard (281). This applies also to Holten's words about the inappropriateness of the evaluation tools promoted in the context of 'New Public Management'-oriented reforms:

> How does one measure a good opera performance? If we were to do the measuring, it would be one where people weep. The Danish Ministry of Finance would actually like us to include the measuring of good opera in our result contract. [...] I can easily imagine that if you designed a machine, I don't think you could, but say you could design a machine which could measure the quality of an opera performance, and then on some evenings, I am sure it would say fantastic. Yes, but, I would say, I didn't shed a single tear, and on other evenings it would say no, too many things went wrong, and she didn't sing the top C very well, and I don't know what. And I must say that I cried inconsolably during her death scene. And I know which performance I would rather see. To measure the quality of an opera performance, we would have to install a hydrometer among the audience so as to be able to measure any increases in humidity. This is, of course, a bit affected, but this is a story which I can tell both to a stage technician who understands perfectly well that his wife cries her way through the dress rehearsal because it is so beautiful, and to a highly educated opera soloist who knows that when singing his death scene he really should do what he can to make the audience weep, and actually also to my secretary who must treat all the foreign agents so well that they send their best artists over here and down onto the stage to make people weep. [...] And those metaphors, that story, can be used throughout the house. (Kasper Holten, cited in Nørreklit 2011, 277)

In contrast to the arbitrariness of a performance evaluation model originating in the symbolic form of science which is inadequate in an artistic context, Holten creates a sound ontological certainty based on "the everyday conventions of making sense of the very reality of things, other persons and oneself" in the opera environment (Nørreklit 2011, 286). The final criterion for performance evaluation has to be based on his own as well as his organization's ambition to speak "to people's deepest emotions rather than producing a technically correct performance. Opera should not be evaluated on the basis of science as symbolic form, but on the basis of the symbolic form of art" (Nørreklit 2011, 277). Apart from being effective in managing arts organizations, the metaphors used by Holten - opera as an "emotional fitness center" (Kasper Holten, cited in Nørreklit 2011, 279), or a

"hydrometer" to measure weeping - and, more generally, the use of the symbolic form of art, can also inspire new, more sympathetic conceptualizations of performance evaluation in other sectors (287-288).

With Sundström (2011), the setting remains within the performing arts sector in Scandinavia. This time the investigated case is a small touring theater in Sweden. At the time of the study, the Swedish Performing Arts association had started a project aimed at the standardization of accounting procedures and vocabulary within the Swedish performing arts sector (268). This project was funded by the Swedish Arts Council, and the administrative director of the investigated theater was a member of the project team (268-269). At the same time, the theater had to adopt a scorecard developed by the local municipality (which owned the theater together with the county council) both for internal management control and for reporting to its owners (264, 276). In his case study, Sundström explores the implications of distance between providers and users of accounting information. With distance he does not only mean physical distance, but also differences in knowledge and understanding of the contexts represented by accounting information (260-261). The small, publicly funded touring theater investigated by Sundström faces this issue, since it is held accountable by different stakeholders, internal and external, based on numerical representations of its artistic activities and of the results achieved. Decontextualized interpretations of numbers become even more problematic in a setting where numbers are considered inadequate to represent performance, as is the case for performing arts organizations (261-262).

Sundström studies the implications of distance for the way theater managers use numbers and frame organizational performance with respect to four main uses of accounting information: internal decision-making, reporting to board and owners, reporting to other funders, reporting to press and other unknown users (264). Internally, managers and employees find it in general difficult to describe the process of value creation of the theater. In particular, they find the use of numbers inadequate for this purpose (265). For instance, the value created for the inhabitants of small villages, by performing for them, cannot be captured through a standardized instrument (266). Even though audience surveys are conducted, they are irrelevant for the framing of performance within the organization. The feelings of being appreciated by the audience and the consequent self-fulfillment of staff fill the stories of performance within the organization, while measurements are used to confirm those feelings (265). Even when numbers are used for comparisons between theaters, "it is not necessarily the difference between the numbers that matters to the manager but the reasons for the existence of a difference. Rather than representing performance, measurement is hence seen as something that may assist in organizational development through a learning process regarding contextual differences between T[ouring] T[heater] and other theatres" (Sundström 2011, 266).

With respect to reporting to the board and the owners, theater managers are positive about the use of a scorecard with four perspectives - citizen/customer, development/growth, finance, employee - as developed by the municipality. The scorecard offers the theater a chance to include information that goes beyond purely financial results and to create a more complete context for the interpretation of the reported figures. In particular, managers use the additional information to direct the owners' and the board's interpretation of the reported figures (267). Creating a more complete context and directing the board's interpretation of the numbers is essential for the managers, since the board, in their opinion, lacks the knowledge of the context that is necessary to

supervise the organization. This lack of knowledge becomes an opportunity for the theater managers to influence the board's framing of organizational performance (268).

In relation to reporting to other funders, the lack of knowledge and understanding of the specific context of individual arts organizations is again the main concern for the theater managers (268). Funders would like to have numbers to easily compare arts organizations and to decide which one is better or worse, although no numbers can adequately represent the core values created by these organizations and thereby facilitate meaningful comparability (269). Nevertheless, since those funders are continuously in touch with the individual organizations, it is likely that they can contextualize the reported numbers. This is less likely in the case of press and other unknown users, who are much more "distant" in terms of knowledge and understanding from the context of the individual organizations and, consequently, of the reported numbers (269). When press and other unknown users read the theater's annual report, the theater managers can hardly influence their interpretation and use of that information. Under such circumstances, the information is likely to be taken out of the original context and the "reported numbers are thus reframed in a context of numerical calculation" (Sundström 2011, 270). In order to fill this distance and to prevent a purely numerical interpretation of the numbers, annual reports are filled with textual and visual descriptions of the context from which reported numbers come. For instance, in order to offer more information about the artistic value created, the theater publishes in its annual report a review, conducted by an external party, of the performance critiques which have appeared in major newspapers (270). While the theater managers are not in principle against reporting numbers to external stakeholders, they want to fill them with a language that is legitimate to tell a story of artistic performance (273-274):

> Measurements regarding intangible performance are perceived to be useful only as far as they are read as additional information on a specific situation, yet with increased distance the access to other information sources can be expected to decrease; hence measures will be the only information available to users operating at a long distance. (Sundström 2011, 274)

Sundström's conclusion is that the perceived usefulness of measurements depends on trust and control of the way users frame the numbers. If there is lack of trust, theater managers try to enhance their control of the framing of performance by the not-trusted users of reported information. Nevertheless, "the greater the distance between provider and user of accounting information, the less trust - yet also the more difficult it gets to control framing" (Sundström 2011, 274). The perceived usefulness of measurements of intangible performance seems thus to depend on who uses these measurements, rather than on the technical precision of the performance representation through numbers (275).

To sum up the main results of this section, management accounting research on the arts and cultural sector has focused so far on the organizational issues related to the cohabitation of artistic and administrative staff and processes in performing arts and heritage. In particular, the representation of performance emerges as a central issue in the understanding of the different rationalities that compete and coexist in the arts and cultural sector. Amongst other arts and cultural organizations, performing arts organizations are the most recurrent object of study. The management accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector shows a clear interest in the study of how rules and

procedures are embodied in specific organizational and societal contexts and positions itself - often quite explicitly - as against traditional accounting research.

In the next section, I conduct a comparative analysis of the financial and management accounting literature reviewed. The objective is to understand to what extent this literature offers a theoretical framework for a contextualized, in-depth study of the practice of evaluation in the arts and cultural sector.

4.4. Trends in accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector

In this section, I analyze the main trends emerging from the literature review, both with respect to the research settings (organizational, geographical, historical), the research topics, and the research approaches. These are summed up in Figure 4.1. Miller's idea of the "margins of accounting" (1998) informs the analysis of these trends and the resultant understanding of the development of this literature against the background of the general shift of focus in accounting research in general, and in management accounting research in particular, from the study of rules and procedures to the study of their embodiment in specific organizational and societal contexts.

With respect to the research settings of the reviewed contributions, homogeneous patterns within financial and management accounting literature stress the differences between these two bodies of literature. With respect to the type of organizations studied, apart from the article by Rentschler and Potter (1996) dealing both with performing arts and museums, all financial accounting contributions deal exclusively with museums and heritage. On the contrary, apart from the heritage setting in Zan's study of Pompeii (2002), all management accounting contributions deal exclusively with performing arts. With respect to the geographical settings, apart from the focus on the European arts and cultural sector in the article by Adam et al. (2011), all financial accounting contributions deal with the new world: United States, Australia, and New Zealand. On the contrary, all management accounting contributions focus on the European arts and cultural sector. With respect to the historical setting of the reviewed literature, the first management accounting contribution (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997) appears nine years after the first financial accounting contribution (Mautz 1988), when the discussion about financial reporting for museums and heritage in the United States (Mautz 1988; Glazer and Jaenicke 1991; Christiansen and Mohr 1995) and in Australia (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995; 1996; Rentschler and Potter 1996; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1997; Hone 1997; Micallef and Peirson 1997; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1999) had practically ended.[23] Indeed, financial accounting contributions are clustered in three time frames, each of them dealing with the arts and cultural sector of a different country. Between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the debate on financial accounting in heritage and museums relates to the situation in the United States (Mautz 1988; Glazer and Jaenicke 1991; Christiansen and Mohr 1995). In the mid-1990s, a similar debate develops in Australia (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995; 1996; Rentschler and Potter 1996; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1997; Hone 1997; Micallef and Peirson 1997; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1999).

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[23] The only exception is Carnegie and Wolnizer's reply to Micallef and Peirson, which appeared in 1999 but was probably in the pipeline since 1996, as their quotation of a forthcoming article for 1996 with a similar title to the one finally published in 1999 suggests (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1996, 95).
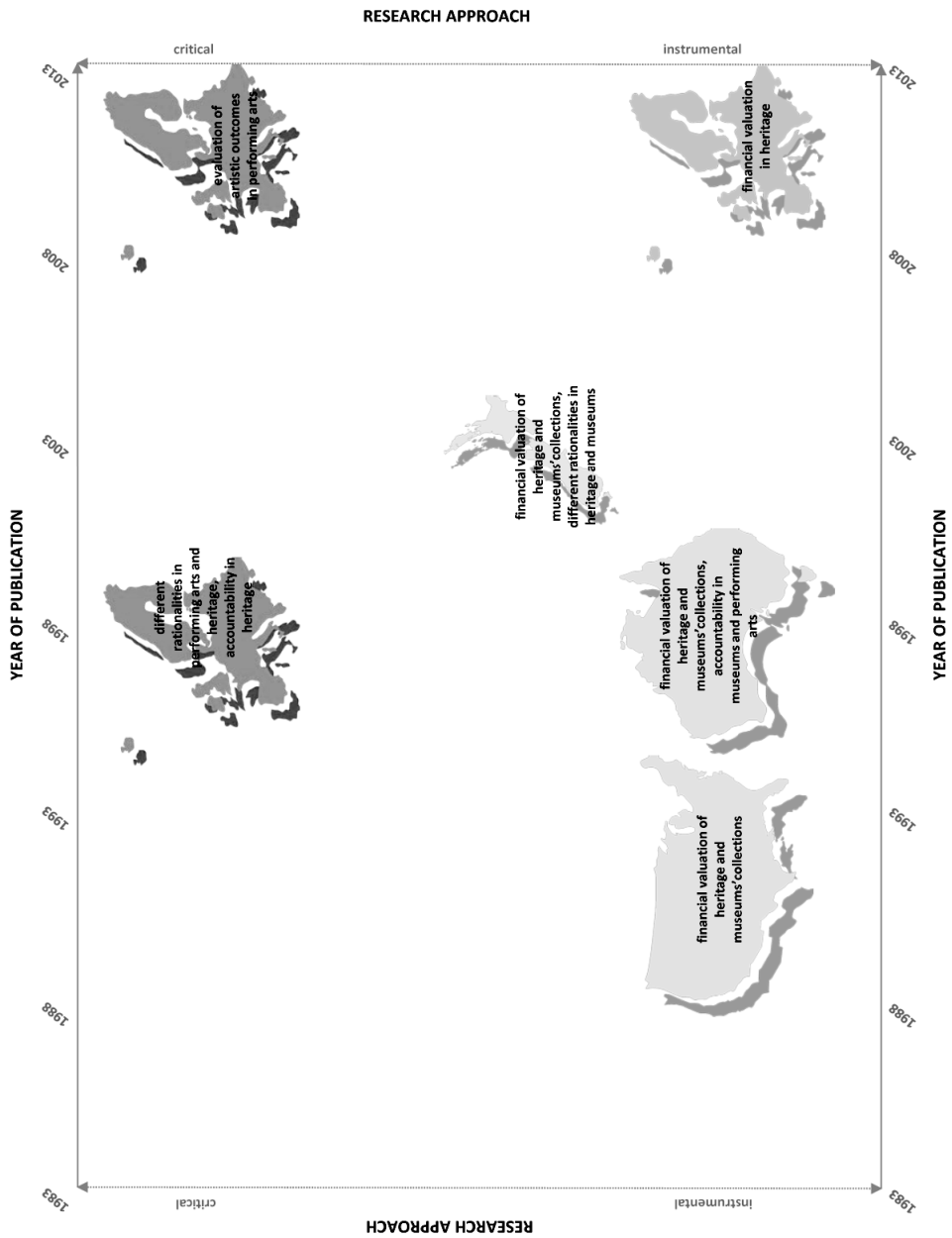
Figure 4.1: Trends in financial accounting literature (light) and management accounting literature (dark), with respect to research settings (organizational, geographical, historical), research topics and research approaches

Finally, between 2000 and 2005, the debate reemerges in New Zealand (Barton 2000; 2005; Hooper et al. 2005). In all of these three time clusters, the academic debate is the result of regulatory pressure for the introduction of accounting standards in museums and heritage in the respective countries, as emerges from the reviewed literature.

These are three examples of the process of the "adding of practices to accounting at its margins" (Miller 1998, 606) pushed "by regulatory bodies, government agencies and other institutionalized actors who argue that there is 'a problem', that something needs to be done, and that accounting is the way to do this" (Miller 1998, 607). The same type of organizations faces, in different countries and at different times, similar regulatory pressures, which lead to similar academic debates. In this sense, the fact that the first financial accounting contribution focusing on the European arts and cultural sector was published only in 2011 (Adam et al. 2011) can be interpreted as a sign of a later or, at least, weaker regulatory pressure in the European arts and cultural sector in general. Nevertheless, a distinction has to be made between Europe in general and the individual European countries. The "weaker" regulatory pressure on the general European arts and cultural sector may be due to do the heterogeneity of the contexts of the individual European countries. At the individual country level, the regulatory pressure can be stronger, although this differs from country to country and leads to different accounting practices (Adam et al. 2011). With Miller's words,

> [...] the margins of accounting vary from one national setting to another (Miller 1998, 606).

In the management accounting literature reviewed, which exclusively focuses on the European arts and cultural sector, a geographical clustering of the contributions around individual European countries can be observed. Three contributions focus on Scandinavian countries (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011) and three on Italy (Zan 1998; Zan 2002; Mariani and Zan 2011). With respect to the historical setting of the reviewed management accounting literature, two time frames can be clearly identified. The first is around 1997-1998 and includes, apart from Christiansen and Skærbæk's contribution (1997), both contributions single-authored by Zan (1998; 2002).[24] The second time frame is the year 2011 (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011).

In the case of the management accounting literature, the country-related clusters do not fully correspond with the time-related clusters. This can be interpreted as a sign that the management accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector is motivated by the interests of individual researchers rather than by contextual pressure. The main motivation for the three contributions in the first time frame (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Zan 1998; 2002) is mainly theoretical, which supports this interpretation. Nevertheless, the fact that all three contributions in the second time frame (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011), although each to a different extent, problematize the concept of evaluation in the performing arts cannot be easily labeled as accidental. As shown by Chiaravalloti and Piber in the same year (2011), arts management research on the evaluation of artistic outcomes has remained prevalently instrumental so far, focusing on proposing new evaluation techniques and systems without questioning the appropriateness of performance evaluation in the arts. From an accounting perspective, it can be observed here how the evaluation

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[24] The article about Pompeii from 2002 is a translation of an Italian article from 1998, as Zan declares in the acknowledgments of his English article (Zan 2002, 89).

of artistic outcomes, which used to be "outside accounting," now seems to have become "a central and taken-for-granted part of accounting within as little as a decade" (Miller 1998, 619). In this sense, the process of managerialization of the European arts and cultural sector, in which "the representation of performance emerges as the critical issue" (Zan 2000, 432), forms the context in which new "calculative practices and their related rationales have [...] initially permeated accounting at its boundaries, and gradually come to occupy a dominant position" (Miller 1998, 605). In this case, the management accounting contributions from 2011 can then be interpreted as a symptom of the search for a new direction in performance evaluation in the arts:

> If a particular calculative technology emerged only recently, and under specific conditions, it is reasonable to expect that it may be modified or replaced in due course. (Miller, 608)

With respect to the research topics of the reviewed contributions, Miller's concept of the margins of accounting (1998) takes a tangible form. One of the characteristics of the process of adding practices to "accounting at its margins" (Miller 1998, 606) is that the "alleged problems have nothing immediately or self-evidently to do with accounting" (Miller 1998, 607). This is clearly the case with the "problem" of evaluating the artistic outcome of arts organizations, which can be expressed as the artistic value created by the organizations for the audience, the community, and the professional field (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010). Evaluation of artistic outcomes is one of the main topics mentioned in the management accounting contributions from 2011 (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011) and it has to do with aesthetics rather than accounting. The main topic of the contributions from 1997-1998 (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Zan 1998; 2002) was the relation between different rationalities within arts organizations, which is originally a topic in management and organization studies (see, for instance, with respect to the arts and cultural sector, Oakes et al. 1998; Glynn 2000; Lampel et al. 2000; Townley 2002; Thornton et al. 2005; Eikhof and Haunschild 2007).

Also in the financial accounting contributions reviewed, the topic of financial valuation of heritage and museums' collections reveals itself as a "problem" that has to do with accounting only at the surface. Under the surface, the "problem" which emerges is not a purely procedural one relating to how to produce better financial reporting, but it is a substantive one relating to the nature of the arts and heritage and, consequently, to the scope of not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations in individual communities and in society in general (Mautz 1988; Glazer and Jaenicke 1991; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1996). The two critics of Carnegie and Wolnizer's article from 1995 (Hone 1997; Micallef and Peirson 1997), as well as Carnegie and Wolnizer's reactions (1997; 1999), illustrate the difficulty of treating financial valuation of museums' collections as a purely technical issue. The discussion shifts quickly from the technical to the organizational and societal levels. The financial reporting problem is at first a problem of financial accountability, but then of general public accountability. This wider problem cannot be solved only by discussing the technicalities of evaluation because it necessarily involves an understanding of the specific objectives of the organization and of the needs of the community the organization seeks to serve.

The topic of financial valuation of heritage and museums' collections was originally pushed into the financial accounting debate by its regulatory context, but it cannot be properly treated without considering, at the organizational level, such strategic management and management accounting

issues as planning and control and, at the societal level, such public management issues as the meaning of accountability and the value of arts and culture for specific communities. In the financial accounting literature reviewed, the topic of accountability emerges as a link between financial and management accounting issues (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995; 1996), as well as a link between the study of technical and procedural aspects and the study of the organizational and societal context in which techniques and procedures are used or resisted. Barton (2000) highlights the limits of financial reporting as a global management information system. The discharge of accountability calls for more than financial information. To provide more complete and diverse information, beyond purely financial information, is a task *of* and a challenge *for* management accounting. Amongst the management accounting contributions reviewed, only Zan (2002) focuses explicitly on the topic of accountability. Although he studies, in particular, the lack of financial accountability in Pompeii, he recognizes the necessity of extending the meaning and scope of accountability in the arts and cultural sector beyond financial accountability, in order to support a dialogue "with professional concerns that are crucial and distinctive of these kinds of organization" (Zan 2002, 93).

With respect to the research approaches adopted in the reviewed contributions, the financial accounting literature remains prevalently instrumental, advocating or opposing certain techniques and systems rather than investigating the effects of the use of those techniques and systems on the involved organizational and societal actors. Even the term *practice* has a purely instrumental meaning in the financial accounting literature reviewed. Carnegie and Wolnizer (1995) survey the use or rejection of mandatory capitalization *practices* in different countries. Christensen and Mohr's (1995) test a predictive model of introduction of capitalization *practices*. Adam et al. (2011) are interested in "detailing the diversity of accounting *practices*" (107-108, my italics), but they explicitly add that, by practice, they mean "accounting technique" and the application of "norms" (109), which is the same meaning as in Carnegie and Wolnizer (1995) and in Christensen and Mohr (1995). Only Hooper et al. (2005) are interested in the contexts of organizations which are facing the introduction of mandatory valuation standards and the process by which they are embraced or rejected. They develop a coherent self-critical approach and make the first and only contribution to financial accounting literature in the arts and cultural sector that explicitly focuses on how people and organizations embody accounting procedures and rules rather than on technical aspects.

The remaining financial accounting contributions reviewed try to make the case for the need to go beyond the uncritical application of traditional accounting techniques in the arts and cultural sector, but they fail to develop a coherent argument, as they remain imprisoned within the traditional accounting logic that prevents them from understanding the differences between the individual organizational and societal contexts. For instance, on the one hand, Rentschler and Potter (1996) advocate a broadening of the scope of accountability in publicly funded not-for-profit museums and performing arts organizations from a purely financial to a content-related form of accountability. On the other hand, they ask these organizations to implement their broad concept of accountability by formulating "clear, concise organizational objectives" and by developing "better informed performance measures" so that accountants and economists can understand the complexity of those organizations (111). While they start their argument from the need to challenge the intrusive language of economics and accounting in the arts and cultural sector, they end up advocating, for publicly funded not-for-profit museums and performing arts organizations, the sort of language - clear and concise - and the sort of instruments - performance measures - that are typical of economists and accountants.

In general, financial accounting research shows the legacy of its uncritical tradition, where the "search for parsimony" (Miller 1998, 607) is more important than the depth of analysis and understanding. As Miller noticed, this search for parsimony "can lead to a neglect of 'how'-type questions. Studies of the processes by which particular accounting practices emerge in specific contexts can be seen in a less favorable light than studies that draw upon a predictive model" (Miller 1998, 607).

The difference between the financial and management accounting literatures is evident in the research approaches used. In the first management accounting contribution on the arts and cultural sector, Christiansen and Skærbæk (1997) explicitly position themselves as against "a more traditional accounting approach focusing on the techniques" (433-434). They aim to understand the organizational and social implications of the use of management accounting systems rather than their technicalities. Zan is interested in a contextualized, in-depth understanding of the investigated organizations (1998; 2002), although in his work figures and procedures, rather than organizational actors, are the storytellers in the respective cases. His clear and explicit stand against traditional approaches to management and accounting research is confirmed in his later, co-authored work, where he advocates the importance of understanding processes and practice in management and accounting research, and criticizes the obsession with general and decontextualized theorizing and modelling which is dominant in the management and accounting research communities (Mariani and Zan 2011, 139, 142). With the contributions by Nørreklit (2011) and Sundström (2011), the shift of focus from the study of rules and procedures to the study of their embodiment in specific organizational and societal contexts reaches a new height. They are interested in the meaning organizational actors give to leadership and management - including evaluation - and to numbers and other accounting information.

In general, management accounting research on the arts and cultural sector shows a clear and explicit interest in the contexts studied and, to a large extent, in the embodiment of rules and procedures by organizational actors. In this sense, it clearly distinguishes itself from financial accounting research on the arts and cultural sector by explicitly embracing a critical approach. In particular, with respect to the topic of performance evaluation, all three reviewed management accounting contributions from 2011 (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011) problematize the very meaning of performance and evaluation in arts and cultural organizations. Considering the recent broad and taken-for-granted adoption of performance evaluation systems in public sector organizations (see, for instance, Ter Bogt and Scapens 2012), also the publicly funded, not-for-profit arts and cultural sector emerges here as a case where "accounting gradually acquires a 'centre', one that comes to be regarded widely as self-evident, and which in turn becomes the target of criticism during subsequent attempts to bring new calculative practices within the boundaries of accounting" (Miller 1998, 608). However, in the critical contributions from 2011 there are not yet any explicit attempts to suggest new calculative practices; there is rather a shared discomfort with the ones currently in use.

4.5. Conclusion

Arts management research has so far been unable to propose a theoretical framework for a contextualized, in-depth study of the practice of evaluation in the arts and cultural sector. The objective of this article is to understand whether accounting literature and, in particular, the

management accounting literature, where the topic of performance evaluation has its roots, can offer one.

As I have shown, financial accounting literature remains stuck in advocating or opposing specific evaluation techniques and systems. The discussion, mainly conceptual, is about what should or should not be evaluated and whether the costs of financial valuations are justified by their benefits, expressed in terms of enhanced public credibility of organizations and their managers. It is thus not surprising that the influence of the different rationalities of organizational and societal actors on the acceptance *of*, or resistance *to*, the introduction of mandatory accounting standards in arts and cultural organizations is only discussed in one of the fourteen financial accounting contributions reviewed (Hooper et al. 2005). This topic is central in the three management accounting contributions on the arts and cultural sector from the end of the 1990s and becomes more explicitly related to the topic of performance evaluation in the most recent management accounting literature, when Mariani and Zan affirm that different rationalities lead to different ways of making sense of performance (2011).

Three of the six reviewed management accounting contributions were published in 2011. All three discuss the topic of performance evaluation in performing arts organizations, at least partially. Both their research approaches and their findings highlight the importance of the specific context studied. Mariani and Zan go even further and speak about micro contexts (2011),[25] showing a clear attitude towards in-depth understanding that is typical of the critical turn in accounting research. However, only Nørreklit (2011) and Sundström (2011) put the embodiment of rules and procedures at the core of their study, by offering some initial but valuable insights into the meaning given to performance and evaluation by, respectively, the artistic director of an opera company and the staff of a small touring theater. Although their contributions do not yet form a thorough theoretical framework capable of giving a clear direction to further research on performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector in general, they are definitely an important first step towards an in-depth, contextual understanding of the practice of evaluation in a specific sub-sector: the performing arts.

Strangely enough, while the issue of accountability has gained considerable attention in the financial accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector, and while the study of accountability in other sectors[26] has contributed substantially to the development of more critical and self-reflective accounting research, the management accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector has not yet used the potential offered by the study of accountability for a deeper and contextual understanding of the practice of accounting in organizations (cf. Roberts and Scapens 1985). Further research should elaborate on the potential offered by the study of accountability forms in organizations for the understanding of the practice of performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector.

Even though the more substantive contributions to an understanding of the practice of evaluation in arts and cultural organizations come from management accounting literature, the review of financial accounting literature not only suggests that accountability can be the link between the study of the technical and procedural aspects of performance evaluation and the study of the organizational and

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[25] Zan already used the term micro in a previous article (Zan et al. 2000).
[26] See, for instance, Laughlin (1990), Roberts (1991), Broadbent et al. (1996), Laughlin (1996), Roberts (1996), Broadbent and Laughlin (1998), Roberts (2001), Ezzamel et al. (2007), and Roberts (2009).

societal context in which performance evaluation techniques and procedures are used or rejected; it also offers one very explicit suggestion about how to study the practice of performance evaluation. Observing how managers in organizations evaluate success and the information they use, how they form a judgment about the future operations of their organizations is a legacy of the first accounting article on the arts and cultural sector (Mautz 1988) and provides important pointers for future researchers studying performance evaluation in arts and cultural organizations.

From Mautz's legacy, two main lessons can be drawn. First, arts management scholars should take seriously the complete body of knowledge of the discipline where specific topics were originally studied; in the case of performance evaluation, management accounting as a sub-field of accounting. There is a lot to learn even from contributions that at first glance may seem less useful. A thorough confrontation with literatures others than one's own (one's own in this case being the arts management literature), instead of an arbitrary and instrumental use of them, is not only more respectful of other disciplines, it also delivers a deeper understanding of the studied topics. Second, the story of accounting at its margins, which entered the academic debate for the first time with Mautz's 1988 article, still has a long way to go. While I agree with Miller when he states that practitioners are not the only source of innovation in accounting (1998, 618), I have to conclude here that the experience of practitioners or, in my words, the practice, which Mautz invited to research more than twenty-five years ago, has been largely absent from the investigation of performance evaluation in arts and cultural organizations so far, not only in the arts management literature, as Chiaravalloti and Piber (2011) had already shown, but also in the accounting literature. Developing Mautz's legacy is thus still an essential task on the path towards an understanding of performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector.

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5. Understanding the practice of evaluation of artistic performance in a context of growing NPM-oriented accountability: The case study of a European publicly funded opera company

ABSTRACT

This paper shows how the different groups of managers (administrative, artistic, and technical) of a publicly funded opera company evaluate the artistic performance of their organization. Performance information of varied nature is exchanged between the internal and external stakeholders of the organization through a dense web of formally defined procedures and of naturally occurring activities. It is within this dense web that the managers make sense of different dimensions of performance, and of the opinions and expectations of different evaluators of performance. In forming their judgments about artistic performance the interviewed managers share a common frame of reference in which the evaluators and the dimensions that are central (respectively: press, audience, peers, direction, staff and oneself; artistic and social dimensions of performance) are those which are closely related to the core artistic processes of the organization: opera creation (programming, production, reception) and opera distribution (audience development). The evaluators and dimensions that are largely absent from the common frame of reference used by the interviewed managers to form their judgments about artistic performance (respectively: government, cultural council, auditors/inspectors, sponsors, donors and supervisory board; organizational and financial dimensions of performance) are related to the supporting processes of the organization: financial and organization management. The shared frame of reference stresses the distinction between core and supporting processes and does not seem to be influenced either by the individual profile of the managers, or by the procedures of evaluation inspired by NPM-oriented forms of accountability and imposed by funding and regulatory bodies. Rather, the common frame of reference of the interviewed managers seems to originate in the nature of work processes in opera. The implications of these findings for the study of performance evaluation and for the understanding of accountability in arts and cultural organizations are discussed. In particular, I suggest that concepts from organization studies can enrich extant taxonomies of accountability forms and enhance our understanding of the nature of work and, consequently, of accountability relationships in arts and cultural organizations.

5.1. Introduction

Arts organizations in Europe have traditionally belonged to the public sector, either being directly a branch of it, or being substantially dependent on public funding (Zan 2006). With the introduction of 'New Public Management' (NPM)-oriented reforms, they are thus facing the same growing pressure for accountability and for the introduction of business practices as the European public sector in general (Belfiore 2004; Gstraunthaler and Piber 2007; Ter Bogt and Tillema 2010; Zan 2000a; Zan et al. 2000).[27]

In NPM-oriented reforms, accountability is associated with a "clear statement of goals" and a "'hard look' at objectives", resulting in the "definition of goals, targets, indicators of success, preferably expressed in quantitative terms" (Hood 1991, 4). Measurable performance indicators are used as "output controls" to decide about resource allocation (Hood 1991, 4). NPM-oriented forms of accountability are also used to evaluate publicly funded arts organizations. The evaluation of their primary objective - the artistic value created for the key stakeholders: customers, community and professional field (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010) - as commissioned by governments, is growingly based on quantitative indicators and used in a judgmental rather than developmental way (see Ter Bogt and Scapens 2012). Despite some early signals of the inadequacy of "artistic-cultural policy indicators [...] as a reliable and valid method of evaluation" and the suggestion to use and promote "such indicators in the focusing, formulation and reformulation of the artistic-cultural policy-making and implementation processes [as] a crucial aid to explicit policy development and wider public debate" (Evans 1997, 179), the evaluation of arts organizations has followed exactly the opposite pattern, shifting from a "content-oriented" and "contrast-filled" debate aiming at the development of cultural life in individual communities, towards a technocratic, formal instrument of control (Nielsen 2003).

Generally, evaluation is the process of forming as well as explaining a judgment on the amount, quality or value of somebody or something. From a management accounting perspective, in individual organizations "evaluation occurs when feedback about the system's current level of performance is compared to the planned level so that any discrepancies can be identified and corrective action prescribed" (Atkinson et al. 2004, 283). Information about the level of performance of individual organizations is also required by external stakeholders: profitability in the case of profit-seeking enterprises, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the case of governments and not-for-profit organizations (Atkinson et al. 2004, 17). Feedback about the system's current level of performance is usually provided to managers and employees through management accounting information. This comprises both financial and nonfinancial information, in contrast with financial accounting reports, which are meant to communicate above all economic information to external stakeholders (Atkinson et al. 2004, 3-4). Both financial and nonfinancial management accounting information is based on measurements (Atkinson et al. 2004, 4), and is thus quantitative in nature.

According to Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010), information about the artistic value created by publicly funded arts organizations for their key stakeholders (customers, community, professional field) should regard respectively:

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[27] Similar developments can be observed also outside Europe, for instance in Australia (Caust 2003) and Canada (Oakes et al. 1998; Townley 2002).

- "Nature and intensity of artistic experiences per artwork per audience segment, and the influence of supportive services" (customers);

- "Total number of artistic experiences, spread amongst social groups, and the dissemination within general culture" (community);

- "Nature and number of artworks and role within the professional art field" (professional field) (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010, 308).

Information about artistic value goes beyond such quantitative aspects as the number of productions presented and the size of audience reached. The nature of artworks, their intensity, their dissemination within general culture, and their role within the professional field are subjective, intangible and dynamic aspects of artistic performance, and are thus hard to operationalize (see Zan 1998; Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010). On the one hand, it thus seems unlikely that management accounting information, which is, as seen above, mainly quantitative, apart from supporting evaluation and decision making about financial issues, will play a role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results. Alternative sources of information might be used to form and explain judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. On the other hand, NPM-oriented forms of accountability, which are characterized by procedures imposed by legislators in which measurable aspects of performance are dominant, are being growingly applied in the publicly funded arts sector (Lindqvist 2012). These procedures of accountability might have impacted the substantive evaluation practices of the managers of the individual organizations, including the evaluation of the artistic performance. By substantive evaluation I mean the actual judgment of the managers about the artistic value produced by their organizations. In other words, 'what they really think' regardless *of,* but potentially influenced *by*, rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems. By managers of publicly funded arts organizations I mean all the organization's staff responsible for policy and/or operations (administrative, artistic and technical) and in charge of leading teams either on a permanent or on a project (production) basis. Consequently, the first objective of my research is to understand how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations actually evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations.

As Zan points out, substantive and procedural aspects of management can be in a "loose coupling" relationship with each other rather than in a deterministic one (2000b, 230-231). With respect to accountability procedures, a deterministic relationship means that accounting procedures "determine" how managers in organizations "actually" practice accountability, a circumstance that is considered questionable in general (Roberts and Scapens 1985, 447). In arts organizations it is even more questionable that the relationship between procedures of evaluation imposed by NPM-oriented forms of accountability and actual, or, according to my definition, substantive evaluation might be deterministic. In fact, considering the difficulty of operationalizing artistic value, procedures of evaluation imposed by NPM-oriented forms of accountability to arts organizations seem *a priori* incompatible with substantive evaluation practices (Zan et al. 2000). They seem a rather good candidate to exemplify the "loose coupling" between substantive and procedural aspects of management, as meant by Zan (2000b, 230-231). A deep understanding of the actual practice of evaluation in publicly funded organizations can thus offer valuable insights into the relationship between NPM-oriented forms of accountability and the actual systems of accountability

as they are embodied by the organizational actors (see Roberts and Scapens 1985). Consequently, the second objective of my research is to explore what the practice of evaluation in publicly funded arts organizations says about accountability relationships in the arts sector in general. These accountability relationships are specified by Zan as follows:

> To speak of accountability presupposes that someone is called upon to be accountable for something to someone else. There are therefore two premises, one which is informative (the information that allows some kind of representations of something), the other organizational-institutional regarding governance, the identification of that 'someone' who will take responsibility for managing 'something'. (Zan 2006, 6-7)

How the managers of publicly funded arts organizations actually evaluate artistic performance can only be understood by investigating the practice of evaluation within the specific organizational and institutional context of the individual organization (Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011), as is more generally the case with the study of accounting in organizations (Hopwood 1983; Roberts and Scapens 1985). Arts management research, despite a growing interest in the topic of performance evaluation, has focused so far on how the evaluation of artistic processes and results should be done rather than on understanding how evaluation is actually done (Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011; Chiaravalloti 2014). Accounting research, despite the scarce interest in the arts and cultural sector (see Mariani and Zan 2011), offers three concrete pointers for the study of the practice of evaluation.[28]

The first pointer regards a set of empirical research questions to answer in order to get an understanding of the practice of evaluation. Already in an early contribution, Mautz (1988) makes a clear suggestion as to what research questions should be answered before trying to elaborate new solutions for the evaluation of organizational success in not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations:

> How do the managers of not-for-profit organizations judge their success? What information do they seek at the end of a period, or at any time during the period, in order to make plans for the future? How do they conclude whether they will be in operation a year or two from now? (Mautz 1988, 128)

The second pointer offered by accounting research on arts and cultural organizations regards the sub-sector to investigate. The role of performance evaluation in the arts and cultural sector is problematized above all by accounting contributions set in the same sub-sector, the performing arts (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011). The third and final pointer regards the theoretical direction to follow in order to reach analytic generalization (Yin 2014) of empirical findings about the practice of evaluation. A substantial amount of accounting contributions on the arts and cultural sector points to the necessity to discuss the role of performance evaluation from an accountability perspective (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995; 1996; 1997; 1999; Rentschler and Potter 1996; Hone 1997; Micallef and Peirson 1997; Barton 2000; Hooper et al. 2005).

Consequently, inspired by Mautz's questions and by the accounting literature on performing arts, I develop an analytical framework that is specific for performing arts organizations and that leads to the formulation of specific, empirical research questions for the investigation of the practice of

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[28] For a complete review of the accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector see Chiaravalloti (2014).

evaluation in publicly funded performing arts organizations. The choice of continuing with the investigation of performing arts organizations, which has - as seen above - begun to gain momentum in the accounting literature only recently, is justified by the importance of contextualization of research both on arts management (Zan 1998; 2002; Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011; Mariani and Zan 2011) and accounting (Hopwood 1983; Robert and Scapens 1985). Finally, I embrace the suggestion of the accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector to discuss performance evaluation from an accountability perspective. This suggestion is supported by literature that points to the potential offered by the adoption of an accountability perspective for a deep understanding of accounting in general (Roberts and Scapens 1985), and of performance evaluation in particular (Chiaravalloti 2014). In particular, by discussing the findings of my investigation of the practice of evaluation in publicly performing arts organizations from the broader theoretical perspective offered by the literature on multiple forms of accountability in organizations (Laughlin 1990; Roberts 1991; Sinclair 1995; Laughlin 1996; Roberts 1996; Ezzamel et al. 2007; Messner 2009), I am able to elaborate on what the practice of evaluation in publicly funded arts organizations says about accountability relationships in the arts sector.

The empirical research questions drawn from the analytical framework and aiming at understanding how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations actually evaluate artistic performance will be answered through a case study of a European publicly funded opera company. A case-based approach has been chosen because of its appropriateness for the study of the practice of accounting, of which performance evaluation is a major aspect, in its organizational and institutional context (Bruns 1989). Reviewing the first edition of Yin's seminal book on case study research (1984), Bruns writes:

> Recent years have brought many of us to increased recognition that accounting cannot be fully understood outside of the organizational context in which it takes place. Improving accounting methods and processes so that they can contribute to solving an organization's or society's problems cannot be accomplished without better knowledge than we now have about how accounting and organizations actually work. [...] This demands field studies, or to use Yin's term, case study research. (Bruns 1989, 163)

In particular, case studies offer the opportunity to understand accounting by going beyond the procedures "which senior managers believe are used", and by investigating whether and how those procedures are actually used (Scapens 1990, 264). Otley and Berry sum up both points clearly:

> [...] Accounting information provides a window through which the real activities of the organization may be monitored, but it should be noted also that other windows are used that do not rely upon accounting information. Thus, in order to assess and evaluate the operation of management accounting and control systems, it is necessary to place them in their wider context.
> There is thus a *prima facie* case for the use of case-based research methods in developing a fuller understanding of the relative role of accounting and other controls in the management of organizational performance. (Otley and Berry 1994, 46)

Considering that accounting literature on performing arts organizations is still in its nascent phase, a case study is an appropriate method for the development of theoretical explanations of evaluation practices in those organizations (see Otley and Berry 1994). In particular, in line with Humphrey and

Scapens (1996), I am interested in using the case study as a method "to obtain a better understanding of accounting practice and of the role and functioning of accounting in organizations, including the pressures which accounting exerts and has exerted on it, and the interests it serves and undermines, and to compare the claimed potential of accounting with its practical achievements and consequences [...]" (1996, 86-87). This type of case study has the "capacity to move away from managerialist notions of accounting and to provide more challenging reflections on the nature of accounting knowledge and practice" (Humphrey and Scapens 1996, 86).

A European publicly funded opera company has been chosen for this case study. Among other publicly funded performing arts organizations, opera companies represent a particularly interesting object of study from both a management and an accounting perspective. From a management perspective, opera companies are the most complex form of performing arts organizations, requiring a very big and diversified staff and structure in order to work properly, where different rationalities and, as a consequence, different ways of evaluating performance may emerge; for instance based on different personal backgrounds and different functions within the organization (see for instance Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Mariani and Zan 2011). From an accounting perspective, compared with other organizations in the arts sector, opera companies receive a substantial share of the arts and culture funding through local and national governments in most European countries. This increases the pressure for more accountability of the organization to the external environment, in particular to regulatory and financing bodies (see for instance Zan 2006). Undergoing regular external evaluations of artistic and supporting processes and results commissioned by the national government, the investigated opera company represents a "typical case" (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005, 46) of a national, publicly funded opera company facing the growing pressure for accountability in Europe. Its selection for my case-based research has thus been purposive (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005, 44-49).

The discussion of what the findings of my case study of the practice of evaluation say about accountability relationships in the arts sector occurs in two steps. At first, I adopt the above mentioned definition of accountability used by Zan (2006, 6-7) in his study of the impact of managerialism on the arts and cultural sector in order to structure the comparison of the findings of my case study with the accounting literature on performing arts and on the arts and cultural sector in general. By doing this, I can elaborate on what the practice of evaluation of the investigated organization says about accountability relationships in the organization self. Then I discuss the implications of my findings for the literature on different forms of accountability in organizations (Laughlin 1990; Roberts 1991; Sinclair 1995; Laughlin 1996; Roberts 1996; Ezzamel et al. 2007; Messner 2009). By doing this, I can elaborate on what the practice of evaluation and the accountability relationships in the investigated organization say about accountability relationships in the arts sector in general. These two steps support a sound analytical generalization of the case study findings (Yin 2014), highlighting the theoretical contributions of my research and possible avenues for further research.

Through this research, I offer contributions to three main bodies of literature. With respect to the arts management literature, I offer a first in-depth analysis of how publicly funded performing arts organizations actually practice evaluation, that goes beyond the currently available inventories of procedures used (Turbide and Laurin 2009). With respect to the nascent accounting literature on performing arts organizations (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011), I add a

clearer focus on the evaluation of the most controversial aspect of the performance that these organizations are accountable for: the artistic value created for their stakeholders. In addition, the findings add to the discussion on the coexistence of different rationalities in performing arts organizations (Amans et al. 2015; Christiansen and Skærbæk, 1997). With respect to the literature on different forms of accountability in organizations (Laughlin 1990; Roberts 1991; Sinclair 1995; Laughlin 1996; Roberts 1996; Ezzamel et al. 2007; Messner 2009), I show how some fundamental concepts from organization studies can enrich the understanding of accountability relationships in arts and cultural organizations.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, I present the analytical framework and the empirical research questions that have informed the investigation of the case. In the research methods section I describe the data that has been collected and how it has been analyzed. In the case study section, after a brief description of the investigated opera company, I describe the practice of evaluation of artistic performance in the investigated organization by answering the empirical questions of my research. In the discussion I reflect on what the practice of evaluation in the investigated organization says about relationships of accountability in publicly funded arts and cultural organizations. The paper finishes with a conclusion where I sum up the contributions of this paper and present some avenues for further research in arts management, accounting in the arts and cultural sector, and accountability in general.

5.2. Analytical framework

Accounting scholars (see for instance Otley and Berry 1994; Humphrey and Scapens 1996), management scholars (see for instance Eisenhardt 1989) and case study experts (Yin 2014) agree on the importance of building case studies on a preliminary theory. This theory facilitates data collection and analysis and constitutes the starting point for the "analytic generalization" of the case study results (Yin 2014, 68). Since this preliminary theory, or, in Eisenhardt's words, this "a priori specification of constructs" (Eisenhardt 1989), is not necessarily expected to have a place in the resultant theory after the case study analysis, I prefer to use the term *analytical framework* rather than *theoretical framework.* By doing this I stress the importance of the preliminary theory as a lens that gives structure to data collection and analysis, but not necessarily to the interpretation and the consequent theoretical discussion. Consequently, in this section only literature will be discussed which contributes to the formulation of the empirical research questions for the case study. Literature which only contributes to the analytic generalization of the case study findings, but not to the formulation of the empirical research questions, will be introduced directly in the discussion section.

As explained in the introduction, Mautz's unanswered questions and the accounting literature on performing arts largely inform my analytical framework. Mautz (1988) makes a clear suggestion as to what research questions should be answered in order to understand the practice of evaluation in not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations:

> How do the managers of not-for-profit organizations judge their success? What information do they seek at the end of a period, or at any time during the period, in order to make plans for the future? How do they conclude whether they will be in operation a year or two from now? (Mautz 1988, 128)

Considering that the first objective of my research is to understand how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations actually evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations, the specification of the first of Mautz's questions for the evaluation of artistic performance practically overlaps with this objective and can be considered the main empirical question for the case study:

How do the managers of publicly funded arts organizations evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations?

Mautz's second and third questions help me to specify a set of sub-questions that need to be investigated in order to answer the main empirical question formulated above and, consequently, to pursue the first objective of my research. Considering the likely inadequacy of (management) accounting procedures and information for the evaluation of artistic objectives (see Zan 1998 and Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010), the following sub-questions aim at extending the investigation of the practice of evaluation to all the activities and information that potentially influence the managers' judgments about artistic performance:

- What are the activities through which information about artistic performance is evaluated?
- What is the nature of the evaluated information?
- How do the managers form their judgments about artistic performance?

In particular, considering the potential loose coupling in publicly funded arts organizations between NPM-oriented procedures of evaluation and the managers' substantive evaluation (Zan et al. 2000), I formulate the following, additional sub-question:

- What is the impact of NPM-oriented forms of accountability on the managers' actual judgment about the artistic performance of their organization?

Accounting literature on performing arts (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Mariani and Zan 2011; Sundström 2011; Nørreklit 2011) offers some first answers to these rather unexplored questions, above all with respect to the nature of the activities and the information of evaluation. This literature also highlights the importance of the personal background of the managers for their actual judgments about artistic performance. In addition, Zan's work on museums and heritage (Zan 2000b; Zan 2002) as well as his book on the impact of managerialism on the arts and cultural sector (Zan 2006) add insights into the relation between NPM-oriented procedures of accountability and substantive evaluation. Drawing on this literature, I develop an analytical framework which is specific for the organizational and institutional context of the case I study, and which helps to specify the information needed for the case study by giving directions to data collection and analysis.

In general, the accounting literature on performing arts suggests that the managers' actual judgment about the artistic value created by their organizations may not be based on procedures inspired *by,* and oriented *towards,* a mechanical view of work (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Nørreklit 2011), but on activities anchored in the very reality of the artistic work and its artistic environment (Nørreklit 2011). The nature of the artistic work at the opera emerges from Nørreklit's description of the opera production process:

> The staging of a Royal Danish Opera production is a complex project. It involves a multinational, interdisciplinary, loosely coupled and dispersed network of people who must realise their competencies, potential and commitment in a coherent opera

production. It is characterised by a mutual interrelatedness and dependence, a central aspect of the realisation of the opera project being that everybody works together and culminates at the same time. (Nørreklit 2011, 279)

The results on stage are thus the results of this "mutual interrelatedness and dependence". Nørreklit shows that, in leading the entire staff towards the final artistic accomplishments on stage, planning and communication tools based on a mechanical, deterministic view of work are far less relevant and effective than continuously caring for "the players' emotional commitment" (Nørreklit 2011, 281). This suggests that also the substantive evaluation of the artistic work may be based on a process of sense-making of its "very reality" (Nørreklit 2011, 286) and of its extended environment. The meaning of artistic performance and of its evaluation, more than from any procedure, would then emerge from an intersubjective process that is characteristic of a reality made of "mutual interrelatedness and dependence":

He [Kasper Holten, Artistic Director of the Royal Danish Opera at the time of the interview analyzed by Nørreklit] does not operate with an individual reality only, but also a social reality of mutual inter-dependences. (Nørreklit 2011, 287)

The incompatibility between mechanical forms of evaluation and control and the artistic work in the opera is confirmed by Christiansen and Skærbæk's study of the process of implementation of a new control system at the Royal Danish Theatre (1997). The top management of the theatre, despite the pressure of the politics and of the technical staff to implement clear and standardized budgeting and control procedures, defended artistic freedom by insisting that artistic processes, characterized by creativity and innovativeness, were incompatible with budgetary controls based on figures that are planned much in advance (419-420). They recognized that artistic creativity cannot be packaged in a set of calculative practices. First, artistic ideas develop continuously through close cooperation between artists and production staff, many of them working on a freelance basis. Second, only designers and artists can recognize when their work is really finished. Thus, how can the formalized planning of the production process cope with the creativity of the artistic development? (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997, 428-429) The CEO of the theater ended up applying the new budgeting system only to the technical units and not to the stage performers (429), in a way confirming the incompatibility between standard accounting procedures and information on one hand, and artistic work on the other hand.

The accounting literature on performing arts suggests that the process of subjective and intersubjective sense-making of the very reality of the artistic work and its environment is the basis of the managers' judgments, but does not specify through which activities the managers are informed about that very reality. A thorough investigation of the evaluation activities in which the managers of the organization are involved is necessary to gain a complete overview of the evaluation practices of the organization.

With respect to the information on artistic performance, the literature suggests that the information used to make evaluations may not be numerical (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011), but discursive or even tacit, based on emotions and bodily expressions directly experienced by the actors involved (Nørreklit 2011). This has again to do with the non-mechanical nature of artistic work in the opera. While the existence of clear cause-effect relations, which characterizes a mechanical view of work, is the basis for the use of numerical

performance indicators, the individual emotions and feelings, which finally make the accomplishment of the "joint effort" on stage possible (Nørreklit 2011, 281), can hardly be expressed numerically. As Christiansen and Skærbæk incisively state:

> Artistic creativity cannot be transformed into pieces of paper, and it is even more difficult to calculate creativity. (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997, 428)

Both to make sense of, and to communicate artistic performance, managers of arts organizations seem to use a language based on the conventions of the specific artistic environment in which they operate and not on the conventions of abstract, apparently universally valid, managerial tools, such as, for instance, traditional accounting tools. Referring to Giddens, Nørreklit writes :

> Ontological security is related to the presence of a certain level of robustness in the everyday conventions of making sense of the very reality of things, other persons and oneself. (Nørreklit 2011, 286)

Even when forced to adopt such managerial tools as the Balanced Scorecard, as in the case of the traveling theatre investigated by Sundström (2011), it is the possibility of adding more qualitative descriptions of performance in categories other than the financial one, that meets the favor of the managers.

Assuming that the managers' judgment about the artistic value created by their organization is based on the process of "making sense of the very reality of things, other persons and oneself" (Nørreklit 2011, 286), it still remains unclear what exactly those *things* and *people* - apart from *oneself* - are and what their role is with respect to the exchange of information on artistic performance. On the one hand, the *things*, the *persons* and *oneself* may represent the object of evaluation; that is, what is evaluated. In this respect, they represent the content of the information of evaluation that managers make sense of. For example, the evaluation of a theatrical performance by a stage director might take into account the scenography (thing), the actors on stage (persons) and one's own work as a director (oneself). On the other hand, the *persons* and *oneself* may represent the subject of evaluation; that is, who evaluates. In this respect, they represent a source of the information of evaluation that managers make sense of. For example, the evaluation of a theatrical performance by a stage director might take into account the opinions on that performance expressed by the audience (persons) and one's own opinions (oneself). In this sense, a manager makes sense both of different *dimensions of performance* and of different *evaluators of performance,* including oneself, in order to form a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization. In this paper, I use the concept of *dimensions of performance* for the content of evaluation and its different aspects and components as well as for the criteria and indicators of performance referring to it; and the concept of *evaluators of performance* for the (groups of) persons whose expectations and opinions are a potential source of information for the managers while forming their judgments on artistic performance.[29]

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[29] By *dimensions* of performance I mean the set of aspects, criteria, and/or indicators contributing to a consistent and coherent understanding of the value created by the organization. Ezzamel et al. (2007) used the term with a similar meaning with respect to the different dimensions of accountability. They also used the term objects of accountability with a similar meaning to the one that the term *evaluators* of performance assumes in this paper.

The investigation of the role of the different *dimensions* and *evaluators of performance* in the actual judgment of the managers about the artistic value created by their organization takes the research from a descriptive to an explanatory level. An inventory of activities and information forms the base for an understanding of the practice of evaluation in the organization. A deeper understanding can be reached through the analysis of the *things* and *persons*, and thus, of the *dimensions* and the *evaluators,* that actually influence the managers' judgment. In particular, such an analysis offers insights into the relation between procedures of evaluation and the managers' substantive evaluation of the artistic performance of their organization.

With respect to the relationship between NPM-oriented accountability procedures and information on the one hand, and the managers' substantive evaluation of the artistic performance of their organization on the other hand, the accounting literature on performing arts suggests a low impact of the former on the latter. An artistic form of evaluation, which is an alternative to the standardized procedures based mainly on numerical indicators (as it is typical of NPM-oriented forms of accountability), is considered to be still dominant in arts organizations. Mariani and Zan (2011) use the attribute "substantive" to refer to a content-based arts discourse, and highlight the relevance of the investigation of substantive aspects of the artistic work as "real world" phenomena (142). With respect to performance evaluation, according to Nørreklit (2011) it is necessary to ground judgments in the artistic reality in order to avoid the risk of adopting an "arbitrary performance evaluation" (286) that complies with the "procedural rationality" typical of mainstream management models (274) and the ones promoted by NPM-oriented reforms. Nørreklit uses the attribute "non-reflective" to describe the procedural rationality:

> When the specific case no longer requires special judgment, the manager's and the employee's own abilities to perceive and reflect upon the specific situation and phenomena become almost superfluous. The individual has to subscribe to an objective and rational world order which cannot be discussed, criticised or disproved. (Nørreklit 2011, 274)

Nørreklit's procedural rationality coincides with what Zan describes in Pompeii as "an emphasis more on formal control, focused on the legitimacy of acts from a merely logical-procedural point of view, than on managerial control using substantive information within a decision-making context" (2002, 124). According to Zan, this is one of the consequences of the intrusion of the managerial discourse promoted by NPM-oriented reforms into the arts and cultural sector (2002; 2006). Arts and cultural organizations "are professional organizations where a substantive-aesthetic culture prevails over the culture of […] management knowledge that is generic and a-specific" (Zan 2006, 9), or, with Nørreklit's words, "arbitrary" (2011, 286). As a consequence, a deterministic relation between substantive and procedural aspects cannot be taken for granted. In fact, an obsessive focus on procedures is deemed to be substantively irrelevant:

> Substantive and procedural aspects […] therefore, belong to two dimensions which must be considered together, rather than focusing in an obsessive way on 'best practices' [that is, best procedures] that should mechanically translate into best results from a substantive point of view. This is one of the major hazards of the invasion of managerial rhetoric in the cultural sector, wherein the most sophisticated part of management knowledge - that is, the part which is most critical and subtle, and

'difficult' in management discourse - is simply lost, almost blocked by a filter, resulting in the importation of only naive and simplistic approaches. For example, the passion for terms and rituals - such as mission, customer satisfaction and Total Quality - is carried into museums as well as health care: it is an obsession with procedures that do not attend to the substantive characteristics of organizations such as museums or hospitals. This is, in effect, what is most perplexing in the procedural approach: the scarce attention towards substantive elements […], which raises the issues of lack of relevance and failure to differentiate between organizations (between different museums or even between arts organizations and hospitals) of very different importance and value (in the eyes of the taxpayer, the policymaker and the museologist). (Zan 2006, 20-21)

With their analysis of the conflicts arising at the Royal Danish Theatre between the organization and the external environment, as well as between different groups of staff during the process of implementation of a new management control system which was enforced by political bodies, Christiansen and Skærbæk (1997) show how procedural and substantive relevance can be in a "loose coupling" relationship (Zan 2000b, 231). Through a "strategy of 'balanced management' […] the management of the theatre on the one hand claims to conduct some management accounting, but on the other hand does not want accounting to interfere too much with production" (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997, 420). The management of the theatre fully recognizes, at the same time, the necessity of compliance with procedures enforced by political bodies in order to gain external legitimation (426), and the inadequacy of those procedures in order to manage artistic processes (424, 426). This is a case in which, with respect to the artistic work of the theatre, procedural relevance coincides with substantive irrelevance: compliance with procedures may be relevant for external legitimation, but completely decoupled from the real, or substantive, artistic work.

On the contrary, Sundström (2011) shows that some procedures imposed by funders may be well accepted by the organization and considered as substantively relevant. The touring theatre that he investigates has to use a scorecard to report to its public owners (county council and local municipality). Despite the fact that the use of the scorecard has been imposed by these political bodies, both the CEO and the CFO of the theatre are positive about the possibility of reporting on other dimensions of performance (than the financial one), since those other dimensions are more relevant for explaining the theatre's performance (266-267). In this case procedural and substantive relevance coincide.

The analysis of the relationship between procedural and substantive relevance of different dimensions and evaluators of performance for the managers' judgment about artistic performance can help to explore the extent to which procedures of evaluation based on NPM-oriented forms of accountability are embodied in the substantive evaluation practices of the managers of the individual organizations. Based on the concepts presented in the analytical framework so far, for the investigation of my case-study I adopt the following working definitions of procedurally/substantively relevant dimensions/evaluators of performance.

By *procedurally relevant dimensions of performance* I mean *dimensions a manager has the duty to take into account according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems in order to give and receive account of the value created by himself and by the organization.*

By *substantively relevant dimensions of performance* I mean *dimensions a manager takes into account in order to form and explain his own judgment about the value created by himself and by the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management.*

By *procedurally relevant evaluators of performance* I mean *(groups of) persons a manager has the duty to work for and/or to inform about (the results of) his own work and/or the work of the organization according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems* and/or *(groups of) persons whose judgments about (the results of) the manager's work and/or the work of the organization have a statutory role according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems.*

By *substantively relevant evaluators of performance* I mean *(groups of) persons a manager considers co-producers and/or recipients of (the results of) his own work and/or the work of the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems* and/or *(groups of) persons whose opinions about (the results of) the manager's work and/or of the work of the organization influence the manager in the process of forming as well as explaining his own judgment about the value created by him and by the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems.*

As seen above, in making sense of different dimensions and evaluators of performance, oneself may be both the object and the subject of evaluation. As a subject of evaluation, the individual managers' sense-making process is influenced, by definition, by who the manager is. The accounting literature on performing arts confirms the influence of the managers' individual profiles on their sense-making about artistic performance.

By investigating the role of "distance" between information user and provider[30] in the information user's sense-making of performance information, Sundström (2011) indirectly stresses the influence of the function undertaken by the information user on his sense-making process. The closer this function is to the object and the source of information, the more the information user's interpretation can reflect the reality of the specific organizational and institutional context that the information is supposed to represent. Mariani and Zan (2011) seem to agree when they argue that knowledge of the specific organizational context is necessary to understand the meaning of performance. In addition, they stress the influence of the personal (e.g. educational) and professional background of the information user on his sense-making process. They affirm that professionals with a different profile, and especially artists and accountants, "make sense of performance in a very dissimilar way" (Mariani and Zan 2011, 141). In their contribution studying the process of implementation of a new control system at the Royal Danish Theatre, Christiansen and Skærbæk (1997) analyze in depth the differences in rationalities emerging, not only between employees of the organization and administrators and politicians, but also between various groups of the theatre staff (administrative, artistic, and technical) (432). For instance, production managers (who belong to the technical staff), although recognizing the incompatibility of artistic creation and standardized planning, were interested in having a new budgeting system in order to reduce the continuous and unforeseeable changes wanted by artists and thereby to ensure some stability in the

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[30] Information user and provider can be the same (group of) person(s), as will become clear from the presentation of the findings of the case study in section 5.4.

production process (424-425). On the contrary, the top management - as seen above - defended artistic freedom by insisting that artistic processes, characterized by creativity and innovativeness, were incompatible with budgetary controls based on figures that are planned much in advance (419-420).

Assuming that the process of sense-making may vary according to the manager's professional and personal profile (Mariani and Zan 2011; Sundström 2011) implies the assumption that that the procedural/substantive relevance given by the managers to the dimensions and the evaluators of performance may depend on the profile of the respective manager. In particular, considering that the staff, and thus also the managers, of performing arts organizations can be divided into three main groups with potentially different rationalities (administrative, artistic, technical; see Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997), the analysis of the procedural/substantive relevance may benefit from a closer look at common patterns within each group of managers, as well as from a comparison between the three groups.

To sum up, the last two sub-questions regarding the managers' judgment about artistic performance have to be further specified in order to include both the relevance of dimensions and evaluators of performance on their judgments, and the potential influence of their individual profiles on the relevance assigned to dimensions and evaluators of performance. The final sub-questions to answer through the case study in order to understand how the managers of the investigated opera company actually evaluate the artistic performance of their organization are consequently:

- What are the activities through which information about artistic performance is evaluated?
- What is the nature of the evaluated information?
- How do the managers form their judgments about artistic performance? In particular, what *dimensions* and *evaluators* of performance are substantively relevant for their judgments? And, how is this influenced by the individual profile of the managers?
- What is the impact of NPM-oriented forms of accountability on the managers' actual judgment about the artistic performance of their organization? In particular, what is the relationship between procedural and substantive relevance of those *dimensions* and *evaluators* of performance that are central in procedures of evaluation imposed by funding and regulatory bodies? And, how is this influenced by the individual profile of the managers?

5.3. Research methods

As explained in the introduction, a case-based research approach has been chosen because of its suitability for a study of the practice of performance evaluation in its organizational context (Bruns 1989). In particular a case-based approach offers the opportunity to go beyond the merely procedural aspects of the evaluation practice (Scapens 1990; Otley and Berry 1994; Humphrey and Scapens 1996). In this section I explain in detail which data I collected during the case study and how I analyzed it in order to address the questions set out at the end of the previous section.

5.3.1. Data collection

With respect to data collection, I have purposively chosen to investigate a European publicly funded opera company which undergoes regular external evaluations of its artistic and supporting processes

and results. As explained in the introduction, this organization represents a "typical case" (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005, 46) of a national publicly funded opera company facing the growing pressure for accountability in Europe. The first contacts with the organization date back to the beginning of 2008, but only at the end of 2010 and after repeated meetings and exchange of correspondence was it possible to gain approval for the research project. Finally, between March and November 2011 it was possible to interview 17 managers (administrative, artistic, and technical). Most interviews lasted about 1.5 hours. Two interviews lasted only 1 hour because many questions regarding the personal background did not need to be asked, since this information was publicly available due to the public role of the two interviewees.

Table 5.1 gives an overview of the interviews, including date, place and length of each interview as well as, for each interviewee, function and its nature, personal and professional background (experience and education), and the profile of the group of managers (administrative, artistic, or technical) he has been assigned to (see section 5.3.2).

The interview questionnaire was developed from the analytical framework and the research questions presented in the section 5.2. Questions concerning the personal and professional background and responsibilities of the interviewees were asked at the beginning of the interview. The subsequent structure of the questionnaire and the form of the individual questions reflected the need to maximize the space for the discussion of the non-procedural practices of evaluation, as well as the influence of existing procedures on substantive evaluation. This was achieved by asking questions about substantive evaluation before questions about evaluation procedures, and by starting the discussion on each topic with broad questions and finishing with more directive ones. The full interview questionnaire included 97 questions.[31] Depending on the function of the individual interviewee, some questions were adapted or even omitted if superfluous. The latter was the case, for instance, with the questions about the personal background of the artistic director and the chief conductor, as both are already well-known to the public through the media.

The interviews represent the main source of information for this case study, especially with respect to the relevance of different practices of evaluation. Nevertheless, the interviews were complemented by a rich variety of internal and external documents. These have been analyzed in order to verify the completeness and validity of the information relating to the evaluation procedures and the reporting systems provided by the interviewees. Some documents were analyzed before the interviews, some were acquired ad hoc during or after the interviews. The analyzed documents include: policy plans, organograms, description of individual functions within the organization, annual reports, handbooks of the external evaluation procedures, self-evaluation reports for the external evaluation procedures, final reports of the external evaluation commissions, production planning of individual productions, minutes of opera evaluation meetings regarding different individual productions, minutes of technical evaluation of individual productions, employees' satisfaction study. In addition, many observations were made in the preparatory phase of the case study, and during its execution, in both formal and informal settings (e.g. at lunch in the staff restaurant and at the many full dress-rehearsals attended).

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[31] The full interview questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

Function	Interview date, place, length	Nature of function	Experience in years at the organization until interview	Experience outside the organization	Higher education	Assigned Profile
Communication Chief	25.3.11, office, 1:20	Administrative	4,5 in the same function	Administrative (in the arts)	Humanistic/Administrative	ADM
Production Manager	31.3.11, office, 1:26	Technical	25 in technical functions	---	---	TECH
Manager of Fundraising & Sponsoring	13.4.11, office, 1:22	Administrative	0,3 in the same function	Administrative	---	ADM
Assistant of the Managing Director	13.4.11, office, 1:27	Administrative	5 in the same function	Artistic/Administrative (in the arts)	Humanistic	ADM
Chief of Artistic Department	22.4.11, bar terrace, 1:41	Artistic/Administrative	6 in the same function	Administrative (in the arts)/Artistic	Humanistic	ART
Chief of Production Management	27.4.11, foyer, 1:24	Technical	31 in technical functions plus Assistant Director at one production	---	Artistic	TECH
Chief Dramaturge	27.4.11, foyer, 1:25	Artistic	21 in the same function	Artistic	Humanistic	ART
Planning Chief	28.4.11, office, 1:37	Administrative	33 in administrative and technical functions	Technical/Administrative (in the arts)	---	ADM
Finance Chief	28.4.11, office, 1:20	Administrative	3 in the same function	Administrative	Administrative	ADM
Artistic Director	3.5.11, office, 0:58	Artistic	23 in the same function	Artistic	Humanistic	ART
Managing Director	3.5.11, office, 1:21	Administrative	24 in the same function	Administrative	---	ADM
Deputy Director for Education, Participation, Programming	4.5.11, office, 1:15	Administrative/Artistic	1,5 in the same function	Administration (in the arts)	Artistic	ART
Technical Director	4.5.11, office, 1:28	Technical/Administrative	12 years in the same function after having been Production Manager of a Wagner cycle	Technical	Technical	TECH
Orchestra General Manager	6.9.11, office, 1:30	Artistic/Administrative	3 in the same function	Artistic/Administrative (in the arts)	Artistic	ART
Chorus Managing Director	12.9.11, office, 1:12	Administrative	20 in administrative functions	Administrative	---	ADM
Chief Conductor	18.10.11, office, 0:58	Artistic	0,1 in the same function after having been Guest Conductor at different productions	Artistic	Artistic	ART
Chorus Artistic Director	12.11.11, office, 1:22	Artistic	5 in the same function after having been Guest Conductor at one production	Artistic	Humanistic/Artistic	ART

Table 5.1: Overview of interviews, interviewees' background, and assigned profile in chronological order (ADM = administrative, ART = artistic, TECH = technical)

5.3.2. Data analysis

With respect to data analysis, all interviews were recorded, literally transcribed, and then individually analyzed in two phases: firstly, using excel tables, excerpts of each interview were assigned to variables derived from the case study questions. Variables related to the attitude *towards*, and reception *of*, the different evaluation practices helped to complete and countercheck the analysis of the procedural and/or substantive relevance assigned by each interviewee to the different evaluators and dimensions of performance. Variables related to the internal (organizational) and external (institutional) context have been added since some interviewees explicitly and spontaneously referred to them. The variables used for the analysis of the individual interviews are the following:

1. Profile of the interviewee:
    a. Position in the organization;
    b. Responsibility in the organization;
    c. Experience inside and outside the organization;
    d. Education;
    e. Interests;
2. Activities and information of evaluation (procedures and techniques as well as non-procedural activities and information);
3. Evaluators of performance:
    a. Procedurally relevant inside the organization (e.g. superiors) and outside (stakeholders);
    b. Substantively relevant inside the organization and outside;
4. Dimensions of performance (nature, object and use of information with respect to production, season, and organization/profile):
    a. Procedurally relevant;
    b. Substantively relevant;
5. Attitude towards, and reception of, different practices of evaluation (with respect to activities, information, evaluators and dimensions);
6. Context:
    a. Internal environment;
    b. External environment.

Secondly, from the excel table of each individual interview, the story described by each interviewee was reconstructed in written form (in a summary varying in length from 3 to 8 pages). The analysis of the individual interviews were complemented with an analysis of the internal and external documents mentioned above. Conclusions were then drawn from each interview about how each interviewed manager actually evaluates the artistic performance of his/her organization and about

whether, and to what extent, NPM-oriented accountability procedures have become embodied in his/her actual judgment of the artistic value created by the organization.

After the analysis of the individual interviews, I assigned each interviewed manager to one of the three groups corresponding to, respectively, the administrative, artistic, or technical profile. For 13 of the 17 managers the assigned profile coincides with the nature of their function as listed in table 5.1. For the other 4 who have a mixed function (e.g. either administrative/artistic or administrative/technical) the assigned profile is the prevailing one emerging from the analysis of variables 1a-1e. The only manager with an administrative/technical function is the technical director. Despite his administrative role, as deputy director of the venue where the opera company performs, he has a thoroughly technical background. Thus, he has been assigned to the technical profile group. All 3 managers with an administrative/artistic function (the deputy director for education, participation and programming, the chief of the artistic department, the orchestra general manager) have humanities/artistic education. Two of them have artistic experience, as well as administrative experience, and the one with only administrative experience had obtained her administrative experience in the arts sector and at the time of the interview had, amongst other responsibilities, the responsibility for programming guest productions. As programming is a fundamental process within the artistic work of performing arts organizations, she has been assigned, like the other two managers with an administrative/artistic function, to the artistic group of managers. Table 5.1 also shows the profile assigned to each interviewed manager.

A further step in the analysis was to compile a list of all the types of activities mentioned in the interviews, through which information about the organization's performance and, in particular, about artistic performance is evaluated by the internal and the external stakeholders of the organization.[32] Then the interviews with managers with the same profile (administrative, artistic, or technical) were analyzed separately; at first with respect to the evaluators of performance and then to the dimensions of performance.

With respect to the evaluators of performance, at first I compiled a list of all the evaluators mentioned in the interviews. Then, for each evaluator mentioned, I investigated what kind of relevance (procedural/substantive) is given to him. Since the procedural and/or substantive relevance given by the interviewed managers to the different evaluators of performance can depend on the individual profile, at first I analyzed the evaluators of performance within each of the three groups of managers (administrative, artistic and technical). This allowed me to identify common patterns within each group and to relate possible differences between the individual managers in the group to specific aspects of their personal profiles (education, experience and function). Then, I analyzed the evaluators of performance across the three groups (administrative, artistic and technical). This allowed me to reconsider the role of personal factors against the role of contextual factors related both to the internal and external environments of the organization.[33]

With respect to the dimensions of performance, I first listed all aspects, criteria and indicators of performance which emerged from the interviews and I then grouped them according to different dimensions and sub-dimensions of performance. The second phase of the analysis consisted of an investigation of the type of relevance (procedural/substantive) the interviewed managers attached

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[32] The complete list of activities of evaluation is included in Appendix 2.
[33] The complete analysis of the evaluators of performance is presented in Appendix 3.

to the aspects, criteria and indicators they mentioned and consequently, at an aggregate level, to each (sub-)dimension of performance. Since the procedural and/or substantive relevance which the interviewed managers attached to the different dimensions of performance may depend on the individual profile of the manager, I analyzed the dimensions of performance within each of the three groups of managers with shared personal profiles (administrative, artistic and technical). By doing this, I was able to identify common patterns within each group and to relate possible differences between the individual managers in the group to specific aspects of their personal profiles (education, experience and function). Then, I analyzed the dimensions of performance across the three groups (administrative, artistic and technical). By doing this, I was able to reconsider the role of personal factors against the role of contextual factors related both to the internal and external environments of the organization.[34]

These steps provided me with a thorough picture of the different practices of evaluation of artistic performance in the investigated organization as well as of their relevance in the judgment of the different groups of managers. In particular, they allowed the formulation of some exploratory conclusions about the impact of NPM-oriented forms of accountability on the evaluation practice of the organization.

5.4. Case study

In this section, I present the results of the case study. Section 5.4.1 provides a brief description of the investigated organization. Section 5.4.2 answers the four empirical sub-questions of my case study. By summing up the main findings of the case study, section 5.4.3 answers the main empirical question of my case study. This has been formulated in order to pursue the first objective of my research, which is to understand how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations actually evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations.

5.4.1. The organization

In this section I describe the investigated organization's mission, activities and stakeholders, as well as its organizational, legal, and financial structure.[35] The provided information is based on internal and external documents collected before and during the field research.

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[34] The complete analysis of the dimensions of performance is presented in Appendix 4.

[35] The description in this section also clarifies the appropriateness of the selection of the managers to be interviewed during the case study. The selection of the interviewed managers (see table 5.1 in section 5.3.1) was made considering both the organizational structure of the opera company and the venue, and the role of the orchestra in-residence in producing, performing and distributing opera. From the opera company, only one department was not represented directly by the interviewed managers: the music library. Due to the focus of my study, this was not considered essential. From the venue company, only two departments were not represented directly by the interviewed managers: the costumes, wigs and make-up department, and the human resources department. The former was partially represented by the director of the technical organization. Due to the focus of my study, the latter was not considered essential. In fact, the human resources department was only responsible for the selection, evaluation and development of technical and administrative staff and not of the artistic staff. The chorus management and the artistic administration department of the opera company were responsible for the artistic staff and were both directly represented by the interviewed managers. To represent the orchestra in-residence, both the general manager and the chief conductor were interviewed. In this way, all managers of the three organizations involved in the production, performance and distribution of opera (opera company, venue, and orchestra in-residence) were interviewed.

The mission of the opera company at the time of the field research was to develop and perform a wide-ranging opera repertoire with the highest standards, and to broaden support for it. The seasonal programs, based on the *stagione* system (where each production is cast separately and has a brief, but intensive run of performances) included works ranging from baroque to contemporary opera and new commissions, and a mix of new productions, co-productions and revivals. In 2011 the opera company offered ca. 100 performances of 7 new productions and 5 revivals for around 120,000 visitors, ca. 35 educational activities for around 2,000 visitors, ca. 35 short performances (not in the main theatre hall of the venue) for around 7,000 visitors, ca. 100 other activities (e.g. special activities for sponsors, live broadcasts) for around 18,000 visitors.

The main stakeholders - both external and internal to the organization - of the opera company were:

External:

- Audience (both existing and new audience);
- Subsidizers (local and national governments and the agencies advising them about subsidy policies);
- Sponsors (one main sponsor, private individuals, businesses and funds);
- National and international orchestras, opera companies and festivals;
- National broadcast service and partner music label;
- Media and press, both traditional (newspapers and specialized magazines) and contemporary (bloggers, glossy magazines);
- The association of the friends of the organization;
- The professional association of opera houses and festivals in Europe;
- Education and talent development partners (from amateur to professional, from primary to secondary schools, from academic to post-academic training);
- Suppliers (in particular of technical services)
- Peers in general (conductors, choruses, soloists, other artists and technicians);

Internal:

- Supervisory board;
- Personnel, both permanent employees and temporary production staff.

At the time of the field research, the investigated national opera company was exclusively a producing organization. This means that a separate organization was in charge of the venue where the opera productions were performed. The separate venue organization was also in charge of the technical organization (e.g. set workshop, props department, lighting department), the costume, wigs and make-up departments, the productions and stage management, the financial department and the human resources department. Also the education, participation and programming department was under the venue organization. Nonetheless, the investigated national opera company had, together with the national dance company, an in-residence status at the venue. This means on the one hand that the opera company mainly performed there; on the other hand that the venue was mainly used by the two national companies: dance and opera. The so-called guest programming of the venue was practically limited to productions invited within special education

and participation programs.[36] In addition, the investigated opera company had its own chorus, but did not have its own orchestra and it used to perform with different partner orchestras. Of those partner orchestras, one used to perform in the larger part of the opera productions, gaining a status of orchestra in-residence at the investigated opera company.

The opera company was an independent foundation employing around 95 people with a permanent contract, with 2/3 of them being members of the chorus. It was run by two directors: an artistic director and a managing director. These two directors, together with the artistic director and the managing director of the national dance company, formed the board of directors of the venue. Also the national dance company and the venue were independent foundations employing respectively around 120 and 420 employees. The managing director of the opera company was also the chairman of the board of directors of the venue. The board of directors of the opera company and the board of directors of the venue were formally controlled by two different supervisory boards. Nevertheless, the supervisory board of the venue consisted of two members from the supervisory board of the national opera company and two from the supervisory board of the national dance company. The structure of the boards of directors and of the supervisory boards show how interwoven the opera company and the venue formally were. From the organizational charts of both organizations (Fig. 5.1 and 5.2) it also emerges how interwoven the two organizations were in producing, performing and distributing opera.

The annual operating budget of the opera company was around 34.1 million euro, with 25.4 million euro coming from the national government's structural subsidy (plus smaller subsidies and private donations of about 80,000 euro) and around 8.7 million euro own income, consisting of 7.6 million euro revenue from ticket sales, 300,000 euro from sponsoring, 300,000 euro from other, unspecified income sources and 500,000 euro from indirect revenues. Most expenses were related to personnel costs, including both employees and freelancers contracted for the individual productions: around 28 million euro of the 34.1 million euro total budget. The organization's balance sheet as of 31 December 2011 showed a total value of assets of around 18 million euro. The annual operating budget of the venue was 11.4 million euro, with 8 million euro coming from the city government's subsidy. The venue organization's balance sheet as of 31 December 2011 showed a total value of assets of around 26 million euro.

In the next section I describe the practice of evaluation in the organization. From now on, with *the managers of the organization* I refer to all the managers involved in the process of producing, performing and distributing opera in the studied case, regardless of their formal employer: the opera company, the venue, or the orchestra in-residence.

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[36] The three legally independent organizations, national opera, national ballet and the venue, have later merged to form, also legally, what was de facto already a single organization.
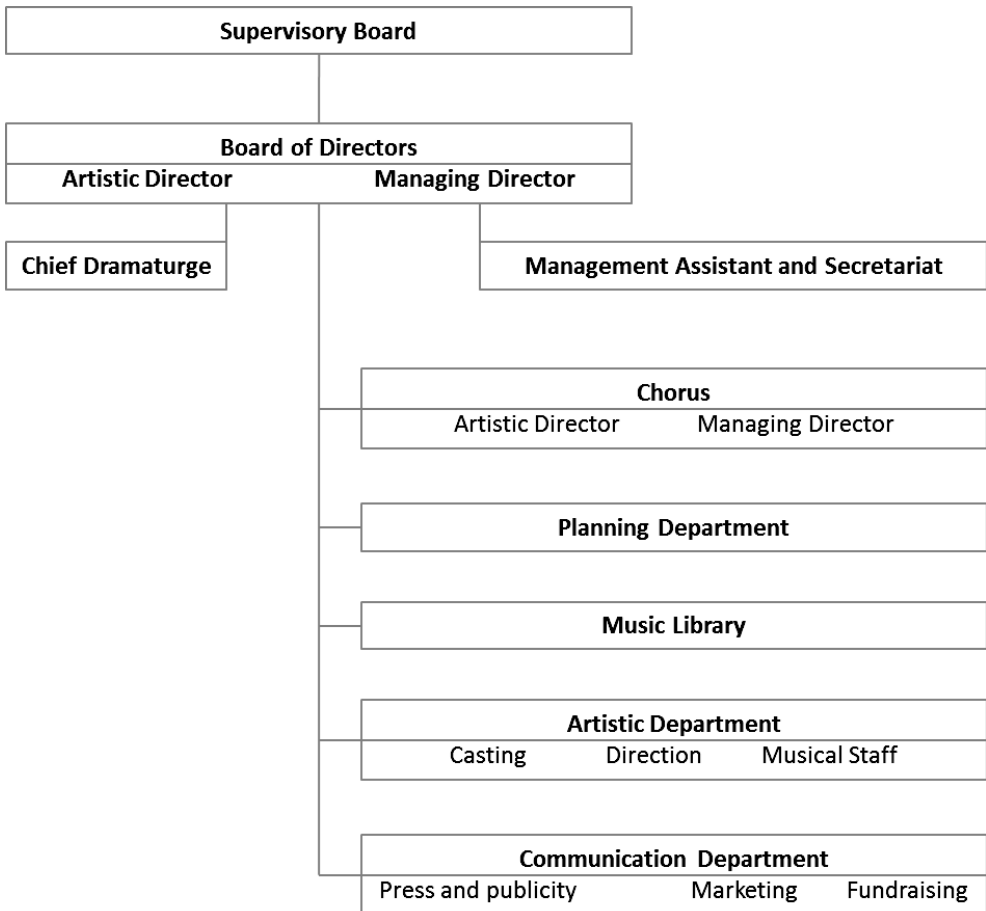
Figure 5.1: Organizational chart of the opera company
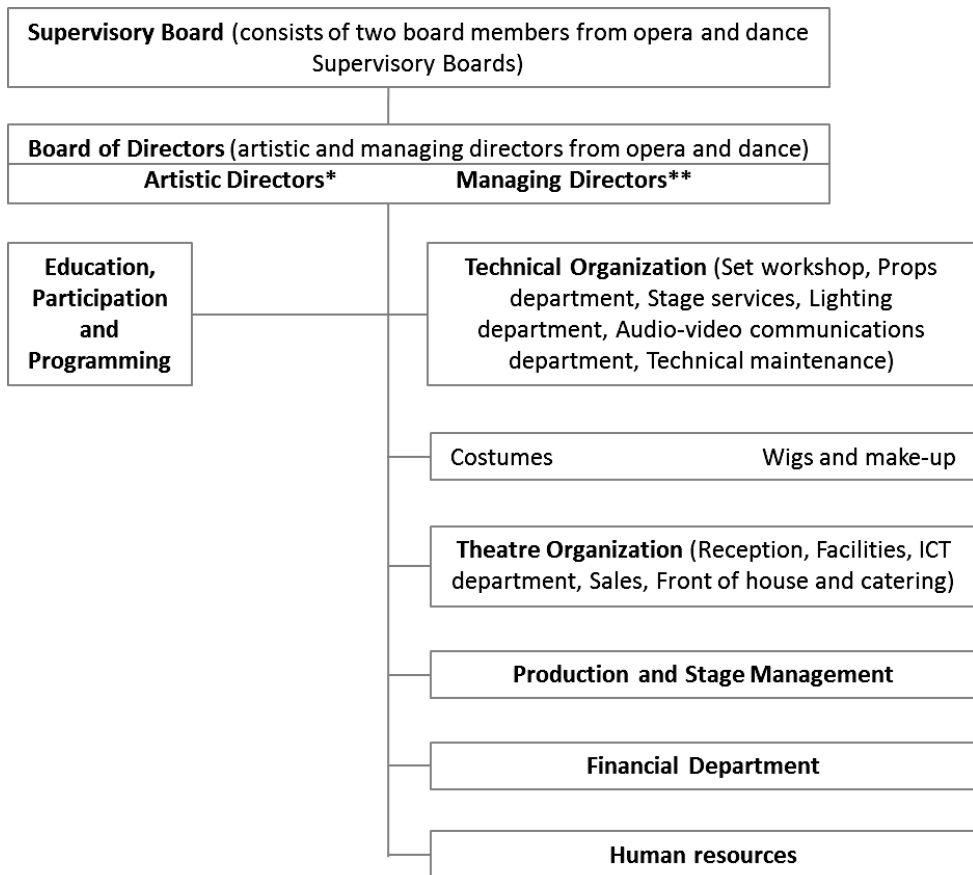
Figure 5.2: Organizational chart of the venue
(* Both artistic directors are jointly responsible for the artistic quality of the activities.
** While the board is jointly responsible for policymaking and decisions, the managers of all departments report directly to the chairman of the board of directors, that is, the managing director of opera and venue)

5.4.2. The practice of evaluation

The investigated organization is involved in a large and varied amount of activities through which information about its level of performance is evaluated by internal and external stakeholders. This confirms the organization's official view of its evaluation practices, as contained in the introduction of the self-evaluation report written by the opera company for the international evaluation commission in 2010:

> For a large opera company like [ours], evaluation is not only a familiar concept, it is a continuous process which includes both internal and external objective critique. Our productions are visited, watched, listened to, reviewed and criticized by the audience, the press, the authorities and by colleagues. Opinions from the outside world supplement internal evaluation, which is carried out with great care. All productions and activities are evaluated at department level as well as with senior management, focusing both on work process and on the final result. (Self-evaluation report 2010)

Many activities of evaluation are procedurally anchored in the work of the organization, either according to internal management systems (e.g. regular meetings with the supervisory board, general management meetings, production-related meetings, annual press conferences) or to the rules imposed by external regulatory and funding bodies (e.g. meetings with ministry representatives, external evaluation procedures, sector analyses, annual reports). In addition, there are other activities that are not procedurally anchored in the work of the organization, but are naturally embedded in its artistic work (e.g. ad hoc conversations and observation during the production process and at performances).[37]

The evaluated information relates to four main dimensions of performance: artistic, social, organizational, and financial. The artistic dimension of performance includes three sub-dimensions related to three main artistic processes: programming, production, reception.[38]

The sub-dimension *programming* of the artistic dimension of performance includes three categories: *artistic director, program,* and *profile.* The ability of the artistic director to run risks, and his taste and artistic leadership influence the program of a season. For the evaluation of the program the most important criterion is the match between the chosen works and the recruited cast per work. Finally, the programs of the individual seasons influence the profile of the opera. For the evaluation of the profile the most important criteria are its specificity and consistency on a long-term horizon.

The sub-dimension *production* of the artistic dimension of performance includes two categories: *artistic and production team,* and *performance on stage.* The ability of the chorus, orchestra, soloists, stage director and technical staff determines the quality of the performance on stage, which consists of a good match between the overall musical quality of the performance, the clarity and innovativeness of the staging concept, and the fit of the scenery constructed with the stage director's original idea.

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[37] See Appendix 2 for a complete overview of the activities of evaluation in the investigated organization.
[38] See figures D1-D6 in Appendix 4 for all aspects, criteria and indicators included in each (sub-)dimension and the categories within which those aspects, criteria and indicators are clustered.

The sub-dimension *reception* of the artistic dimension of performance includes two categories: *artistic experience,* and *artistic impact.* The meaningfulness and worthwhileness of the performance, its transformational and educative power, its ability to challenge and surprise the audience, its expressiveness, the magic and breathless aura it creates and its ability to connect performers and audience, influence the impact that the production has on the audience, media, and professional field. In turn, appreciation of the audience, media, and professional field influences the artistic reputation of the organization.

The social dimension of performance relates to the audience development process and includes two categories: *marketing and education,* and *outreach.* The quality of the marketing and education activities (e.g. segmenting the market, targeting the audience, positioning the offer) influences the outreach results of the organization, both in quantitative terms (e.g. box office numbers) and in qualitative terms (e.g. sustainable connection to the audience of the future).

The organizational dimension of performance includes three categories: *processes, culture,* and *people.* Good planning, coordination and technical facilities are fundamental for the work processes of the organization, whose culture is characterized by the ability to customize work after listening to the individual ideas of artists, and the ability to create a hierarchy-free dialogue. Finally, the leadership style of the administrative, artistic, and technical managers and the organization's attention to the development of (artistic) talents contribute to the long-term quality of the organization management process.

The financial dimension of performance includes two categories: *expenses,* and *revenues*. On the expenses side, the main evaluation criteria are economy (for example, the ability to keep soloists' average honorariums low) and efficiency (for example, making good use of subsidies). On the revenues side, the main evaluation criteria are sales revenues and fundraising.

The following sub-sections 5.4.2.1-5.4.2.4 will answer the four sub-questions of the case study (see section 5.2), while section 5.4.3 will answer the main empirical question of the case study (see section 5.2).

5.4.2.1. The activities of evaluation of artistic performance

The analysis of the practice of evaluation of artistic performance, which is the object of my research, implies a focus on those activities of evaluation through which information about the three sub-dimensions programming, production, and reception is evaluated by internal and external stakeholders. Table 5.2 shows the sub-dimensions covered by the information evaluated through the activities of evaluation of artistic performance in the investigated organization.[39]

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[39] Details of each of the activities are in Appendix 2.

Activities of evaluation	Sub-dimensions of artistic performance	Programming	Production	Reception
Internal/external evaluation	Type of activity			
Internal stakeholders	Bi-monthly meetings with supervisory board	x		
	Six-weekly meetings of artistic direction with orchestra general manager	x	x	
	Weekly meetings of chiefs of the artistic department of opera and orchestra		x	
	Monthly meetings of chorus direction with chorus singers committee		x	
	Technical evaluation of individual productions (at the level of the design team and the production team)		x	
	Opera evaluation of individual productions		x	x
	Policy team meetings about individual productions		x	
	Ad hoc conversations and observations during production process and at performances		x	x
External stakeholders	Meetings with ministry representatives	x		
	External evaluation procedure	x	x	
	Annual reports	x	x	x
	Season's presentation to the press	x		

Table 5.2: Activities of evaluation of artistic performance

A dense web of activities covers the three sub-dimensions of artistic performance. Nevertheless, the information evaluated does not have the same level of breadth and depth in each activity. For instance, at the meetings with the supervisory board that deal with programming, the required information only regards the titles chosen for a season. The board listens to and ratifies the decisions made by the artistic director without discussing the content of these decisions. Also within the external evaluation procedure the information about programming provided by the organization mainly concerns titles and casting choices (e.g. names of directors, conductors and soloists). More detailed information about the program of the next season is presented to the press, and, consequently, to the public, at the annual press conference, while the annual report contains detailed information about the productions of the last commercial year.

The evaluation of individual productions is the objective of a series of hierarchically structured meetings. From the work floor to the upper management, there are design team meetings (with stage managers, first lighting technicians, assistant directors, props managers; in other words, with all the staff working on the stage); production team meetings (with technical director - who is the chief of the technical organization - and the chiefs of the individual departments of the technical organization - stage, lighting, audio-visual communication, props, building maintenance); opera evaluation meetings (all department chiefs of the opera company, such as communication, artistic department); and policy team meetings (production manager of the specific production, managing director, artistic director, chief of the artistic department, technical director, costumes and wigs/make-up director). The technical evaluation conducted by the design team always discusses the quality of the scenery; the one conducted by the production team discusses, in addition, the quality of the props and of the lighting. Nevertheless, the attention devoted to the evaluation of these aspects of the artistic production is very limited if compared with the largest part of the technical

evaluations, which is devoted to organizational aspects (e.g. the quality of the cooperation between external, project-based staff and permanent staff of the organization) and financial aspects - the latter above all in the technical evaluation conducted by the production team. Production-related aspects are discussed at the opera evaluation meetings, where every department chief evaluates the finished production from the perspective of his/her department. It is thus not surprising that the representatives of the technical organization speak about scenery, the representatives of the artistic department about the quality of the artistic team, and the chorus representatives about the quality of the chorus direction. At those meetings that are attended by the artistic director, more production-related details are discussed, such as the quality of the orchestra and the stage director, and the adequacy of the soloists' voices for that production or for the venue in general.

The opera evaluation meetings are also the only regular meetings where reception-related information is presented. This is mainly the task of communication chief, who reports on the tone of the media reviews and the reactions of the audience. In addition, the representatives of the technical organization or, if present, the artistic director, inform colleagues when the scenery constructed for a production has been already sold or rented, which is a sign of appreciation within the wider professional field. Nonetheless, at the opera evaluation meetings a large part of the information presented concerns organizational aspects and, to a smaller extent, finance, while relatively little information relates to the audience development efforts of the organization (social dimension of performance). While the main objective of the opera evaluation meetings is to exchange information, decisions are made in general by the direction and, what concerns specific productions, by the policy team. It is within the policy team, for instance, that the decision to re-program a production is made.

It is through ad hoc conversations and individual observations during the production process and at performances that more in-breadth and in-depth information about the production and its reception is evaluated. For instance, during work breaks, within the production team there are continuously conversations about how things are going, how the production team is working, how an idea is developing. In addition, the managers of the organization are present during the production process and at the different performances. At the different presentations of the production concept and of the scenery, and at the different rehearsals, the information collected relates to every detail of the progress of the artistic team and of the production team towards the final performance on stage: scenery, lighting, props, acting, orchestra, soloists, chorus. This information is immediately used to adjust individual aspects and to improve the artistic quality of the production. From the full dress rehearsal on, it is also possible to observe the reactions of the audience. Attending the full dress rehearsal and the performances provides an opportunity to get a feeling of the atmosphere in the theatre, of the connection to the audience and of other aspects related to how the audience experience the performance. In addition, after the individual performances the managers of the organization talk to the audience and get their immediate reactions. In particular, at the after-première reception, conversations occur with invited audience members, press, and peers, but also with the production and the artistic team.

5.4.2.2. The nature of the information about artistic performance

The fact that a large part of in-breadth and in-depth information about artistic performance is evaluated through activities which are naturally embedded in the artistic processes of the

organization, and not procedurally ruled, is consistent with the nature of the evaluated information. The information about artistic performance is mostly qualitative, largely unwritten, and often tacit.

Concerning the sub-dimension *programming* of the artistic dimension of performance, information about the profile of the organization can be found in the annual reports and in the self-evaluation report that is written for the external evaluation procedure. This information is qualitative, focusing on what is programmed by the organization in order to establish a certain profile. The offering consists of a balanced repertoire with respect to the works presented (from baroque to contemporary), the productions presented (from reprises to new productions), and the direction styles. These programming choices aim at establishing the organization as an highly innovative, high-quality opera company. Lists of productions and their respective casts are also used for the meetings with the supervisory board and with the ministry representatives. Nevertheless, the impression is that much programming-related information remains tacit. This regards above all the information about the artistic director, who is fundamental in giving his imprint to the artistic profile of the organization. For instance, for the chief of the artistic department, artistic directors are more important than conductors and singers in forming the profile of an opera company. A clear artistic vision of the artistic director is a main success criterion for an opera company. According to the planning chief it is the responsibility and the talent of an artistic director to find people that have good concepts, that have something to say, and that do it with passion and full commitment. For her, putting together a good season is like creating a work of art. Sometimes one understands the relations between the different productions only afterwards, similarly to what happens with works of art: one never knows whether the artists were conscious of the effects in advance. As a result, some seasons have just something special. But the quality of the individual seasons and of the contribution of the artistic director are not explicitly evaluated through any internal or external procedure.

Concerning the sub-dimension *production* of the artistic dimension of performance, much information appears in the minutes of the production-related meetings described above. Above all, the information about the scenery is written in detail. Information about the quality of the director's concept, the quality of orchestra, chorus, soloists and conductors appear in those minutes irregularly and not systematically, often depending on who is present at the opera evaluation meetings. In addition, the level of detail is low. Many evaluations are limited to expressing a general "good", or "not excellent" about the artistic level of the production. Most information remains unwritten, and often also unspoken. For instance, chief conductor describes his evaluation of his contribution to a successful performance as follows:

> Well, I trust my ears, and if things are […] kind of well-established, if the orchestra, [the] singers had a coherent, good stream of phrasings and get together, that's already number one. Number two would be, like, if there's been a good tension - was it a good, was it an interesting line we could draw over the whole evening. This is something which needs a good moment, you can't really force that. You can't really rehearse on that. It needs a good moment. Is there a moment of inspiration or not? So, everything could inspire you. A singer in a wonderful shape or great form, of course it inspires the orchestra, and vice versa. If they would be really playing with a lot of delicacy, then the stage would be inspired. So, this is important. (Chief conductor)

Although this information remains unwritten and probably also unspoken, it is this information which is used by the chief conductor in order to improve the next performances of the orchestra - at least with respect to those aspects of a good performance that can be rehearsed! Practically every artistic manager of the organization evaluates with the same level of detail and through the same kind of unwritten, and often tacit information, the artistic processes and results for which he is responsible.[40] Unwritten, but spoken information about the sub-dimension *production* is discussed in bilateral meetings. For instance, every six weeks the orchestra general manager of the orchestra in-residence attends the artistic direction meetings of the opera organization where, amongst other things, current productions and just completed productions are discussed and evaluated. At their weekly meetings, the chief of the artistic department of the opera and the manager of the artistic department of the orchestra discuss, for instance, the extent to which their expectations of a new conductor, who has been invited for the first time, are met.

Concerning the sub-dimension *reception* of the artistic dimension of performance, some quantitative indicators of audience and media appreciation are presented by the communication chief at the opera evaluation meetings. The applause's length after a performance, the grade given to the production, and the number of people to whom the production will to be recommended are communicated to account for the audience appreciation of a production. The average number of stars (out of 5) in reviews are communicated to account for media appreciation. Additional written information presented by the communication chief regards the reactions of the audience by mail and the content of the media reviews. This is the only information about reception which is discussed at the opera evaluation meetings. Within the remaining procedurally anchored activities of evaluation, only the excerpts of media reviews which are used in the annual reports relate to the sub-dimension reception. As with the sub-dimension production, it is through ad hoc conversations and, even more so, through observations that most information about the sub-dimension reception is evaluated. This information remains largely unwritten, and is also often tacit, as the following quote exemplifies:

> I often during a performance sit in the back row of the main floor of the house. And you can feel when the audience is responding with breathlessness or awe or silence. You can sense when they laugh in the right places, not just because they know it's funny or because they've just read the surtitles, but because they feel what the characters are presenting to each other. I think you can feel a lot of […] how well you're reaching the audience. There may be someone who sits there and seems totally bored during throughout the whole piece and then says at the end: 'That was the most incredible experience of my life' and you're sitting and going 'Oh! This was off-key, the fourth measure!' You know? Of course the applause at the end of a performance shows a great amount of what the audience - whether they appreciate it or not - but that's not always the biggest thing. I think you have to live and breathe with the audience what they're seeing and hearing. (Chorus artistic director)

The nature of the information about the artistic dimension of performance is thus very different from the nature of the information about the social, the organizational, and the financial dimensions

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[40] Appendix 4 presents more examples; for instance, how the chorus director evaluates the performance of his chorus, or how the chief of the artistic department and the artistic director, who share the responsibility for casting, evaluate the chosen soloists.

of performance. The information relating to the latter three dimensions of performance is often quantitative and largely available in written form. As introduced above, outreach, the main objective within the social dimension of performance, can be evaluated through such quantitative indicators of performance as seat occupancy per production and season, number of sold-out productions per season, audience retention numbers, number of reviews in the media, or number of DVD and broadcastings. Other qualitative objectives within the social dimension of performance, like the position of the organization in the cultural establishment, or its role in the community, although hardly quantifiable, can be evaluated based on a large variety of written information, such as the sector analyses by the cultural council or articles in the professional press. Safety of work processes, a fundamental criterion to evaluate the quality of the organization management, can be evaluated through the number of incidents per production and season. Other qualitative aspects, like the coordination between project-based and permanent staff, are hardly quantifiable but thoroughly documented in the minutes of the many production-related meetings described above. Finally, financial objectives are by definition quantifiable. For example, the performance of the sponsoring and fundraising department can be evaluated based on the amount of subsidies granted to the organization.[41]

Information about performance that can be quantified or, at least, caught in words, is more *usable* within evaluation procedures than the mostly qualitative, largely unwritten, and often tacit information about programming, production and reception. What information is more *useful* for the substantive evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization will be answered in the next section.

5.4.2.3. The managers' judgments about artistic performance

Through the different activities of evaluation and the different kinds of information described above, the managers of the organization form their judgments about the artistic performance of the organization. In these activities different (groups of) people with different expectations and opinions are involved, and information concerning different aspects, criteria and indicators of performance is collected, exchanged, and evaluated. As explained in the analytical framework presented in section 5.2, in this paper I use the concept of *evaluators of performance* for those (groups of) persons, including the managers themselves, whose expectations and opinions count for the procedural and/or substantive evaluation of artistic performance; and the concept of *dimensions of performance* for those coherent sets of aspects, criteria and indicators that are taken into account in the procedural and/or substantive evaluation of artistic performance. In order to understand the managers' actual judgments about artistic performance, that is, their substantive evaluation of artistic performance, I investigated what evaluators and dimensions of performance are assigned substantive relevance by the interviewed managers while they make sense of artistic performance.[42] Here it is convenient to recall the working definitions of substantively relevant evaluators and dimensions of performance given in the analytical framework:

substantively relevant evaluators of performance are *(groups of) persons a manager considers co-producers and/or recipients of (the results of) his own work and/or the work of the organization,*

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[41] See Appendices 2 and 4 for more examples.
[42] See Appendix 3 and 4 for the complete analysis of, respectively, the evaluators and the dimensions of performance.

regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems and/or *(groups of) persons whose opinions about (the results of) the manager's work and/or of the work of the organization influence the manager in the process of forming as well as explaining his own judgment about the value created by him and by the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems;*

substantively relevant dimensions of performance are *dimensions a manager takes into account in order to form and explain his own judgment about the value created by himself and by the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management.*

The results of the analysis show that, in forming their judgments about artistic performance, the three groups of managers (administrative, artistic, technical) share a common frame of reference, consisting of substantively relevant evaluators and dimensions of performance. As it will be explained in this section, the evaluators and dimensions that are significantly substantively relevant for the evaluation of artistic performance are the ones that are closely related to the core processes of the organization: opera creation (programming, production, reception) and opera distribution (audience development). The evaluators and dimensions that are modestly, or not, substantively relevant for the evaluation of artistic performance are the ones that are related to the supporting processes of the organization (organization and financial management). Figure 5.3 sums up these findings, showing the divide between the core dimensions of performance and their evaluators on the one hand, and the supporting dimensions of performance and their evaluators on the other hand.

press

peers

audience

oneself

direction

staff

supervisory board

government

auditors

cultural council

donors

sponsors

opera distribution
(social dimension)

opera creation
(sub-dimensions
programming,
production,
reception)

financial management
(financial dimension)

organization management
(organizational dimension)
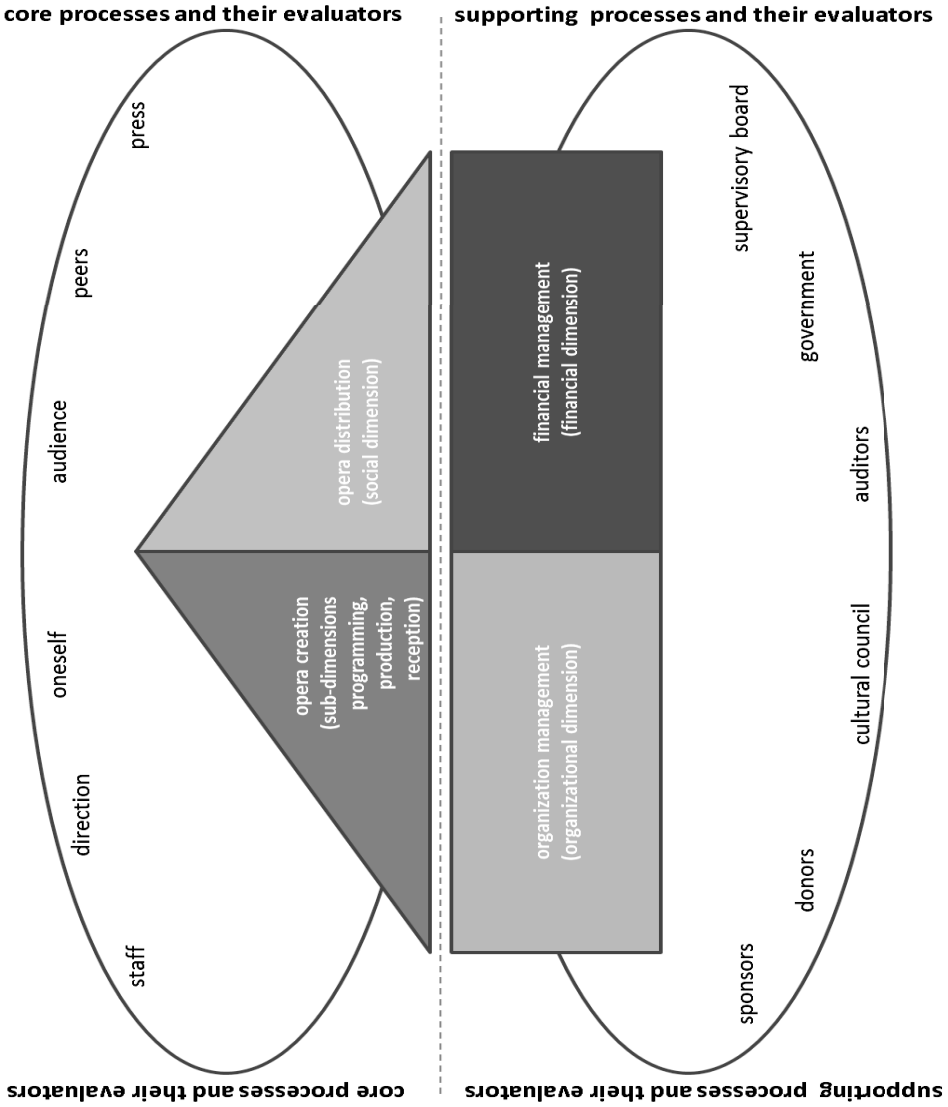
Figure 5.3: The organization's processes and their evaluators

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Table 5.3 shows for each evaluator of performance the number of managers (out of the total of 17) who considered that evaluator to be substantively relevant (S) for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization. For example, 13 of the 17 managers interviewed considered the press to be a substantively relevant evaluator of performance. In contrast, only 2 managers interviewed considered the government to be a substantively relevant evaluator of performance.

Evaluators of Performance	Total Managers (17)
Press	**13S**
Audience	**14S**
Peers	**12S**
Direction	**15S**
Staff	**16S**
Oneself	**14S**
Government	2S
Cultural Council	
Auditors/Inspectors	
Sponsors	1S
Donors	
Supervisory Board	2S

Table 5.3: Substantively relevant evaluators of performance for the managers of the organization[43]

Two main groups of evaluators of performance emerge from the analysis:

- evaluators that significantly influence the managers' judgments of artistic performance; these are press, audience, peers, direction, staff and oneself;
- evaluators that do not, or hardly influence the managers' judgments of artistic performance; these are government, cultural council, auditors/inspectors, sponsors, donors and supervisory board.

By looking at the individual evaluators of performance within these two groups it becomes visible how their substantive relevance depends on their natural involvement in the artistic processes of the organization, rather than on their internal or external position in the stakeholders' structure of the organization (see section 5.4.1). Knowing what happens in the work of the opera, especially with respect to the artistic processes, seems to be the dividing criterion for being considered a substantively relevant evaluator of artistic performance or not. If an evaluator personally participates in the artistic processes of the organization, as a maker or a recipient, then his expectations and opinions are taken into account by the managers of the organization in forming their judgment about artistic performance. While the whole staff of the organization, and in particular the direction and the other managers, are protagonists of the programming and production processes, press, audience and peers are protagonists of the reception process.

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[43] Based on table E1 in Appendix 3.

For instance, according to the chief conductor the organization should be evaluated by the audience who buy tickets, by journalists, media, experts, and every kind of connoisseur who can see what is happening in the opera world today and the position of the organization within it. For him, a legitimate evaluator is someone with whom the opera organization is in daily contact.

Among the substantively relevant evaluators of performance, the audience have a fundamental role for the interviewed managers. Asked about how he knows when he has done a good job, the chief dramaturge responded:

> Through the audience I think, again. Obviously, that's difficult, 'cause I think that we makers have to be some steps further than the audience, and we have to forecast and predict things - new talents, new developments - to demand more from the audience than an audience itself would dare to. You'd better present difficult things in a popular, interesting, appealing dress than only things that the audience knows and like to see. I think, if we say: 'Go and see the show', the show is good and they go along with us, than I know we've been good. (Chief dramaturge)

The substantive relevance of audience, press and peers does not mean that the frame of reference of the organization's managers is fully projected towards the external environment of the organization. The internal evaluators, and mainly direction, staff and oneself, are also very relevant, and a hierarchy between the substantive relevance of internal and external actors of evaluation emerges from the interviews. For instance, asked about how he recognizes the success of a production, chief conductor answered:

> First, we would say, we would judge ourselves and say: 'Well, ok, apart from what's being said by the critics and the public, or the box office, are we content with the result? Are we actually convinced that this is a valuable - a good thing or not?' This could be kind of contradictory at times, that outside it could be a big success and inside we wouldn't be […] similarly convinced about it. You see what I mean? So […] first it's us, then it's of course the public every night, you see if there's a response or not. And then in the end - or, further - there could be a…, there's of course an echo of the media. […] But these three are kind of independent. (Chief conductor)

In general the staff as a whole constitutes a fundamental evaluator for the interviewed managers. The chorus singers are, for example, the most influential for the chorus artistic director in forming judgments about the work of the artistic director:

> As a whole the chorus can really be considered an artistic, a great artistic conscience of the company. (Chorus artistic director)

Within the staff, a special role is reserved for the direction and, with respect to the artistic work of the organization, especially for the artistic director. Having been responsible for programming choices for years, and enjoying artistic authority, it is not surprising that his expectations and opinions strongly influence the judgment of the other managers about artistic performance.

Finally, although the opinions and expectations of the staff and the direction, together with those of the external evaluators - audience, peers and press - are all relevant in making sense of the artistic value created by the organization, it is one's own opinion that seems to have the heaviest weight in the final judgment of most of the interviewed managers. For instance, according to the orchestra

general manager, to understand whether an opera is doing well compared to other European opera companies, you have to listen and see a lot. There are no measurable criteria:

> It is above all your own standard, the one you have in your mind and that is influenced by the many experts working with the orchestra and the opera. You know what you can expect. (Orchestra general manager)

Having strong personal opinions on artistic choices seems a crucial condition for an artistic career in the opera world, as the following quote from the interview with the chief of the artistic department testifies:

> You are just expected to pursue your own line. (Chief of the artistic department)

If an evaluator does not participate personally in the artistic processes of the organization, then his expectations and opinions are not taken into account by the managers of the organization in forming their judgments about artistic performance. For instance, within the external evaluation procedure, the international commission has to attend only *one* performance of the organization; and the sector analyses by the cultural council are based only on the documents issued by the organization and not on direct contact with the artistic processes themselves. The other substantively 'irrelevant' evaluators have relevance for processes others than the artistic ones, such as financial management in the case of government, donors, sponsors, auditors and supervisory board; and organization management in the case of government and supervisory board. Nevertheless, at least in two cases the irrelevance of these evaluators for the managers' judgments about artistic performance is not completely obvious. Government and cultural councils use time-consuming procedures of evaluation (external evaluation procedures, sector analyses), explicitly including and even stressing the importance of the artistic dimension of performance, in order to legitimate their funding decisions; and the supervisory board is the statutory organ of control of the organization.

The irrelevance of the government may be linked to skepticism about politicians and their ability and interest in understanding the world of opera and the opera art form, as it clearly emerges from the interviews with the organization's managers. This skepticism was expressed, for instance, by the chief conductor:

> I think it's important that not only one group of people evaluates all our work. And I think the last who should do it are politicians. How can I trust politicians nowadays? They do not even come here to visit the opera house personally. So they, the actual class of politicians, they're not really able to evaluate our work. That's pretty sure. (Chief conductor)

According to the artistic director, politicians are unable to understand what it means to work in an opera, otherwise they would not say that quality is good and at the same time threaten the very existence of the organization by dramatically cutting budgets.

Concerning the supervisory board, it may seem a paradox that this statutory organ of control of the organization has literally nothing to say about the artistic choices of the direction. The supervisory board has to be informed about programming and special initiatives, but it seems as if its members are not even expected to express an opinion on these topics, let alone influence the managers in their judgments about artistic performance. The supervisory board, which is a statutory body that is

by definition responsible for controlling the work of the direction of the organization, is practically excluded from controlling the main value created by the organization: the artistic value.[44]

The analysis of the substantive relevance of the different dimensions of performance for the managers' judgments about artistic performance confirms the hierarchical divide between the programming, production, and reception processes on one side, and the organization and financial management processes on the other. In addition, the significant substantive relevance assigned to the social dimension of performance places the audience development process as an additional core process of the organization next to programming, production, and reception.

Table 5.4 shows for each dimension of performance the number of managers (out of the total of 17) who considered that dimension to be substantively relevant (S) for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization. For example, 15 of the 17 managers interviewed considered programming to be a substantively relevant dimension of performance. In contrast, only 7 managers interviewed considered the organizational dimension of performance to be substantively relevant for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization.

Group of Managers Dimensions of performance	Total Managers (17)
Artistic/Programming	**15S**
Artistic/Production	**13S**
Artistic/Reception	**15S**
Social	**15S**
Organizational	7S
Financial	10S

Table 5.4: Substantively relevant dimensions of performance for the managers of the organization[45]

Two main groups of dimensions of performance emerge from the analysis:

- dimensions that significantly influence the managers' judgments about artistic performance;
- dimensions that modestly influence the managers' judgments about artistic performance.

Apart from the expected substantive relevance of the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance for the managers' judgments about the artistic performance of the organization, it is the high substantive relevance of the social dimension of performance that constitutes a particularly interesting element of the findings of my research. In fact, the social dimension of evaluation is the only non-artistic dimension of performance that is assigned substantive relevance as often as the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance (programming, production, reception). This confirms

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[44] The reasons why the supervisory board emerges as irrelevant in the evaluation of the core value created by the organization have been not investigated in this research. The members of the supervisory board have not been interviewed. Nevertheless, it is surprising that the power to express opinions *on* and to influence the work *of* the direction, which the supervisory board statutorily has, is not felt at all by the members of the direction and by the other managers of the organization.

[45] Based on table D1 in Appendix 4.

the genuine commitment to the community that had already emerged from the analysis of the evaluators of performance, in particular with respect to the important role of the audience and peers. According to the interviewed managers, evaluating the results of an opera company means, for instance, seeing what place the organization has in the community according to the general public and, more specifically, the audience; that is, to those stakeholders for whom the opera company is expected to work for. Outreach, understood by the interviewed managers as aiming to reach a representative average of society and providing that different groups in society go to see the productions, is considered fundamental in judging the performance of an opera company. The first criterion mentioned by the technical director when referring to a successful season is to sell out productions, since this shows that the audience has been reached. Also other managers see sold-out productions and, more generally, seat occupancy as indicators of success. Nevertheless, these quantitative indicators of outreach must be accompanied by qualitative considerations to better understand the context within which certain objectives are achieved or not, and, consequently, whether one can speak of success or not. For instance, how high seat occupancy should be in order to be considered successful depends on the individual production. For the production of a contemporary opera as a world première, 85% seat occupancy would be a huge success. For other qualitative aspects, despite being fundamental in forming judgments about the artistic value created by the organization, no specific indicators are used. For instance, ability and success in creating a sustainable connection to society can be seen, according to the production manager, in the extent to which the audience go to the performances with the expectation that they are going to do something beautiful, something that is "life-changing", a special experience; and the extent to which they are "stimulated to get once again stimulated" by the opera company. In order to achieve a sustainable connection to society a balance is required between challenging the audience and respecting their acceptance threshold with respect to innovation and experimentation, as is clearly explained by the chorus artistic director, for whom presenting new works that challenge the audience is essential for a successful opera company:

> I think that if opera companies become museums, where they only do the standards that reach the middle of the road opera, the standard opera crowd, then they're not successful, even if they are financially successful. A company that is - because of the standards of its performers and because of its good planning towards financial stability - able to reach a loyal audience, should be able to challenge the audience now and then with a new piece. (Chorus artistic director)

Balance is also necessary between being appealing to opera lovers and attracting new audience, and between local taste and international position. The difference between the latter two can be huge, as the artistic director clearly stated:

> Opera is very local: what is maybe very successful in Milan can be a total flop [...] in Amsterdam. (Artistic director)

Concerning the two dimensions that have a modest role in the substantive evaluation of artistic performance, the organizational dimension is considered substantively relevant less frequently than all other dimensions. The organization's processes, culture and people allow for a good production process, but how good the opera production is depends entirely on what happens on stage. Aspects, criteria and indicators related to the production process do not influence the evaluation of the

results on stage, as the chief conductor explains referring to what really counts in the evaluation of his work:

> You know, […] the result is what counts. And the process of how we get there is a secondary thing. So I think you would be always, or I would be always judged by results. And […] yeah: If the results are fine, then the process will be less in question. You know? But yeah, I mean, […] there are responsible figures in the theatre who actually have to judge my work and to have a careful look on how this would influence the company or what impact is there, or what's the artistic outcome? Of course they have to, you know, to have a […] good and closer look at every day, or let's say, every project. (Chief conductor)

The financial considerations emerge as essential in setting the limits for programming choices and technical decisions concerning individual productions. In this sense, the financial dimension influences what will be finally produced. Nevertheless, it plays a secondary role in the evaluation of what has been produced and performed, as clearly emerges from the closing sentence of the managing director's explanation of what makes an opera company successful:

> What makes an opera house successful is in my opinion the fact that all the following aspects are present at a high quality standard: quality and attention in rehearsing, quality of performance, both the physical performance and the quality of the artistic ingredients […] You also have to be a little conscious that you have to realize an optimum with the money you get. (Managing director)

Contrary to what might be expected from managers of an arts organization, and especially from artistic managers, there seems to be no negative attitude towards the financial dimension of performance. Only the planning chief explicitly refutes of any intrusion of the financial dimension of performance into the artistic ones. For her quality means not getting distracted by commercial considerations. However, for the other managers interviewed, the financial dimension of performance is not only a 'constrainer' of artistic processes, but also an 'enabler'. A sound financial structure is considered necessary in order to do the artistic work properly. For instance, according to the orchestra general manager, only by having enough budget is it possible to cast soloists who assure an adequate quality of the production. Financial stability and the commercial success of a season, which is a precondition for financial stability, are for him as important as artistic success.

As introduced above, the frame of reference for the evaluation of the artistic performance is shared by the managers of the organizations. The analysis shows no major difference between the three groups of managers, despite their different individual backgrounds (administrative, artistic, technical). The few differences which did emerge are explained here.[46]

Concerning the evaluators of performance, slight differences can be found with respect to the role of self-opinion and of the three evaluators which are central in the reception process: press, audience and peers. Self-opinion is very important for all managers with artistic and technical profile, but not for the managers with an administrative profile. Considering the focus on artistic processes and their results, it is plausible that administrative managers rely on the opinion of artistic

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[46] The other minor differences which emerged within each group are analysed and explained in Appendices 3 and 4.

managers to evaluate the artistic performance of the organization. Technical managers and artistic managers are the creators of the artistic product. The technical managers supply tangible techniques and decoration to the artistic managers and their teams, who use them to create the final intangible artistic value, the opera performance. Technical and artistic managers are experienced *with* and involved *in* the production of opera performances. They are continuously busy with the evaluation of what they are doing and have thus developed personal, and individual, standards by which to evaluate the results. As seen above, having strong personal opinions on artistic choices seems to be a necessary condition to work in an artistic function in the opera world. This might also be an explanation for the fact that all the interviewed managers with artistic profile, who are all responsible for artistic choices, see self-opinion as fundamental. For managers with an administrative profile working in a purely administrative function (e.g. the finance chief) this is not the case, since they are not responsible for any artistic decisions. In this case it is legitimate to embrace the opinions of the artistic staff in order to form one's own judgment on artistic matters.

The evaluators of performance related to reception (peers, audience and press) are slightly less relevant for the managers with technical profile. In practice the technical department works for the artistic department, since the technique and decoration they create are used by the artistic teams for the individual productions. In this sense, the natural recipients of the work of the technical managers and their departments - what I call, according to my definitions at the beginning of this section, substantively relevant evaluators of performance - are inside (artistic teams) rather than outside the organization (audience etc.). This explains why the frame of reference of the technical managers is centered in the internal organization.

Concerning the dimensions of performance, the only slight difference between the three groups of managers that is worth mentioning here relates to the substantive relevance of the social dimension of performance. It is interesting to note that the artistic managers are the only ones who unanimously assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance, underpinning the impression that audience development processes and outreach efforts are naturally embedded in the artistic work of the organization.

5.4.2.4. Influence of NPM-oriented accountability on managers' judgments about artistic performance

In order to explore the extent to which procedures of evaluation based on NPM-oriented forms of accountability are embodied in the substantive evaluation of artistic performance of the investigated organization, I focus on the relation between the procedural and substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to those evaluators and dimensions of performance that, according to official documents, have a central role in procedures imposed by funding and regulatory bodies. Earlier in this section I have recalled the working definitions of substantively relevant evaluators and dimensions of performance given in the analytical framework. Here it is convenient to recall also the working definitions of procedurally relevant evaluators and dimensions of performance given in the analytical framework:

procedurally relevant evaluators of performance are *(groups of) persons a manager has the duty to work for and/or to inform about (the results of) his own work and/or the work of the organization according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems* and/or *(groups of) persons whose judgments about (the results of) the manager's work*

and/or the work of the organization have a statutory role according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems;

procedurally relevant dimensions of performance are *dimensions a manager has the duty to take into account according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems in order to give and receive account of the value created by himself and by the organization.*

The procedures of evaluation imposed on the organization by funding and regulatory bodies are the annual discharging of accountability to the ministry for education, culture and science through reports which are explained personally by the managing director to the ministry representatives at regular meetings, and the external evaluation procedure which takes place once in a subsidy term (4 years for cultural organizations of national relevance).[47] Due to the much lower frequency of the external evaluation procedure compared with the annual discharging of accountability, I limit my exploration to those evaluators and dimensions that are central in both procedures. These are respectively, audience and government, and the social and financial dimensions of performance.

With respect to the two evaluators of performance, the government and, more specifically, the ministry for education, culture, and science, is the evaluator to which the organization has to give account annually for its work and, in particular, for the use of the government's subsidy. The government is also the one that commissions the external evaluation procedure in order to gain insights into the way in which the organization fulfills the tasks for which it is funded. The final report of the international commission in charge of the external evaluation is used by the ministry, together with additional documents, to make the next subsidy decision. Both in the annual discharging of accountability and in the external evaluation procedure, the audience are the ones that have to be served by the work of the organization. In particular, the organization has to offer a fixed number of productions or other initiatives (e.g. courses, introductions, workshops) purposively programmed for those segments of the audience that, according to the ministry, are not sufficiently reached by the traditional offering of the organization. The audience are part of that community which the organization has to serve in order to legitimate its place in society, and for which a specific outreach vision has to be developed and consistent outreach activities have to be programmed.

With respect to the two dimensions of performance, accountability to the ministry for education, culture, and science has to be discharged for the use of the granted subsidy, and this is done through the financial information which is commonly contained in annual reports. In the external evaluation procedure explicit criteria are formulated to evaluate the financial dimension of performance. These are: financial health (solvency, liquidity, reserves); cost coverage through income; efficiency (making good use of subsidies); cultural entrepreneurship. Concerning the social dimension of performance, the organization is held accountable by the ministry for education, culture, and science for the offering of a certain number of activities to certain segments of the audience. Consequently, information is required about how many activities of a certain type have been offered, and how many visitors have attended that certain type of activities. For qualitative aspects there is little room in the direction report. In the external evaluation procedures different criteria are formulated to evaluate the social dimension of performance. These are: position in the cultural establishment; role in the community; output in numbers of activities and audience numbers per geographic area; clear

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[47] Details of these activities are shown in Appendix 2.

policy and vision on audience outreach; presence in media; education activities; impact on amateur art practice, artistic training and culture education.

From the analysis of the procedural and/or substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to the different evaluators of performance,[48] it emerges that only a minority of the managers assign procedural relevance to the government (7 out of 17), and that even fewer assign substantive relevance to the government (2 out of 17). Despite the time-consuming procedures of evaluations it imposes, the government does not succeed in becoming seen as a natural evaluator of performance. It even fails to be seen as a procedurally relevant one. The low procedural relevance of the government may be linked to the skepticism emerged from the interviews about the usefulness of the accountability procedures and of the external evaluation procedure in actually influencing funding decisions. For instance, the managing director, who has in principle no aversion to the external evaluation procedures, thinks that subsidy decisions are made by the government and their representatives before even receiving the results of those evaluation procedures.

The audience is assigned procedural relevance by 9 out of the 17 interviewed managers. The high importance of the audience, both while discharging accountability and within the external evaluation procedure, is thus recognized by the majority of the interviewed managers. Nevertheless, the managers who assign substantive relevance to the audience are even more: 14 out of 17. If a procedure influences the substantive judgment of a manager, and consequently the substantive relevance assigned by the manager to an evaluator or dimension of performance, it is unlikely (though not impossible) that the manager does not also give procedural relevance to that evaluator or dimension. In fact, specific questions in the interviews addressed the procedures of evaluation. For all the interviewed managers, the influence of a procedure on their substantive judgments would imply that at least as many managers assign procedural relevance to a certain evaluator or dimension of performance as the number of managers that assign substantive relevance to that evaluator or dimension. The managers assigning substantive relevance to the audience are significantly more than those assigning it procedural relevance. Rather than a sign of the embodiment of NPM-oriented forms of accountability in the substantive evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization, the relation between procedural and substantive relevance of the audience for the evaluation of artistic performance seems to point to the insufficient procedural coverage of the role of the audience as a substantively relevant evaluator of the work of the organization. In fact, none of the procedures imposed on the organization by funding and regulatory bodies includes the opinions of the audience as an evaluation criterion.

As the audience is the main recipient of the audience development efforts of the organization, it is a consistent finding that the relation between procedural and substantive evaluation of the social dimension of performance (the one related to the audience development process) is similar to that relation with respect to the audience as an evaluator of performance. 8 out of 17 managers assign procedural relevance to the social dimension of performance, while 15 out 17 assign it substantive relevance. As shown in section 5.4.2.3 the social dimension of performance emerges as even more closely related to artistic success from the interviews with the managers with artistic profile than from the interviews with the managers with administrative profile. Since the managers with administrative profile are the ones that directly face the procedures of evaluation and the regulatory

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[48] See Appendix 3 for the complete analysis.

pressure for more accountability, one would expect that they would be more influenced by procedures than the artistic and the technical managers. However, the opposite emerges from the case study. Rather than the result of the intrusion of NPM-oriented accountability forms in the managers' substantive evaluation of artistic performance, the interviews seem to confirm the impression that commitment to the community in which the organization operates is a genuine attitude of the managers of the organization. To the question, whose opinion is the most important for a successful opera, the artistic director answered:

> Our audience. If the press is enthusiastic but our audience isn't, that's a flop for me. The audience, or at least a high percentage of our audience, has to understand our work well and enjoy it. That's the basis! (Artistic director)

Both procedural and substantive relevance are assigned by the majority of the interviewed managers only to the financial dimension of performance. 11 out of the 17 interviewed managers assign procedural relevance to the financial dimension of performance, 10 out of the 17 assign it substantive relevance. The procedural relevance reflects the centrality of the financial dimension of performance in discharging accountability and in the external evaluation procedure. The substantive relevance reflects the essential role of financial considerations in setting the limits for programming choices and technical decisions concerning the individual productions. Nevertheless, from the analysis of the interviews no direct link emerges between the central role of the financial dimension in the procedures of evaluation imposed by regulatory and funding bodies and its substantive relevance. Rather, an enduring trend in cutting the budget for culture seems to have created an embedded consciousness of the importance of being financially health. The artistic staff is becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that subsidies are no longer automatic. As a result, financial considerations become a genuine concern for the managers of the organization.

To sum up, based on an exploration of the relationship between the procedural and substantive relevance of those evaluators and dimensions of performance that, according to official documents, have a central role in the procedures of evaluation imposed by regulatory and funding bodies, it does not seem that specific NPM-oriented procedures of evaluation influence the way in which the interviewed managers judge artistic performance. It is the financial consciousness propagated by NPM-oriented public policies in general, which seems to influence the judgments of the managers. However, this is only a tentative conclusion. Only through a longitudinal study would it be possible to draw more robust conclusions about the influence of NPM-oriented forms of accountability on the managers' judgments.

5.4.3. Summary

The managers of the investigated organization as well as their subordinates are involved in a large and varied amount of activities in which there is an exchange of information about the organization's performance. Many of these activities are procedurally anchored in the work of the organization, according to either internal management systems (e.g. regular meetings with the supervisory board, general management meetings, production-related meetings, annual press conferences) or rules imposed by external regulatory and financing bodies (e.g. meetings with the minister, external evaluation procedures, sector analyses, annual reports). In addition, there are other activities that are not procedurally anchored in the work of the organization, but are naturally embedded in its artistic work (e.g. production-related ad hoc conversations and observations).

Through these activities the managers of the organization have the opportunity to make sense of different dimensions of performance, and of the opinions and expectations of different evaluators.

For the substantive evaluation of the artistic performance the interviewed managers share a common frame of reference in which the evaluators and dimensions that are central are closely related to the core artistic processes of the organization: opera creation (programming, production, reception) and opera distribution (audience development). Evaluators and dimensions that are related to the supporting processes of the organization (financial and organization management) are largely absent from the common frame of reference of the interviewed managers. The frame of reference stresses the distinction between core and supporting processes. In view of the artistic-mission-related objectives of publicly funded arts organizations (see Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010), this distinction is presumably common in other publicly funded opera companies. The common frame of reference of the interviewed managers seems to originate in the nature of work processes in opera rather than in the individual profile of the interviewed managers or in the general context of growing regulatory accountability in which the investigated organization is located, or in a unique organizational culture.

On the one hand, no major differences emerge between the three groups of managers (administrative, artistic, technical) with respect to the relevance given to the opinions and expectations of the various evaluators and to the different dimensions of performance. On the other hand, there seems to be no intrusion of NPM-oriented forms of accountability in the managers' judgment of artistic performance, neither with respect to financial accountability, nor to accountability for audience development and outreach activities. The substantive relevance assigned by some managers to the financial dimension of performance seems a result of the enduring trend of budget cuts for culture rather than of the use of financial indicators in the external evaluation procedures. The staff is becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that subsidies are no longer automatic. As a result, financial considerations have become a genuine concern for the managers of the organization. In particular, the growing pressure for more financial accountability, together with the tightening budgets, potentially enhances the natural tensions existing between financial and artistic considerations in decision making about programming and budgeting individual productions. Nevertheless, these tensions do not emerge in the evaluation of the artistic performance.

The substantive relevance given to the opinions and expectations of the audience and to the social dimension of performance, which is related to the audience development process, seems to be a natural concern of the artistic staff, including the artistic managers. Audience development and outreach considerations emerge as genuinely embedded in the artistic work of the organization. Although it cannot be excluded that this might be a consequence of the growing pressure for publicly funded arts organizations to take their social role more seriously, there is no evidence for this assumption in the case study. In fact, the social dimension of performance emerges from the interviews with the managers with artistic profile, more than from the interviews with the managers with administrative profile, as closely related to the artistic dimension of performance. On the one hand, artistic managers should in principle be more resistant to the intrusion of non-artistic considerations in their frame of reference. On the other hand, administrative managers are in principle more exposed to the intrusion of non-artistic and, especially, commercial and market-related considerations into their frame of reference because of their largely non-artistic background, and, moreover, because they are the ones who are usually personally involved, on behalf of the

organization, in discharging accountability through various procedures of evaluation. Consequently, they should know better than the artistic and technical managers what the statutory and regulatory bodies expect. If there were an intrusion, then it would be likely that more administrative managers (than artistic managers) would assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance. From the case study, the opposite emerges.

A possible explanation for the homogeneous response of the three groups of managers (administrative, artistic, technical) might be the fact that, at the time of the interviews, most interviewed managers had been working together in the organization for a very long time, often in the same position (see table 5.1), and thus they might have developed their own organization's frame of reference. Nevertheless, the clear divide in relevance between the core artistic processes (opera creation and distribution) and the supporting processes (financial and organizational management), which characterizes the frame of reference of the interviewed managers, as mentioned above, is probably not peculiar to the investigated organization, but also applies in publicly funded opera companies more generally. The homogeneous response of the three groups of managers seems thus to be informed by a frame of reference that may be potentially shared by managers of publicly funded opera companies rather than only by the managers of the investigated organization.

The frame of reference of the interviewed managers for the evaluation of the artistic performance of their organization clarifies the role, and especially the relevance, of procedures and other activities of evaluation within the varied practice of evaluation of the investigated organization. On the one hand, the dimensions of performance relating to the organization's supporting processes (financial and organization management) are extensively covered through procedures of evaluation, both internal (meetings with the supervisory board, general management meetings and production-related meetings, such as the opera evaluation and the technical evaluation, financial reporting) and external (meetings with the minister, external evaluation procedures, annual reports). Nevertheless, these dimensions are not very influential in the managers' judgment about the artistic performance of their organization. Consistent with these findings, the opinions and expectations of those evaluators (such as the government, cultural council, auditors/inspectors, sponsors, donors, supervisory board) who are mainly involved in the supporting processes, but not directly involved in the artistic processes, do not influence the managers' judgment about the artistic performance of the organization. On the other hand, the dimensions of performance relating to the core artistic processes of the organization (artistic creation - including programming, production and reception - and artistic distribution - including audience development) are hardly (or only partially) covered by procedures of evaluation and left largely to activities which are not procedurally relevant, but instead naturally anchored in the artistic work of the organization, such as ad hoc conversations and observations. These dimensions are very influential in the managers' judgment about the artistic performance of the organization.

It is not surprising that information relating to the process of artistic creation influences the managers' judgment about the artistic performance of the organization. But it is surprising that information relating to the process of artistic distribution influences the managers' judgment about artistic performance, especially considering the recurring claims over the last 20 years about performing arts organizations not caring for their audiences; claims that have become institutionalized in the cultural policies of many Western countries. The case study shows that the

managers of the organization do care for their audiences. The opinions and expectations of those evaluators (direction, staff and oneself, press, audience, peers) who are involved in the artistic creation and distribution processes influence quite considerably the managers' judgment about the artistic performance of the organization.

In general, the impression arises that existing procedures largely ignore the managers' frames of reference. For instance, the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance (*programming*, *production* and *reception*) are largely absent from both the external and internal procedures of evaluation. This raises doubts about the adequacy of these procedures for evaluating the artistic performance of the organization. In addition, the managers of the organization are skeptical about the usefulness of the procedures of evaluation imposed by regulatory and funding bodies in evaluating the financial dimension of performance. They doubt that fulfilling financial performance agreements really influences subsidy decisions. Internal procedures of evaluation, despite their sometimes misleading names, as in the case of the 'opera evaluation meetings', are not really aimed at evaluating the qualitative artistic aspects of a production, but rather the organizational ones. The way in which the organizational aspects are discussed in these meetings is useful for the coordination of people and processes and for the evaluation of the cultural fit between external production and artistic teams on the one hand, and the permanent staff of the organization on the other hand. These meetings, though largely irrelevant for the managers' judgment about artistic performance, especially with respect to the sub-dimension *reception*, are relevant for the evaluation of the financial and, above all, the organizational dimension of performance. The substantive evaluation of the artistic dimension of performance and of the qualitative aspects of the social dimension of performance is based mainly on a process of sense-making of those dimensions of performance, and of the opinions and expectations of those evaluators of performance, that are hardly represented in any procedures of evaluation but that are largely represented in the non-procedural activities of evaluation which are embedded in the daily work of the managers of the organization.

The gap between procedures of evaluation and substantive evaluation becomes clear by looking at the evaluation of the experience of a performance. This is a main category of the sub-dimension *reception* and is central to the mission of the organization, as set out in its 2011 annual report with respect to the education and participation activities:

> In addition to their instructive or informative function, all projects emphasize the aspect of 'the experience': active participation or attendance at a performance is certainly the best way to engage people with an art form. (Annual report 2011)

While 'the experience' is considered here instrumental to the success of the audience development and outreach efforts of the organization, its nature is not evaluated through either internal or external procedures. This might suggest that the managers of the organization do not evaluate 'the experience' of the audience at a performance. But this is not true. The managers of the organization know how to evaluate it, as this quote from the interview with the managing director testifies:

> A couple of time I've got that feeling in the theatre, as if there was the highest concentration and everybody had to be touched, maybe in a different way, but definitely touched. Sometimes you really have the feeling that there is an interaction between the stage, the orchestra pit and the hall. And that you know it for sure: everybody is enjoying it. (Managing director)

While the external procedures of evaluation have a mainly ceremonial status; while the internal procedures of evaluation are instrumental to the smooth running of the organization and its finances; the substantive evaluation of the artistic performance and, at least what concerns the more qualitative aspects, the substantive evaluation of the audience development and outreach efforts are organic in nature. In general, while quantitative information, e.g. management accounting information, is fundamental in evaluating and ensuring the stability of supporting processes, the information used to evaluate the core processes is mostly qualitative, unwritten and tacit, as also the chief dramaturge confirms:

> The problem is that you obviously [...] can measure things based on sales numbers, percentages, box office. And people write, but they mostly write about negative aspects rather than about positive ones. Thus, if something is fine than you'll get less to hear than when things go wrong [...] But I think, personally, I get more if someone comes to me after a reading or an introduction and says: 'Hey, you've told it so well, and now I understand this piece better' or anything similar. This is also success, a sort of success that you cannot measure, maybe a little part of the whole but an influential one. (Chief dramaturge)

In general, procedures of evaluation inspired by NPM-oriented forms of accountability seem not to have influenced the way the managers of the organization form their judgments about artistic performance. The implications of these findings for the study of performance evaluation and accountability relationships in the arts sector are discussed in the next section.

5.5. Discussion

The gap between procedures of evaluation and substantive evaluation of artistic performance which emerged from the case study shows the necessity of looking beyond procedures in order to understand the practice of evaluation in organizations. This has immediate echoes of Roberts and Scapens' seminal article "Accounting Systems and Systems of Accountability: Understanding Accounting Practices in Their Organisational Contexts" (1985):

> Understanding accounting practices in their organizational contexts requires more than a technical description of accounting information systems as they are conceived and designed in abstract. (Roberts and Scapens 1985, 443)

Roberts and Scapens call accounting systems the abstract, designed bodies of accounting rules and resources; and systems of accountability the way in which the accounting systems are embodied in the practice of different organizational actors at different times under different circumstances (1985). In particular, they suggest shifting the focus of accounting research from the accounting systems to the systems of accountability in order to get an integral understanding of the practice of accounting in its organizational context, where the "technical and interpersonal aspects of accounting systems" (Roberts and Scapens 1985, 443) are analyzed in their mutual interplay and not artificially separated from each other. They consequently define accountability broadly and inclusively as "the giving and demanding of reasons for conduct" (Robert and Scapens 1985, 447).

Roberts and Scapens' broad and inclusive idea of accounting research and of accountability supports an integral understanding of the practice of evaluation of artistic performance in the publicly funded opera company that I have investigated. In particular, it supports an explorative discussion of what

this practice says about accountability relationships in the arts sector. With respect to the practice of evaluation of artistic performance, the role of accounting systems in the investigated organization is very limited. Nevertheless, a complex and diverse system of accountability seems able to focus the attention of the managers of the organization on those dimensions of performance, and on the opinions and expectations of those evaluators, that really count in the substantive evaluation of artistic performance; that is, in the managers' actual judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. Paraphrasing Roberts and Scapens, in the investigated organization a system of evaluation is in use, and it includes many more activities of evaluation than the ones included in the evaluation systems (i.e. the procedures of evaluation). It is particularly through the investigation of the non-procedural activities of evaluation and of their relevance for the substantive evaluation of artistic performance that the core of evaluation emerges, offering insights into the actual relationships of accountability and into the nature of the work of the organization.

For a systematic discussion of the insights emerging from the case study and their comparison with the accounting literature on performing arts that informed the analytical framework and with other related accounting literature on arts and cultural organizations, I follow Zan's definition of accountability relationships:

> To speak of accountability presupposes that someone is called upon to be accountable for something to someone else. There are therefore two premises, one which is informative (the information that allows some kind of representations of something), the other organizational-institutional regarding governance, the identification of that 'someone' who will take responsibility for managing 'something'. (Zan 2006, 6-7)

Consequently, I begin by discussing what the findings of the case study say about the someone, the something, and the someone else within the accountability relationships. Then I go on by discussing what the findings of the case study say about the two premises formulated by Zan: the informative and the organizational-institutional premise. By doing this, I can elaborate on what the practice of evaluation of the investigated organization says about accountability relationships in the organization self. I finish by discussing the implications for research on different forms of accountability in organizations. By doing this, I can elaborate on what the practice of evaluation and the accountability relationships in the investigated organization say about accountability relationships in the arts sector in general.

5.5.1. Relationships of accountability
5.5.1.1. Someone

With respect to "that someone [who] is called upon to be accountable" (Zan 2006, 6-7), the findings of the case study show a different picture than the one offered by the accounting literature on performing arts. While this literature highlights the different rationalities of the administrative, artistic, and technical staff of performing arts organizations (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Mariani and Zan 2011), and the different meanings of performance to which these different rationalities may lead (Mariani and Zan 2011), the managers of the investigated organization share a common frame of reference for the evaluation of the artistic performance of their organization.[49] This frame of reference seems independent of the specific rationality of the group the managers

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[49] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendices 3 and 4.

belong to (administrative, artistic, or technical). It rather seems to depend on the specific rationality of the organization the managers work for, what I will call 'opera rationality' in the remainder of this paper. Even the slight differences between the frame of reference of the three groups of managers confirm, rather than refute, this finding. For instance, the relevance of one's own opinion for the judgment about the artistic value created by the organization is in general lower for the managers with administrative profile than for the managers with artistic or technical profile. While the managers with artistic or technical profile are directly involved in the creation of opera and are thus makers of the opera rationality, the managers with administrative profile are not responsible for artistic processes and are thus adopters of the opera rationality. Rather than relying on their own non-expert opinion to form a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization, they rely on the expert opinions of the artistic staff. By doing so the administrative managers embrace the opera rationality which, at least with respect to the evaluation of artistic performance, dominates the administrative rationality.

This is in line with what Hooper et al. (2005) found in New Zealand's museums: accountants working in those museums seemed to share a museum-field rationality, rather than an accounting-field rationality. Similarly, in my case study the administrative managers of the organization, including the finance chief - who is a chartered accountant - share the same frame of reference for the evaluation of artistic performance as the artistic and the technical managers. Rather than speaking separately of administrative, artistic and technical managers of the opera company, at least with respect to the way the managers evaluate the artistic processes and results, speaking of 'opera managers' in general better suits the reality of the organization that I have investigated.

Nevertheless, with respect to other managerial processes (e.g. decision making, budgeting, etc.), there are also signals of potential tensions between the different groups of managers.[50] These managerial processes have not been a specific object of investigation in my case study and I can thus draw no conclusions about them. Existing accounting research on performing arts organizations, which focuses on the role of different rationalities in those processes, is scarce and shows contradictory results. While Christiansen and Skærbæk (1997) show that the different rationalities are in conflict with each other during the implementation of a budgeting system, Amans et al. (2015) show that the different rationalities "can be connected through budgeting" (37). Further research should try to explore the relation between the different rationalities in all the different processes characterizing performing arts organizations. It is plausible that this relation varies with the different processes of the organization. My findings clarify that in the artistic processes an opera rationality dominates the other ones.

5.5.1.2. Something

With respect to that something for which "someone is called upon to be accountable" (Zan 2006, 6-7), by combining a broad and inclusive view of the meaning of performance with an in-depth analysis of the relevance of the different dimensions of performance for the substantive evaluation of artistic performance, three main aspects of the nature of work in the investigated organization emerged: first, a clear distinction between core and supporting processes; second, the role of reception within the opera creation processes; third, the role of audience development as a core artistic process together with the opera creation processes.

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[50] See section 5.4.3 and Appendix 4.

Opera creation (programming, production and reception) and distribution (audience development) are the core artistic processes of the organization, the ones for which the managers feel accountable to those stakeholders for whom the organization creates and distributes opera productions. Financial and organization management are the supporting processes, the ones for which the managers are accountable to those stakeholders by whom the financial and organizational structure of the organization is made possible.[51] The managers talk about what they can do with certain resources, but they do not usually talk in financial terms about coordinating and giving direction to their work. Furthermore, they do not talk about what it means financially to do certain things. Instead, they look at financial resources rather than financial results, and thus feel less accountable for financial results than they do for artistic and outreach results. If there is a felt accountability for financial aspects, this relates to the financial input rather than the financial output.

These findings support the call in the accounting literature for an extension of the meaning and scope of accountability in the arts and cultural sector beyond financial accountability, and specifically to include mission-related objectives (Carnegie and Wolnizer 1996; Rentschler and Potter 1996; Zan 2002). Only by doing so can the evaluation of the overall performance of arts and cultural organizations become meaningful (Rentschler and Potter 1996), so that the managers of these organizations are held procedurally accountable for those dimensions of performance for which they also feel substantively accountable. If the government intends to make financial accountability central in the evaluation, and even dominant over the accountability for artistic production and distribution, as recent cultural policy developments might suggest, two implications should be seriously considered. First, the government should seriously consider the ethical implications of this choice (Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011). Is it really desirable to shift financial management from the supporting to the core processes in arts and cultural organizations? What consequences might this shift have for the arts and cultural sector in general in the long-term? Second, individual organizations and the sector in general might - and hopefully would - exhibit strong and effective resistance to such a substantive shift (Hooper et al. 2005).

Amongst the core artistic processes of the organization (opera creation and distribution), three sub-processes characterize the opera creation process: programming, production, reception.[52] While programming and production have been the object of accounting research (see for instance Mariani and Zan 2011 and Nørreklit 2011), reception has not, apart from Carnagie and Wolnizer's invitation to consider the quality of the experience of museum visitors as the final indicator of organizational performance (1996). In the arts management literature, reception is considered as an integral part of artistic creation, but mainly from a marketing perspective. Reception is not studied from the perspective of the managers who have to deal with the reception process, but from the perspective of the audience who are the subjects of the reception process. In particular, those arts marketing scholars whose work is influenced by pragmatic aesthetics and focused on theatre and performing arts, are interested in the reception process (see for instance Boorsma 2006). Reception is thus seen as a marketing, rather than a management issue. As a management issue, reception makes an entry in the arts management literature only in relation to performance evaluation. Since the outcome of the reception process, that is, the artistic experience of the different recipients, is considered a core

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[51] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendices 3 and 4.
[52] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendix 3.

value produced by arts organizations, this needs to be evaluated in order to conduct a meaningful evaluation of the organization's performance (Boorsma and Chiaravalloti 2010).

While it seems obvious that artistic creation is felt by the managers of the investigated publicly funded opera company as a core artistic process of their organization, the same cannot be said with respect to artistic distribution, which includes the audience development and outreach efforts of the organization. As Zan (2006) shows summing up an extensive literature review, there is much skepticism in the academic literature about the compatibility of artistic integrity and market-driven approaches to the management of arts and cultural organizations. Andreasen (1985) earlier, and Lee (2005) later, speak about an "orientational dilemma" between artistic autonomy and customer orientation, which no arts marketing approach has really been able to solve (Lee 2005). However, similar to what Zan (2002) shows in the case of Pompeii, where the interests of the museum visitors overlap with the interests of the researchers, my case study shows that searching for audiences is not in contradiction with the nature of an opera company. In the investigated organization, the establishment of a specific artistic profile is based on the impact that individual productions, seasons and overarching cycles have on the professional field, the media, and the general audience. While challenging the audience is an essential component of the artistic profile of the investigated organization, this profile can only be successfully established if the audience responds and accepts the challenge. In other words, if the organization reaches out to its audience.[53]

The two supporting processes of the organization (financial and organization management) are considered not only as constrainers, but also as enablers of the core processes.[54] Both financial and organization management not only set boundaries, but ensure that, within those boundaries, all possible support is given to the core processes. While this might sound obvious with respect to organization management, it is not so obvious with respect to financial management. This finding contradicts the assumption that publicly funded arts and cultural organizations have a negative attitude towards financial management (see again Zan 2006 for a review of the discussion of the colonization of an economic discourse in the cultural sector). As such, this finding points to the positive dialogue between an artistic-musical rationality and a business-managerial rationality found by Zan (1998) at the Imola Academy. Sound financial management, which tries not to be intrusive in the core artistic processes of the organization, and especially in the artistic creation, through a clear separation of responsibilities and of activities of evaluation, is seen as an important enabler of the artistic work of the organization. However, the general trend of cuts in the budgets for arts and cultural organizations is seen as a constrainer of the artistic work of the organization and as a threat which could amplify conflicts between different groups of staff within the organization, especially between the "operating core" and the "support staff" (Chong 2010, 159).[55]

5.5.1.3. Someone else

The case study enriches the understanding of who that someone else is, to whom the someone is held accountable. In particular, in the investigated organization a clear divide emerges between that someone else to whom the managers of the organization are accountable, and that someone else to

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[53] See section 5.4.2 and appendices 3 and 4.
[54] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendix 4.
[55] See section 5.4.3 and Appendix 4.

whom the managers of the organization feel accountable.[56] The only someone else to whom the managers of the organization are and feel accountable at the same time, is the direction. The artistic and the managing director, who form the direction, are the official superiors of all the interviewed managers - except for the chief conductor and the orchestra general manager, who are formally members of the orchestra organization. It is thus not surprising that most managers are accountable to the direction. The high status of the two directors, and especially of the artistic director, within the opera world might explain the felt accountability to them. The artistic director can be considered as a higher peer of the artistic staff of the organization, and someone whose opinion substantively influences the way in which the members of the artistic staff look at their own contribution to the artistic performance of the organization. Another possible explanation might be found in their management style. This aspect was not within the purpose of the case study, but is indirectly suggested by Nørreklit (2011). She shows how the former artistic director of the Royal Danish Opera, Kasper Olten, succeeded in binding the organization's objectives to "the individuality of each of the players involved in the production of the opera" (285) by "speaking to the individual's innermost feelings and abilities" (281), rather than by using sophisticated management systems. Only by doing this can it be ensured that the staff feel responsible, and thus, in broader sense, accountable, for "the realization of the opera project", where a "central aspect [is] that everybody works together and culminates at the same time" (Nørreklit 2011, 280).

By speaking of Olten's "caring attitude towards the other person" and towards the "real people's life-world" (282), Nørreklit implicitly contrasted Olten's life-world based management style and the system-world management style based on "objective, rational and universal methodical approaches, which may result in a paradoxical kind of procedural rationality" (274). In the organization investigated during my case study, the "procedural rationality" is paradoxical in so far as it gives a fundamental role in accountability relationships to two stakeholders, the supervisory board and government, that are substantively ignored by the managers of the organization. They are especially ignored with respect to the accountability for artistic performance, although this is the core value created by the organization and an explicit evaluation criterion in the external evaluation procedures favored by the government.[57] At the same time, other stakeholders to whom the managers of the organization feel accountable are largely ignored by procedures. These are, internally, oneself and the organization's staff in general, and, externally, peers, press, and audience.[58]

These findings add to Sundström's (2011) interpretation of the role of distance in relationships of accountability in performing arts organizations:

> The greater the distance between provider and user of accounting information, the less trust. (Sundström 2011, 274)

By looking broadly and inclusively at the systems of evaluation and not only at the evaluation systems in the organization that I have investigated, I show that trust not only refers to the ability of certain stakeholders to interpret accounting information correctly, as is the case in Sundström's research (2011). In the organization that I have investigated trust seems to refer to the stakeholders'

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[56] See section 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 3.
[57] See section 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 3.
[58] See sections 5.4.2.3 and 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 3.

legitimate role as evaluators of the artistic performance of the organization. With respect to the concept of distance, my findings overlap with Sundström's:

> [...] the distance to information users is not merely constituted by physical space but derives from the knowledge and understanding of the referred context. (Sundström 2011, 275)

In my case study, the stakeholders that are close to, and know, the artistic processes, because they are personally involved in them as producers (oneself, staff, direction) or recipients (peers, press, and audience), are consequently considered legitimate evaluators of the artistic performance of the organization. In particular, each recipient makes a personal effort to get a direct understanding of the artistic work of the organization. The organization as a whole is creating and distributing opera for them and feels thus both responsible and, in a broader sense, accountable to them. Those stakeholders that are distant from, and do not know, the artistic processes, because they are not personally involved in them (e.g. the government whose judgment is based on an evaluation conducted either by the cultural council or by the external evaluation commission), are considered illegitimate evaluators of the artistic performance of the organization. From the perspective of the interviewed managers, these stakeholders do not even seem interested in getting a direct understanding of the artistic work of the organization.[59]

That oneself, staff in general and direction in particular, as well as peers and press, would be considered legitimate evaluators of the artistic performance of the organization is not surprising. However, that audience would be given such an important role as evaluator by the managers of the organization is neither obvious nor anticipated in the accounting literature on arts and cultural organizations. Only Nørreklit offers a hint in this direction, when she incisively sums up how the role of the audience as recipient is intertwined with the role of the artists as producers:

> Caring for the audience is there in the artistic project, and the highest instance for all concerned is caring for operatic art. (Nørreklit 2011, 285)

In the arts management literature Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010) recognize a central role of the audience as a key stakeholder for whom arts organizations create artistic value. Customers are one of the three key stakeholders - together with community and professional field - for whom arts organizations create artistic value, this being the primary objective of arts organizations. Boorsma and Chiaravalloti thus make the organization responsible to the audience and accountable for the artistic value created for them. From my case study it emerges that the investigated organization feels accountable to the audience, but is not held procedurally accountable for the value created for the audience in a way that allows the organization to explain the meaning and richness of the felt accountability.

5.5.2. The premises of accountability
5.5.2.1. The informative premise

The first of the two premises formulated by Zan (2006) relates to the necessity of exchanging information that is able to represent the dimensions of performance for which the managers are accountable. The inadequacy of numerical information to represent artistic performance as assumed

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[59] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendix 3.

in the literature (Mariani and Zan 2011; Sundström 2011; Nørreklit 2011) is confirmed through my case study. What the findings of the case study add to this literature is a better understanding of the nature of the information evaluated. The managers of the organization form their judgments about the artistic value created by the organization based on information that is not only non-numerical, but also non-verbal. Seeing, hearing, feeling are the main sources of information. This information often remains tacit and is not even necessarily collected and exchanged through verbal communication - let alone in written form.[60]

In addition, the case study shows that this sort of information is also the one used to evaluate the qualitative aspects of the social dimension of performance (e.g. the ability to understand the audience with respect to their threshold of acceptance for innovation and experimentation, or the ability to create and maintain high expectations in the audience).[61] Despite the centrality of audience development and outreach objectives in recent cultural policies, the accountability for the social dimension of performance is discharged to the external stakeholders, for instance to the ministry, through numerical indicators that are not able to cover the richness and the largely qualitative nature of this dimension.[62] A considerable amount of substantive information gets lost through the form of information which is preferred in procedures that are inspired by NPM-oriented forms of accountability: written and, if possible, numerical.

Sundström (2011) shows how the managers of performing arts organizations, in discharging their accountability to the external stakeholders, try to fill the gap between procedural and substantive information by enriching the numerical information of performance with descriptive information of the contexts in which performance is achieved. Instead, my case study shows that the managers, at least internally, seem able to manage well the flow of substantive information about artistic performance, even in the absence of procedures. The impression is that, in the overall system of evaluation used in the investigated organization, no essential information about the artistic performance gets lost through the absence of specific evaluation systems. The same cannot be said about the social dimension of performance. Such substantively relevant, long-term qualitative objectives of the organization's audience development and outreach activities, as having a sustainable connection to the audience of the future, are not only largely absent from the procedures of evaluation. They do not seem to be fully grasped through non-procedural information either. With respect to the evaluation of the social dimension of performance, the system of evaluation in use seems to suffer from the absence of an adequate evaluation system.

5.5.2.2. The organizational-institutional premise

The second of the two premises formulated by Zan (2006) relates to the necessity of making someone responsible for managing something, if that someone has to be held accountable for that something. Making someone accountable for something implies that this someone is able to manage this something.

With respect to the main focus of my research, that is the evaluation of artistic performance, the question is thus, who is responsible and, thus, accountable for artistic processes and results. The

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[60] See section 5.4.2.2 and Appendix 2.
[61] See section 5.4.2 and Appendix 4.
[62] See section 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 2.

three main processes of artistic creation are programming, production and reception.[63] Programming is the main responsibility of the artistic director and he is consequently also accountable for it. The accountability for programming is discharged by showing the program for the next season to the supervisory board.[64] The artistic director is able to manage the programming process, since he has the final word on what productions will be scheduled in the following seasons. The productions that are finally programmed are the result of the programming process. Procedurally, the relationship of accountability within the programming process is thus easily defined.

The relationship of accountability with respect to the production process is more complex, since responsibility is shared by different "players" (Nørreklit 2011). The stage director is responsible for the conception of scenery and acting; the orchestra conductor is responsible for the orchestra performance and, partially, also for conducting soloists and choir; and the production manager is responsible for the quality of the realization of the scenery and for the whole technique involved in the production. Nevertheless, the soloists and the choir are the ones who will finally have to sing and act on stage, and the orchestra musicians are the ones who will have to play under the leading baton of the orchestra conductor. At that point, the stage director has no influence anymore on what happens. As Nørreklit noted with respect to the stage director, who is hierarchically the leader of a production, often together with the orchestra conductor, his success "is basically at the mercy of the other internal players" (2011, 285). The stage director can manage the feelings of the whole team in a way that leads the team to the highest possible emotional commitment during the performance, but eventually there is no guarantee for it. The "other internal players" will finally determine the success of the performance and, consequently, of the director. To some extent, the stage director can thus not be made fully responsible for managing the production process, since its results, that is, the performance on stage, is in the hands, or better, in the voices and sounds, of other players.

Interesting enough, in the investigated organization, the stage director is not held accountable for the production. He is not even present at the opera evaluation meetings, which are organized after the last performance of each production - apart from the case in which the artistic director is also the stage director of that production.[65] The final responsibility for the production is again in the hands of the artistic director, who chooses to program that production and to invite that stage director, together with a specific conductor. By inviting a stage director, the artistic director gives him the necessary trust and freedom (within financial and organizational boundaries) to develop his ideas. If the work of that stage director has not been appreciated, the artistic director will not invite that stage director anymore. However, writing down an evaluation of the artistic ideas of the stage director in the minutes of a meeting, would be like withdrawing the trust that he has been given by the artistic director. The giving of trust is the responsibility of the artistic director, who will implicitly discharge accountability for his choice by inviting again, or not inviting anymore, that stage director. In this way the relationship of accountability seems to work well with respect to the production process. The artistic director is responsible for the invitation, and is consequently held accountable

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[63] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendix 3.
[64] See section 5.4.2.1 and Appendix 2.
[65] See section 5.4.2.1 and Appendix 2.

for it. The stage director is not fully responsible for the result on stage, and is thus not held procedurally accountable for it.

Identifying someone that is responsible for managing the reception process is not only a complex, but is also a controversial issue. To paraphrase Nørreklit (2011), with respect to reception the director and the conductor are at the mercy of external players: audience, peers, press. How can someone be made responsible for managing their reception within a relationship of accountability? And what does managing the reception process mean? While a tentative answer to the first question can be supported by the findings of my case study, an answer to the second question goes beyond the purpose of my research, since it extends into the marketing and, especially, consumer behavior domain. Responsibility and accountability for the reception process within a relationship of accountability might mean, for instance, responsibility and accountability for trying to understand the reception process, by systematizing the rich and varied information exchanged about reception that currently occurs without any procedure. Understanding the reception process would not necessarily mean guiding reception in a certain, desired direction; this is a very controversial issue. It might rather offer more insights into what the recipients see, hear and feel. In other words, it might offer more insights into what the recipients experience. And if the experience is seen as part of the artistic product (Boorsma 2006), understanding the reception process might finally offer additional insights into the artistic creation process in general. In this sense, identifying someone responsible for understanding the reception process seems feasible and would fit with what emerges as a felt relationship of accountability in the investigated organization. On the contrary, identifying someone responsible for the results of the reception process, and thus for controlling and guiding them, for instance through customer satisfaction surveys, might be technically feasible, but would only fit with the sort of relationships of accountability pushed by NPM-inspired cultural policies and not the ones felt by the organization. As such, they would probably be destined to uselessness and irrelevance (see also Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011).

5.5.3. Implications for accountability research

Roberts and Scapens' (1985) broad and inclusive idea of accounting and accountability, in which the focus shifts from accounting systems to systems of accountability, stimulated the development of a rich literature defining, exploring, and understanding different forms of accountability in organizations (Laughlin 1990; Roberts 1991; Sinclair 1995; Laughlin 1996; Roberts 1996; Ezzamel et al. 2007; Messner 2009). It is thus interesting to see whether and to what extent this literature is able to explain the forms of evaluation in use within the different relationships of accountability in which the managers of the investigated organization are involved; and how this literature can help more generally to explore accountability relationships in arts organizations.

For this purpose, I relate the different contributions from the accountability literature to the individual aspects discussed in the previous two sections 5.5.1. ad 5.5.2: first, the someone, the something, and the someone else within the relationships of accountability; second, the informative and the organizational-institutional premises of accountability. This allows me to show how the use of some concepts from organization studies, by complementing the literature on different forms of accountability in organizations, enriches the understanding of the forms of evaluation which emerged in my case study and how it can potentially enrich the understanding of accountability relationships in arts organizations more generally.

Both Roberts (1991; 1996) and Sinclair (1995) focus mainly on the someone, that is, the accountable self and the interplay between the construction of the notion of accountability and the construction of the self. Roberts is mainly interested in the effects of certain forms of accountability on processes of individualization or socialization of the accountable self within the organization. Consequently, he distinguishes between hierarchical - or individualizing - and socializing forms of accountability (1991, 1996). Hierarchical accountability is formal and based on the assumption that accounting is "a neutral set of techniques which passively and objectively record and represent the results of organizational activity" (Roberts 1991, 355). This form of accountability considers producers and processes as purely instrumental to the achievement of objectives such as profit and return on capital (Roberts 1991). Socializing forms of accountability emerge in informal moments and spaces such as after-work parties and office corridors. By sharing and building "common interpretations of ones world of work [...] not only is the official version of organizational reality penetrated and reinterpreted, but also it is the basis for a diffuse set of loyalties and ties, of enmity as well as friendship, that socialize and humanize the experience of work" (Roberts 1991, 362).

The five forms of accountability identified by Sinclair (political, public, managerial, professional, personal) through interviews with fifteen CEO's of Australian public sector agencies refer also to the something and to the someone else within the relationships of accountability. However, Sinclair recognizes that her five forms of accountability leave "much of what was interesting, and problematic, about accountability, unexplained. [...] Within each form there were apparent contradictions and contrasts of stance and language, attitude and affect. These shifts of affect and language seemed to be important to each CEO's construction of their self-identification as accountable" (Sinclair 1995, 223). To understand these contradictions and contrasts, Sinclair distinguishes between a structural and a personal discourse of accountability: "Accountability in the structural discourse is spoken of as the technical property of a role or contract, structure or system. Territories are clear and demarcated, accountabilities uncontested. The language used within this discourse is abstracted, detached and rational. The structural discourse renders accountability, whether political, managerial or some other form, as something the CEO works with and controls towards foreseeable ends. Accountability is unproblematic, able to be 'delivered', demarcated or exacted, independently of personalities, politics, or fate. In contrast, the personal discourse is confidential and anecdotal. In this discourse, accountability is ambiguous, with the potential to be something that is feared or uplifting. Accountability here is about exposure and vulnerability and is very close to the CEO's sense of who she or he is. The personal discourse functions to admit the risks and failures, exposure and invasiveness with which accountability is experienced" (Sinclair 1995, 224). The structural discourse refers thus to procedures of accountability, while the personal discourse refers to their embodiment. Based on the analysis of the structural and personal discourse of accountability of the 15 CEO's she interviewed, with respect to the someone Sinclair concludes that "accountability is not independent of the person occupying a position of responsibility, nor of the context" (1995, 233).

My analysis of the role that the managers' personal profile on the one hand, and the context of growing NPM-oriented accountability on the other hand, have for the meaning that the managers give to artistic performance and its evaluation takes Sinclair's conclusion into account. However, my research eventually shows that the shared form of accountability for artistic performance by the managers of the organization originates in what I called 'opera rationality' rather than in the

personal discourse of the individual managers.[66] To use Roberts' words, I found "common interpretations of ones world of work" with respect to artistic performance (1991, 362). In this sense, the non-procedural forms of evaluation of artistic performance found in the investigated organization[67] lead to that shared frame of reference which Roberts considers the result of socializing forms of accountability. However, more hierarchical forms of evaluation do not seem to be necessarily individualizing. For instance, the dense web of production related meetings has the typical vertical structure of a hierarchical control system.[68] Nevertheless, my impression is that those meetings also help to create a shared interpretation of the organizational reality. First, it is difficult to assess the role of more spontaneous conversations or exchange of information within those procedurally ruled meetings. Second, the dimensions of the organizational reality the managers make sense of through those meetings are mainly the ones related to the supporting processes: finance and organization. It seems as if the nature of the discussed dimensions of performance determine the nature of a substantively relevant form for their evaluation. While the organic nature of the artistic work (see Burns and Stalker 1961) is meaningfully evaluated through an organic form of evaluation (see Chenhall 2003), the more mechanistic nature of the supporting processes (Burns and Stalker 1961) can be better evaluated through a mechanistic form of evaluation (Chenhall 2003).

While Roberts' and Sinclair's main focus is on the someone, Ezzamel et al. (2007) focus both on the something and on the someone else. With respect to the something, in their study of the impact of the implementation of Local Management of Schools in the UK on different discourses of accountability in the British education field, they conclude that, despite the existence of "different dimensions of accountability, discourses of financial accountability were the key rationale for the explanations of conduct, even when informants were discussing seemingly non-financial or 'folk-based' institutions of accountability" (Ezzamel et al. 2007, 150). NPM-oriented oriented forms of accountability, called by Ezzamel et al. "regulatory institutions of accountability", ended up changing the interviewed informants' way of making sense of their own work (2007, 150). The regulatory institutions of accountability "introduced by organizations requirements under recent legislation to legitimate themselves within their field", partially intruded into the folk, or "old" institutions of accountability; that is, the ones "organizational actors [use to] legitimate themselves with each other in the enactment of their everyday activities" (Ezzamel et al. 2007, 150).

The distinction between folk and regulatory forms of accountability implies a clear distinction between a before and an after. The clarity of this distinction is challenged by the findings of my case study. Considering that the dense web of production-related meetings[69] has a vertical structure typical of those hierarchical control systems that characterize NPM-oriented forms of accountability, one might think that this is due to the intrusion of regulatory into folk forms of evaluation in the investigated organization. As Meyer and Rowan explained in their seminal article from 1977, "organizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society" (340). The NPM paradigm is currently one of those "prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work", which might lead to the interpretation of the mechanistic form of evaluation for the supporting processes

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[66] See section 5.4.3 and Appendices 3 and 4.
[67] See section 5.4.2.1 and Appendix 2.
[68] See section 5.4.2.1 and Appendix 2.
[69] See section 5.4.2.1 and Appendix 2.

as the result of an intrusion of regulatory forms of accountability into the folk ones. However, this sort of procedurally structured form of evaluation seems necessary in order to be in control of the strict logistics of the work in the opera:

> In actual fact, our logistics control is very, very strict. If I say just now that Othello will be opening on 12 March 2010 and take on a director and a conductor with that time-frame because that is how it must be if we are to get hold of that particular conductor and that particular director, well then that date cannot be brought forward or postponed by a week. And in five years' time, all the elements of the production must culminate on that particular date. It is no good if the set is finished six months early and fills the stage. That is obvious. It is no good either if the orchestra is not ready until the fifth performance. Everything must culminate on that same day in five years' time. It goes without saying that this requires rather strict logistics control. (Kasper Holten, cited in Nørreklit 2011, 276)

In Ezzamel et al.'s taxonomy this form of evaluation would thus be a folk form of evaluation. Nevertheless, this says far less about the nature of this form of evaluation than the concept "mechanistic" (Burns and Stalker 1971), imported from organizations studies, does. To be meaningful, the evaluation of the supportive processes must reflect the very structured nature of those processes. A mechanistic form of evaluation (Chenhall 2003) helps to evaluate properly the dimensions of performance related to those processes, while the artistic dimension of performance and, largely, the qualitative aspects of the social dimensions of performance, are better evaluated through an organic form of evaluation (Chenhall 2003).

In the case I have investigated, the regulatory forms of accountability, differently than in Ezzamel et al.'s study, do not seem to have intruded into the folk forms of evaluation.[70] This is not only true with respect to the artistic and, largely, the social dimensions of performance, but even with respect to the financial dimension of performance. The consciousness of the financial boundaries seems to derive from the context of budget cutting rather than from the used procedures of financial accountability. To remain within the organization studies vocabulary, the external or, with Ezzamel et al.'s words, regulatory forms of evaluation assume a purely ceremonial role (Meyer and Rowan 1977) in the organization that I have investigated. They consist basically of ticking the boxes, but do not influence the actual work of the organization.

To refer to the someone else, Ezzamel et al. use the expression "'objects' of accountability" (2007, 159). The more intuitive expression "principals" is used by Laughlin (1996) for that someone else to whom the someone - the "agent" - has to account. In particular, Laughlin distinguishes between the "economic principals" and the "'higher principals'". Higher principals can be, for instance, professional bodies or the personal conscience of the individual agent. They represent deeply seated values and principles, "similar to religious beliefs" (Laughlin 1996, 232), that guide agents' work even in the absence of formal controls by means of a "clear hierarchical view about what is important and central and what is more secondary" (Laughlin 1996, 235). As a paradigm case, Laughlin describes the situation of the Church of England, where, in his words, the higher principal, is God: Whatever an economic principal, such as the Diocesan Board of Finance, might want, the clergy is accountable to

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[70] See section 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 4.

the higher principal, God, and "no administrator could dare to impose any alternative 'account' which might conflict with this" (Laughlin 1996, 236).

Laughlin's distinction between economic and higher principals describe very well the clear divide which emerged in my case study between the someone else to whom the managers of the organization are accountable and the someone else to whom the managers of the organization feel accountable, especially with respect to the artistic performance of the organization.[71] The economic principals of the investigated organization are the funders and their representatives, and such statutory control organisms as the supervisory board. The higher principals are all those evaluators of performance who are involved in the artistic creation, from programming, through production, to reception. Even in absence of procedures for the evaluation of the results of those processes, the managers - or the "agents", with Laughlin's words - know exactly how to evaluate them, based on a shared frame of reference that comes from their personal conscience and from the professional field in which the agents operate. However, while Laughlin's main point is that in certain situations, where the conduct required by the wishes of the economic principals clashes with the value system of the higher principals, the demands of the higher principals should have priority and be followed, in the investigated case there is no evidence of clashing wishes. There is rather an irrelevance of the wishes of the economic principals - and not only with respect to the artistic dimension of performance - at least in the way they are spread through external evaluation procedures.[72] The wishes of the higher principals seem not to emerge from a reaction against the wishes of the economic principals, but from the very nature of the artistic processes. Again, the attributes *organic* for the evaluation of the artistic performance, and *ceremonial* for the external procedures of evaluation, seem to describe more accurately the nature of the evaluation forms which have been found in my case study.

With respect to the two premises of accountability, the informative premise remains largely unaddressed in the literature on multiple forms of accountability. This is a natural consequence of the critical focus of this literature, which shifted from the techniques of accounting (including the use of certain sorts of information) to accountability as a social practice (Roberts and Scapens 1985; Roberts 1996). In this context, when this literature discusses the use of accounting information for accountability, it mainly criticizes its use. For instance, Roberts (1991, 359-361) criticizes the apparent objectivity and value neutrality of accounting information and the epistemological paradigm, oriented to the scientific method, it imposes. A similar concern is expressed by Laughlin, who highlights the power of the measurable against the unmeasurable, and "the dangers of spurious surrogate measures for complex goals" (1996, 228). Although it recognizes the use of alternative sources of information, this literature seems not to benefit from an analysis of the nature of such alternative information in order to get a more complete understanding of the systems of accountability used in organizations. In this sense, by largely neglecting the informative premise formulated by Zan (2006), the risk is that this will remain the exclusive domain of mainstream accounting research, which is interested in techniques more than in their organizational and social effects, and which the accounting literature on multiple forms of accountability criticizes.

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[71] See sections 5.4.2.3 and 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 3.
[72] See sections 5.4.2.3 and 5.4.2.4 and Appendices 3 and 4.

Concepts from organization studies could enrich our understanding of the nature of the information used to make sense of artistic performance. The sort of information used for this purpose in the investigated organization is similar to the "fine-grained" information exchanged during production processes in the fashion industry (Uzzi 1997, 42).[73] Fine-grained information is described by Uzzi as proprietary, tacit, detailed but at the same time holistic and not divisible and, consequently, not easily to codify - for instance in numbers or in procedures. This information is exchanged in "embedded relationships" (Uzzi 1997, 45), which are determined by personal and professional ties rather than by contract. The idea of fine-grained information exchanged through embedded relationships seems to capture the nature of the information about the artistic dimensions of performance which is exchanged, in the organization that I have investigated, between the relevant evaluators of performance; that is, the ones who are close to the artistic processes.[74]

Finally, the organizational-institutional premise is explicitly addressed by Messner (2009). He is concerned about the ethical appropriateness of the ever growing demands for someone who is held accountable. The "accountable self [is forced] to account for something which is very difficult or even impossible to justify" (918). As seen in the previous section, this is the case for the results of the reception process in the opera. In particular Messner expresses concerns about the "limits of accountability", not only with respect to the "what" of accountability, but also with respect to the "how" (920). In section 5.5.2.2. I suggested that, while it seems controversial to ask a manager to be responsible for the result of the reception process (the "what"), it might be possible to make him responsible for the understanding of that result (the "how"). Nevertheless, Messner reminds us that it might be difficult, if not impossible, for the accountable self to explain and communicate his understanding of that result in a narrative form (924). This takes us back to the informative premise of accountability:

> Whether an action is grounded in tacit knowledge, in an incalculable decision, or in intuition and impulse, the consequences for accountability are similar. These forms of opacity introduce a limit to what can be accounted for by means of rational argumentation. (Messner 2009, 925)

Although the literature on accountability highlights the difficulties in facing the challenges posed by the informative and organizational-institutional premises formulated by Zan (2006), the investigated organization seems to be able to cope with them successfully. In order to solve the problem of representation of performance with respect to artistic performance, including the potential dominance of accounting and numerical information over the unmeasurable nature of artistic 'accounts', and in order to solve the problem of identification of an accountable self who is responsible for managing the process for which he is made accountable, two forms of loose coupling are applied in the investigated organization. Internally, a loose coupling between different activities of evaluation (Orton and Weick 1990) allows the separation of the relationships of accountability relating to the core processes of artistic creation and distribution from the relationships of accountability relating to the supporting processes: organization and financial management. The two forms of internal activities of evaluation are distinctive but responsive (Orton and Weick 1990). Activities of evaluation relating to different dimensions of performance are separated and left to their natural environment, but interact in the sense that they finally form a complete and functional

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[73] See section 5.4.2.2 and Appendix 2.
[74] See section 5.4.2.3 and Appendix 3.

form of evaluation. Externally, a loose coupling between the organization and its environment (Orton and Weick 1990) separates the rituals of legitimation represented by the ceremonial fulfilling of the accountability requirements of the external evaluation procedures from the actual evaluation within the organization. The internal and external activities of evaluation are distinctive and not responsive; they are fully decoupled (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Internally, the organic evaluation of artistic performance and of the qualitative aspects of social performance are loosely coupled from the mechanistic evaluation of the dimensions of performance related to the two supporting processes - organization and financial management. Externally, the overall system of evaluation of the organization is decoupled from the evaluation system pushed by the NPM-oriented procedures of accountability imposed by the government. The substantive judgments of the organization's managers, not only with respect to the artistic dimension of performance, but with respect to all the dimensions of performance, are hardly influenced by the criteria imposed by NPM-oriented forms of accountability.[75]

Zan's (2000b) assumption of a loosely coupled relationship between procedural and substantive aspects of management against the background of the managerialization of the arts and cultural sector, is not only confirmed, but is also specified here. In particular, the original objective of Roberts and Scapens (1985) to understand accounting systems as a part of more holistic systems of accountability is achieved here by complementing the accountability literature with concepts from organization studies that clearly identify the nature of the different components of the overall system of evaluation of the investigated opera company. Where Roberts (1991; 1996) and Sinclair (1995) focus on the effects of different forms of accountability on the accountable self; where Laughlin (1990; 1996) focuses on the intrinsic necessity to resist imposed forms of accountability; and where Ezzamel et al. (2007) focus on the process of institutionalizing forms of accountability, the concepts of organic, mechanistic and ceremonial used here focus on the very nature of the organization and its processes. By doing this, these concepts are able to describe more accurately the forms of evaluation in the organization that I have investigated than the taxonomies proposed by the accountability literature. As the findings of my case study show, the forms of evaluation used in the investigated organization are strongly linked to the nature of the organization and the processes in opera. Consequently, the concepts of organic, mechanistic and ceremonial bear the potential to contribute substantially to an understanding of accountability relationships also in other organizations of the arts sector.

5.6. Conclusion

This paper has two objectives: to understand how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations actually evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations; and to explore what the practice of evaluation in publicly funded arts organizations says about accountability relationships in the arts sector. The first objective is pursued through the case study of a European publicly funded opera company. The second objective is pursued through analytic generalization of the case study findings from the perspective of the academic discussion on multiple forms of accountability in organizations.

The case study shows how the different groups of managers (administrative, artistic, technical) of a publicly funded opera company evaluate the artistic performance of their organization. This mainly

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[75] See section 5.4.2.4 and Appendix 4.

occurs through a process of intersubjective sense-making of the dimensions of performance, and of the opinions and the expectations of the evaluators of performance that are close to the core artistic processes of the organization: artistic creation and distribution. Opinions and expectations of the evaluators of performance that are distant from the core artistic processes are excluded from the frame of reference of the managers. Dimensions of performance that are not related to the core artistic processes are seen as enablers of the artistic processes but do not influence the judgment of the artistic performance. The frame of reference of the managers stresses a clear divide between the core artistic processes (opera creation and distribution) and the supporting processes (organization and financial management). The frame of reference seems to depend on the nature of opera processes rather than on the individual profile of the managers or on the embodiment of NPM-oriented forms of accountability.

As the frame of reference for the evaluation of artistic performance is related to the nature of the work processes in the investigated organization, concepts from organization studies would seem to explain the forms of evaluation found in the organization better than extant taxonomies of accountability. Artistic performance and the qualitative aspects of the social dimension of performance are largely evaluated through an organic form of evaluation which is naturally embedded in the work of the organization, loosely coupled from other internal procedures of evaluation, and fully decoupled from external procedures of evaluation imposed by funding and regulatory bodies and inspired by NPM-oriented forms of accountability. This organic form of evaluation is largely based on fine-grained information, that is, information that is largely qualitative, mostly unwritten and often tacit. The evaluation of the organizational and financial dimensions of performance is mechanistic and instrumental to the smooth functioning of the work processes of the organization. This is largely based on written information, with an important role for management accounting and quantitative information. Procedures of evaluation imposed by funding and regulatory bodies and inspired by NPM-oriented forms of accountability have a purely ceremonial role in the organization, not only with respect to the evaluation of the artistic performance, as could be expected, but largely also with respect to the social, the organizational, and even the financial dimension of performance.

The analytic generalization of the case study findings from the perspective of the academic literature on different forms of accountability shows that the accountability relationships in the investigated organization work well with respect to both the artistic and the supporting processes, even in cases in which the informational and organizational-institutional premises formulated by Zan are not procedurally provided. This is particularly true for the reception process: no substantively relevant information of performance related to this process is grasped by procedures of evaluation; there is not a 'someone' who can be formally made responsible for managing this process. In fact, the reception process and, consequently, its results are not fully in the hands of the internal players of the organization, but also, and substantially, in the hands - or, better said, in the minds - of external players: peers, audience and press. The way arts organizations deal with the two premises of accountability formulated by Zan emerge as the most controversial and, at the same time, fascinating aspects that need to be further explored in order to gain an understanding of accountability relationships in arts organizations.

My findings contribute to three main bodies of literature. With respect to the arts management literature, I offer a first in-depth analysis of how performing arts organizations actually practice

evaluation, that goes beyond the currently available inventories of procedures used (Turbide and Laurin 2009). With respect to the nascent accounting literature on performing arts organizations (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011), I add a clearer focus on the evaluation of the most controversial aspect of the performance that these organizations are accountable for: the artistic value created for their stakeholders. In addition, in line with recent findings by Amans et al. (2015), I show that the different rationalities coexisting within performing arts organizations do not necessarily conflict with each other, as Christiansen and Skærbæk had suggested (1997). With respect to the literature on accountability, I suggest that the concepts of organic and mechanistic organization (Burns and Stalker 1961) and ceremonial management (Meyer and Rowen 1977) can enrich the existing taxonomies of accountability proposed so far to explain how different systems of accountability coexist and compete in organizations, especially in publicly funded organizations (e.g. Ezzamel et al. 2007) as a consequence of the introduction of NPM-oriented reforms. Finally, the concept of fine-grained information (Uzzi 1997), also coming from organization studies, can help to provide an accurate description of the sort of information used in the evaluation of artistic performance. The use of these concepts from organization studies allows for an extension of the meaning of accountability in the arts and cultural sector beyond the currently dominant financial accountability, and fosters a better understanding of the actual relationships of accountability in arts and cultural organizations (Roberts and Scapens 1985). This is a first step towards an understanding of accountability in arts and cultural organizations that can support a dialogue "with professional concerns that are crucial and distinctive of these kinds of organization" (Zan 2002, 93). Such an understanding is urgently needed in order to prevent the full decoupling of internal evaluation practices and NPM-oriented forms of accountability, as emerged from this case study.

What concerns the avenues for further research, I relate them again to the three main bodies of literature this paper contributes to: arts management, accounting in the arts and cultural sector, and accountability in general. Further research on arts management should embrace the idea of going beyond procedures and investigating the actual practices of arts and cultural organizations. By doing this, arts management research could contribute to management knowledge in general, showing what special forms of management are used, mostly without calling them so, in arts and cultural organizations. Accounting literature on arts and cultural organizations should try to examine all the different processes of these organizations to gain a thorough understanding of where, when, and why different rationalities emerge as conflicting or cooperating with each other. In particular, further case studies of opera companies could show whether there is an opera rationality as I found it in the investigated organization. Finally, further research on different forms of accountability in organizations would benefit from acknowledging that substantively relevant forms of accountability may occur both in an organic and a mechanistic form. The mechanistic forms are not necessarily the result of contamination through NPM-oriented forms of accountability, but may depend on the nature of the processes that have to be evaluated, as emerged from my case study. A more detailed and graduated taxonomy of accountability forms taking into account the nature of work processes in different organizations might thus be necessary to fully understand the different systems of accountability coexisting and competing in those organizations.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview Questionnaire

1A - General personal background

1. How long have you worked for the organization? Always in the same position?

2. What have been jour previous jobs? (job description and organization)

3. Was there a sort of transitory period when you started working here?

4. What is your educational background? (school/university)

5. What are your interests and hobbies?

1B - Personal position in the organization with respect to the <u>responsibility on artistic policy</u>

6. Can you describe your job? (artistic/administrative work)

7. Can you describe your responsibilities? (artistic results)

8. Is there a formal description of your job responsibilities?

9. Who is (are) your boss(es)?

10. Are you involved in the formulation of the objectives of the organization? (long-term/season/ production) <u>Which ones</u>?

11. Who is involved in the formulation of the objectives of the organization? (<u>internal/external</u> [government, sponsors, audience])

12. Are you involved in the formulation of the artistic policy of the organization? (artistic vision, programming, individual production) <u>Which ones</u>?

13. Who is involved in the formulation of artistic objectives? (<u>internal/external</u> [government, sponsors, audience])

14. Are artistic objectives communicated to you/the whole staff of the organization at the beginning of a season/production? (Formally/informally, systematically/sporadically) By whom?

15. Would you describe the artistic policy of the organization? (this season, next season with respect to possible development in cultural policy)

16. What aspects of the artistic policy are the most relevant to you?

17. Are there any aspects of the artistic objectives that your superiors (or: boss) find most relevant?

18. Are there any aspects of the artistic objectives that your colleagues in your department and in the organization find most relevant?

19. Are there any aspects of the artistic objectives that the external environment find most relevant? (government, sponsors, audience)

20. Are you (partially) responsible for the achievement of artistic objectives? <u>Which ones</u>? (Formally/informally, systematically/sporadically)

21. Who is responsible in your organization for <u>artistic</u> results? For which ones particularly?

22. Do you work together with colleagues that are responsible for <u>artistic</u> results?

23. Would you describe the kind of work you do together with other colleagues in the opera that are responsible for the artistic policy and for the achievement of artistic results? (<u>formulation of artistic objectives</u>, <u>evaluation of artistic objectives</u>)

24. How do you work together? (procedures, rules, responsibilities, superior/subordinate/peer)

25. Could you describe for example how you work together to formulate the artistic objectives for a <u>season</u>/<u>production</u>?

2A - Which factors are considered while evaluating artistic results and how is the evaluation of artistic results related to the evaluation of the general organizational performance according to a general point of view?

26. What makes a successful opera? (According to the respondent/the ones he has to give account to, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight) And what makes an unsuccessful one?

27. What makes a successful season? (According to the respondent/the ones he has to give account to, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight) What makes an unsuccessful season?

28. What makes a successful production? (According to the respondent/the ones he has to give account to, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight) And an unsuccessful one?

29. More generally, what is success? (Organizational/artistic, in general/in the arts world/in the opera world) And failure?

30. How is success recognized? (Organizational/artistic, measurement/description/ feeling)

31. Can success be recognized? (Organizational/artistic, measurement/description/ feeling)

32. Whose opinion is most influential in determining success in the arts world? (Organizational/artistic, of an opera house/a season/an individual production) Whose opinion is most influential in determining failure in the arts world?

2B - Which factors are considered while evaluating artistic results and how is the evaluation of artistic results related to the evaluation of the general organizational performance according to the <u>interviewee's point of view</u>?

33. How do you know you've done a good job? (speaking with someone/reading something/just thinking by one's self, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight)

34. How do you know you've contributed to a successful production? (speaking with someone/reading something/just thinking by one's self, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight)

35. How do you know you've contributed to a successful season? (speaking with someone/reading something/just thinking by one's self, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight)

36. Whose opinion is for you the most influential when you judge your own work? (Your own/colleagues/audience/family and acquaintances, general/production/season)

37. How do you know/recognize that your colleagues have done a good (<u>artistic</u>!) job? (<u>Directors/guest conductors/soloists/choir & orchestra musicians /intendant</u>; speaking with someone/reading something/just thinking by one's self, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight)

38. How do you know that your colleagues have contributed to a successful production? (speaking with someone/reading something/just thinking by one's self, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight)

39. How do you know that your colleagues have contributed to a successful season? (speaking with someone/reading something/just thinking by one's self, tangible vs. intangible aspects/criteria and their weight)

40. Whose opinion is the most influential for you when you form your own judgment of your colleagues' work? (<u>Artistic staff: Directors/guest conductors/soloists/choir & orchestra musicians /intendant</u> / <u>administrative staff</u>; Your own/colleagues/audience/family and acquaintances, general/production/season)

3A - Who gives account to whom? What activities are performed in order to give account of artistic results? What kind of information is gathered in order to give account of artistic results? How is this information gathered? How is this information used? By whom? (Reporting systems)

41. Whom do you have to report to? (internal stakeholders: artistic direction, board of directors/external stakeholders: ministry, union trades) When?

42. What do you have to report about? (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders, artistic work/results, weight and relevance of the different aspects according to the reporting employee and the one it is being reported to)

43. In which form do you have to report? (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders, written reports, formal meetings)

44. What do you do in order to prepare for reporting? (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders, systematic/sporadic)

45. Is there a written record of this report?

46. Who has access to the report (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders)?

47. How is the report used? (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders, interviewee/the one(s) he reports to)

48. Do you have to gather specific information about artistic results? (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders, systematic/sporadic, season/production) Which information? Which ones and how? (indicators)

49. In case of divergent information, which aspect will be given more weight? Why? (discussion/final protocol, examples from the past)

50. Does anybody help you to gather all information required? Who? Do you have subordinates?

51. Does anybody have to report to you? Who? When?

52. What do they have to report about? (artistic work/results, weight and relevance of the different aspects according to the reporting employee and the interviewee)

53. What kind of information do they have to gather for you? (systematically/sporadically, indicators)

54. Is there a written record of these reports?

55. Who has access to the report apart from you (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders)?

56. How do you use the(se) report(s)?

57. With whom do you discuss the report(s)? (internal stakeholders/external stakeholders)

58. Do you know about similar reports made by colleagues?

59. Are you informed about them? (systematically/sporadically, formally/informally)

60. Do you use them? (procedure/your choice)

61. How do you use them? (causal loops are determined/ personal interpretation)

62. Do you also have to meet with someone else to speak about the work of your organization? (Colleagues/peers/audience members/press, formally/informally, systematically/sporadically)

63. Are there special meetings where you speak about the artistic results achieved in the opera? (season/production) Who attends these meetings?

64. What are the topics of these meetings? (examples from the past)

65. In case of divergent opinions, which aspects/whose views are given more weight? Why? (discussion/final protocol, examples from the past)

66. What role do the artistic objectives of the organization, as formulated for instance in the mission on the website, play during these discussions/meetings? (explicitly/implicitly, systematically/sporadically)

67. Is there a written record of these meetings?

68. Who makes decisions based on these meetings? (examples from the past)

69. What kinds of decisions are made? (examples from the past)

70. Are there any other documents or meetings where the artistic work of your organization is evaluated? (season/production, internal/external)

71. Who makes decisions based on these evaluations? (examples from the past)

72. What kind of decisions? (examples from the past)

73. What role do the artistic objectives of the opera house, as formulated for instance in the mission on the website, play in these evaluations? (explicitly/implicitly, systematically/sporadically)

74. Which (artistic) aspects get more attention/relevance/weight in the evaluation process? (Those that are more relevant for you/Superiors/Colleagues/Government/Sponsors/Audience. Examples from this season. Related to the new governmental policy)

3B - What are the differences in the ways of giving account to the different stakeholders? What forms of accountability exist or might be established?

75. If there is any evaluation meeting and/or document, how does this influence your job? (before and after)

76. How does this influence the work of your colleagues? (before and after)

77. Whose opinions do you mention while reporting on artistic results? (systematically/sporadically, formally/informally)

78. Do you have to respect any rules and/or procedures to talk and/or report to different groups of people? Where do they come from? (organizational procedures/government policy)

79. Do these rules and procedures influence the way you work? (content and time; examples from the past)

80. Do these rules and procedures influence the way you speak about your work with certain people? (colleagues [superior/subordinate/peers]/press/audience/government, examples from the past)

81. Are there any other occasions where you talk about the artistic performance/achievements of your organization with your colleagues in the opera? Where? When? How? (examples with respect to season/production: behind the stage after a première)

82. Are there any other occasions where you talk about the artistic performance/achievements of your organization with external people (colleagues, press, audience, government) Where? When? How? (examples with respect to season/production: reception after a première)

83. How do these discussions influence the work of your colleagues?

84. How do these discussions influence your job?

85. Whose opinion influences your own judgment of the work of the organization the most? (artistic/not artistic performances)

86. Whose opinion influences your own judgment of your work for this organization the most? (with respect to personal beliefs/career motives)

87. Whose feedback do you implement in your daily work? (recent examples)

88. Which aspects of a feedback are you especially sensitive to?

89. Which aspects of a feedback are your colleagues in the opera especially sensitive to? (artistic and non-artistic staff)

90. Whom would you ask for advice if you would have the desire to improve yourself professionally? (personal performance/group and processes the respondent is responsible for)

91. What would you ask? (recent examples)

92. If you could choose, based on which criteria would you like to be evaluated? Or: what makes a good employee/professional in your position? (personal performance and department performance)

93. How? (procedures, indicators, dialogue, frequency)

94. If you could choose, based on which criteria should the organization be evaluated?

95. How? (above all with respect to the artistic work! procedures, indicators, dialogue, frequency)

96. If you could choose, based on which criteria should an opera company in general be evaluated?

97. How? (above all with respect to the artistic work! procedures, indicators, dialogue, frequency)

APPENDIX 2: The activities of evaluation

In this section I describe the different activities through which information about the organization's performance is evaluated by the internal or the external stakeholders of the organization. These activities emerged from the analysis of the interviews and of internal and external documents. Analogously to the distinction between management accounting and financial accounting, I call internal activities of evaluation the activities through which information is evaluated by internal stakeholders (e.g. supervisory board and staff); and external activities of evaluation the activities through which information is evaluated by external stakeholders (e.g. subsidizers and audience). This broad overview helps to identify in particular those activities through which information about artistic performance is evaluated.

Internal activities of evaluation include:

- Regular meetings with the supervisory board,
- General management meetings,
- Production-related activities (meetings, conversations and observations),
- Department meetings,
- Artists' annual appraisal interviews.

Regular meetings with the supervisory board

As the statutory control body of the organization and employer of the board of directors of the organization, the supervisory board is informed about the activities of the organization in 5-6 meetings a year where the artistic and the managing director are regularly invited. Since individual meetings are often devoted to a specific topic (e.g. marketing, organizational structure, artistic policy), the managers responsible for that specific area are usually invited too. For instance, the deputy director for education, participation and programming is sometimes invited to the meetings in order to inform the supervisory board about the education and participation activities her department is in charge of. The supervisory board is also interested in outreach activities, which are in the charge of the communication department. Nevertheless, the supervisory board discusses above all financial matters, and does it based on financial information provided directly by the finance chief, who regularly meets with the supervisory board, or indirectly, by accessing the reports of the finance chief to the managing director. While these financial reports represent essential information for the supervisory board and are available at every meeting, artistic aspects are not discussed regularly. At the meetings with the supervisory board that deal specifically with the organization's artistic policy, the required information only regards the titles chosen for a season. The board listens to and ratifies the decisions made by the artistic director without discussing the content of these decisions. With respect to the program of a season, the role of the supervisory board is only to give approval to the respective yearly budget. Minutes of the meetings with the supervisory board are taken and made accessible to the direction, the supervisory board, and to the external accountants. Internally they are used when decisions about big investments have to be made.

General management meetings

The artistic and the managing director of the opera company meet continuously with each other and with the other managers of the organization in order to plan and control the progress of the organization's activities. This happens within a dense net of regular and ad hoc meetings. These can be divided into meetings attended by both directors, meetings of managers with the artistic director, meetings of managers with the managing director, and meetings of managers with other managers.[76]

Most meetings between the artistic director and the managing director are ad hoc, with no written minutes. Nevertheless, about once a month they participate, together with the chief of the artistic department, the planning chief and the assistant of the managing director, in a formal direction meeting, where minutes are taken. The direction meetings are not about artistic ideas, concepts and visions, but about policy issues raised by the ministry of education, culture and science, or about staffing and financial balance within a season. Discussions about the latter can lead for instance to cancellation of a production. Not every voice has the same weight in these kinds of decisions. For instance, the planning chief has only an observation role. She gets information that can be relevant for planning time and number of rehearsals and performances for each production, but she is not really involved in making decisions.

Amongst the meetings with the artistic director, the artistic direction meeting is the only regular meeting. The artistic director, chief dramaturge and the chief of the artistic department, meet to discuss the programs for the new seasons. Nevertheless, a lot of relevant information is exchanged ad hoc, for instance as soon as one of the three members of the artistic direction has the opportunity to hear a singer who is being considered for a specific role in a production. Every six weeks the orchestra general manager of the orchestra in-residence attends the artistic direction meetings to check whether the choices of the artistic director of the opera are feasible. In addition, current productions and just completed productions are discussed and evaluated. Additional topics discussed at these meetings are: the strategic positioning of the partnership between opera and orchestra in-residence in a changing cultural and political environment; safety at work and safety of orchestra musicians during individual productions; payments and estimated budgets. One consequence of this evaluation is the decision about whether singers and/or conductors will be invited again, or whether a certain conductor should come again in combination with a certain repertoire. Another one can be a change in directing decisions, for instance when the distance between singers on stage and orchestra is so big that the final quality of the performance might be exposed to risks. The written minutes of these meetings are accessible to all the participants in the meetings.

All other meetings are ad hoc. For instance, being the main artistic advisor of the artistic director, chief dramaturge meets the artistic director very often ad hoc to discuss the choice of productions and of artistic teams. In this case, the way of reporting to the artistic director is purely verbal. If

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[76] The division between meetings with the artistic director and meetings with the managing director mirrors the clear division of tasks between the two members of the board of directors of the opera company. As the managing director explains, she is "responsible for everything apart from artistic choices", thus for finance and organization. The artistic director is responsible for programming and for directing a couple of individual productions a year.

someone else is involved, minutes are taken and made available to the participants and to other departments that may find the information relevant. The content of the reports of the chief dramaturge to the artistic director takes the form of advice. He is indeed the main advisor to the artistic director. Also the chief conductor talks directly with the artistic director in order to decide what productions to conduct. The chorus artistic director discusses informally and bilaterally with the artistic director such issues as the difficulty for the chorus of having two big productions in a row. By approaching the artistic director ad hoc, alternatives can be discussed on the spot. Finally, the deputy director for education, participation and programming reports ad hoc to the artistic director on such artistic aspects as the choice of titles, production companies and directors.

Also the meetings with the managing director happen either regularly or ad hoc. The technical director reports to the managing director on a weekly basis. The topics of these reports are mainly of an organizational, technical and financial nature. For instance, planning, implementing and following up initiatives in the area of sustainability was one important topic on the agenda at the time of the interviews. Safety is also a frequent topic of discussion. The technical director also reports to the managing director in written form on the man-hours and money spent in comparison to the budget he gets for opera and ballet. The finance chief meets with the managing director every two weeks to speak about organizational issues concerning the financial department (staff, software) and about financial aspects concerning production processes (e.g. contracts). Numbers are central in her reports to the managing director and in preparation for the discussions within the direction. The deputy director for education, participation and programming reports to the managing director on organizational and commercial aspects: budget, staffing and performance of the education and participation department. Minutes of their meetings are taken.

Due to her role, the assistant of the managing director meets her direct superior continuously and ad hoc. Financial aspects are at the core of her reports to the managing director. The meetings between the chief of production management and the managing director are bilateral and ad hoc. In these meetings, the financial aspects of different productions are discussed, as well as personal management issues. Finally, the chorus managing director has to report to the managing director, but there is no regular, formally scheduled meeting between them, they make appointments when necessary. The topics of their discussion are practical, concerning budget and personal matters. For instance, if the costumes for the chorus are expensive, a decision may have to be made between performing with less chorus singers or saving on costumes.

The last form of general management meetings is the meetings between managers others than the two directors. They are all ad hoc. For instance, finance chief often meets the communication chief and the manager of fundraising and sponsoring to know about how things are going, since audience numbers and new donations or sponsoring contracts influence directly the financial situation of the organization. Chief dramaturge meets regularly with the chorus direction in order to discuss planning with respect to the available work capacity of the chorus, and with the different orchestras playing for the opera, with whom an agreement on the planning must be achieved. The chiefs of the planning departments of the opera company and of the orchestra in-residence are constantly in touch. Also the chief of the artistic department of the opera and the manager of the artistic department of the orchestra meet weekly in order to discuss programming and casting choices, as well as the extent to which the expectations of, for instance, a new conductor that has been invited for the first time are met, based on what the reactions and the feelings within the orchestra and the

artistic team are. Chief conductor talks regularly to the chief of the artistic department about casting. He regularly meets colleagues of the departments he has to work with, such as the communication department, and gives his feedback to the colleagues who attend the production-related meetings, such as the opera evaluation meeting (see later). Finally, the chorus artistic director consults with designers and stage directors in order to find the right voices and the right body types for a production.

Production-related activities

As the production of opera is the core activity of the organization, it is not surprising that many, and varied, activities of evaluation are related to the individual productions. These include regular meetings, ad hoc conversations, direct experience of production process and of performances, audience research and press reviews.

<u>*Regular meetings*</u>

From the work floor to the upper management, the first sort of production-related meetings are the design team meetings (with stage managers, first lighting technicians, assistant directors, props managers; in other words, with all the staff working on the stage). The topics of these meetings are practical. Questions discussed are, for instance, whether there were any accidents, why there has been a certain argument on a specific day, how the coordination between scenery staff on stage was, and so on. Minutes of these meetings are then discussed within the production team.

The technical director – who is the chief of the technical organization – and the chiefs of the individual departments of the technical organization – stage, lighting, audio-visual communication, props, building maintenance – attend the production team meetings. The production team discusses budget and staff issues and gathers the impressions of the team about how the production was. The production team is responsible for the so-called technical evaluation, which is conducted for each production. The topics considered in the technical evaluation are process, technique, budget, safety, sustainability, and, in the case that it is known that the production will be reprogrammed as a rerun, or leased out, the necessary technical adjustments and improvements to be made. Also, aspects related to personnel are considered in the technical evaluation. The technical evaluation is the moment when financial accountability on the part of the technical organization is due. If the budget has been exceeded, then the chief of production management and the technical director have to give an account of it at the opera evaluation meeting. The minutes of the technical evaluation are discussed at the opera evaluation meetings.

All department chiefs of the opera company (e.g. communication, artistic department) participate in the opera evaluation meetings, but not the director, the designer and the conductor of the individual productions; that is, those responsible for the artistic conception of the production and its final execution. Also the chorus artistic director does not attend these meetings, only the chorus managing director. The chief conductor not only does not participate in the opera evaluation meetings, he does not even get the minutes of them. The artistic director attends the opera evaluation meetings sometimes, if he has been the director of the involved production. The fact that the managers who are responsible for the artistic conception of the production and its execution are not invited to the opera evaluation meetings reflects the nature of the topics discussed at these meetings. The discussions are about practical aspects and not about the quality of the concepts.

Also, the relation between the individual production and the artistic policy of the organization is not discussed. Practical things that did not work properly are usually discussed, but not the ones that worked well. For instance, a topic of discussion might be whether there was a problem on stage that prevented artists from performing well, or how well the work of the core staff was coordinated with the partially external production team, and whether safety issues emerged during the production. Some content-related discussion may be necessary in some cases. For instance, the chief dramaturge has sometimes to explain what content-related aspects explain the less than satisfactory box office results. In general, the quality of the director's concept, the quality of the shows and the quality of the soloists involved in a production are not a topic of discussion at the opera evaluation meeting. Only if a team was completely new, with a famous theatre or film director directing opera for the first time, then some management and production staff might comment on how they found the director; for instance innovative or difficult. But this mainly relates to the quality of the work process. Also, aspects in the charge of the technical organization may be touched, such as decoration and costumes. Immediately after the last performance of each production there is an opera evaluation. The main objective is to exchange information, but no decisions are made. Instead, general decisions are made by the direction and production specific decisions are made in the policy team meetings.

The number of policy team meetings varies depending on the complexity of the production. During policy team meetings problems that could not be solved during the other production-related meetings are discussed. Production specific decisions are made, such as the decision to re-program a production. In these meetings the production manager of the specific production reports to the managing director, artistic director, chief of the artistic department, technical director, costumes and wigs/make-up director. Minutes of these meetings are taken.

Ad hoc conversations

Much production-related information is exchanged through ad hoc conversations. These occur continuously at work breaks or at some specific moments in the production. During work breaks, within the production team there are continuously conversations about how things are going, how the production team is working, how an idea is developing. Just how anchored this form of information exchange is in the culture of the organization, and especially of the production and stage management department, is testified by the following story told by the chief of production management:

> "Once we were sitting for lunch, we were with the director, the designer and the production manager, and we were speaking about our work, about how the rehearsal had gone. Someone came and sat with us, someone who was pretty new in the organization and who was working on the production. And he said loud: 'I can't believe you talk about work at lunch! ' We looked at him and said: 'You're new here. Sorry, but we keep on doing it. If you don't like it, go and sit somewhere else'. That was typical; the guy didn't stay very long with us. But that's how we are".

During the production process, ad hoc conversations occur at the different presentations of concept and model before the rehearsals start, at the different rehearsals, at the different performances and, in particular, at the after première reception.

At the first presentation of the model and the concept of a production, at the presentation of the scenery trial, and at the presentation of the final scenery at the beginning of the rehearsals, the production team has many ad hoc conversations with musicians and stage directors. For instance, the technical director is present, together with all the chiefs of the technical departments, at the presentation of the model and the concept of each production, about one year before the première. The objective is to understand the artistic vision and choices behind a production in order to do the required job properly. The discussion at the model presentation is recorded in every detail in a requirement catalogue. In this way it is possible to compare how the technical staff has understood the concept with what the director and the artistic team really meant. This document is used by designers as a base for their drawings, and for a control check at the time when the scenery is delivered. This happens in two phases. At first a scenery trial is presented. Later, at the beginning of the rehearsals, the final scenery is presented. These two opportunities are used by the technical director to ask the stage director for feedback. If necessary, adjustments are immediately suggested.

After the final delivery of the scenery, the ad hoc conversations continue during the rehearsals, in particular at the first rehearsal of the chorus with the guest conductor, at the first rehearsal with orchestra, and at the costumes rehearsals. The first rehearsal with orchestra is a very important moment to understand whether the production process is going well or not. Then the costumes are "rehearsed" in three very important rehearsals: with piano (three before the première), with orchestra before the full dress rehearsal, and at the full dress rehearsal itself. Feedback about the work of the production team comes regularly from the production manager or the stage manager who is present at every rehearsal. There are thus continuous discussions based on what has been seen at the rehearsals. Another example is offered by the chorus artistic director. In order to understand how his chorus is doing, the chorus artistic director is present at rehearsals and talks to the (guest) conductor. There he can make some suggestions to the (guest) conductor for directing the chorus in a way that will help the chorus to perform better. After the rehearsals and the shows, in informal situations, the (guest) conductor asks for feedback on how the implemented suggestions worked. The chief conductor usually speaks with the individual members of the orchestra during the rehearsal breaks or after the rehearsals. If an orchestra member is new, representatives of the orchestra in-residence ask directly the opinion of the chief of the artistic department or of the artistic director of the opera company, in order to know how they found the musician, and this information is used in the orchestra evaluation of the production, which the orchestra in-residence conducts on its own after each opera production.

The first official performance with an audience is the première, where the programming and production work of years culminates. This is celebrated with an after première reception, where conversations occur with the artists performing, invited audience members, press, and colleagues (organization and production staff, but also from outside the organization). For some managers this is a moment of relaxation, for others a fundamental opportunity to perform some of the tasks they are responsible for. For instance, the manager of fundraising and sponsoring has conversations with potential donors and sponsors. The orchestra general manager is always present at the after première reception, where he talks with many people. Some of them are intentionally approached. The conversations during the after première reception offer much information about how the production has been received, in particular through the opinions of external guests. This feedback is also used to improve the following performances. For instance, after the première the technical director also asks the users (artistic team) for feedback about the products delivered by the technical

organization and, if necessary, reacts immediately with adjustments. The feedback received after the première is communicated to the production team at the first meeting after the première, mentioning explicitly the source of the feedback (who said what). This happens regularly after every première. In addition, the technical director speaks to the production team to hear their opinions on how things have worked, and also to say goodbye to the ones who will depart from that moment.

Something similar happens after the last performance of a production. Attending that performance is a courtesy towards the members of the artistic team who will leave. In addition, it is an important moment to hear how things have worked out during the whole production process in an even more informal sphere than at the after première reception.

Observations

For many managers of the organization, being present during the production process and at the performances is an important part of their job. The information about how the process is progressing and about its results is not only gathered through conversations. Much nonverbal information is gathered by the managers through direct experience of the production process and of the performances.

As with the production-related ad hoc conversations, the model and concept presentations, the rehearsals and the performances of the individual productions are important opportunities to gather nonverbal information about the progress and the results of the production process through direct experience. For instance, how a direction concept fits in the artistic vision of the artistic director can be judged based on the facial expressions of the artistic director captured during the model and concept presentations. At the last rehearsal with piano, the chief conductor sits next to his assistant, who conducts, in order to evaluate the progress of the synchronization between music and stage in every detail. The technical director also visits rehearsals on a regular basis, until a couple of days before the première, "just to sense how and what [is going on]."

The deputy director for education, participation and programming is responsible for special productions such as opera or ballet productions for children, or educational workshops. Although she meets her employees regularly, it is through observation that she gets to know whether her employees are working well. With respect to the workshops, she says:

> "When someone has to give a workshop, you go and sit at the workshop and look how he/she is moderating the workshop".

From the full dress rehearsal on, it is also possible to observe the reactions of the audience. At the full dress rehearsal, the audience consists mainly of staff and acquaintances. This is the last opportunity for major improvements. For instance, the orchestra general manager is present at the full dress rehearsal of each production at which the orchestra in-residence works. If he notices something strange, he immediately sends the manager of the artistic department of the orchestra to check what the problem might be. He does the same with the couple of performances he regularly attends of the productions at which the orchestra in-residence works. Attending the performances provides an opportunity to get a feeling of the atmosphere in the theatre and of the connection to the audience.

Department meetings

Some departments of the organization also hold regular department meetings. For instance, the education, participation, and programming department always conducts an evaluation of the marketing activities and of the financial results related to its productions and activities. The chorus direction meets about once a month with a committee of 5 to 8 singers chosen by the chorus to represent them. The topics at these meetings are mainly organizational: the progress of productions they are working on at the moment, problems that have occurred or are occurring, safety issues, involvement of the chorus in education projects, vacancies for people who have recently retired or have left the chorus for personal reasons and when those vacancies might be filled. With respect to each individual production, the committee examines how well the planning has served the production and what obstacles were met along the way (e.g. personality of a stage director, conducting style of a conductor). The reports of these meetings go to the upper management, to the heads of the different departments so that if there are any things involving costuming or make up, those people see what has been discussed in the chorus committee. Controversial topics come for discussion in the production-related meetings. The chief conductor has to participate in analogous meetings with the artistic committee of the orchestra in-residence.

Artists' annual appraisal interviews

Annual appraisal interviews with the chorus singers are responsibility of the opera organization and not of the H&R department of the venue organization. Since the chorus and its members are a fundamental component of the individual productions, the individual evaluation of the chorus singers can be considered in principle as an activity in which information about artistic performance is exchanged. Nevertheless, the topics of the annual appraisal interviews with the chorus singers are mainly practical, concerning personal and financial aspects. In addition, the development of the voice of individual singers, as well as language skills and acting skills are discussed at these meetings. If the singers have problems with the development of their voices, they may be advised to take singing classes.

External activities of evaluation include:

- Meetings with ministry representatives,
- External evaluation procedure,
- Sector analyses,
- Annual reports,
- Meetings with external auditors,
- Media-related activities (annual press conference, reviews).

Meetings with ministry representatives

The managing director has at least one regular meeting a year with representatives of the ministry for education, culture, and science, which is the largest funder of the organization. They also receive the annual report of the organization. Additional ad hoc meetings, with other managers of the organization, may be required. In this case, ad hoc management reports may have to be sent to the

minister as a preparation for the meetings. These might regard, for instance, an evaluation of the efforts of the organization to increase its outreach through educational activities. Nevertheless, financial issues are always at the core of the discussions with the minister, even when the topic of the meeting is related to such core artistic processes of the organization as, in the example above, programming. This is also the case with the meetings of the general manager of the orchestra in-residence with the ministry representatives. Being both the artistic and managing director of the orchestra in-residence, he also has to meet them, mostly six months after submitting the annual report of the orchestra in-residence. He has to agree with the ministry representatives how many opera productions the orchestra has to accompany, as well as other, mostly quantitative, artistic objectives, related to the output of the orchestra: number of activities and number of visitors. Also, in the case of the orchestra in-residence, additional, ad hoc reports on policy changes and adjustments to performance agreements between the orchestra in-residence and the ministry may be required.

External evaluation procedure

At the time of my field research, arts and cultural organizations that were considered of national relevance by the national government received a guaranteed subsidy for a four year term with the condition of undertaking an external evaluation during this term. Organizations of international relevance would be evaluated by an international evaluation commission consisting of experts of the artistic area in which the respective organization operated. The artistic area in which the investigated organization operates is the performing arts sector.

The main purpose of the external evaluation for the subsidy term 2009-2012 was quality control.[77] In particular, the international commission had to evaluate the organization on four main aspects: mission and goals, artistic quality, productivity and audience outreach, quality of management. The final report of the international commission would be used by the minister, together with the reaction of the evaluated organization to the report, as a basis for the formulation of the performance agreements for the next subsidy term. Additional documents would be required from the organization to support the next subsidy decision of the minister.

Each investigated organization had to write a self-evaluation report, not publicly accessible, including

- a self-evaluation of the four topics mentioned above, supported by financial information, output information, organizational charts, number of employees, an overview of facilities and maintenance, reviews, and an overview of awards, nominations or other forms of acknowledgements,
- a SWOT analysis,
- a management summary drawing conclusions from the evaluation of the four main topics and the SWOT analysis,
- in case of shortcomings signaled by the management, a plan for improvement.

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[77] Complete information about the external evaluation procedure in performing arts organizations can be found in the guideline of the procedure compiled by the National Association of Performing Arts (NAPK) in 2009.

The international commission would receive the self-evaluation report and then visit the organization for one full day to meet with members of the board of directors, of the supervisory board, of the employees' council, of the association of friends of the organization, and with other employees.

In addition, the internal commission had to visit one performance of the organization and consult additional documents issued by the organization and by the minister.

Finally, the international commission had to write a final, publicly accessible, report to the minister, including

- a description of the methodology used,
- a list of the organization's stakeholders and staff members met during the whole evaluation procedure,
- an explanation of the evaluation criteria used,
- a thorough evaluation of the four main topics mentioned above,
- an evaluation of the organization's vision and plans for the future,
- an evaluation of the position of the organization in the national and international, respective arts field,
- recommendations to the organization,
- scores (from insufficient to excellent) for the four main topics of the evaluation.

Sector analyses

The national cultural council regularly produces written and publicly accessible sector analyses and advice to the minister, including subsidy advice. The subsidy advice is issued by sector, with the investigated opera company belonging to the performing arts sector, in particular to the musical theatre area. At the time of the field research, the subsidy procedure for arts organizations considered of national relevance did not prescribe specific subsidy advice through the cultural council for every individual organization, but only for the whole sector. Sector analyses and advice to the minister are mainly based on documents issued by the evaluated organizations, such as the annual reports. Similar advice is issued also by the city cultural council.

Annual reports

The annual reports of the opera company refer to a calendar year and not to a season. They include a financial statement, statistics about the output of the organization in terms of number of activities and visitors in that calendar year, and a description of the individual productions in that calendar year. The latter includes general information about the composition and/or about specific aspects (e.g. technical aspects) of the production, which is mainly provided by the chief dramaturge. Excerpts from reviews in the media are included in this descriptive part of the annual report. Financial information and the statistics about activities and visitors appear in a standardized format.

Meetings with external auditors

The organization's managers have also to meet with different auditors. For instance, the accountants have to certify the annual report, and the technical director has to meet labor inspectors and juridical bodies, mainly in relation to safety issues.

Media-related activities

Media regularly report on the activities of the opera company. The most common form are the reviews of the individual productions in the media. The organization invites the media and facilitates their coverage and is thus actively involved in this activity of evaluation. This is for instance the case with the annual press conference, when the program for the upcoming season is officially presented to the press and, indirectly, to the public. This is, thus, a way to communicate the result of the programming activity to the external stakeholders.

From this broad overview of all the activities of evaluation in which the organization and its managers are involved, it is possible to identify in particular those activities through which information about artistic performance is evaluated. These are: meetings with the supervisory board, meetings of the artistic managers, production-related activities (regular meetings, ad hoc conversations and observations), amongst the internal activities of evaluation; meetings with ministry representatives, external evaluation procedure, annual reports, and annual press conference amongst the external activities of evaluation.

APPENDIX 3: Evaluators of performance

In this section I analyze the role of different evaluators of performance in the interviewed managers' process of making sense of the artistic performance of their organization. To do this, I focus on the procedural and/or substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to the different evaluators of performance.

By *procedurally relevant evaluators of performance* I mean *(groups of) persons a manager has the duty to work for and/or to inform about (the results of) his own work and/or the work of the organization according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems* and/or *(groups of) persons whose judgments about (the results of) the manager's work and/or the work of the organization have a statutory role according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems.*

By *substantively relevant evaluators of performance* I mean *(groups of) persons a manager considers co-producers and/or recipients of (the results of) his own work and/or the work of the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems* and/or *(groups of) persons whose opinions about (the results of) the manager's work and/or of the work of the organization influence the manager in the process of forming as well as explaining his own judgment about the value created by him and by the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems.*

For the analysis of the procedural/substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to the different evaluators of performance, at first I compiled a list of all the evaluators mentioned in the interviews. Then, for each evaluator, I investigated what kind of relevance (procedural/substantive) is given to him. Since the procedural and/or substantive relevance given by the interviewed managers to the different evaluators of performance can depend on the individual profiles, I first analyzed the evaluators of performance within each of the three groups of managers (administrative, artistic and technical). This allowed me to identify common patterns within each group and to relate possible differences between the individual managers in the group to specific aspects of their personal profiles (education, experience and function). Then, I analyzed the evaluators of performance across the three groups (administrative, artistic and technical). This allowed me to reconsider the role of personal factors against the role of contextual factors related both to the internal and external environments of the organization.

The analysis of the evaluators of performance within each of the three groups of managers will be introduced in a table showing an overview of the results for the respective groups of managers. In the first column of the tables the evaluators of performance are divided in two groups, as emerged from the analysis of all 17 interviewed managers:

- evaluators who have a very limited role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, both procedurally and substantively;
- evaluators who have a significant role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, either procedurally or substantively.[78]

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[78] This is determined by the sum of the occurrences of those evaluators as *procedurally* and *substantially* relevant in the interviews.

The evaluators of performance with a very limited role are: government,[79] cultural council, funders, auditors/inspectors, sponsors, donors and supervisory board. The evaluators of performance with a significant role are: press, audience, peers, direction, staff and oneself. Within each category, the evaluators of performance are ordered according to their place in the external or internal environment of the organization, as it has been seen in the description of the stakeholder's structure of the organization (see section 5.4.1 of the paper). Amongst the evaluators with a very limited role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, six belong to the external environment (government, cultural council, funders, auditors/inspectors, sponsors, donors) and only one to the internal environment of the organization (the supervisory board). Amongst the evaluators with an important role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, three belong to the external environment (press, audience and peers) and three to the internal environment of the organization (direction, staff and oneself). Table E1 shows how many of the 17 interviewed managers mentioned these evaluators as procedurally (P) and/or substantively (S) relevant for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization:[80]

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[79] In the analysis I use the term *government* for different evaluators of performance: government as a whole at both national and local level; representatives of national and local government (both politicians, such as Minister of Education, Culture and Science or Mayor, and civil servants).
[80] In this table and in the following ones in this Appendix, the bold number represents, for each evaluator of performance, the highest number of occurrences of procedural or substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers.

Evaluators of Performance	Total Managers (17)
Government	**5P**/2S
Cultural Council	**1P**
Funders	**3P**
Auditors/Inspectors	**3P**
Sponsors	**4P**/1S
Donors	**1P**
Supervisory Board	**5P**/2S
Press	1P/**13S**
Audience	9P/**14S**
Peers	2P/**12S**
Direction	**16P**/15S
Staff	5P/**16S**
Oneself	**14S**

Table E1: Summary of the relevance of the evaluators of performance for all the interviewed managers

Evaluators of performance for managers with administrative profile

The group of managers with an administrative profile includes Managing Director, Assistant of the Managing Director, Communication Chief, Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring, Finance Chief, Planning Chief and Chorus Managing Director. Table E2 shows which relevance, procedural (P) and/or substantive (S), they assign to the evaluators of performance, as emerged from the interviews.

Managers / *Evaluators of Performance*	Managing Director	Assistant of the Managing Director	Communication Chief	Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring	Finance Chief	Planning Chief	Chorus Managing Director	Total Administrative Managers (7)
Government	P		P		P			**3P**
Cultural Council	P							**1P**
Funders				P				**1P**
Auditors/Inspectors					P			**1P**
Sponsors			P	P				**2P**
Donors				P				**1P**
Supervisory Board	P				P/S			**2P**/1S
Press		S	P/S	S	S		S	1P/**5S**
Audience	S	P/S	P/S	S	P/S		S	3P/**6S**
Peers	S	S	S	P/S			S	1P/**5S**
Direction	S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	6P/**7S**
Staff	S	P/S	S	S	S	S	S	1P/**7S**
Oneself	S		S	S			S	**4S**

Table E2: Evaluators of performance for managers with administrative profile

From this table it emerges that regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the local and national Cultural Councils, and even statutory bodies such as the Supervisory Board play a purely procedural role for Managing Director, Communication Chief and Finance Chief. With respect to the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, only the Communication Chief explicitly assigns a role to politicians. Being spokesman of the organization, for him it is relevant what politicians think of the organization and its two directors, Artistic Director and Managing Director. Nevertheless, the opinions of politicians do not influence his own opinion, as he clearly explains:

> "For my work it's obviously important to know what the external environment thinks about my directors. Thus, what politicians, media, and sponsors think of them. Theoretically, this doesn't have anything to do with what I personally think of them. […] Because I think that I can do my job so professionally that I can have a personal opinion and propagate a different one. For me it's obvious, my task is to present my organization and my directors in the best possible way to the external environment".

One of the tasks of Communication Chief is to set up and coordinate communication campaigns targeting the different stakeholders of the organization. As it can be seen in section 5.4.1 of the paper, the government is a fundamental stakeholder of the organization. Communication Chief has thus to take into account the opinions of politicians if he wants to set up an effective communication

campaign targeting, amongst other stakeholders, the government. The specifications of his function assign a central role to the opinions and judgments of politicians, which are thus procedurally relevant for him. Nevertheless, the Communication Chief forms his own judgment about the value of his directors, including the Artistic Director, regardless of the opinions of politicians. It is the opinions and judgments of artistic staff, peers, international press and audience, and not of politicians which are substantively relevant for him.

The interview with the Managing Director reinforces the impression that regulatory and statutory bodies hardly have a voice in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results and that, if they have a role, it is purely procedural in the sense that it does not influence the managers with respect to the process of forming as well as explaining their own judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. For the Managing Director, procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators are clearly separated. Procedurally, the Managing Director has to report internally to the Supervisory Board and externally to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In addition, the national and local Cultural Councils are procedurally relevant for her, since they advise the respective governments about which organizations should get subsidies and why. The substantively relevant evaluators of performance related to the artistic work of the organization have nothing to do with the procedurally relevant ones. Internally, oneself, the Artistic Director and in general the whole artistic and technical staff are the key evaluators for the Managing Director. The opinions of these key evaluators are central for the Managing Director in the process of forming as well as explaining her own judgment about the value created by her and by the organization. Externally, the audience is the core evaluator of performance for the Managing Director when judging artistic aspects. Her peers, such as managers of other organizations and public administrators, are important in providing feedback which she uses to improve her own work as a Managing Director. The divide between procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators of performance can be explained by the work attitude of the Managing Director over her whole career. She emphasizes that, before starting at the organization, the core of her work would be to provide support to creatives. This attitude also characterizes her 24 year experience as Managing Director of the organization. At the same time, as she likes to say herself, her function at the organization implies that she is practically "responsible for everything apart from artistic choices". In this sense she accepts both the coexistence *of* and the distinction *between* the necessity for the organization to be statutorily accountable on administrative issues to regulatory (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, local and national Cultural Councils) and statutory (Supervisory Board) bodies, and the necessity of leaving the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization in the hands of those involved in the artistic programming and production (artistic and technical staff), and reception (audience and peers).

In general, evaluators of performance other than regulatory and statutory bodies are relevant for the managers with administrative profile, in most cases both procedurally and substantively. These are audience, peers, and press as evaluators of performance outside the organization; and oneself, staff, and the direction as evaluators of performance inside the organization. For the Assistant of the Managing Director, for instance, direction, staff and audience are both procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators of performance. She has to report to the direction (and obviously to the Managing Director), which is thus a procedurally relevant evaluator of performance for her. At the same time she considers the opinion of the direction, amongst those of other staff members, as the most influential for her in making sense of the quality of her own work. The direction is thus also

a substantively relevant evaluator of performance for her. She sees the organization as statutorily responsible towards the employees. In this sense, she and the organization have to work for the employees too, who are thus procedurally relevant evaluators of performance. At the same time she considers the opinions of the employees, as experts, essential in evaluating the artistic success of the organization in general and of the individual productions in particular. The staff is thus also a substantively relevant evaluator of performance for her. The audience is central in the policy of the organization, and is thus a procedurally relevant evaluator of performance. At the same time their opinions about the artistic value created by the organization are central for the Assistant of the Managing Director in the process of forming a judgment about organizational success. The audience is thus also a substantively relevant evaluator of performance for her.

In the case of the Chorus Managing Director there is overlap between procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators of performance too, although the higher relevance of the latter becomes evident by looking at the richness and variety of substantively relevant evaluators for her. For instance, while procedurally the Chorus Managing Director only has to report to the Managing Director, substantively all colleagues of the direction and many staff members are important for her to make sense of the artistic value created by the organization. The ones she works directly with (chorus singers, Chorus Artistic Director, orchestra conductors and stage directors of the individual productions, Artistic Director, Chief of the Artistic Department and Planning Chief) are the most influential for her. With respect to the external environment, the Chorus Managing Director assigns external evaluators of performance no procedural relevance. Nevertheless, press, audience and the opera scene in general are central for her in forming a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization, and are thus important evaluators of performance amongst the substantively relevant ones. Press and audience (regular and new) are fundamental voices in the evaluation of the artistic work of the organization. The opera scene (national and international) is a benchmark of the artistic contribution of the organization, since opera productions have to add to the national supply of opera, and the general artistic profile of the organization has to be recognizable also at international level.

To sum up, regulatory and statutory bodies have a limited role in the practice of evaluation of the managers with administrative profile. Their role is largely procedural and does not influence the managers with administrative profile in their process of forming as well as explaining their own judgment about the artistic value created by the organization. The substantive irrelevance of regulatory and statutory bodies for the practice of evaluation of the managers with an administrative profile becomes evident if compared with the substantive relevance of many other evaluators of performance, both inside and outside the organization. Self-opinion - by definition substantively relevant - has a primary role for the managers with an administrative profile in their process of forming a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization. Nevertheless, considering the focus on the evaluation of artistic aspects, it is not surprising that some administrative managers (Assistant of the Managing Director, Finance Chief, Chorus Managing Director) base their judgments more on ideas of colleagues with artistic profile (that is, of the evaluators of performance staff and direction) than on their own. Also the opinions of most staff members - apart from the direction - and of peers and press are to a large extent only substantively relevant, since the role of these evaluators of performance is not anchored in rules and procedures. Finally, the opinions and judgments of the audience are substantively relevant, as they are considered fundamental by the managers with administrative profile in order to form their own

judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. Considering that service and customer orientation have increasingly become integral doctrines of public and not-for-profit management in the recent years, the substantive relevance given to the audience's opinions and judgments might come from the administrative profile of the interviewed managers, which would justify a genuine service and customer orientation. By comparing the evaluators of performance for the managers with administrative profile with those for the managers with, respectively, artistic and technical profile, at the end of this section I will be able to elaborate further on this proposition.

The group of managers with artistic profile includes Artistic Director, Chief Conductor, Chief Dramaturge, Chorus Artistic Director, Chief of the Artistic Department, Orchestra General Manager,[81] and Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming. Table E3 shows which relevance, procedural (P) and/or substantive (S), they assign to the evaluators of performance, as emerged from the interviews.

Managers / Evaluators of Performance	Artistic Director	Chief Conductor*	Chief Dramaturge	Chorus Artistic Director	Chief of the Artistic Department	Orchestra General Manager*	Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming	Total Artistic Managers (7)
Government						P*/S*	S	1P/**2S**
Cultural Council								
Funders					P		P	**2P**
Auditors/Inspectors								
Sponsors						P*	P	**2P**
Donors								
Supervisory Board	P					P*/S*	P	**3P**/1S
Press	S	S	S	S		S	S	**6S**
Audience	P/S	S	P/S	S		P*/S	P/S	4P/**6S**
Peers	S	S	S		S	P*/S	S	1P/**6S**
Direction	P	P/S	P/S	P/S	P	P/S	P/S	**7P**/5S
Staff	S	S	P/S	P/S		S	S	2P/**6S**
Oneself	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	**7S**

Table E3: Evaluators of performance for managers with artistic profile (= members or evaluators of performance of the orchestra in-residence as a separate organization)*

From this table it emerges that for managers with artistic profile regulatory and statutory bodies hardly play a role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results. They generally play a procedural role for managers who are either members of the Direction (e.g. the Artistic Director) or have functions that are partially administrative (e.g. the Orchestra General Manager and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming). For instance, the Artistic Director has to present the season's program to the Supervisory Board but needs neither to discuss and negotiate it with the board members, nor to take into account their opinion on the artistic choices made. The duty to inform the Supervisory Board is thus purely procedural.

A substantive role is given to the government by the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming and by the Orchestra General Manager. The Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming assigns the government a substantive role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results when she explicitly mentions government's funding decisions as an indicator of the artistic value created by the organization. The government's funding decisions are central for her in the process of forming a judgment about the artistic value created by the

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[81] The Orchestra General Manager is the general manager of the orchestra in-residence at the studied opera company. As it can be seen in section 5.4.1 of the paper, the investigated opera company has no own in-house orchestra.

organization. The Orchestra General Manager assigns the government a facilitating role when he admits that the freedom to experiment with new, contemporary interpretations of opera, which is a main characteristic of the organization, is possible thanks to the positive attitude of the government towards the artistic profile of the organization. For him the government is in this way a sort of co-producer of the artistic work of the organization. According to my working definitions of procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators of performance, the government is, thus, a substantively relevant evaluator for both the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming and the Orchestra General Manager.

The Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming and the Orchestra General Manager are the only two managers with artistic profile giving the government a role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results. A closer look at the specific aspects of their personal profiles (education, experience and function) may offer some possible explanations for this attitude. The Orchestra General Manager unifies in one person the responsibilities of a managing and an artistic director. He is responsible both for the organizational and the artistic aspects of the orchestra in-residence and leads all its departments from a personal, financial, and artistic perspective. As a consequence, meeting with the Ministry representatives to agree on the number of opera productions the orchestra has to collaborate on during a season is part of his work just like meeting with the direction of the opera organization to discuss on-going productions. The Orchestra General Manager works on a daily basis with and within a network of procedurally and/or substantively relevant internal and external evaluators of performance. Some can be seen as typical evaluators for a managing director, like government or supervisory board. Some can be seen as typical evaluators for an artistic director, like peers, audience and press. The function of the General Manager necessarily brings all these evaluators together, which can explain the presence of the government in the natural frame of reference of the Orchestra General Manager and thus as a substantively relevant evaluator of performance for him.

The situation is apparently different for the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming, who has a more artistic responsibility, which includes programming of guest productions with a focus on education and participation activities, and programming of education and participation initiatives. Despite her more artistic profile, she seems to accept genuinely the regulatory context in which operas operate. If an opera company continues to get subsidies, then it has to mean that this opera company is good, also from the artistic point of view. Since her function does not statutorily include any contact with the government, an explanation might be found in her experience and higher education. After receiving a conservatory education as a musician, she has actually never worked as a musician. Before becoming responsible for the programming of educational activities in performing arts organizations, she held various administrative functions in an important conservatory. One possible explanation of her genuine acceptance of the regulatory context in which operas operate could thus be the influence of her administrative experience on her personal frame of reference, an influence that, in the course of her career, could have prevailed against the influence of the artistic education received but never transformed into a career as a performing artist. The growing weight of the administrative component in a manager's profile might thus explain the genuine acceptance of the regulatory context. Nevertheless, this interpretation is not supported by the findings from the interviews with the managers with administrative profile. None of the interviewed managers with administrative profile considers the government as a substantively relevant evaluator of performance with respect to artistic processes and their results.

Another possible explanation might be offered by the analysis of contextual factors. The actual focus of the last external evaluation of the organization in 2010 was on education and participation activities, as emerges from the interview with the Chorus Managing Director. The Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming was appointed in October 2009. It is thus plausible that she was appointed to strengthen (the visibility of) the education and participation efforts of the organization before the external commission came to visit and evaluate the organization. The evaluation criteria were already known at the end of 2009, when the Visitation Protocol Performing Arts 2009 was distributed to the involved performing arts organizations, and the topic of education and participation was already central in the general debate about the future of the arts and cultural sector. It is thus plausible that the organization recruited a person who recognized the necessity of greater commitment to education and participation activities, as expected by the government. In this sense, Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming's genuine acceptance of the judgment of the government as an indicator of artistic quality can be interpreted as an intrusion of a regulatory criterion into the practice of evaluation of the organization. In this case, the intrusion is made possible by recruiting someone who shares, at least with respect to her own tasks and responsibilities, the government's criteria for granting subsidies to performing arts organizations.

Apart from the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming and the Orchestra General Manager, for managers with artistic profile other evaluators of performance than regulatory and statutory bodies are in general relevant, procedurally and/or substantively. These are direction, staff and oneself as evaluators of performance inside the organization, and peers, audience and press as evaluators of performance outside the organization. For instance, the Chief Dramaturge has, statutorily, to report to the Artistic Director - which is quite obvious since the Chief Dramaturge is the main artistic advisor to the Artistic Director - and to the Managing Director who are thus procedurally relevant evaluators of performance for him. At the same time, the Artistic Director is also the one, together with the Managing Director, whom the Chief Dramaturge asks for feedback and whose opinion influences his judgment of his own work. They are thus substantively relevant evaluators of performance for him. The Chief Dramaturge also has to give external lectures as part of his job. He is thus statutorily in charge of interacting with the audience and the general public, who are procedurally relevant evaluators of performance for him. At the same time, he finds it important that opera as an art form continues to be relevant to the general public. Audience and public are natural recipients of the results of the artistic work of an opera company and, thus, substantively relevant evaluators of performance for him.

Procedurally relevant evaluators of performance are hardly present in the practice of evaluation of the Chorus Artistic Director. Statutorily, the superiors of the Chorus Artistic Director are the Managing Director and the Artistic Director, but, as he likes to state, he does not "report to them", he "collaborate[s] with [them]". Rather than procedurally relevant evaluators of performance, the two members of the direction are thus seen above all as co-producers of the work of the Chorus Artistic Director and, thus, as substantively relevant evaluators of performance. With respect to the evaluators of performance that are procedurally relevant to him, the Chorus Artistic Director also has the duty to meet regularly with a chorus committee representing the interests of all chorus singers. This happens once a month. The overall picture of the substantively relevant evaluators of performance for the Chorus Artistic Director, especially of the ones inside the organization, is much richer. These include Chief Conductor, Artistic Director and Managing Director, designers, stage

directors, guest conductors, Chief of the Artistic Department and the chorus singers. The Chorus singers are very influential in the judgment forming of the Chorus Artistic Director since, as he says,

> "As a whole, the chorus can really be considered an artistic, a great artistic conscience of the company".

Also the Chief Conductor has practically no procedurally relevant evaluators apart from his statutory superiors:[82] Artistic Director and Managing Director. The role of the Artistic Director in the work of the Chief Conductor becomes evident above all from the substantive relevance assigned by the Chief Conductor to the opinions of the Artistic Director. The Artistic Director is important for the Chief Conductor because the opinions of the Artistic Director influence the Chief Conductor in the process of forming judgements about the artistic value created by himself and by the organization, and not because the Artistic Director is the statutory superior of the Chief Conductor. In this sense, the Artistic Director is more a peer than a superior, and a co-producer of the artistic work with the Chief Conductor rather than someone the Chief Conductor has to work for. He is thus more a substantively than a procedurally relevant evaluator of performance for the Chief Conductor. Other substantively relevant evaluators of performance for the Chief Conductor are, in order of relevance: the other artistic managers of the organization (Chief of the Artistic Department, Chorus Artistic Director, Chorus Masters and Concert Masters) and the artistic staff in general, the audience, and the press, as he explains here with respect to the evaluation of an individual production:

> "First, we would say, we would judge ourselves and say: 'Well, ok, apart from what's being said by the critics and the public, or the box office, are we content with the result? Are we actually convinced that this is a valuable - a good thing or not?' This could be kind of contradictory at times, that outside it could be a big success and inside we wouldn't be maybe similarly convinced about it. You see what I mean? So […] first it's us, then it's of course the public every night, you see if there's a response or not. And then in the end - or, further - there could be a…, there's of course an echo of the media, […] but these three are kind of independent".

Another fundamental evaluator of performance for the Chief Conductor is oneself, whose opinion is by definition substantively relevant. Self-opinion is particularly important for him in forming every kind of judgment about the quality of his own artistic work and, in general, of the artistic value created by the organization. Referring to the most important opinion in judging his own work and the work of the Artistic Director and of other colleagues, the Chief Conductor says:

> "I trust my ears […] Well, it does not mean I'm the most important person in the theatre, it does mean I'm the one I trust most. I trust my ears, my instincts. And then if other people say different things - fine. But, you know? I start always with my point of view".

To sum up, regulatory and statutory bodies have a very limited relevance for the practice of evaluation of the managers with an artistic profile. More generally, the substantively relevant evaluators of performance are more important than the procedurally relevant for the evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization. In the case of the Chief Conductor, whose function is purely artistic, procedurally relevant evaluators of performance play practically no role at all in the

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[82] This was at the time of the interview. Later he has himself become a member of the direction.

artistic evaluation. Together with the relevance of the opinions of the artistic staff, peers and press, which are not anchored in rules and procedures, self-opinion is central for all the interviewed managers with an artistic profile. Although the frame of reference for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization is influenced by the artistic experts of the organizations itself, the individual is finally the one who sees and listens to the opera productions and forms a judgment on them. Finally, for the managers with artistic profile the audience is a fundamental evaluator of performance, both procedurally and substantively. Apart from the Chief of the Artistic Department, whose closed network of substantively relevant evaluators of performance only includes oneself and peers - both inside and outside the organization - all other managers assign a high importance to the judgments and opinions of the audience. The audience is not only a group the organization has the duty to work for, as requested by the government, they are also the natural recipients of the results of the artistic processes of the organization - programming and producing. The centrality of the audience in the artistic processes of the organization seems not to be the consequence of the general pressure for more market orientation in the publicly funded arts sector, but a natural concern of the artistic staff - including the artistic managers - of the organization.

The group of managers with technical profile includes Technical Director, Chief of Production Management, and Production Manager. Table E4 shows which relevance, procedural (P) and/or substantive (S), they assign to the evaluators of performance, as emerged from the interviews.

Managers / Evaluators of Performance	Technical Director	Chief of Production Management	Production Manager	Total Technical Managers (3)
Government	P			**1P**
Cultural Council				
Funders				
Auditors/Inspectors	P	P		**2P**
Sponsors			S	**1S**
Donors				
Supervisory Board				
Press	S	S		**2S**
Audience	P/S		P/S	*2P/2S*
Peers			S	**1S**
Direction	P/S	P/S	P/S	*3P/3S*
Staff	S	P/S	P/S	2P/**3S**
Oneself	S	S	S	**3S**

Table E4: Evaluators of performance for managers with technical profile

From this table it emerges that for managers with technical profile, regulatory and statutory bodies hardly play a role in the evaluation of the artistic processes and their results. The government plays a purely procedural role only for the Technical Director, the only manager with technical profile who has, being member of the direction, a partially administrative function. He considers the organization statutorily accountable to the government and statutorily responsible towards the audience, since the main statutory objectives are dependent on the government's cultural policy objectives, and audience outreach is one of these objectives. According to him, the organization has thus the duty to work for the audience and to inform the government about (the results of) this work. Given my working definitions, government and audience are thus considered procedurally relevant evaluators of performance by the Technical Director. Anyway, the government, together with the supervisory board, plays no role for the managers with technical profile in their process of forming as well as explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization and by themselves.

For the managers with technical profile other evaluators of performance than regulatory and statutory bodies are in general relevant, procedurally and/or substantively. A difference compared to their colleagues with administrative and artistic profile is a more accentuated focus on evaluators of performance inside the organization. The three managers with technical profile share oneself, staff, and the direction as relevant evaluators of performance. Although there is no apparent contradiction between procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators of performance inside the organization, a closer look shows that the (groups of) colleagues that influence the three managers with technical profile in their process of forming as well as explaining judgments about the artistic

value created by the organization and by themselves, and that are thus substantively relevant evaluators of performance, are many more than the ones they have statutorily to report to. For instance, for the Technical Director, his own staff and all the colleagues that use the work of the technical department, including the Artistic Director, influence his process of forming judgments about the value of his own contribution. The opinions of the Artistic Director, of the technical staff and of the individual production teams (director, stage designer, costumes designer etc.), are fundamental for the Technical Director in order to form a judgment about the individual productions. With respect to the individual productions, he also actively seeks the opinions of those members of his staff who do not have the opportunity to see the performance from the theatre hall, but only experience the production process from backstage. Finally, the opinions of the whole organization's staff influence the Technical Director in his process of forming a judgment about the quality of the work of the Artistic Director.

The most important evaluators of performance for the Chief of Production Management are also inside the organization, with the artistic and production staff assuming the most influential role for him. The Chief of Production Management has the duty to inform the direction and the policy team (which includes Artistic Director, Managing Director, Chief of the Artistic Department, Technical Director, Costumes Director, and production managers) about (the results of) his work and (the results of) the work of his staff. Direction and policy team are thus procedurally relevant evaluators of performance for him. Above all he sees the directors of the individual productions as the recipients of his work, and thus as substantively relevant evaluators of performance. The satisfaction of a director is for him an indicator of how well he has worked at a production. The Artistic Director's opinion is the most important for the Chief of Production Management to determine whether he is doing a good job in the organization in general. The Artistic Director is thus also a substantively relevant evaluator of performance for the Chief of Production Management. Nevertheless, his self-opinion, which is by definition substantively relevant, influences the Chief of Production Management the most. One's own standards and opinions are the main references for the evaluation of a production and of one's own work. The ability to judge the quality of one's own work comes from one's own experience. The 31 year experience of the Chief of Production Management in technical functions within the organization may explain this attitude. The impression that the frame of reference of the Chief of Production Management is prevalently inside the organization is reinforced by the fact that he consciously limits his frame of reference both by assigning high relevance to internal evaluators of performance and by explicitly neglecting the role of external ones. On the one hand, for the Chief of Production Management, his department, that is the production management team, is the best evaluator of itself. On the other hand, also when he mentions that the international press influences success in the opera world, he stresses that the opinion of the press is influential for opera fans and not for his own process of forming judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. The press has thus for him clearly a secondary role as a substantively relevant evaluator of performance. The internal frame of reference cannot be disturbed by external intrusion, as the following quote from the interview with the Chief of Production Management testifies with respect to work style and customs within the organization:

> "Once we were sitting for lunch, we were with the director, the designer and the production manager, and we were speaking about our work, about how the rehearsal had gone. Someone came and sat with us, someone who was pretty new in the organization and who was working on the production. And he said loud: 'I can't believe

you talk about work at lunch!' We looked at him and said: 'You're new here. Sorry, but we keep on doing it. If you don't like it, go and sit somewhere else'. That was typical, the guy didn't stay very long with us. But that's how we are."

While the audience is not an important evaluator of performance for the Chief of Production Management, the Technical Director and the Production Manager assign the audience a high relevance both procedurally and substantively. For instance, when speaking about the current policy of the organization, the Production Manager sees the organization as statutorily responsible to the audience. The organization has the duty to create value for audience and community, which are thus procedurally relevant evaluators of performance for the Production Manager. At the same time, within the organization there is a lot of thinking about how the audience has been educated by the organization and how the audience has grown together with the organization and its Artistic Director. Also in explaining what makes opera companies and productions successful, the audience is the first to be mentioned, as it is the case when the Production Manager is asked about how he judges his own work. Thus he sees the audience both as a natural recipient of the results of the work of the organization and as a group whose opinion influences the Production Manager in his process of forming judgments about the value created by the organization. According to my definitions of procedurally and substantively relevant evaluators of performance, the audience is thus also one important evaluator amongst the substantively relevant evaluators of performance for the Production Manager.

To sum up, regulatory and statutory bodies are hardly relevant for the practice of evaluation of the managers with technical profile. Self-opinion and the opinion of the staff are central for managers with technical profile in their process of forming as well as explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. This suggests the presence of a frame of reference that is strongly embedded in the internal environment of the organization. Apart from the important role of the audience for two of the three managers with technical profile, peers outside the organization are important only for the Production Manager, and the opinion of the press is considered as a legitimate, expert voice for the evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization only by the Technical Director. The focus on the internal organization might be explained by the nature of the work of technical staff and managers. They are mainly concerned with the practical aspects of the production process and they have to, literally, produce physical, material artefacts (technique and decoration) to be used by the artistic team of the individual productions. While the artistic staff produces and performs mainly for an audience, the technical staff produces and performs mainly for the artistic staff. In this sense the technical managers are a sort of suppliers to the artistic managers who use and judge their work, which would explain the dominance of internal evaluators of performance in their frame of reference. By comparing the evaluators of performance of the managers with technical profile with those of the managers with, respectively, administrative and artistic profile, below it will be possible to elaborate further on this proposition.

Table E5 shows the number of occurrences of the evaluators of performance, both procedurally (P) and/or substantively relevant (S), in the interviews with the three groups of managers with, respectively, administrative, artistic, and technical profile.

Group of Managers / Evaluators of Performance	Managers with Administrative Profile (7)	Managers with Artistic Profile (7)	Managers with Technical Profile (3)	Total Managers (17)	Total per Group of Evaluators of Performance
Government	**3P**	1P/**2S**	**1P**	**5P**/2S	
Cultural Council	**1P**			**1P**	
Funders	**1P**	**2P**		**3P**	
Auditors/Inspectors	**1P**		**2P**	**3P**	**22P**/5S
Sponsors	**2P**	**2P**	**1S**	**4P**/1S	
Donors	**1P**			**1P**	
Supervisory Board	**2P**/1S	**3P**/1S		**5P**/2S	
Press	1P/**5S**	**6S**	**2S**	1P/**13S**	
Audience	3P/**6S**	4P/**6S**	**2P/2S**	9P/**14S**	
Peers	1P/**5S**	1P/**6S**	**1S**	2P/**12S**	33P/**84S**
Direction	6P/**7S**	**7P**/5S	**3P/3S**	**16P**/15S	
Staff	1P/**7S**	2P/**6S**	2P/**3S**	5P/**16S**	
Oneself	**4S**	**7S**	3S	**14S**	
Total Evaluators of Performance	23P/**35S**	22P/**39S**	10P/**15S**	55P/**89S**	

Table E5: Evaluators of performance for the three groups of managers

As anticipated in the introduction of this section, my analysis shows that the evaluators of performance of the interviewed managers are clearly divided in 2 groups:

- evaluators that have a very limited role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, both procedurally and substantively;
- evaluators that have a significant role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, either procedurally or substantively.

What is particularly interesting is that the evaluators with a very limited role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, if mentioned, are mostly assigned only procedural relevance, while the evaluators with a significant role are all assigned at least substantive relevance. With respect to the evaluators with a very limited role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, the relation between *procedurally* and *substantively* relevant evaluators of performance mentioned in the interviews is 4.4 to 1 (22P/5S). The picture changes completely by looking at the evaluators that have a significant role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results. In this case, the relation between *procedurally* and *substantively* relevant evaluators of performance mentioned in the interviews is 1 to 2.5 (33P/84S).

For an understanding of the practice of evaluation in the organization, this means that, if an evaluator has an important role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results, then this role is mostly substantive and not necessarily procedural. The opinions of the natural co-producers and

recipients of the artistic work of the organization are far more important for the process of forming and explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization than the opinions of the groups of persons the organization has the duty to work for or to inform about (the results of) the artistic work of the organization.

By looking at the individual evaluators of performance within the two groups distinguished above (evaluators with a very limited role and evaluators with a significant role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results) it becomes visible how the relevance of the evaluators for the practice of evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization depends on the involvement of these evaluators in the artistic processes of the organization and not on the fact that they are internal or external stakeholders of the organization (see section 5.4.1 of the paper).

The evaluators of performance with a limited role are: government, cultural council, funders, auditors/inspectors, sponsors, donors and supervisory board. From the perspective of the interviewed managers, these evaluators are not involved in the core artistic processes of the organization but only in the supporting ones. At least in two cases this is not completely obvious. Government and Cultural Councils use time-consuming procedures of evaluations of the organizational performance, explicitly including and even stressing the importance of artistic aspects of performance, in order to legitimate their funding decisions. Nevertheless, they do not seem to influence the managers of the organization in their process of forming as well as explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. This can be interpreted as a sign of a separation between the regulatory systems of accountability for artistic results and the ones actually used in the organization. The Supervisory Board is also considered irrelevant with respect to the evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization. It may seem a paradox that this organ of statutory control of the organization has literally nothing to say about the artistic choices of the direction. The Supervisory Board has to be informed about programming and special initiatives, but it seems as if its members are not even expected to express an opinion on these topics, let alone influence the managers in their process of forming as well as explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. The Supervisory Board, a statutory body that is by definition responsible for controlling the work of the Direction of the organization, is practically excluded from controlling the main value created by the organization: the artistic one.[83]

The evaluators of performance with an important role are: press, audience, peers, direction, staff and oneself. The Direction, the organization's staff in general and the individual managers (oneself) are involved in two core artistic processes: programming and production**. Peers, audience and press are involved in another process that emerges as a core artistic process from the interviews: reception. Considering programming, production and reception as integral processes of the artistic work of the organization, an explanation is offered for the clear divide between the two groups of evaluators of performance - the ones with a very limited role and the ones with a significant role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results - emerged from the interviews. Evaluators that are involved in the artistic processes - programming, production and reception - have consequently a

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[83] The reasons why the Supervisory Board emerges as irrelevant in the evaluation of the core value created by the organization have been not investigated in this research. The members of the Supervisory Board have not been interviewed. Nevertheless, it is surprising that that the power to express opinions *on* and to influence the work *of* the Direction, which the Supervisory Board statutorily has, is not felt at all by the members of the Direction and by the other managers of the organization.

significant role in the evaluation of these processes and their results. Evaluators that are not involved in the artistic processes, but only in the supporting ones, have consequently a very limited role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results.

As noticed above, the evaluators with a significant role in the evaluation of artistic processes and their results are mostly assigned substantive relevance. Only the direction is given the same high relevance both procedurally and substantively. The interviewed managers are either members of the direction, or their superiors are members of the direction. The statutory relation between them is thus obvious, and, consequently, the procedural relevance given to these evaluators as well. The substantive relevance can be explained by a general trust of the interviewed managers in the work and the authority of the direction and, with respect to the artistic work of the organization, especially in the work and the authority of the Artistic Director.

Together with the direction, the organization's staff and oneself are important evaluators of performance inside the organization, both of them mostly substantively. While staff is important for all the interviewed managers - except one - across the three groups, self-opinion is very important for all managers with artistic and technical profile, but not for all managers with administrative profile. Considering the focus on artistic processes and their results, it is plausible that administrative managers rely on the opinion of artistic managers to evaluate the artistic value created by the organization. Technical managers and artistic managers are the creators of the artistic product. The technical managers supply tangible techniques and decoration to the artistic managers and their teams, who use them to create the final intangible artistic value, the opera performance. Technical and artistic managers are experienced *with* and involved *in* the production of opera performances. They are continuously busy with the evaluation of what they are doing and have thus developed personal, and individual, standards to evaluate the results. As the following quote from the interview with the Chief of the Artistic Department testifies, having strong personal opinions on artistic choices seems a necessary condition to work in an artistic function in the opera world:

> "You are just expected to pursue your own line".

This might also be an explanation for the fact that all the interviewed managers with artistic profile, who are all responsible for artistic choices, see self-opinion as fundamental. For managers with an administrative profile working in a purely administrative function (e.g. the Finance Chief) this is not the case, since they are not responsible for any artistic decisions. In this case it is legitimate to embrace the opinions of the artistic staff in order to form one's own judgment on artistic matters.

While the evaluators of performance related to programming and production (direction, staff and oneself) are equally relevant for the managers of the three groups, the evaluators of performance related to reception (peers, audience and press) are slightly less relevant for the managers with technical profile. In practice the technical department works for the artistic department, since the technique and decoration they create are used by the artistic teams of the individual productions. In this sense, the natural recipients of the work of the technical managers and their departments - what I call, according to my definitions at the beginning of this section, substantively relevant evaluators of performance - are inside (artistic teams) rather than outside the organization (audience etc.). This explains why the frame of reference of the technical managers is centered in the internal organization.

Amongst the relevant evaluators of performance outside the organization, audience is important for all three groups of managers. The assumption that the substantive relevance given to the audience's opinions and judgments might be a consequence of increasing presence of a market orientation doctrine within the public and not-for-profit sector, as I had assumed in the analysis of the evaluators of the evaluation of the managers with administrative profile, is not confirmed by the cross-analysis. The audience is not only an evaluator the organization has the duty to work for, as requested by the government, they are the natural recipients of the results of the core artistic processes of the organization, which are completely in the hands of the organization (i.e. programming and production). Being involved in the reception of the artistic work for the organization, it is logical that their evaluation influences managers in their process of forming as well as explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization. Thus, the centrality of the audience in the artistic processes of the organization seems not to be the consequence of the growing market orientation in the publicly funded arts sector, but a natural concern of the artistic staff - including the artistic managers - of the organization, as the following quote from the interview with the Chief Dramaturge clearly summarizes. Asked about how he knows he has done a good job, the Chief Dramaturge answers:

> "Through the audience I think, again. Obviously, that's difficult, 'cause I think that we makers have to be some steps further than the audience, and we have to forecast and predict things - new talents, new developments – to demand more from the audience than an audience self would dare to. You'd better present difficult things in a popular, interesting, appealing dress than only things that the audience knows and like to see. I think, if we say: 'Go and see the performance, the performance is good and they go along with us, then I know we've been good".

Through the cross-analysis of the evaluators of performance for the interviewed managers no particular difference emerges between the managers with, respectively, administrative, artistic and technical profile. The few exceptions have been explained either through specific aspects of the personal profile, such as the function of the individual manager, or contextual ones, such as the specific focus of an external evaluation procedure. The homogeneous distribution of the relevance given to the evaluators of performance across the three groups of managers shows that belonging to the organization implies sharing a common frame of reference with respect to the evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization. Since, at the time of the interviews, many managers had worked at the organization for a very long time and often in the same position (see table 5.1 of the paper), it is difficult to understand whether the common frame of reference originates in the organization itself or in the opera world in general. Anyway, although regulatory and statutory bodies are excluded from the shared frame of reference, there is no evidence that this is the result of a barrier created by the organization's members as a reaction against the external pressure for more regulatory accountability. As evidenced above, the common frame of reference seems to be related to the nature of artistic processes and their results. If someone is naturally involved in the artistic processes (programming, production, reception) then he is considered an important evaluator of the artistic performance of the organization, regardless of the rules and procedures imposed by regulatory bodies or by internal management systems. If someone is not naturally involved in the artistic processes, then he is not considered an important evaluator of the artistic performance of the organization, even if his role as evaluator is anchored in rules and procedures imposed by regulatory bodies or by internal management systems.

In general, while there seems to be no intrusion of the opinions of regulatory and statutory bodies in the process of forming and explaining judgments about the artistic value created by the organization, there seems to be no special aversion to the role of regulatory and statutory bodies. They just seem to be absent from the actual practice of evaluation of artistic processes and their results in the organization, even though the organization has recently undergone two external evaluations where artistic aspects played, at least according to the procedures, an important role. The role of the evaluators for the Chief Conductor exemplifies these findings in the most effective way. He also exemplifies the prevailing role of substantively against procedurally relevant evaluators of performance in the evaluation practice of the organization. His function at the time of the interview was purely artistic. The only evaluators of performance he mentions are those involved in the artistic processes: direction, staff and oneself; press, audience and peers. Apart from the fact that the Artistic Director was, at the time of the interview, his superior, and thus also a procedurally relevant evaluator of performance for the Chief Conductor, all the six evaluators are for him, above all, substantively relevant. All other evaluators of performance, i.e. those not involved in the artistic processes, are practically absent in his practice of evaluation of artistic processes and their results.

The fact that the opinions of the important evaluators of performance (e.g. oneself and audience) are relevant for the artistic work of the organization mainly substantively, might be related to the content of the information exchanged in order to form judgments about the artistic value created by an opera company. The analysis of the dimensions of performance and their procedural and/or substantive relevance for the practice of evaluation of the managers of the organization can help to elaborate on this assumption.

APPENDIX 4: Dimensions of performance

In this section I analyze the role of different dimensions of performance in the interviewed managers' process of making sense of the artistic performance of their organization. To do this, I focus on the procedural and/or substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to the different dimensions of performance.

By *procedurally relevant dimensions of performance* I mean *dimensions a manager has the duty to take into account according to rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management systems in order to give and receive account of the value created by himself and by the organization.*

By *substantively relevant dimensions of performance* I mean *dimensions a manager takes into account in order to form and explain his own judgment about the value created by himself and by the organization, regardless of rules and procedures imposed by external regulatory bodies or by internal management.*

For the analysis of the procedural/substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to the different dimensions of performance, I first listed all aspects, criteria and indicators of performance which emerged from the interviews and then I grouped them according to different dimensions and sub-dimensions of performance. The second phase of the analysis consisted of an investigation of the type of relevance (procedural/substantive) the interviewed managers attached to the aspects, criteria and indicators they mentioned and consequently, at an aggregate level, to each (sub-)dimension of performance. Since the procedural and/or substantive relevance which the interviewed managers attached to the different dimensions of performance may depend on the individual profile of the manager, I analyzed the dimensions of performance within each of the three groups of managers with shared personal profiles (administrative, artistic and technical). By doing this, I was able to identify common patterns within each group and to relate possible differences between the individual managers in the group to specific aspects of their personal profiles (education, experience and function). Then, I analyzed the dimensions of performance across the three groups (administrative, artistic and technical). By doing this, I was able to reconsider the role of personal factors against the role of contextual factors related both to the internal and external environments of the organization.

From the analysis of the interviews, four main dimensions of performance have emerged: artistic, social, organizational and financial. The artistic dimension of performance includes three sub-dimensions related to the three main artistic processes which emerged from the analysis of the evaluators of performance: programming, production, and reception. For each (sub-)dimension, aspects, criteria and indicators of performance mentioned in the interviews have been clustered in categories. Figures D1-D6 show all aspects, criteria and indicators included in each (sub-)dimension. The shapes ending with an arrow on their right side are used when a cause-effect relation emerged from the interviews. For instance, in the sub-dimension *Programming* (figure D1)*,* I identified aspects, criteria and indicators of performance relating to three categories: *Artistic Director, Program, Profile.* The ability of the Artistic Director to take risks, his taste and his artistic leadership are aspects that influence the final program of a season. In turn, the most important criterion for the evaluation of the program is the match between the chosen works and the recruited cast per work. Finally, the programs of the individual seasons influence the profile of the opera. The most

important criteria for the evaluation of the profile are its specificity and consistency on a long-term horizon.[84] Figures D2 (sub-dimension *production*), D3 (sub-dimension *reception*) and D4 (social dimension) can be read in an analogous way. In figures D5 and D6 (respectively representing the organizational and the financial dimension of performance), aspects, criteria and indicators are grouped in categories that have, at least according to what emerged from the interviews, no explicit cause-effect relation with each other. Squares represent these categories. In particular, what concerns the shapes on the right end of figures D1-D6, if the shape ends with an arrow it means that that (sub-)dimension influences the managers' actual judgments of the artistic performance of the organization. If the shapes on the right end are squares, it means that that (sub-)dimension does not influence the managers' actual judgments of the artistic performance of the organization.

With respect to the procedural and/or substantive relevance assigned by the managers of each of the three groups of managers to the different dimensions of performance, the analysis will be introduced by a table showing an overview of the dimensions of performance of the managers of the respective group, as emerged from the interviews. In the first column of the tables the dimensions of performance are divided into two groups, as emerged from the analysis of the dimensions of performance of all the 17 interviewed managers:

- dimensions whose relevance is mainly procedural;
- dimensions whose relevance is mainly substantive.

The dimensions of performance that are mainly procedurally relevant are the financial and the organizational dimensions of performance. The dimensions of performance that are mainly substantively relevant are the social dimension and the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance: programming, production and reception. Table D1 shows how many of the 17 interviewed managers mentioned these dimensions as procedurally (P) and/or substantively (S) relevant for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization:[85]

Group of Managers *Dimensions of performance*	Total Managers (17)
Financial	**11P**/10S
Organizational	**13P**/7S
Social	8P/**15S**
Artistic/Programming	6P/**15S**
Artistic/Production	5P/**13S**
Artistic/Reception	3P/**15S**
Total Dimensions of Performance	46P/**75S**

Table D1: Summary of the dimensions of performance of the interviewed manager

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[84] The mentioned aspects, criteria and indicators are the ones which emerged from the interviews at the investigated organization. There is no pretension of general validity for other opera companies.
[85] In this table and in the following ones in this Appendix, the bold number represents, for each (sub-) dimension of performance, the highest number of occurrences of procedural or substantive relevance assigned by the interviewed managers.

ARTISTIC AND PRODUCTION TEAM

Ability of chorus to sing quietly or fully

Ability of chorus to create a compact sound

Clarity of chorus in communicating score and text

Ability of the chorus to adapt to guest conductors' requirements

Ability of the chorus to adapt to stage directors' requirements

Ability and commitment of orchestra (musicians) to follow the conductor

Ability and commitment of orchestra (musicians) to adapt to what happens on stage

Quality of soloists' phrasing

Soloists' consciousness of style

Soloists' individual taste

Soloists' *ampleur* of voice

Ability of stage director to realize its vision

Ability of technical staff to adapt to stage directors' requirements

PERFORMANCE

Overall musical quality

Quality of the individual groups (chorus, orchestra, soloists) in relation to each other and to the overall musical quality

Clarity of staging concept

Innovativeness of staging

Fit of scenery realization with original idea, including props and lighting

MATCH / CONSISTENCY

Figure D2: Artistic Dimension of Performance - Production

ARTISTIC IMPACT

ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE

Artistic reputation

Audience appreciation
(Applause length, commitment and engagement in audience reactions, percentage of well received productions by audience)

Media appreciation
(number of stars in reviews, tone of discussion in the media, percentage of well received production by media)

Professional appreciation / Added value to opera form
(Decision of other companies to buy or rent a production)

Meaningfulness and worthwhileness of performance

Transformational power of performance (enriching, giving depth to life)

Audience-challenging performance

Expressiveness

Surprise and magic aura of performance

Breathlessness causing performance

Connectivity between stage and hall, between performers and audience

Supportiveness of an understanding of arts from the past

Figure D3: Artistic Dimension of Performance - Reception

Understanding the audience
(Taste appeal of productions to a broad audience, respect for audience's acceptance threshold of innovation and experimentation)

Trend in ticket sales after première, seat occupancy per production and season, number of sold-out productions per season

Identifying segments, selecting target markets, positioning the offer
(Outreach contemporary society, balance between regular and new audience, balance between adding value to local and international offer)

Number of performances/productions, popularity, awards for outreach initiatives, position in the cultural establishment, role in community (locally, nationally, internationally)

Managing location
(Quality of hospitality services)

Audience satisfaction with overall experience at the theatre (hospitality, building, technique)

Building audience frequency and loyalty
(Artistic Director's vision outreach, ability to create and maintain attenders' high expectations)

Audience retention numbers, willingness to pay for tickets

Public relations
(Creating opportunities for presence in the media)

Number of reviews in the media, number of DVD and broadcastings

Education
(Presence and quality of education activities)

Sustainable connection to the audience of the future
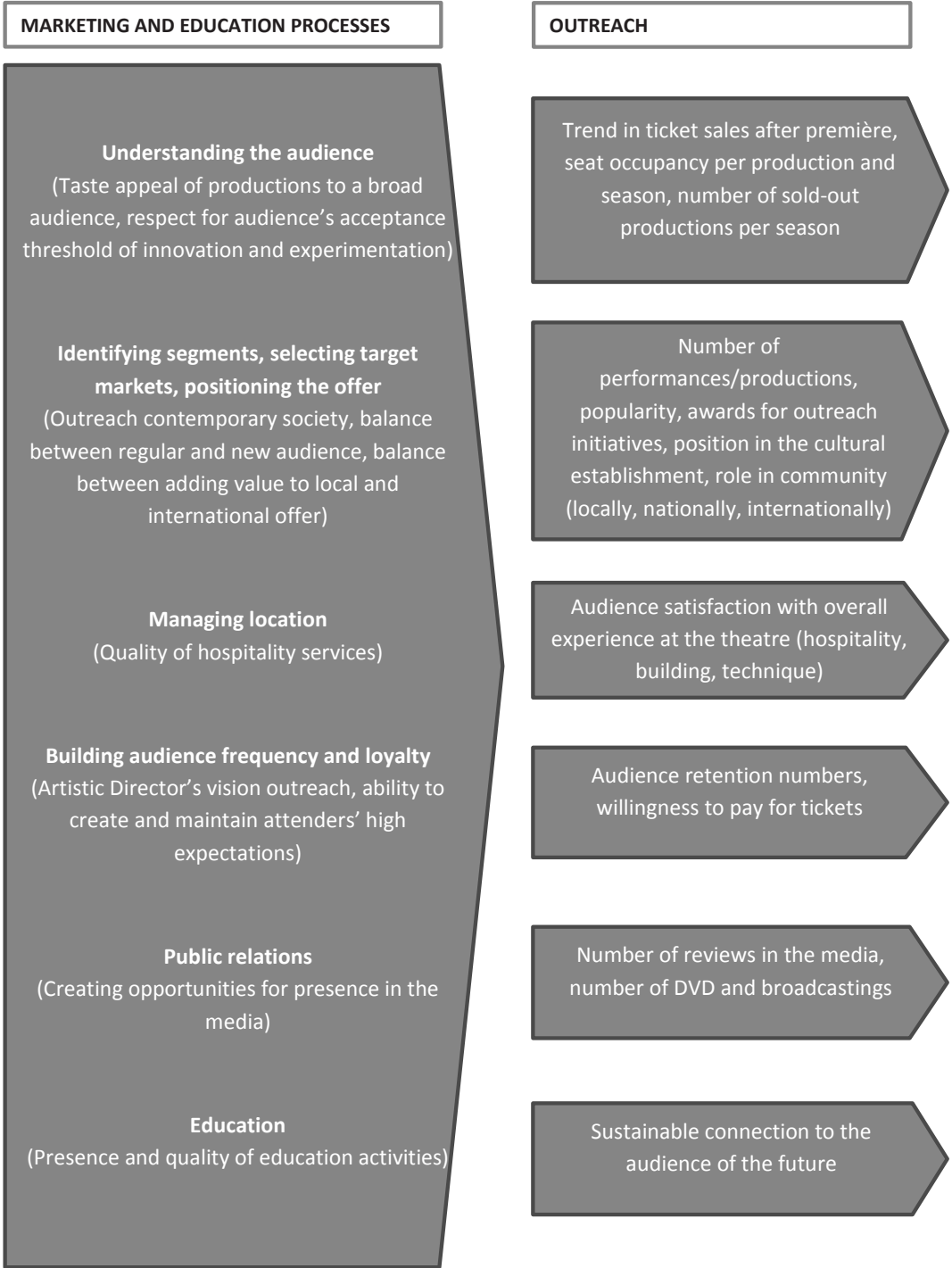
Figure D4: Social Dimension of Performance

PROCESSES

Technical facilities (keeping within boundaries, avoiding problems to singers on stage)

Safety

Sustainability

Rehearsal time for chorus

Available staging time for production

Coordination between project-based and permanent staff

Level of attention and concentration at rehearsals

Quality of team work

CULTURE

Ability to customize work
(to give freedom to experiment with modern interpretations)

Ability to listen to individual ideas of artists

Ability to create a hierarchy-free dialogue
(by different parties by going beyond hierarchical divisions that are typical of the opera world)

PEOPLE

Artistic talents development
(e.g. voice, language skills and acting skills of chorus singers)

Leadership style of artistic staff
(artistic director, stage directors, orchestra conductors, chorus conductors, singers)

Figure D5: Organizational Dimension of Performance

Economy
(Budget compliance, keeping soloists'
average honorariums low)

Efficiency
(Making good use of subsidies)

Sales revenues
(Revenue per ticket, box office returns)

Fundraising performance
(Amount of granted subsidies)

Figure D6: Financial Dimension of Performance

Dimensions of performance for managers with administrative profile

The group of managers with an administrative profile includes Managing Director, Assistant of the Managing Director, Communication Chief, Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring, Finance Chief, Planning Chief and Chorus Managing Director. Table D2 shows which relevance, procedural (P) and/or substantive (S), they assign to the different dimensions of performance, as emerged from the interviews.

Managers / Dimensions of performance	Managing Director	Assistant of the Managing Director	Communication Chief	Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring	Finance Chief	Planning Chief	Chorus Managing Director	Total Administrative Managers (7)
Financial	P/S	P	P/S		P/S		P	**5P**/3S
Organizational	P/S	P/S	P/S	P		P	P/S	**6P**/4S
Social	P	P/S	P/S	S	S		P/S	4P/**5S**
Artistic/Programming	S	P/S	P/S		S	S	S	2P/**6S**
Artistic/Production	S	S				S	S	**4S**
Artistic/Reception	S	S	P/S	S	S	S	P/S	2P/**7S**

Table D2: Dimensions of performance for managers with administrative profile

From this table it emerges that all dimensions of performance are relevant for the managers with administrative profile. The difference between the financial and organizational dimensions on the one hand, and the social dimension and the three artistic sub-dimensions on the other hand consists in the sort of relevance the managers assign to them. The financial and organizational dimensions of performance have to be procedurally taken into account and are thus in general procedurally relevant. Nevertheless, their influence on the managers' actual judgments of the artistic value created by the organization emerges as limited if compared with their procedural relevance. In particular, none of the interviewed managers with administrative profile assigns only substantive relevance to the financial and organizational dimensions of performance. The administrative profile of the interviewed managers do not result in general in an higher substantive relevance of the dimensions that are commonly associated with administration; that is, the financial and organizational dimensions of performance, compared with the dimensions that are commonly associated with the mission of arts organizations, that is, the social and the artistic (sub-)dimensions. Substantively, the social and artistic (sub-)dimensions of performance are the most relevant for the managers with administrative profile although procedurally their relevance is very limited. From most of the interviews they emerge as only substantively relevant.

Financial dimension of performance

With respect to the financial dimension of performance, for the Assistant of the Managing Director and the Chorus Managing Director this has only a procedural relevance, reflecting the general pattern of dominance of the procedural relevance of the financial dimension within the group of managers with administrative profile. Financial aspects are at the core of the reports that the Assistant of the Managing Director gives to the Managing Director and of her discussions with the Ministry representatives. While discussing the budget for a production, the financial dimension is procedurally relevant and automatically intertwined with artistic choices. Nevertheless, in forming a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization, no substantive role emerges for the

financial dimension from the interview with the Assistant of the Managing Director. The financial dimension of performance influences the artistic planning and not the evaluation phase, since the amount of the available budget is a financial precondition, in the same way as the size of the stage is a technical precondition.

Also from the interview with the Chorus Managing Director the financial dimension emerges as having an implicit role in the artistic planning by setting limits which, in recent times, are becoming increasingly tightened and obvious for the staff. The artistic staff is getting increasingly conscious of the fact that subsidies are not obvious anymore. In the programming process, when a production is firstly planned, the Chorus Managing Director looks at its feasibility. Sometimes it is necessary to recruit additional singers for a production and maybe this is not financially possible in that season, since other productions in the same season already require additional chorus singers. As a result, smaller productions might be planned. Budget-related information is also prepared by the Chorus Managing Director for her regular meetings with the Managing Director, for instance about the cost of the costumes for the chorus and whether it is better to perform with less chorus singers or to save on costumes. These financial aspects have to be taken into account within the artistic processes and are thus, according to my definitions, procedurally relevant. Although in this case financial considerations influence the artistic processes, this happens again at the beginning rather than within or at the end of the process. Though important in the artistic planning, no substantive role emerges for the financial dimension in the evaluation, since there is no evidence that financial considerations influence the Chorus Managing Director's judgment of the artistic value created by the organization.

For the Managing Director, the Communication Chief, and the Finance Chief the financial dimension of performance has both procedural and substantive relevance. The procedural relevance of the financial dimension of performance for these three managers is no surprise, considering their personal profile. The Managing Director is, as she likes to say herself, practically "responsible for everything apart from artistic choices", thus for technique, organization, and finance, indeed. The Communication Chief is responsible for publicity and marketing, including sales. The Finance Chief is responsible for financial administration, control, and salary records. Financial aspects, criteria and indicators thus play a central role in their work. Nevertheless, the substantive relevance they assign to the financial dimension is not dominant, but rather secondary if compared with the social and artistic (sub-)dimensions. What is interesting is that the substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance is higher for the Communication Chief than for the Managing Director and the Finance Chief, although the former has a much less commercial and financial background than the latter. The Managing Director has a commercial and practice-oriented background, both with respect to education (no higher education) and work experience (cruise company, broadcasting, promotion consulting). The Finance Chief studied Economics with a major in Accountancy and then attended a postgraduate program to get the qualification of chartered accountant. Finally, she worked for 13 years as a chartered accountant at a big auditing company before joining the organization. In contrast, the Communication Chief's first degree was in the humanities, and his whole career within the performing arts sector. Nevertheless, at the time of the interview he was attending an executive MBA programme and trying to build a career beyond the cultural sector, which might be an explanation for his more business-oriented attitude in judging the artistic value created by the organization. For him, the relevance of the financial dimension seems to go beyond the procedurally relevant information he has to gather (box office returns, budget). Asked

about what makes an opera company successful, the Communication Chief mentions financial health at first. Although this is not directly to do with artistic success, the impression that the financial dimension of performance partially enters the artistic one is underpinned by the Communication Chief's opinion that the success of a season can be measured through the ratio of returns/cost, which is a financial measure. In this way, the financial dimension of evaluation influences the Communication Chief's judgment about the programmed season. In this case the judgment does not happen during the artistic planning but when the 'artistic plan' has been executed, that is, when the programmed productions have been performed. In this sense it is clearly a judgment of the results of the artistic processes which the Communication Chief refers to here. According to my working definitions, the financial dimension assumes a substantive relevance in the evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization.

As mentioned above, for the Managing Director and the Finance Chief the substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance as well as the possibilities of financial indicators for the evaluation of artistic value are much more modest. Although the Managing Director has a purely administrative profile, the financial dimension of performance only partially touches the realm of the artistic processes in her judgment of the artistic value created by the organization. Financial aspects are part of artistic decisions in the sense that they give a frame in which to operate. The Managing Director sets this frame, by communicating the financial limits for programming and productions. Her role is to "try to make dreams possible", but then she has to make clear what "dream" is financially feasible, that is, what the financial limits of that "dream" are. Going beyond those limits would not be good, and this does not usually happen. Financial considerations have thus a role in the planning more than in the evaluation. Apart from a procedural relevance, the financial dimension has a substantive relevance in the evaluation of artistic processes and results, but this is secondary compared with the artistic sub-dimensions, as it clearly emerges from the closing sentence of the Managing Director's explanation of what makes an opera company successful:

> "What makes an opera house successful is in my opinion the fact that all the following aspects are present at a high quality standard: quality and attention in rehearsing, quality of performance, both the physical performance and the quality of the artistic ingredients […] You also have to be a little conscious that you have to realize an optimum with the money you get".

Procedurally, with respect to the production process, the Finance Chief has to collect financial information. Nevertheless, financial information does not give the whole picture of how successful the organization is. Finally, the organization is responsible for offering lyric music, with the ambition of offering top quality and of being innovative. Although the artistic component has always a prevailing role compared with the financial one when important decisions have to be made in the organization, for the Finance Chief the financial dimension of performance is always linked to the artistic one, as it clearly emerges from the following quote:

> "And finally, well, a production can be very successful and reach a large audience, but obviously, if it has cost a lot of money and we do not have that money, than we have not scored well on this aspect. Thus, there must be a balance between all the aspects".

Although she assigns a substantive relevance to the financial dimension of performance here, she also recognizes the limits of using financial indicators to evaluate success. To the question about how she recognizes whether her superiors are doing a good artistic job, she answers:

> "Whether they're doing well from the artistic point of view, I always find it difficult to say [...] Obviously, I can track very well how they're doing with respect to budgets. Because I see it [...] And, well, if someone finally stays within the budget and the production ends up being very good, well, then I can also say 'he has just done what he had to do'".

Artistic success cannot be grasped through financial indicators. The impossibility of having in general 'hard data' about the artistic dimension of job achievement produces a shift of the focus to the financial dimension of performance, where information is easier to read since it is expressed through 'hard data'. Nevertheless, there emerges a consciousness about the fact that this hard data finally says very little about the artistic dimension.

Organizational dimension of performance

With respect to the organizational dimension of performance, for the Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring and the Planning Chief this has only a procedural relevance, reflecting the general pattern of dominance of the procedural relevance of the organizational dimension within the group of managers with administrative profile. The Manager Fundraising and Sponsoring explains that the discussion at the opera evaluation meetings are mainly about organizational aspects and not about the artistic ones. Organizational aspects such as the quality of team work and time planning are regularly discussed and formalized in the minutes of the meetings. The organizational dimension is thus procedurally relevant.

The Planning Chief says a lot about the organizational aspects of the artistic work. For instance, what makes the organization successful are mainly aspects related to the organizational culture: customization of work, the ability to listen to the individual needs and ideas of the artists and to create a dialogue between the different parties that goes beyond the hierarchical divisions that are typical of the opera and classical worlds. Nevertheless, the artistic dimension seems to be disconnected from the organizational one, above all with respect to the organizational processes. Although work processes are very important, the intangible aspects of quality are rather independent of them. The quality of a concept has nothing to do with teamwork, but with what one wants to say with the production and how he says it. The way to realize the concept is very important for the people involved and an object of discussion in the opera evaluation meetings. It is thus procedurally relevant. Nevertheless, it says nothing about the quality of the concept itself, which is not discussed in those meetings. Being separate from the substantive evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization, the organizational dimension of performance remains only procedurally relevant for the Planning Chief.

For the Managing Director, the Assistant of the Managing Director, the Communication Chief, and the Chorus Managing Director the organizational dimension of performance has both procedural and substantive relevance. Apart from the shared nature of the responsibilities they have in the organization, which can explain the shared procedural relevance assigned to the organizational dimension of performance, in the case of these four managers there emerges a shared attitude,

possibly originating in their shared administrative profile, towards the role organizational aspects have for the organization's success, and more specifically for the artistic success. Indeed, the shared administrative profile seems to lead in this case to a shared substantive relevance of one of the two typically administrative dimensions of performance, the organizational one. A good example of how procedural and substantive relevance overlap is offered by the interview with the Assistant of the Managing Director. For the first time the external evaluation procedure is treated extensively in her interview, which is not surprising considering that the Assistant of the Managing Director is in charge of the most time-consuming phase of that procedure, the self-evaluation. She explains that within the external evaluation procedure some aspects of organizational performance have to be considered while writing the self-evaluation, according to guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (see *Visitation Protocol 2009, Performing arts institutions with long term subsidy perspective*). Some of the used criteria are related to the organizational dimension, such as management and conditions for continuity. Considering the procedural relevance of the external evaluation for the finances of the organization, these criteria have to be considered procedurally relevant too. With respect to the fact that the direction of the organization had worked together for more than 20 years at the time of the last evaluation (in 2010), questions to be asked were for instance: What will happen when the Managing Director retires in 2012? How can continuity be guaranteed? Who has the knowledge and how can this knowledge be transferred? Apart from this procedurally anchored role of the organizational dimension of performance, the Assistant of the Managing Director also assigns substantive relevance to it. Success of a production depends for her not only on purely artistic aspects, but also on the quality of team work during the production process, which is an aspect that is related to the organizational dimension of performance indeed.

Another example is offered by the interview with the Chorus Managing Director. For regular meetings with the Managing Director, the Chorus Managing Director has to prepare, apart from the financial information seen above, information about staff. Also the topics of the annual appraisal interviews with the chorus singers mainly concern personal and financial aspects. Even the artistic aspects discussed during the annual appraisal interviews are linked to personal development. The Chorus Managing Director mentions for instance developing the voice of individual singers, who may be advised to take singing classes if there are any problems. Language skills and acting skills are two further examples. These aspects that are related to the organizational dimension of performance are thus procedurally relevant. The organizational dimension also has a substantive relevance. For instance, for the chorus singers it is important to have enough time to prepare their appearances. This influences their work satisfaction. In turn, according to the Chorus Managing Director, their work satisfaction should be taken into account while evaluating the work of the chorus direction. Work satisfaction, an aspect related to the organizational dimension of performance, is thus substantively relevant for the Chorus Managing Director in the judgment forming about artistic results, which are in this case represented by the work of the Chorus Artistic Director as one of the members of the chorus direction.

In the case of the Managing Director, procedural and substantive relevance do not overlap at the level of the individual aspects, criteria or indicators. From the interview with her, the ability of a director to communicate with the production team emerges as an aspect related to the organizational dimension of performance that is regularly discussed in meetings, but do not seem to influence the final judgment of the quality of a production. This aspect is thus only procedurally

relevant according to her. On the contrary, quality and attention in rehearsing emerge as substantively relevant aspects within the organizational dimension of performance for the Managing Director, since they contribute, according to her, to the artistic success of the organization. While at an aggregate level the organizational dimension of performance can be consequently considered both procedurally and substantively relevant for the Managing Director, it is important to keep in mind that at the level of the individual aspects, criteria and indicators of performance, there might be cases where procedural and substantive relevance do not overlap.

This consideration is valid for all interviews. For instance, the Communication Chief confirms the procedural relevance of aspects related to the organizational dimension of performance, such as work coordination between core staff and the partially external production teams, and safety issues, which are object of discussion at the opera evaluation meetings. Nevertheless, my conclusion that he also assigns substantive relevance to the organizational dimension of performance originates in the relevance he assigns to another organization-related aspect: commitment to the development of new talents. Together with artistic and social aspects, this is a fundamental aspect in the Communication Chief's judgment of the artistic value created by the organization.

Social dimension of performance

As seen in the introduction to the analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with administrative profile, while procedural relevance is dominant with respect to the financial and organizational dimensions of performance, substantive relevance assumes the dominant role with respect to the social and, even more clearly, to the artistic (sub-)dimensions of performance. It is with respect to the social dimension of performance, that for the last time only a procedural relevance emerges for a dimension of performance from an interview with managers with administrative profile. With respect to the financial and organizational dimensions of performance, this was the case twice for each dimension, while with respect to the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance this will not be the case anymore.

It is from the interview with the Managing Director that only a procedural relevance emerges for the social dimension of performance. According to the Managing Director, the Supervisory Board wants to know whether the organization pays enough attention to education activities, whether it is connected to the community and whether it is looking for the audience of the future. Accounting for these aspects, which are all related to the social dimension of performance, is required by the Supervisory Board, which is a statutory body of the organization. According to my definitions, the social dimension of performance emerges thus as procedurally relevant from the interview with the Managing Director. Nevertheless, the artistic dimension does not seem to be touched at all by the social dimension of performance. For instance, the audience appreciation of a production, which is an aspect relating to the artistic dimension, sub-dimension reception, does not necessarily mean that a production is also sold out, which is an outreach-related aspect belonging to the social dimension of performance: it depends on which specific production one is speaking about. In turn, sometimes a production is sold out but the staff is unhappy about the quality of, for instance, the staging, and thus the production is not considered fully successful. And sometimes it's just the opposite. The criteria of the organization's staff are the strongest frame of reference for evaluating artistic success according to her. This possibly originates in her devotion to supporting the artists. The Managing Director acts as a bridge to the artistic and technical staff; she absorbs the pressure of

making artistic work possible and intermediates between external pressure and artistic work, thus between Supervisory Board/Ministry and the Artistic Director in a way that, on the one hand, Supervisory Board/ Ministry does not need to deal with artistic choices, and, on the other hand, that the Artistic Director does not need to deal with the external pressure. In this construction, it is not necessary that information about artistic processes and their results go outside the realm of the artistic and technical staff. It is based on their frame of reference that the evaluation of artistic processes and results is conducted in the organization, and this seems to be true for the Managing Director too. This might explain why, despite the regulatory pressure for more outreach and for an intensification of marketing and education activities, she does not immediately associate social objectives with the substantive evaluation of the artistic value created by the organization and assigns only procedural relevance to the social dimension of performance.

For the Assistant of the Managing Director, the Communication Chief, and the Chorus Managing Director the social dimension is both procedurally and substantively relevant. In the case of the Communication Chief the procedural relevance of the social dimension of performance is explained by his function within the organization. The Communication Chief is responsible for the whole communication with the external environment (especially audience and media), including publicity and marketing, and thus for activities that have to lead to more outreach, which is one of the main criteria of success within the social dimension of performance. He has to gather information about number of reviews written for a production, seat occupancy and other audience numbers, such as trends in ticket sales for a production after première (an immediate pick in sales after a première often meaning positive word-of-mouth) and has to conduct audience surveys about the audience satisfaction with the general experience at the opera, including the satisfaction with the services. All of these indicators relate to the social dimension of performance and are procedurally relevant for the Communication Chief. Substantively, the social dimension of performance seems to be even more relevant for him than procedurally. The fact that a production is sold-out, for instance, is for the Communication Chief also an indicator of artistic success. Qualitative aspects of the social dimension of performance, such as ability and success in creating a sustainable connection to society, influence his judgment of the artistic value created by the organization, although no specific indicator is available to offer evidence of such achievements. In this sense, his substantive commitment to the social objectives of the organization goes even further than what is possible to account for in procedures. Looking at his personal profile, it emerges that, after his first university degree in the humanities, he has always worked in communication and marketing at performing arts organizations, also before joining the organization. He was press spokesman at a world-famous orchestra, marketing chief at an important German theatre and communication chief at a famous German opera company and joined the organization 4.5 years before the interview. His genuine commitment to social objectives, and thus the high substantive relevance of the social dimension of performance for him, is thus fully aligned with his personal profile.

Also for the Assistant of the Managing Director the substantive relevance seems higher than the procedural one. She refers to the procedurally anchored relevance of social aspects of performance, such as audience outreach and output (the number of offered performances being a precondition for outreach), within the external evaluation procedure, a procedure in which she is personally involved as responsible for the self-evaluation that has to be conducted before the evaluation commission visits the organization. At the same time she finds that artistic aspects of performance (such as innovativeness) must go together with outreach (which is related to the social dimension of

performance), because if nobody goes to the theatre, then something is wrong. In fact, a season is successful for her if it surprises and causes emotions to both experienced and inexperienced audience. The ability to reach both of these audience segments, which is a main task of the marketing and education departments, and thus an aspect belonging to the social dimension of performance, influences her judgment of the whole season. Also in her case the personal profile might explain her genuine commitment to social objectives. After studying literature and theatre - which are still her main interests - the Assistant of the Managing Director worked at first as a dramaturge and then changed into a more management oriented career. Her commitment to outreach might come from her background as a dramaturge. Indeed, a dramaturge has, amongst others, the task of building a content-based bridge between artists and audience through booklets, introductions to performances, etc. An additional explanation for her attitude towards the social objectives of the organization can be her personal involvement in the external evaluation procedure. Considering that the last two external evaluation procedures stressed the relevance of respectively marketing and communication activities and of education activities, the substantive relevance given by the Assistant of the Managing Director to the social dimension of performance might be a sign of intrusion of regulatory criteria of performance into her frame of reference. Nevertheless, considering her background as a dramaturge, it would be more adequate in her case to speak about a fit between her personal attitude and the faced regulatory relevance of the social dimension of performance than about an intrusion of regulatory criteria into her way of thinking.

With respect to the procedural relevance of the social dimension of performance, also the Chorus Managing Director mentions the audience surveys conducted regularly at individual productions. The general experience at the opera, and in particular, as seen above, the service delivery - which is an aspect related to the social dimension of performance - are evaluated through these surveys. The social dimension of performance is also substantively relevant for the Chorus Managing Director, in particular what concerns outreach. When speaking about successful productions, she refers not only to purely artistic aspects of performance, but also to social ones. For instance, productions have to be innovative within the national context, but also appealing to a broader audience: the artistic quality makes an opera company successful together with box office results, and the latter are indicators of audience outreach.

Finally, for the Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring and for the Finance Chief the social dimension is only substantively relevant. No procedural role for aspects, criteria and indicators relating to the social dimension of performance emerge from the interviews with them. Nevertheless, their judgments of artistic success seem to be strongly influenced by aspects related to the social dimension of performance. Even though the Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring considers the artistic aspect central within the general experience of a night at the opera, an evaluation should be based, in her opinion, on the total experience of the audience, which is no surprise considering the marketing and communication oriented background of the Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring and the current relevance of experiential marketing in the academy and in the field. Not only the artistic, thus, but also the service-related aspects have to go well for her. The latter are responsibility of the marketing and education departments, and thus belong to the social dimension of performance.

For the Finance Chief not only top quality and innovative productions, but also outreach is a success criterion for the organization. The social dimension of performance touches the artistic evaluation

and has thus a substantive relevance also for her. This is confirmed when she mentions box office numbers - which relate to audience outreach and thus to the social dimension of performance - as indicators of successful productions, at least from the perspective of the audience. As seen above with respect to the financial dimension of performance, the Finance Chief seems to base her evaluation of artistic aspects on available hard data relating to other dimensions - in this case the social dimension of performance - if no hard data relating to the artistic sub-dimensions of performance are available. Relying on numbers seems unavoidable for her, probably due to her background as an accountant.

Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension Programming

As it can be expected, the artistic sub-dimensions of performance assume a high substantive relevance in the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization. The question is whether this high substantive relevance is reflected by a procedural relevance. In other words, whether the evaluation of artistic aspects has also a role within the rules and procedures of evaluation imposed by external regulatory bodies, for instance to support funding decisions, or by internal management systems to adjust the organization's activities and improve the organizational performance and, in particular, the artistic performance.

With respect to the sub-dimension programming, only from the interviews with the Assistant of the Managing Director and the Communication Chief, do both procedural and substantive relevance emerge for this artistic sub-dimension of performance. In both cases, the procedural relevance has to do with the role of programming-related aspects within the external evaluation procedure. The Assistant of the Managing Director reflects on how government and external evaluators keep prescribing so many criteria that one finally thinks that someone else is deciding what the right criteria are to judge the quality of an opera company. The criteria relating to the artistic dimension of performance formulated in the Visitation Protocol 2009 are artistic level and position, artistic development and innovation (see *Visitation Protocol 2009. Performing arts institutions with long term subsidy perspective*) and have all to do with programming. The sub-dimension programming has thus a procedural relevance in the evaluation. According to the Assistant of the Managing Director, artistic innovation is also a fundamental aspect of the artistic success of the organization, together with audience outreach, which gives the sub-dimension programming also a substantive relevance.

Also Communication Chief speaks about programming-related criteria that have to be taken into account for the external evaluation. These are mainly related to casting choices. The names of directors, conductors and singers are regularly reported in the self-evaluation that has to be written before the external evaluation commission visits the organization. The sub-dimension programming assumes thus a procedural relevance also in the eyes of Communication Chief. For him too, the challenging and innovative nature of programmed works and of their staging makes the organization artistically successful, making the sub-dimension programming substantively relevant.

From the interviews with the remaining managers with administrative profile (Managing Director, Finance Chief, Planning Chief and Chorus Managing Director), no procedural relevance of programming-related aspects emerges with respect to the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization, although their responsibilities are in principle strongly linked to the programming process. Nevertheless, the link to the programming process is only related to activities that support

the planning and has nothing to do with the evaluation of the artistic aspects of the programmed season. As seen above with respect to the financial dimension of performance, the Managing Director describes herself as "responsible for everything apart from artistic choices", which seems coherent with the fact that she does not give procedural relevance to programming-related aspects. Her role in programming is only to say which "dreams" are financially and technically feasible, which has nothing to do with an artistic judgment of that "dream", although her financial judgment will influence the making of that "dream". Nevertheless, considering that she is a sort of bridge between artistic staff and external stakeholders, it is strange that she does not mention the role of programming-related aspects within the external evaluation procedure, as her Assistant as well as the Communication Chief do. Apart from the fact that the person in charge of the coordination of the evaluation procedure within the organization is her Assistant, the procedural 'irrelevance' for the Managing Director might also be explained by her attitude towards the external evaluation procedure. In principle, she finds it a good system to evaluate a company. Nevertheless, she seriously doubts that the results of the evaluation really have a role in the government's judgment of the organization and, consequently, in the funding decisions. In other words, she finds this procedure procedurally irrelevant. What concerns the Finance Chief are her three main tasks: financial administration, control, and salary records. Nevertheless, the financial department is responsible for controlling budgets, and not for deciding on budgets, which is a responsibility of the direction. When a program is made, the Chief Finance helps to determine whether the budget for a season fits in the financial possibilities of the organization on a long term (more seasons). Again, this has nothing to do with the evaluation of the artistic aspects of a program. The Planning Chief is responsible for dividing the available stage time of a season between opera, dance and guest programming, based on the policy plans of the opera company, the dance company and guest programming. For the opera company she is also responsible for the planning of the slots for individual productions and the respective rehearsals. And these are purely organizational and logistical aspects. Finally, the Chorus Managing Director is responsible for the planning of all chorus activities at an operative level and deals with available work power of singers, rules and laws. She is not involved in any procedural judgment of artistic aspects related to programming neither.

For the Managing Director, the Finance Chief, the Planning Chief and the Chorus Managing Director the sub-dimension programming has only substantive relevance. With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators related to the sub-dimension programming, the Managing Director refers to the role of the Artistic Director and of the season's program. According to the Managing Director, the quality of the Artistic Director depends on his courage to run risks, his feeling for what is artistically good, and in his ability to keep being innovative, which are all aspects relating to the sub-dimension programming of the artistic dimension of performance. These aspects are taken into account by the Managing Director in order to explain what makes a good artistic director in general, and can be thus considered substantively relevant for her judgment of the artistic staff responsible for the artistic processes and results of the organization. Also with respect to the judgment of a season, aspects related to programming are substantively relevant. A season is good if one has the feeling of always seeing something new. It is thus a matter of variety with respect to the type of work, the orchestra which is playing, and the staging. These programming-related aspects are substantively relevant too.

Innovation is one of the most frequently occurring aspects of artistic success in the interviews with the managers with administrative profile. According to the Finance Chief, the organization is

responsible for offering lyric music, with the ambition of offering top quality and of being innovative. According to her, individual titles and productions to be included in the program of a season are even "tested" based on these two criteria related to the sub-dimension programming. Unfortunately it is not clear from the interview how this "test" is done. The interview with the Finance Chief suggests that the two mentioned criteria are not procedurally required but just actually applied, and thus, according to the definitions offered at the beginning of this section, substantively relevant for evaluations related to the programming process.

Also for the Planning Chief the sub-dimension programming is substantively relevant. According to her, it is the responsibility, and the talent of an artistic director, to find people who have good concepts, that have something to say and that do it with passion and full commitment, and not just a production has the mystery of an art work. Also putting together a good season can be seen as a work of art, with a touch of magic and mystery. Sometimes one understands the relations between the different productions only afterwards. Sometimes they just happen by chance, and this is exactly what happens with works of art too, one never knows whether the artists were conscious of the effects in advance. As a result, some seasons have just something special.

Finally, for the Chorus Managing Director the match between casting and work - a criterion that is related to the sub-dimension programming - together with the quality of the cast and the clarity of the direction concept, is important to determine success of individual productions. Again, the substantive relevance of sub-dimension programming emerges here.

Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension production

The sub-dimension production is one of the least occurring in the interviews with the managers with administrative profile and assumes only substantive relevance. Since this sub-dimension of performance deals with the quality of the cast of individual productions and of the performance, it is not surprising that these aspects do not play a procedural role for the managers with administrative profile, who are not responsible for the artistic production process. Whether their shared administrative profile also influences the fact that only four of the seven interviewed managers assign substantive relevance to the sub-dimension production will only emerge from a cross-analysis of the relevance assigned to this sub-dimension by the three different groups of managers (with respectively administrative, artistic, and technical profile).

The sub-dimension production assumes exclusively substantive relevance in the interviews with the Managing Director, the Assistant of the Managing Director, the Planning Chief, and the Chorus Managing Director. Both for the Managing Director and her Assistant, innovativeness of staging is an essential aspect in judging individual productions, as well as the technical quality of performance, especially the musical one. These aspects, all related to the sub-dimension production, are thus substantively relevant for them.

For the Chief Planning, aiming at the highest quality in singing and playing are the most important aspects within the artistic dimension of performance. Both are related to the sub-dimension production and are thus substantively relevant for her. The concept of the production (as formulated by the stage director, the designer or the conductor; it also relates to the sub-dimension production) must be good too, but this is less relevant than good singing and playing for her.

For the Chorus Managing Director, the main objective of the organization is to create "beautiful artistic productions". Together with outreach, expressed through indicators such as box office results as seen above with respect to the social dimension of evaluation, it is the artistic quality that makes an opera company successful. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say in general when a production is good, since there are many different sorts of productions, for instance what concerns the time when the work was composed: baroque opera, contemporary opera, etc. And then it depends on the individual perspective on the production. Staging is an aspect that should be taken into account anyway, together with the musical quality of the productions. The quality of the cast as well as the clarity of the direction concept, together with the match between casting and work - the latter already mentioned above with respect to the sub-dimension programming - are important to determine success of individual productions. From the perspective of the chorus, in order to evaluate the quality of the chorus and its direction it is important to consider the musical quality of the production in general and then the role of the chorus in it. All the aspects mentioned by the Chorus Managing Director and influencing her judgment of the artistic value created by the organizations are related to the sub-dimension production, which is thus substantively relevant for her.

Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension reception

Contrarily to the sub-dimension programming, the sub-dimension reception of the artistic dimension of performance is the most occurring dimension in the interviews with the managers with administrative profile. All of them assign substantive relevance to this sub-dimension, which emerges as central in the judgment of the artistic value created by the organization. Nevertheless, only two managers with administrative profile also assign procedural relevance to this sub-dimension. Whether this depends on the fact that the managers with administrative profile have no artistic responsibility and do not have to take perception-related aspects into account in their giving and receiving of accounts will only emerge from a cross-analysis of the relevance assigned to this sub-dimension by the three different groups of managers (with respectively administrative, artistic, and technical profile).

The sub-dimension reception has both procedural and substantive relevance only for the Communication Chief and the Chorus Managing Director. The procedural relevance for Communication Chief can be explained with his responsibility for the whole communication with the external environment, and especially with audience and media. Indeed, he mentions indicators of, respectively, audience, media and professional appreciation that are taken into account according to the internal work procedures. These are: the applause's length, which is measured after every show and mentioned in internal reports, and is an indicator of the audience appreciation; the number of stars (out of 5) in review, which is an indicator of the media appreciation; finally, whether other opera companies buy or rent the production gives an important indication of the professional appreciation. This kind of information is gathered by the Communication Chief according to regular work procedures of evaluation of his department, together with box office measures - as we have seen above with respect to the financial and the social dimensions of performance - and emerges thus as procedurally relevant. While box office data, budget compliance and quantitative data about impact on the media (e.g. number of reviews) only seem to have a procedural relevance for the Communication Chief, the content of reviews in the media and the fact that other opera companies buy or rent a production have also a substantive relevance for him. Audience satisfaction is available

as a hard criterion based on regular surveys, but there is only a score given to the production while most items relate to service and general experience and not to the artistic aspects of it. While the service experience is related to the social dimension of performance, since it is considered a precondition for long-term relationships with the audience, the score given to the quality of the production is related to the artistic dimension of performance, sub-dimension reception. Nevertheless, this score seems to have no substantive relevance for the evaluation of artistic processes and results, neither for the Communication Chief, nor for the other interviewed managers, and is thus only required by the internal management systems. Most aspects relating to the artistic dimension of performance are absent from any procedurally required information to be used for evaluation. This is the case with the transformational power of theatre and the ability to add to the development of the opera form, both of which are related to the sub-dimension reception (respectively to the categories artistic experience and artistic impact). These aspects are fundamental in the judgment forming of the Communication Chief and thus substantively relevant for him in the in the evaluation of artistic processes and results. The impression is that the substantive relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance related to the sub-dimension reception are much more than the procedurally relevant ones.

Also the Chorus Managing Director assigns procedural relevance to the sub-dimension reception. Nevertheless, what she means is that certain reception-related aspects are procedurally relevant for the organization in general and not necessarily for her. This is logical considering that she deals with personal issues concerning the chorus singers and not with the external environment and consequently does not have to take into account reception-related aspects, criteria and indicators within her work procedures. Like the Communication Chief, she also mentions audience surveys conducted regularly at individual productions. Although she does not make clear to what extent and in which depth the artistic component is investigated in these surveys, they are procedurally required in order to evaluate the appreciation of individual productions - which is an aspect related to the artistic dimension of performance, sub-dimension reception - within the overall appreciation of the general experience at the opera - which is an aspect related to the social dimension of performance, as seen above. The sub-dimension reception emerges also as fundamental for the judgment of artistic processes and results and thus as substantively relevant. According to the Chorus Managing Director, a fundamental aspect while judging individual productions is that the audience can derive some benefits from them. In determining the artistic success of the organization, the most important aspect for the Chorus Managing Director is the contribution made by the organization to the future development of opera as an art form or, in other words, the artistic impact on the professional field. And this is something that - according to her - cannot be measured, definitely not at present. Thus, while the sub-dimension reception as a whole can assume at the same time procedural and substantive relevance, some specific aspects play a role only substantively. One reason may be a perceived impossibility of formalizing them within current procedures. In general, indeed, from the interview with the Chorus Managing Director, some doubts emerge about the adequacy of structured and formalized evaluations of artistic aspects. In turn, this can explain why the substantive relevance given to the sub-dimension reception by the Chorus Managing Director emerges from the interview as much higher than the procedural.

For all the remaining managers with administrative profile (the Managing Director, the Assistant of the Managing Director, the Manager of Fundraising and Sponsoring, the Finance Chief, and the Planning Chief), the sub-dimension reception has only substantive relevance. From this sub-

dimension the full richness of meanings given to artistic success, both with respect to the individual productions and the seasons, emerges. According to the Managing Director, a production is successful when it goes directly to the soul, when it touches, because it is disturbing or beautiful. Some aspects related to the sub-dimension production seem to have a cause-effect relationship with the sub-dimension reception. For instance, one gets touched when the quality of work and production (above all the musical aspects) work as a whole in such a way that one feels happy, when everything is on its place. As the Managing Director says,

> "At such a performance you get enough energy to work hard for a couple of years".

These aspects are fundamental for the Managing Director in order to form her judgment of the artistic value created by the organization, but no procedure requires them to be explicitly discussed and/or reported on. They emerge thus as only substantively relevant from the interview with her.

According to the Assistant of the Managing Director, the criteria as defined within the organization characterize the artistic dimension of performance. For everyone in the organization the quality of the individual performance is central, including such criteria as the musical quality and the expressiveness of the production. That's where you get energy and motivation from. While the first aspect is related to the sub-dimension production, the second is related to the sub-dimension reception, which is thus substantively relevant for the Assistant of the Managing Director. Success of a production depends on what happens between stage and hall (also related to the sub-dimension reception) and on what the Assistant calls "consistency" between different aspects and dimensions of performance: How the team works and performs (organizational dimension of performance), how much magic/aura is involved, and how convincing this gets across (both related to the sub-dimension reception). Apart from the organizational dimension of performance (as seen in the respective section of the analysis), also the sub-dimension reception assumes a substantive relevance for the Assistant of the Managing Director with respect to the evaluation of artistic processes and results.

In general, the meaning of artistic success is strongly subjective according to the Manager Fundraising and Sponsoring:

> "What makes a production successful depends on how one describes success".

And this is a matter of different reception on the part of different (groups of) individuals. For instance - as seen above with respect to the sub-dimension production - in her opinion, the artistic concept and the technical aspects of its execution (both related to the sub-dimension production) are fundamental for the artistic team. If the team members achieve what they expected to realize then they will be happy, and this is a substantive indicator of success for them. Innovation might be well seen by the audience too. Nevertheless, compared with the production team, the audience might have a different threshold with respect to the level of acceptance of experiments and innovation. The sub-dimension reception becomes central here, and thus substantively relevant, in the judgment forming about the artistic processes and results. A new staging of a classical opera might go in some cases too far from the level of acceptance of experiments and innovation on the part of the audience, even if the audience recognizes the efforts in the production. Fundamental is that every production touches the audience, even if this happens in a negative sense. In this way a reaction is stimulated and a discussion can be initiated and kept going. For the organization in

general the artistic value added, in the sense of the relevance of the artistic work done, is considered the most important evaluation criterion, and this is again related to the sub-dimension reception of the artistic dimension of performance, in particular to the impact on the professional field or, in other words, to the professional appreciation. This confirms the substantive relevance assigned by the Manager Fundraising and Sponsoring to the sub-dimension reception.

The sub-dimension reception is substantively relevant for Finance Chief too, who shares with the Manager Fundraising and Sponsoring the conviction that a fundamental aspect for judging the artistic success of a production is whether the audience is able to form an opinion on the production, regardless of finding it "ugly" or "beautiful".

It is finally from the interview with the Planning Chief that the substantive relevance of the sub-dimension reception fully emerges, also in comparison with the substantive relevance of the other artistic sub-dimensions (programming and production). As seen above, for the Planning Chief, aiming at the highest quality in singing and playing (both related to the sub-dimension production) are fundamental aspects for the evaluation of individual productions. Nevertheless, in her answer to the question about what makes a successful production, the sub-dimension production seems to leave room for the sub-dimension reception:

> "Well, there must be a story, I think, that appeals to me. Actually, I don't really know, I don't know it. I'm very impulsive actually, thus I just let it come over me, and sometimes I think, well, what a waste of time. This happens sometimes. And then some other times … yes, there are sometimes moments that you remember, obviously. I can remember when I saw 'Production 1' [the actual title is not mentioned for confidentiality reasons] for the first time and I found that the story was told in a wonderful way. And, in my opinion, it was not the story itself but the way it was told. And that's, well… then you don't know whether it depends on the orchestra or on the music or on the fact that you've slept poorly or had a quarrel. I've no clue… whether it was well directed or because of the singers. It is often very difficult to say. But I noticed that I was stuck, sitting and listening breathless to the story. Thanks to the surtitles the combination was fantastic. […] But for instance, when I went to see 'Production 2' [the actual title is not mentioned for confidentiality reasons], I thought, well, do I have to stay until the end? And then at the end I found it amazing. And you don't know what's happened precisely. I just don't know it, but that's actually what I find very nice".

It is thus the fact that one sits and watches the show breathless that reveals that the production is something special. You don't know what you exactly found so special, but this sort of surprise makes the whole beautiful and worth the time you spend on it as a spectator. These aspects are all related to the sub-dimension reception and are all substantively relevant for the Planning Chief, even more relevant than the ones related to the sub-dimension production. While the Planning Chief understands every detail of a production from a producer perspective - even watching it on TV without any sound! - when she sits with the audience in the theatre everything is different, as the following quote testifies:

> "I go and sit in the theatre and I'm not at all busy with what happens beyond the stage. I go and sit and am only interested in what sort of story it is, what can I learn from it and what do I take with me from it, and whether I'm able to go along with it, whether I'm

tired or [...] But if it works, then I go out of the theatre and I keep thinking of it, the day after, and the following day and then the following day again".

The fact that one keeps thinking of a production is essential in the opera. The ability to offer food for thought is a basic criterion to evaluate the work of an opera company, together with the ability not to leave the audience indifferent. The audience may find something good or bad, but the most important aspect is that they do not remain indifferent to what they have seen. This is to be linked to the ideas of "meaningful" and "worthwhile" that emerge from what the Planning Chief says about a specific production, which she defines as "a textbook case of a successful production. A new production, world première and initially there were no signs that it would really become a success. And I sat in the theatre and thought, that's bloody good. But what is it, which is so interesting, that I don't know. What is it then? Yes, a combination of things. Finally, it has absolutely to do with the fact that a work is meaningful, I think. It must be meaningful and worthwhile".

Another fundamental aspect in opera that is related to the sub-dimension reception is the ability of keeping a magic aura. Magic is essential in experiencing opera, and if the audience know too much about what happens behind the stage, then the mystery might disappear, and this should not happen:

"The mystery must stay intact".

The unexpected, the unknown and, even more, the indescribable are at the core of the artistic dimension of performance, and these can be only judged from a reception perspective:

"Everyone wants the best singer, but the reality is that the best singer with the best musicians and the best concept produce something that you can't describe, but that makes the experience so beautiful".

<u>Summary of the dimensions of performance for managers with administrative profile</u>

From my analysis, the financial and organizational dimensions of performance emerge as mainly procedurally relevant for the managers with administrative profile and do not seem to influence very much their judgment forming about the artistic value created by the organization. The financial dimension of performance seems to influence the judgments of three managers with administrative profile: the Managing Director, the Communication Chief and the Finance Chief. Nevertheless, only in the case of the Communication Chief could an intrusion of the financial dimension of performance into the artistic one be noticed. A possible explanation of this intrusion has been found in the Communication Chief's personal profile, whose career development shows an increasing business-orientation. For the Managing Director instead, the financial dimension is essential in setting the limits of the possible programming choices. In this sense, the financial dimension is substantively relevant in the artistic planning, because it plays a decisive role in the programming phase, influencing what will be finally produced. Nevertheless, the financial dimension plays for the Managing Director a secondary role in the evaluation, where it is represented through the efficiency criterion of having tried to do the best with the available resources. A strong aversion to the intrusion of the financial dimension in the evaluation of artistic processes and results comes only from the interview with the Planning Chief. For her, the financial dimension of performance is not only secondary but even antithetic to the artistic dimension. Indeed for the Planning Chief quality means not always being distracted by commercial considerations.

From the interview with the Planning Chief a disconnection between organizational and artistic dimensions of performance emerges. The whole interview with the Planning Chief is indeed a story about the artistic dimension of performance and how this dimension, and especially the sub-dimension reception, is independent of organizational aspects. Not all managers with administrative profile share her view. Most of them assign not only procedural but also substantive relevance to the organizational dimension of performance. Nevertheless, some of them assign substantive relevance to individual aspects, criteria and indicators related to the organizational dimension of performance, without at the same time assigning them procedural relevance. On the one hand, this might mean that my conclusion that they assign substantive relevance to the organizational dimension as a whole is slightly forced. In fact, it might be also possible that, if asked explicitly about every mentioned aspects - which would have not fit in the largely non-directive style of the interviews' questions and would have not been possible due to time constraints - they would have assigned only substantive relevance to some aspects, criteria and indicators of performance within the organizational dimension of performance and not to all of them. On the other hand, this might depend on the assignment of the individual aspects of performance to the wrong dimension. Those aspects which emerged as substantively but not as procedurally relevant from the interviews with the Managing Director and the Communication Chief (respectively quality and attention in rehearsing and commitment to the development of new talents) relate to organizational aspects of the artistic processes. A deeper understanding of the role of these two aspects - which was not possible within the practical limits of the interviews - could have led to the assignment of these two aspects to the artistic dimension of performance instead of the organizational one. Nevertheless, such a re-assignment of these individual aspects would have not changed the general findings with respect to the relevance of the organizational dimension in the evaluation of artistic processes and results. In fact, a re-assignment would have resulted in even less substantive relevance of the

organizational dimension of performance and even more substantive relevance of the artistic sub-dimensions.

As table D2 shows, from the financial dimension down to the sub-dimension reception, the procedural relevance assigned by the interviewed managers to the respective dimensions of performance decreases while the substantive relevance increases. The social dimension of performance is the only non-artistic dimension that is assigned substantive more frequently than procedural relevance. The growing pressure for taking the social role of publicly-funded arts organizations more into account in the organization's policy and activities might explain the intrusion of the social dimension of performance into the artistic one. Also the administrative background of the interviewed managers might explain this outcome, considering that the administrative staff is usually in charge of the formal accounting for the work of the organization towards the external stakeholders and might have embodied evaluation criteria related to the social objectives of arts organizations as propagated by regulatory bodies. Nevertheless, it is just from the interview with the 'superior' of all the administrative managers, the Managing Director, that a certain disconnection between social and artistic dimensions emerges, which would immediately contradict the explanation offered above. A possible explanation has been found in the attitude of the Managing Director towards her role in the organization as a bridge between artistic dreams and external pressure for accountability and legitimation. The analysis of the sort of relevance assigned to the social dimension of performance by the other two groups of managers (respectively with artistic and technical profile) will reveal to what extent the administrative profile of the interviewed managers plays a role in the relevance assigned to the social dimension of performance.

Finally, the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance emerge as above all substantively relevant for the managers with administrative profile. This means that the managers with administrative profile take into account these sub-dimensions in their actual judgments of the artistic value created by the organization but do not have to consider them within any procedure. The latter might depend on the fact that the managers with administrative profile are not responsible for the artistic work of the organization and thus have a limited role in accounting for the artistic value created. Through the analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with artistic profile I will be able to elaborate further on this proposition.

Another explanation might be found in the nature of the artistic sub-dimensions, whose aspects, criteria and indicators can be difficult to operationalize, making them hard to grasp through formal procedures. Within the sub-dimension programming the procedural relevance emerges only with respect to the external evaluation procedure, which requires above all information about casting choices. Within the sub-dimension production no procedural relevance emerges. Within the sub-dimension reception the procedural relevance emerges mainly from the interview with the Communication Chief, who is in charge of the whole communication with the external environment and has thus to use indicators of audience, media, and professional appreciation within his working procedures. These are respectively: the applause's length, the number of stars (out of 5) in review, and whether other opera companies buy or rent the production. Nevertheless, no procedurally required information seems able to cover the richness and the nature of aspects, criteria and indicators forming the artistic dimension of performance, especially the ones related to the sub-dimension reception.

To sum up, although in general the financial dimension of performance does not seem to intrude the evaluation of artistic processes and results, the interview with the Finance Chief shows the risks that artistic evaluation runs if conducted by evaluators whose rationality is mainly economic-oriented. Since the core of the artistic achievements cannot be expressed through 'hard data', dimensions of evaluation that can be operationalized, such as the financial ones, might become dominant in an evaluation procedure. It is plausible that an economic-oriented rationality characterizes managers with administrative profile more than managers with artistic and technical profile. In this sense, since no important intrusion of the financial dimension of performance in the artistic ones emerged from the interviews with the managers with administrative profile, we expect a similar result also from the analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with artistic and technical profile. The same can be assumed about the organizational dimension of performance, which is also more related to supporting processes than to the artistic ones. With respect to the social dimension of performance, this emerged as central for the managers with administrative profile in their judgments of the artistic value created by the organization, and is thus the only non-artistic dimension that intrudes the artistic ones. The analysis of the dimensions of performance for the remaining two groups of managers (respectively with artistic and technical profile) will reveal to what extent it is adequate to speak of intrusion or whether it is more adequate to speak of genuine commitment of the organization to the community in which it operates - in other words, whether audience development and outreach are secondary or primary objectives of the organization.

Dimensions of performance for managers with artistic profile

The group of managers with an artistic profile includes Artistic Director, Chief Conductor, Chief Dramaturge, Chorus Artistic Director, Chief of the Artistic Department, Orchestra General Manager,[86] and Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming. Table D3 shows which relevance, procedural (P) and/or substantive (S), they assign to the different dimensions of performance, as emerged from the interviews.

Managers / *Dimensions of performance*	Artistic Director	Chief Conductor*	Chief Dramaturge	Chorus Artistic Director	Chief of the Artistic Department	Orchestra General Manager*	Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming	Total Artistic Managers (7)
Financial	S			S	P/S	P/S	P/S	3P/**5S**
Organizational	P	S		P	P	P/S		**4P**/2S
Social	S	S	P/S	S	S	P/S	P/S	3P/**7S**
Artistic/Programming	P/S	S	P/S	S	S	S	P/S	3P/**7S**
Artistic/Production	P/S	S	P	S	S	P/S	S	3P/**6S**
Artistic/Reception		S	S	S	S	S	S	**6S**

Table D3: Dimensions of performance for managers with artistic profile (* = members of the orchestra in-residence as a separate organization)

From this table it emerges that also for the managers with artistic profile all dimensions of performance are in general relevant, although in their case the difference in relevance between financial and organizational dimensions on the one hand, and social and artistic sub-dimension on the other hand is slightly larger. The latter are in general more relevant than the financial and organizational dimensions of performance. Like the managers with administrative profile, also the managers with artistic profile assign more frequently a procedural than a substantive relevance to the organizational dimension, and more frequently a substantive than a procedural relevance to the social and the artistic (sub-)dimensions. In particular, the social and the artistic (sub-)dimensions receive substantive relevance practically unanimously within the group of managers with artistic profile. A difference between the group of managers with administrative profile and the group of managers with artistic profile is that the financial dimension of performance is mentioned more frequently as substantively than procedurally relevant by the managers with artistic profile. In general, despite their artistic profile, they assign substantive relevance to the financial dimension of performance more often than their colleagues with administrative profile.

<u>Financial dimension of performance</u>

With respect to the financial dimension of performance, no manager with artistic profile assigns only procedural relevance to it. For the Chief of the Artistic Department, the Orchestra General Manager and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming, the financial dimension of performance assumes both procedural and substantive relevance. The procedural relevance might be explained by the involvement of all these three managers in the programming process, where, as

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[86] The Orchestra General Manager is the general manager of the orchestra in-residence at the studied opera company. As it has been seen in section 5.4.1 of the paper, the investigated opera company has no own in-house orchestra.

already seen in the analysis of the interviews with the managers with artistic profile, financial information and considerations play an important role. In particular, the Orchestra General Manager of the orchestra in-residence is responsible both for the administrative (financial and organizational) and the mission-related (social, artistic) processes and results of the orchestra and leads all departments within the orchestra organization, both from a personal, financial, and artistic perspective. It is thus no surprise that he has to deal with financial aspects, criteria and indicators within his work procedures.

With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators of performance belonging to the financial dimension, for the Chief of the Artistic Department balance is a keyword, both when he refers to the procedural and the substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance. What concerns the procedural relevance, the information discussed at regular meetings, such as the direction meetings, may concern the need to find a better financial balance within a season (more income, less expenses). In those cases the participants discuss whether to add or to cancel a production. According to the Chief of the Artistic Department, the financial dimension has a very heavy weight in the final decisions, even heavier than artistic considerations. The financial dimension assumes a central role in the procedures which lead to the definition of a season's programme, which is one of the core artistic processes of the organization, and can be thus considered procedurally relevant. Balance is also a key to success. This includes both balance between different aspects and criteria belonging to the same dimension of performance (e.g. balance between repertoire, direction styles, and mix of artists, all belonging to the sub-dimension programming) and balance between different dimensions of performance (e.g. balance between the above mentioned aspects and criteria belonging to the sub-dimension programming and the ability to keep average honorariums low, which refers to the economy criterion, and thus to the financial dimension of performance). The meaning of success is influenced by the financial dimension which thus assumes a substantive relevance for the Chief of the Artistic Department. This can be explained by the function of the Chief of the Artistic Department within the organization. His responsibility as a director of casting includes the selection of singers, a task the Chief of the Artistic Department is finally responsible for. This responsibility also means that the Chief of the Artistic Department has to manage contracts with artists, not only singers, but also directors, production teams, scenery and dress designers, lighting technicians, choreographers, dramaturges and their assistants, conductors and their assistants. He is thus the one who has to decide whom to cast and for what honorarium. The financial dimension is always taken into account in his casting decisions, although this is not reported in any procedure. In fact, in his opinion, this would be practically unfeasible:

> "If I should formally account for my choices of singers, than I would need ten employees".

From the interview with the Orchestra General Manager, both procedural and substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance clearly emerge. What concerns the procedural relevance, the Orchestra General Manager has to account to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture on payments and other financial issues, aspects that belong to the financial dimension. In addition, at regular meetings, such as the direction meetings, payments and estimated budgets are regularly presented and discussed. The financial dimension of performance is relevant within the external evaluation procedure too. The task of the international evaluation commission is to evaluate also efficiency indeed, a criterion which belongs to the financial dimension of performance. What

concerns the substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance, a season's success is for the Orchestra General Manager a mix between different dimensions of performance, including the financial one. According to the Orchestra General Manager, an important indicator of a season's success is the average revenue per ticket sold. In general, for him financial solidity is a fundamental success factor for an opera company, above all considering how expensive this art form is. Only with enough budget is it possible to cast the best soloists and designers and to assure the quality along the whole production process. Thus, in order to have successful productions, there must be both artistic and commercial success. The financial dimension of performance assumes thus a high substantive relevance for the Orchestra General Manager. This finding is not surprising, considering that, as seen above, not only the Orchestra General Manager is both responsible for the artistic and organizational results of the orchestra. Also his personal and professional background, with an education as a musician and experience both as a musician and as a manager in the arts sector, makes the coexistence of mission-related and administrative dimensions of performance natural for him.

The Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming has to prepare information about budget and staffing for her reports to the Managing Director. The financial fit of guest productions within the budget frame of the organization plays a fundamental role while discussing and deciding programming alternatives, giving the financial dimension a procedural relevance within the programming process, which is one of the core artistic processes in opera companies. The substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance for the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming clearly emerges from her answer to the question on how one can evaluate the artistic success of an opera:

> "Through good seat occupancy and granted subsidies".

The granted subsidies, which are an indicator of fundraising performance and one of the revenue sources for the organization, influence her judgment of the artistic value created by the organization together with seats-occupancy, an outreach related indicator belonging to the social dimension of performance, which will be analyzed later. As seen in the analysis of the evaluators of performance, the Deputy Director, Education, Participation and Programming shows an attitude that is aligned with the current regulatory context in which subsidies are considered the consequence of the legitimacy of the organization towards the government. It is thus not surprising that "granted subsidies" are an indicator of success for her.

For the Artistic Director and the Chorus Artistic Director the financial dimension of performance assumes only substantive relevance, which seems a logical consequence of the fact that both managers are complemented by managing directors in their direction work, respectively the Managing Director next to the Artistic Director and the Chorus Managing Director next to the Chorus Artistic Director. The two managing directors are responsible for organizational and financial aspects, leaving the artistic directors the artistic responsibilities, respectively of the whole organization and of the chorus. Consequently, financial dimensions of performance are not expected to have a primary relevance within the work procedures of the Artistic Director and the Chorus Artistic Director, while this is the case with the Managing Director and the Chorus Managing Director (see the analysis of the dimensions of performance for these two managers with administrative profile). What at first glance looks surprising is that for these two managers with a purely artistic

profile (they are respectively a stage director and chorus conductor indeed) the financial dimension is substantively relevant. By looking closer at what kind of substantive relevance the financial dimension assumes for them, the potential, surprising intrusion of the financial dimension of performance in the purely artistic one is strongly relativized. The Artistic Director considers staying within the budgets and thus making good use of subsidies essential when creating a rich but challenging program for the audience. The substantive role for the financial dimension emerges in the programming process. The Artistic Director is responsible for programming and must be conscious of the financial limits. The financial dimension is thus substantively relevant in the planning phase, by imposing limits to the possible artistic activities, but not necessarily in the evaluation.

That the financial dimension might play a substantive role in the evaluation of the offered program is suggested by the Chorus Artistic Director when he says that a unique characteristic of the organization is its ability to mix long arching plans with a season that makes sense financially. For him the financial dimension has thus a substantive relevance in the judgment of individual seasons and of the established artistic profile, which are the results of the programming process. The substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance for the Chorus Artistic Director is confirmed by his opinion that not only success of the individual seasons, but also success of the organization in general, requires a sound financial management, together with audience outreach (an aspect related to the social dimension of performance) and artistic success (artistic dimension of performance). This makes clear that the substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance for the Chorus Artistic Director has above all to do with the evaluation of how well finances support the core artistic processes, particularly the programming process - at least based on this interview.

For the Artistic Director the financial dimension of performance is thus more related to the planning of the artistic activities, than to the evaluation of their results, while for the Chorus Artistic Director the financial dimension makes no intrusion into the artistic one, but accompanies it in a supporting role.

Organizational dimension of performance

The organizational dimension of performance emerges as the least relevant for the managers with artistic profile. In particular, only two managers with artistic profile assign substantive relevance to this dimension of performance.

For the Artistic Director, the Chorus Artistic Director, and the Chief of the Artistic Department the organizational dimension of performance is only procedurally relevant. It does not influence, thus, their judgment of the artistic value created by the organization.

With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators belonging to the organizational dimension of performance, the Artistic Director tells for instance that during the opera evaluation meetings organizational aspects are the most regularly treated one. They are, thus, procedurally relevant. What concerns the planning of the future seasons, the Chorus Artistic Director has to give an estimate of how many chorus singers are needed for a production; how much music rehearsal time they need; sometimes how much staging time is available. These aspects are evaluated later at the meetings of the chorus committee that the Chorus Artistic Director attends. For instance, the

committee evaluates how well the planning has served the production, what obstacles were met along the way - whether it be from staging, whether it be about decisions from a designer or a personality of a stage director. These organizational aspects are thus all procedurally relevant. The Chief of the Artistic Development confirms that the topics treated in the opera evaluation meetings are mainly practical. The discussion is about things that did not work well, and not the ones that worked well; for instance, whether there has been a problem on stage that prevented the artists from performing well. The fact that these kinds of topics are regularly discussed at regular meetings and reported in the minutes of the meetings make them procedurally relevant.

For the Orchestra General Manager the organizational dimension of performance assumes a high relevance, both procedurally and substantively. Nevertheless, while the aspects, criteria and indicators he mentions as procedurally relevant refer mostly to processes (e.g. technical facilities, safety, time-related issues, coordination and quality of team work), the ones he mentions as substantively relevant refer to culture (e.g. ability to customize work and to create a hierarchy-free dialogue) and to people (e.g. leadership style of artistic staff). With respect to the procedural relevance, organizational aspects (such as the length of an opera in relation to the number of work hours for the orchestra) have to be considered in order to agree with the Ministry on how many opera productions the orchestra in-residence must work at. At the regular meetings with the direction as well as at the opera evaluation meetings, quality of teamwork (conductor with artistic team, conductor with orchestra), safety at work and safety of orchestra musicians during individual productions are also regularly discussed topics. Finally, within the external evaluation procedure, one of the aspects the international commission has to evaluate is the operations management of the organization. With respect to the substantive relevance, this emerges when the Orchestra General Manager refers to the evaluation of artistic directors and orchestra managers in general, of orchestra conductors, and of the organization as a whole. A good artistic director of an opera company must be able to talk about opera in public, for instance with politicians, in an active and courageous way, must be ready to cooperate with different parties and colleagues. These aspects relate to the leadership style of an artistic director and, thus, to the organizational dimension of evaluation. Similar criteria are applied to the evaluation of a general manager. A good general manager is someone "that is able to make the orchestra realize a mission, a task successfully. A task that fits his own ambitions and the task assigned by the customer, that is, the government, obviously". What concerns the evaluation of an orchestra conductor, the results of his artistic work are strongly dependent on how good and committed the orchestra is. If the orchestra doesn't study the scores properly, the performance will be poor, regardless of the quality of the work of the chief conductor. Thus, judging a chief conductor only based on the performance of the orchestra might give a biased picture of reality. It is necessary to hear his point of view about the full process to understand the value of his contribution. The organizational dimension of performance comes close to the sub-dimension production here. What concerns the organization as a whole, an organizational culture based on giving freedom to the artistic team to experiment with modern interpretations is an essential component of artistic success. Additional aspects related to the organizational dimension of performance contributing to the long-term artistic success of an opera company are a committed concern for the future and the continuity of the organization as well as for organizational and personal development. In general, the organizational dimension assumes a very high substantive relevance for the Orchestra General Manager, which might be explained again, as in the case of the substantive relevance of the financial dimension for him, with his mixed background as

an artist and a manager and with his overall responsibility for the orchestra in-residence, artistically, organizationally and financially.

For the Chief Conductor the organizational dimension of performance assumes only substantive relevance, as all other dimensions of performance emerged from the interview with him. The Chief Conductor evaluates artistic processes and results outside any sort of procedure indeed, which reflects his responsibilities in the organization at the time of the interview. The Chief Conductor - who later entered the direction of the organization - had at the time of the interview only the task of giving a certain color to the programming of the organization by conducting about three opera productions a year. Considering the difficulty of defining clear borders between the organizational dimension of performance and the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance, as seen in the summary of the findings of the analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with administrative profile, and considering the purely artistic profile of the Chief Conductor, it is interesting to look at the individual aspects, criteria and indicators belonging to the organizational dimension of performance that are substantively relevant for him in the evaluation of artistic processes and results. Together with production-oriented aspects such as the quality of chorus, orchestra, singers, cast, and stage directors, also how they all work daily in order to achieve the best possible results make an opera house successful. Success of individual seasons depends on success of the individual productions in that season. And they are the result of both production-related aspects and organizational ones. A stage director, apart from having a good, contemporary concept (sub-dimension production), also has to be able to convince singers and conductor of the value of the concept and to assure good teamwork between all the parties involved in the production (leadership style, an aspect related to the organizational dimension of performance). The intelligence of the singers and the ensemble is fundamental for a production's success together with the leadership skills of the stage director. Since singers are very sensitive persons, the stage director needs to have good leadership skills to understand the psychology of the singers and motivate them to do things on stage that might be strange to them at first glance. Leadership skills are important for orchestra conductors too. A good conductor needs to be inspiring, motivating, communicative and he needs to know the scores. Missing one of these aspects would be a major lack. Nevertheless, evaluation from the reception side seems finally to have more weight than evaluation from the organizational side, as the Chief Conductor explains referring to his impression that results count more than the process in the final evaluation of his work:

> "You know, it could be - the result is what counts. And the process where to, how we get there is a secondary thing. So I think you would be always or I would be always judged by results. And it, there's, yeah: If the results are fine, then the process will be less in question. You know? But yeah, I mean, there - I think it's - I say there are responsible figures in the theatre who actually have to judge my work and to have a careful look on [sic] how this would influence the company or what impact is there, or what's the artistic outcome? Of course they have to, you know, to have a - yeah, a good and closer look to every day, or let's say, every project".

The organizational aspects, criteria and indicators of performance mentioned by the Chief Conductor are strictly related to the production process, in particular to the quality of leadership and communication of conductors and stage directors and to the quality of team work during rehearsals. They are separated from the handicraft aspects included in the sub-dimension production of the

artistic dimension of performance (e.g. overall musical quality) but may influence them. The fact that the evaluation of the performance - or, in the Chief Conductor's words, of the "results" - is anyway more important than the evaluation of the process, seems to legitimate the distinction between the above mentioned organizational and production-related aspects, criteria and indicators of performance.

<u>Social dimension of performance</u>

With respect to the social dimension of performance, no manager with artistic profile assigns only procedural relevance to it; all assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance. This shows not only the centrality of outreach considerations in the evaluation of artistic processes and results, but, more generally, in the work of the artistic managers of the organization.

For the Chief Dramaturge, the Orchestra General Manager and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming the social dimension of performance assumes both procedural and substantive relevance. The procedural relevance can be explained through the important role of outreach activities within the responsibilities of the three managers. The Chief Dramaturge has to build a content-based bridge between artists and audience through booklets, introductions to performances, moderation of round tables, lectures, etc. The Orchestra General Manager is responsible both for the administrative (organizational, financial) and the mission-related activities (artistic, social) of the orchestra in-residence. The Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming has a twofold responsibility: guest programming with a focus on education and participation activities; and programming education and participation activities with the opera and ballet ensembles.

With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators of performance, the Chief Dramaturge explains that at the opera evaluation meetings audience outreach indicators, such as box office results, are presented and discussed. In some cases he has to explain what content-based aspects may explain less satisfactory audience outreach. In fact, quantitative indicators, like box office results, must be read contextually, since they strongly depend on the individual production considered. Audience outreach, a fundamental aspect within the social dimension of performance, is discussed within evaluation procedures. The social dimension of performance assumes thus a procedural relevance. At the same time, audience outreach influences also the Chief Dramaturge's actual judgment of artistic success. Sold out productions are for him not only an indicator of audience outreach, but also an indicator of a season's success. Audience retention numbers, as indicator of the fact that the audience come back to the opera, are a way to recognize success on a long term, since they show that the audience appreciate the artistic work done by the organization and the organization's artistic profile, and show that opera is still a lively art form that must survive. Sold-out productions and audience retention numbers, both indicators related to the social dimension of performance, have thus a substantive relevance for the Chief Dramaturge.

The Orchestra General Manager has to agree with the Ministry on output-related aspects of artistic results (how many appearances at certain stages and for how many people, how many opera productions as orchestra in-residence). This kind of numerical indicators of output have the heaviest weight for the Ministry and are consequently procedurally relevant. They are all related to outreach and, thus, belong to the social dimension of performance. The role of other aspects related to the social dimension of performance (e.g. the position of the organization in the cultural establishment)

within the external evaluation procedure confirms the procedural relevance of the social dimension of performance. With respect to the substantive relevance of the social dimension of performance, this emerges from the Orchestra General Manager's judgment forming about the success of, respectively, individual productions, individual seasons and, the organization in general. With respect to the individual productions, seat occupancy is a success indicator related to outreach that influences the Orchestra General Manager's judgments together with reception-related aspects, such as audience and press appreciation and enthusiasm in the theatre. The evaluation of a production from the audience perspective means to consider not only the artistic component, but also the night out in general, which is an aspect involving the quality of hospitality services and of other marketing and education activities pursuing a long-term relation with different segments of the audience. Audience numbers and the willingness to buy tickets for such an expensive leisure activity as opera are outreach indicators that say to what extent these activities are successful. But they also give a substantive indication of audience appreciation. The social dimension of performance, including all outreach- as well as marketing- and education-related aspects and indicators mentioned above, is thus also substantively relevant in the judgment of artistic success, represented here by the audience appreciation as one success criterion within the sub-dimension reception of the artistic dimension of performance. This is valid also with respect to individual seasons. A good program for a season is indeed a program that appeals to many people with respect to many of the productions included in the seasonal program. The social dimension of performance, represented here by seat occupancy, assumes thus, together with other financial and reception-related aspects, a substantive relevance in the evaluation of a season's success. A high average seat occupancy of 80% means for the Orchestra General Manager that the season is successful. With respect to the organization as a whole, the ability of the organization to position itself next to the most important opera companies (London, Berlin, Milan, Parma), and thus in the international cultural establishment, and the ability to reach both regular and new audience are two further evaluation criteria related to the social dimension of performance that are substantively relevant for the Orchestra General Manager.

What concerns the work of the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming, apart from being top arts, the productions selected by the education and participation department, that she directs, have also to fulfill criteria that are related to the social dimension, such as audience outreach and relevance for contemporary society. These criteria are regularly discussed with the Artistic Director with respect to the productions to be selected and are thus procedurally relevant. With respect to the substantive relevance, a production that is sold-out every night is definitely a successful one for her. This idea is reinforced by her explanation that the contrary, and thus a production that is not well attended, could be used as an indicator of failure, for instance in programming. The substantive relevance she assigns to the social dimension of performance - together with the financial dimension of performance - is confirmed by her answer to the question about how the artistic success of an opera company can be evaluated:

> "Through good seat occupancy and granted subsidies".

Seat occupancy, an indicator that is related to outreach and belongs the social dimension of performance, influences her judgments about artistic results.

For the Artistic Director, the Chief Conductor, the Chorus Artistic Director, and the Chief of the Artistic Department the social dimension of performance assumes only substantive relevance. Their responsibilities are strictly artistic and related the programming and production processes. In addition, as seen above, the Managing Director tries to act as an intermediary between the artists and the external stakeholders by absorbing the external pressure for, amongst others, more education and participation activities. The artistic responsibilities of the Artistic Director, the Chief Conductor, the Chorus Artistic Director, and the Chief of the Artistic Department and the 'absorbing' role of the Managing Director can explain why social aspects, criteria and indicators of performance are absent from the working procedures of the three managers with artistic profile. Nevertheless, substantively, the social dimension of performance has much relevance also for them.

With respect to the individual, substantively relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance, for the Artistic Director balance is a key to artistic success. He refers, amongst others, to the balance between different aspects of the social dimension of performance: balance between challenging the audience and respecting their acceptance threshold with respect to innovation and experimentation; balance between being appealing to opera lovers and attracting new audience; balance between local taste and international position. The importance of the local context for artistic success is clearly expressed by the Artistic Director in the following quote:

> "Opera is very local: what is maybe very successful in Milan, can be a total flop […] in
> Amsterdam".

For the Chief Conductor, attracting audience is always central to the organization's success. Box office numbers say something about artistic success. If the audience likes a production then they return and more tickets are sold. Being able to show such interesting productions that the audience keep liking them and spread positive judgments of them by word-of-mouth with the result of attracting even more audience, is an important success factor. Indicators of the ability of the organization to build relations with the audience are thus also indicators of artistic success. The social dimension of performance is thus substantively relevant for the Chief Conductor.

As for the Artistic Director, also for the Chorus Artistic Director and the Chief of the Artistic Department balance is a key to making the organization and the individual seasons successful. According to the Chorus Artistic Director, artistic success may be great, but it has to be balanced by another sort of success, consisting in reaching the biggest audience (social dimension of performance), and in running a sound financial management (financial dimension of performance). According to the Chief of the Artistic Department, there must be a balance between high artistic reputation (sub-dimension reception of the artistic dimension of performance) and getting a lot of audience following you in it (social dimension of performance). The social dimension of performance emerges thus from the interviews with the managers with artistic profile as closely related to artistic success and thus as substantively relevant.

Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension programming

With respect to the sub-dimension programming, no manager with artistic profile assigns only procedural relevance to it: all assign substantive relevance to this sub-dimension of the artistic dimension of performance. Considering that programming is one of the three core artistic processes, as emerged from the analysis of the evaluators of performance, it is not surprising that aspects,

criteria and indicators of performance relating to programming influences the judgment of the managers with artistic profile about the artistic value created by the organization.

The sub-dimension programming assumes both procedural and substantive relevance for the Artistic Director, the Chief Dramaturge, and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming. The procedural relevance assigned to the sub-dimension programming by the Artistic Director and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming can be explained by the responsibilities for programming of these two managers. The Chief Dramaturge instead has a role in delivering information about the individual productions presented in a certain year for the respective annual report, which explains the procedural relevance of the sub-dimension programming which emerged from the interview with him.

With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators of performance, from the interview with the Artistic Director it emerges that the program of the chosen productions is the only information procedurally required by the Supervisory Board which concerns the results of the programming process. The sub-dimension programming of the artistic dimension of performance thus emerges as procedurally relevant. Information about the productions of the past season is included in the descriptive part of the annual report and is also provided to the Supervisory Board as official information about the artistic results of a season. Also this information is mainly related to the sub-dimension programming, since it describes the work and the cast of each production.[87] What concerns the substantive relevance of the sub-dimension programming, the dimensions of performance as they emerge from the interview with the Artistic Director overlap with the objectives of the organization as formulated in the organization's mission, which seems obvious considering that artistic policy and programming are his responsibilities. A central aspect for him is the creation of a program that sharply balances the contemporary possibilities for doing opera – "now and not yesterday" - and combines the best musical ingredients with a vision for the future of the opera genre. Balance is a key to programming good seasons for him. In particular, he refers to the balance between different aspects within the sub-dimension programming: balance between local talents and international cast and between new productions and reprises.

Apart from confirming the procedural role of the sub-dimension programming in the annual report of the organization, the Deputy Director, Education, Participation and Programming explains that she has to report to the Artistic Director on many programming related aspects such as the choice of titles, production companies and directors made by her department. In addition, she regularly discusses with him the importance of working with young choreographers or commissioning a new opera in order to contribute to the development of opera as an art form, which are also topics related to the sub-dimension programming. The sub-dimension programming assumes thus procedural relevance. What concerns the substantive relevance, a full list of aspects related to this sub-dimension are mentioned by the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming. The individual vision of the organization concerning the way the art form opera has to be presented to the audience is an important success criterion for an opera company. At the organization this

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[87] In the annual report there is also qualitative information about reception, in particular about the impact on the media, represented by a selection of reviews attached to the description of each production, and quantitative information about the outreach (e.g. number of performances, attendance and average seat occupancy). They are not mentioned explicitly by the Artistic Director and are thus not considered as relevant dimensions for him.

means to make the contemporary aspects of a work explicit in every production, for instance through a certain directing and design approach. To give an individual imprint on every production, while being able to program broadly, is an important quality of an artistic director. Finally, an aspect determining a good production is its relevance for the time in history in which it is presented to the public, which has also to do with programming.

The Chief Dramaturge has a role in delivering information for the annual report. He has to make a summary of content-related aspects regarding the past season. This includes information related to the sub-dimensions programming (work, cast) and production (staging concept). The sub-dimension programming, like the sub-dimension production, assumes thus a procedural relevance. What concerns the substantive relevance of the sub-dimension programming, the Chief Dramaturge considers an opera company successful when the audience can follow it on a difficult journey (social dimension of performance), a journey led by an artistic director who is able to stay in motion and to keep developing his way of working and programming without trying to consolidate a well-known and proven routine (sub-dimension programming). Together with the social dimension of performance, the sub-dimension programming emerges as substantively relevant for the Chief Dramaturge here. Nevertheless, while for the Artistic Director and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming procedurally and substantively relevant aspects in general overlap, for the Chief Dramaturge the information that he takes into account to form a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization is much richer and varied than the one he has to deliver for the annual report.

For the Chief Conductor, the Chorus Artistic Director, the Chief of the Artistic Department, and the Orchestra General Manager the sub-dimension programming assumes only substantive relevance. What concerns the programming process of the opera, at the time of the interviews the Chief Conductor, the Chorus Artistic Director, and the Orchestra General Manager were not responsible for the choice of productions, which can explain why no procedural relevance for the sub-dimension programming emerges from the interviews with them. The same cannot be said for the Chief of the Artistic Department, who is in charge of casting choices and is thus involved in programming. In addition, when the Artistic Director works as a director at a production, the Chief of the Artistic Department practically takes his role, although, as he explains in the interview, this is not formally recognized. Probably the missing 'formal' recognition of his role in programming and managing artistic processes, as well as his skeptical attitude towards the use of formal management systems in the organization, might explain why he does not refer to procedures at all with respect to the sub-dimension programming. This interpretation is underpinned by the fact that he calls the programming process, and the artistic processes in general, "organic". The work of an opera company has an organic structure, according to him. For instance, programming is an "organic" process, and not a formal one, in the sense that the program for a season is not made at once, but incrementally, since at a certain point something needs to be cancelled or something new needs to be added. Coherently with his view of the artistic processes, the Chief of the Artistic Department does not assign procedural relevance to the other two artistic sub-dimensions and to the social dimension of performance either. He only assigns procedural relevance to the 'administrative' dimensions of performance: the financial and the organizational ones.

With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators of performance belonging to the sub-dimension programming, according to the Chief Conductor, the objective of the organization is to

produce music theatre of our time. This can be reached by having a good variety of styles, with a strong leg in the 21st century, either with new compositions, new pieces, or with productions which are actually really up-to-date with respect to the aesthetics of our time, where even ancient pieces are converted into something contemporary. The choice of works to be produced and of the stage directors to work with are thus substantively relevant aspects in order to establish a specific artistic profile, and they are all aspects related to the sub-dimension programming.

For the Chorus Artistic Director a unique characteristic of the organization is the ability to mix long arching plans with a season that, apart from making sense financially, as seen above with respect to the financial dimension of performance, makes sense with respect to the casting of singers and conductors, and the orchestras that work with the organization. In particular, presenting new works that challenge the audience is essential for a successful opera:

> "I think that if opera companies become museums, where they only do the standards that reach the middle of the road opera, the standard opera crowd, then they're not successful, even if they are financially successful. A company that - because of the standards of its performers and because of its good planning towards financial stability - is able to reach a loyal audience, should be able to challenge the audience now and then with a new piece".

Together with the social and the financial dimension of performance, the sub-dimension programming emerges thus as substantively relevant here.

According to the Chief of the Artistic Department, the organization uses her own artistic criteria of evaluation. These can be summed up as a consciousness of tradition combined with innovation. A clear artistic vision is important to judge the work of an artistic director, and artistic directors (at least the ones that are opera directors) are the ones that give a profile to an opera company, much more than conductors and singers can do. To persevere in one's own artistic line or vision is thus the most important aspect according to which an opera company should be evaluated. All these aspects are related to the sub-dimension programming of the artistic dimension of performance, which is thus substantively relevant for the Chief of the Artistic Department. Balance is also for the Chief of the Artistic Department a key to success. This includes balance between different aspects of the sub-dimension programming. For instance he speaks about finding the right mix in repertoire, the right mix of direction styles, and the right mix of artists.

Also for the Orchestra General Manager the artistic director's vision, his ideas, and his commitment for the future of the art form opera as well as his ability to come at the end with a good program and good productions - all aspects being related to the sub-dimension programming - are fundamental for the artistic success of an opera company. In turn, the artistic success is achieved when a specific profile has been established. At the organization, the main characteristic of the current profile (at the time of the interviews) is to make opera a contemporary art form.

<u>Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension production</u>

With respect to the sub-dimension production, only from the interview with the Chief Dramaturge this emerges as only procedurally relevant. Also for the Artistic Director and the Orchestra General Manager the sub-dimension production is procedurally relevant, but in their cases the procedural relevance is accompanied by a substantive relevance. As seen above with respect to the sub-

dimension programming, the Chief Dramaturge has a role in delivering information for the annual report. This information includes a description of the staging concept of each production, which is an aspect related to the sub-dimension production.[88] The sub-dimension production assumes thus a procedural relevance. Considering that one of the responsibilities of the Chief Dramaturge is to cooperate with the stage directors in order to facilitate the development of their concepts and assure their realization, it is surprising that no substantive relevance emerges for the sub-dimension production from the interview with him. In fact, some aspects, criteria and indicators of performance belonging to the sub-dimension production are directly related to the skills of the stage director (e.g. the ability of the stage director to realize its vision) and to the quality of the staging (e.g. the clarity of the staging concept and the innovativeness of the staging). Since no specific contextual factor is known that might relativize the influence of personal factors (in the case of the Chief Dramaturge, especially his function at the organization) on the kind of relevance assigned to the sub-dimension programming of the artistic dimension of performance, the unexpected absence of a substantive relevance of this sub-dimension for the Chief Dramaturge might be a consequence of the practical limits and of the nature of the in-depth interviews that I have conducted. On the one hand, due to time constraints, it was not possible to treat every single aspect mentioned in the interview in full detail and to explore both its procedural and substantive relevance. On the other hand, probing every single aspect mentioned with respect to the kind of relevance would have disturbed the flow of the interviews.

The sub-dimension production assumes both procedural and substantive relevance for the Artistic Director and the Orchestra General Manager. The Artistic Director confirms that the directors' concepts are not an object of discussion during the opera evaluation meetings. Nevertheless, he mentions success of the musical component of a production as a topic of discussion during the opera evaluation meetings, giving thus a procedural relevance to the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance. Similarly, the Orchestra General Manager says that at regular meetings, such as the direction meetings, the general feelings about a production (whether it was good or not) are regularly discussed. Details related to the sub-dimension production emerge, such as singers, orchestra and individual orchestra musicians. There seems thus to emerge a procedural relevance for the sub-dimension production from the interview with the Orchestra General Manager too. Nevertheless, the mentioned topics do not seem to be strongly, or, in other words, systematically anchored in procedures, and specifically in the meetings which these two managers with artistic profile mentioned. The procedural relevance of the mentioned topics seems clearly lower than the one assigned by the Chief Dramaturge to the descriptions he delivers for the annual report.

With respect to the substantively relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance belonging to the sub-dimension programming, for the Artistic Director balance is fundamental in achieving success. Success in opera comes from the combination of different forms of success (e.g. singers, directors), all related to the sub-dimension production. Every component must come to a good balance, one good ingredient is not enough. This reflects the fact that, in his role of director of

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[88] I consider the staging concept a production-related and not a programming-related aspect, since the concept of a production is presented only after that production is formally planned, that is, programmed for a certain season.

individual productions, his responsibility is combining musical and theatrical components of a production.

From the interview with the Orchestra General Manager the substantive relevance emerges with respect to the evaluation of opera orchestras, of individual productions, and of opera companies in general. Being responsible for the orchestra, it is no surprise that the Orchestra General Manager richly explains the artistic dimension of performance with respect to opera orchestras. A good opera orchestra must be much more flexible than a philharmonic one:

> "Yes, an opera orchestra is an orchestra that is ready to anticipate a lot of what happens on stage with soloists and singers. And, thus, that gives a lot of control in the hands of the conductor, almost more than in a concert hall. Because the conductor is finally responsible for bringing together that total whole of singers, direction, acting and this demands sometimes strange tempo adjustments. Sometimes the orchestra has to play more quietly than it can or wants [...] But you do it, because you know that there is no choice, because the direction asks for a different placing. And a real opera orchestra doesn't grumble at this, but understands that sometimes you have to go that far in your artistic performance".

With respect to the individual productions, the artistic quality of music and scenery (sub-dimension production), together with reception-related aspect, is the most important success factor for the Orchestra General Manager. The quality of the individual performances is finally a fundamental criterion to evaluate an opera company.

For the Chief Conductor, the Chorus Artistic Director, the Chief of the Artistic Department, and the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming the sub-dimension production assumes only substantive relevance. Considering the little procedural relevance given by the Artistic Director and the Orchestra General Manager to the sub-dimension production, a general picture emerges of a sub-dimension that, despite being substantively very relevant for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization, is largely absent from procedures.

With respect to the individual aspects, criteria and indicators of performance belonging to the sub-dimension production and considered substantively relevant, for the Chief Conductor, it is the artistic quality of each production, together with good season's programs and a specific profile, that makes an opera house successful. The quality of chorus, orchestra, singers, cast and stage directors are all fundamental to make an opera house successful. Also success of individual seasons depends on success of the individual productions in that season. Successful productions are the results of both organizational aspects and production related ones. Examples of the latter are: quality of cast, contemporary staging concept, musical quality, and what the Chief Conductor calls a "utopian balance between music and theatre".

As it can be expected from an interview with the conductor of a chorus, much information about the substantive role of the sub-dimension production concerns the chorus. For instance, the Chorus Artistic Director knows exactly how to identify problems with the chorus. He asks the chorus singers to sing very softly or full. If they either cannot sing softly or cannot sing full after they have learned the music, then it means that there are some technical problems, either within the chorus section or, occasionally, with an individual. He wants to hear a good sound, a compact musical ensemble

and clarity in communicating what is in the music and what the stage director says. The quality of a chorus is made of many aspects, and these are related to the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance:

> "There are so many variables. My goal was to try to give the chorus [...] the knowledge and ability to do so many different things that when a guest conductor comes or a guest stage director comes, they immediately say: 'I've never seen anything like this. These people jump over walls without question, these people will crawl across ground glass on the stage if you ask them to.' And a conductor who says 'I can ask for something once and they will always remember it.' That's a nice goal".

What concerns the evaluation of individual productions, production-related aspects, and above all singing, together with some reception-related ones, are the most relevant for the Chorus Artistic Director:

> "Well, for me artistically the balance of quality of singers, the interpretation, the presentation of beauty, or, I mean, I mean if you look at Elektra there's very little that's beautiful, except for the high standard of singing, but it's dramatic and it's effecting and it's heart-gripping. So, finding in each opera, in each score, the strength of the best that you can present to the audience. There has to be a balance of the orchestral playing, the balance of what you see and the balance of how well it works technically and the balance of the interpretation from the conductor, but most of all, the high standard of singing".

Also for the Chief of the Artistic Department the quality of singing is fundamental, which makes sense for someone who is responsible for casting and contracting soloists. Quality of singing and singers refers to a whole package of what singing means: phrasing, consciousness of style, taste, *ampleur* of voice, all aspects related to the sub-dimension production. The importance of singing reflects the importance given by the Chief of the Artistic Department to the musical component of a production in general. If you have a good production with poor music most people will leave the theatre disappointed. If you have a controversial production, putting together a good musical cast (conductor and singers) will make the result better, even if someone still finds the director's choices disputable.

Technical quality of individual productions is fundamental for the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming too:

> "Actually, artistic quality [as a component of success] should never be under discussion!"

Technical quality refers both to the musical aspects, and to acting and design. The Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming finds that it is easy to find an agreement on this success criterion.

<u>Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension reception</u>

With respect to the sub-dimension reception, for no managers with artistic profile this assumes procedural relevance. Reception related aspects, criteria, and indicators of performance seem thus to live their life out of the organization's procedures. From the interviews with all managers with

artistic profile, except for the one with the Artistic Director, only a substantive role emerges for the sub-dimension reception. The Chief Conductor expresses this role in a very incisive way. Answering the question about how he knows he has done a good job at a production, he says:

> "And, finally, if the public would be really happy and you could even feel how - the intensity of applause".

Also according to the Chief Dramaturge, you can understand whether a production is successful from the enthusiasm of the audience, from their applause and their word-of-mouth about the production, which are all aspects related to the sub-dimension reception of the artistic dimension of performance. The sub-dimension reception is fundamental for the Chief Dramaturge. Sometimes you know that a production will not be sold out, but you want that the spectators who are there are reached by the power of the arts, that they feel it. Finally, you are successful if you can communicate the message and the power of a work. 'Emotional understanding' is central in the interview with the Chief Dramaturge; opera cannot change the world but can stimulate more reflection about our society. If the audience can think longer about the work seen and the topics emerged from it and not only say, 'it was nice and beautiful', than the opera company has reached what it wants to reach, and that's what arts are for. That's why commitment and engagement of the audience and the passion they show in their reactions are more important for the Chief Dramaturge than the sort of judgment they express. In this sense, boos may even be a better sign than a poor applause.

According to the Chorus Artistic Director, succeeding in getting connected to the audience is the biggest artistic success for an artist as well as for a chorus as a whole, and is the main criterion of evaluation for a production:

> "If I put myself in the place of a performer on stage, you know when you've presented something outstanding to the audience, whether it's vocally or dramatically. And when you feel that connection and you have the response - then you know artistically you've been a success".

This seems to give a higher substantive relevance to the sub-dimension reception compared with the other ones. Nevertheless, as seen above with respect to the sub-dimension production, according to the Chorus Artistic Director there needs to be a balance between the sub-dimensions production and reception, exemplified by the necessity that a production, apart from being "dramatic", "effecting" and "heart-gripping" must also be characterized by excellent singing.

The Chief of the Artistic Department assigns subjectivity a fundamental role within the sub-dimension reception. At the level of the individual production, a thunderous applause after a show is a sign that the production has been positively received in general. But sometimes you have mixed reactions, and this is normal, it is a matter of individual taste. In principle, everyone sitting in the theatre has his own perception of it. In addition, taste and style in opera are influenced by culture; every country has different standards and criteria. If one would be able to understand the complexity of the work done to produce an opera, this would already be fine, since tastes are different and you can expect also negative evaluations. Things have to be evaluated in a context and not arbitrarily, then even a negative review in the press can be well accepted. But, finally, the quality of the work done must be recognized. At the end, the substantive role of the sub-dimension reception for the Chief of the Artistic Department is thus relativized in comparison with the sub-

dimension production, whose relevance is dominant for him. The Chief of the Artistic Department also refers to the artistic reputation - also belonging to the sub-dimension reception, even though this may be strongly influenced by the marketing activities belonging to the social dimension of performance - as an indicator of artistic success for an opera company.

With respect to the individual productions, the Orchestra General Manager takes into account the presence and the appreciation of audience and press and the enthusiasm in the theatre, to form a judgment about the artistic success: "Applause, flowers, euphoria" are all symptoms of success in the opera world. If audience members jump from their seats and thank you for the special night they have had, than you see that it was a successful show. Audience appreciation, together with artistic quality (sub-dimension production), is the most important success factor of and opera company. The evaluation of a production from the audience perspective means to consider aspects related to the service delivery, and thus to the social dimension of performance, such as the night out in general; aspects related to the sub-dimension production, such as music and scenery; and aspects related to the sub-dimension reception indeed, such as emotions. Together with the average seat occupancy (social dimension of performance) and the average revenue per ticket (financial dimension of performance), also the percentage of productions that have been well received by audience and press (sub-dimension reception) contributes to the judgment forming of the Orchestra General Manager about a season's success.

Finally, for the Deputy Director, Education, Participation and Programming, the enthusiasm of the audience at a performance (sub-dimension reception) is definitely an indicator of success, together with the fact that the performance is sold-out (social dimension of performance). From the reactions of the audience it is also possible to understand to what extent the public feels close to the message sent by the opera, which is a fundamental task of the organization.

The sub-dimension reception emerges as rich, varied and highly relevant for the evaluation of artistic processes and results. Nevertheless, no procedures seem to take this sub-dimension adequately into account.

From my analysis of the interviews with the managers with artistic profile, the financial and the organizational dimensions of performance emerge in general as slightly less relevant than the social dimension and the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance (programming, production, reception). A different pattern emerges compared with the managers with administrative profile, where, from the financial dimension down to the sub-dimension reception, the procedural relevance steadily decreased and, at the same time, the substantive relevance steadily increased. In the case of the managers with artistic profile two clusters of dimensions of performance emerge, based on their general relevance (both procedural and/or substantive). Indeed, a distinction in relevance emerges between the dimensions that are related to administration (finance and organization) and the dimensions that are related to the creation and distribution of arts (artistic and social). In particular, the fact that all managers with artistic profile assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance legitimates this distinction, by showing how closely interrelated considerations about outreach and audience development on the one hand, and about artistic processes and results on the other hand are.

With respect to the individual dimensions of performance, a difference between the group of managers with administrative profile and the group of managers with artistic profile is that the financial dimension of performance is mentioned more frequently as substantively than procedurally relevant by the managers with artistic profile. In general, despite their artistic profile, the managers with artistic profile assign substantive relevance to the financial dimension of performance more frequently than their colleagues with administrative profile. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that, in general, the substantive relevance of the financial dimension refers to the consciousness about the financial limits of the organization and, consequently, of the feasibility of certain programming and production ideas. The financial dimension imposes limits to the possible artistic activities, but does not necessarily influence the evaluation of their results. In the only case in which a manager with artistic profile (the Orchestra General Manager) explicitly assigns to the financial dimension a substantive relevance in the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization, this has been explained through the manager's personal profile, which is characterized by double experience and responsibilities; that is, both artistic and administrative.

The organizational dimension of performance emerges as the least relevant for the managers with artistic profile. Only two managers with artistic profile assign substantive relevance to this dimension of performance. The analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with administrative profile led to the question, whether the scarce relevance assigned to the organizational dimension of performance might depend on the assignment of individual aspects, criteria and indicators to the wrong dimension, in particular to the organizational dimension of performance instead of the sub-dimension production and vice versa. I concluded that a re-assignment would have not changed the general findings with respect to the relevance of the organizational dimension in the evaluation of artistic processes and results. The analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with artistic profile legitimates my distinction *between,* and my assignments *to,* the organizational dimension of performance and the sub-dimension production. For instance, the organizational aspects, criteria and indicators of performance mentioned by the Chief Conductor are strictly related to the production process, in particular to the quality of leadership and communication of conductors and stage directors and to the quality of

team work during rehearsals. They are separated from the handicraft aspects included in the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance (e.g. overall musical quality) but may influence them. The fact that, according to the Chief Conductor, the evaluation of the performance (sub-dimension production) - or, with the Chief Conductor's words, of the "results" - is anyway more important *than,* and even separated *from,* the judgment of the process, seems to legitimate the distinction between the above mentioned organizational and production-related aspects, criteria and indicators of performance. The organizational aspects seems thus not to influence the final judgment about the artistic value created by the organization.

As mentioned above, the social dimension of performance and the three artistic sub-dimensions (programming, production, reception) are given more relevance than the financial and the organizational dimensions of performance. With respect to the social dimension of performance, we had wondered whether the substantive relevance assigned to this dimension by the managers with administrative profile might depend on their personal profile. Outreach and audience development are, in general, the result of marketing and education activities. Marketing and education might be considered at first glance supporting processes within publicly funded arts organizations, like finance and organization. Nevertheless, the managers with artistic profile, who are responsible for the artistic processes of the organization, unanimously assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance. At the same time, they assign very little procedural relevance to this dimension, which means that they are not obliged to take it into account in their work. This suggests that outreach and audience development considerations are more genuinely embedded in the artistic work of the organization than it might be assumed. The social dimension of performance emerges from the interviews with the managers with artistic profile, even more than from the interviews with the managers with administrative profile, as closely related to artistic success.

Managers with artistic profile assign even less procedural relevance to the three artistic sub-dimensions than the managers with administrative profile. While programming and production receive little procedural relevance, reception receives no procedural relevance at all. The scarce procedural relevance of the artistic sub-dimensions does not seem to depend on the different responsibilities of the respective group of managers, but on the very nature of the artistic processes and their results, as well as of their evaluation. As the Chief of the Artistic Department explains, the work of an opera company has an organic structure. For instance, programming is an "organic" process, and not a formal one, in the sense that the program for a season is not made at once, or based on prescribed deadlines and meetings, but incrementally, since at a certain point something needs to be cancelled or something new needs to be added. As a consequence, also the evaluation of these organic processes seems to remain untouched *by,* and is probably even 'untouchable' *through* procedures. This explains why, also for managers that assign procedural relevance, though a little, to the sub-dimension programming, the aspects, criteria and indicators freely taken into account to form a judgment about the artistic value created by the organization are much more than the ones they have to take into account according to procedures.

The organic nature of artistic processes and results, and consequently, of their evaluation, explains also why so little procedural relevance is given to the sub-dimension production. Aspects, criteria, and indicators related to the artistic quality of the production team and of the final performance, despite being fundamental in the actual judgment of the artistic success of the organization, are largely absent from any procedure.

Finally, the procedurally uncatchable nature of artistic processes and their results becomes evident through the analysis of the procedural and/or substantive relevance assigned by the managers with artistic profile to the sub-dimension reception. Although they practically unanimously assign substantive relevance to this sub-dimension, for no managers with artistic profile the sub-dimension reception assumes procedural relevance. Reception-related aspects, criteria, and indicators of performance seem thus to live their life out of the organization's procedures. The sub-dimension reception emerges as rich, varied and highly relevant for the evaluation of artistic processes and results. Nevertheless, no procedures seem to take this sub-dimension adequately into account. It is again the Chief of the Artistic Department who spontaneously offers an explanation for this. Subjectivity has according to him a fundamental role within the sub-dimension reception. This is indirectly confirmed by the Chief Dramaturge, for whom commitment and engagement of the audience and the passion they show in their reactions are more important than the sort of judgment they express, since the final judgment is subjective and any subjective judgment is in principle legitimate. For the Chief Dramaturge, consequently, boos may even be a better 'evaluation' than a poor applause, since they show the commitment of the audience to what the organization is doing. Subjectivity makes it not only more difficult to grasp the reception process and its evaluation through procedures. It also makes the evaluation of the reception process in general more difficult than the evaluation of the other artistic processes. For instance, with respect to the sub-dimension production, where aspects to be evaluated relate to the technical quality of musical, acting and design aspects, it is easier to find an agreement on evaluation criteria, at least according to the Deputy Director for Education, Participation and Programming. An agreement on evaluation criteria makes it potentially easier to agree also on a procedure of evaluation.

To sum up, after having analyzed the dimensions of performance for the managers with administrative profile, I expected no intrusion of the financial and organizational dimensions of performance into the artistic one. I also wondered to what extent the substantive relevance of the social dimension of performance can be considered an intrusion of a regulatory value system or the expression of a genuine commitment to audience development and outreach. The financial dimension cannot be considered intrusive as a dimension of performance. Nevertheless, it does intrude the artistic processes by making conscious of the financial limits that have to be respected and of the necessity to use the financial resources in the best possible way. As seen above, for the Artistic Director, for instance, the financial dimension of performance is more related to the planning of the artistic activities than to the evaluation of their results. For the Chorus Artistic Director the financial dimension makes no intrusion into the artistic one, but accompanies it in a supporting role. For him, the substantive relevance of the financial dimension of performance has above all to do with the evaluation of how well finances support the core artistic processes, particularly the programming process. Together with the organizational dimension of performance, the financial dimension of performance emerges thus both as a constrainer and an enabler of artistic success. The final artistic value created by the organization is not evaluated based on these two dimensions, which both relate to the administrative, supporting processes. The final artistic value created by the organization is evaluated based on the dimensions that are related to the core processes of creating and distributing opera: the social dimension and the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance (programming, production, and reception). The commitment of the organization to the community in which it operates emerges, after the analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with administrative and artistic profile, rather as a genuine attitude of the interviewed managers

than as the result of the intrusion of non-artistic considerations into the artistic one. The analysis of the dimensions of performance for the managers with technical profile will finally confirm or relativize this temporary conclusion.

Dimensions of performance for managers with technical profile

The group of managers with a technical profile includes Technical Director, Chief of Production Management, and Production Manager. Table D4 shows which relevance, procedural (P) and/or substantive (S), they assign to the different dimensions of performance, as emerged from the interviews.

Managers / *Dimensions of performance*	Technical Director	Chief of Production Management	Production Manager	Total Technical Managers (3)
Financial	P/S	P/S	P	**3P**/2S
Organizational	P/S	P	P	**3P**/1S
Social	P/S	S	S	1P/**3S**
Artistic/Programming	P/S	S		1P/**2S**
Artistic/Production	P/S	P/S	S	2P/**3S**
Artistic/Reception	P/S		S	1P/**2S**

Table D4: Dimensions of performance for managers with technical profile

From this table it emerges that all dimensions of performance are relevant for the managers with technical profile. Nevertheless, a clear difference emerges between the financial and organizational dimensions on the one hand, and the social dimension and the three artistic sub-dimensions on the other hand with respect to the sort of relevance the managers assign to them. The financial and organizational dimensions of performance have to be procedurally taken into account and are thus procedurally relevant. All managers with technical profile assign procedural relevance to the financial and organizational dimensions of performance. Nevertheless, their influence on the managers' actual judgments of the artistic performance of the organization emerges as limited if compared with their procedural relevance. Substantively, the social and artistic (sub-)dimensions of performance - in particular the sub-dimension production - are the most relevant for the managers with technical profile although procedurally their relevance is very limited.

Financial dimension of performance

For all managers with technical profile the financial dimension of performance is procedurally relevant, as it can be expected by looking at their functions within the organization. The Technical Director has a twofold responsibility: for the building, and for all the technique used and created for opera and ballet productions (scenery, dresses, make-up, props, lighting, and sound). For both he has to manage specific budgets. The Chief of Production Management has a twofold responsibility: he is production manager for some productions, and chief of the production management team (3 production managers and 7 stage managers plus assistants), with responsibility for the logistics of the production teams. Production managers have the final responsibility on the individual productions, the Chief of Production Management coordinates the general long-term plan for the different sorts of presentations of all productions. The Production Manager is responsible for the operations concerning an opera production, from the beginning (about 2-3 years before première) until the end. Responsibility begins as soon as the artistic director communicates who will be artistically responsible for the production (director, conductor, and casting). The responsibility is

about what can be done in a certain time and with a certain budget. The three managers have thus to use budget-related information regularly within their working procedures. The Technical Director uses financial information to prepare his regular meetings with the Managing Director: amount of man-hours and money spent in comparison to the budget that he gets for opera and ballet. Also at the technical evaluation meetings, budget is one of the discussed topics. The Technical Director also mentions that the annual reports of the organization carefully describe the individual productions of the previous year[89] from three points of view: artistic, technical, and financial. The Chief of Production Management uses financial information relating to the different productions, while the Production Manager has to manage the budget of the production he is in charge of. At the technical evaluation conducted by the full production team, accountability over financial aspects is internally discharged, as the Chief of Production Management incisively explains:

> "This was the budget, this is how much we spent".

While for the Production Manager the financial dimension of performance is only procedurally relevant, for the Technical Director and the Chief of Production Management the financial dimension of performance is both procedurally and substantively relevant. The Technical Director literally "does not accept" when his staff exceed the planned budget:

> "No, guys, mind, this is also your task, things must be done within a time limit and within a budget limit, we cannot spend money that we don't have".

The financial dimension emerges thus as fundamental for him in forming a judgment about the results of the work of his department. His department delivers the scenography of the individual productions. The work of the technical department can thus be seen as a component of the artistic processes, in particular of the production process. In this sense the judgment of the work of his own department can also be considered a component of the judgment of the artistic processes of the organization. That the financial dimension of performance has a substantive relevance also for the Chief of Production Management emerges from his assertion that the organization is continuously busy with producing as good quality as possible with as little money as possible. A mix of the criteria economy and efficiency seems to apply to all phases of the work of the organization; not only to the artistic planning thus, but also to the evaluation of artistic processes and results.

The substantive relevance given to the financial dimension of performance by the Technical Director and the Chief of Production Management can be explained by looking at specific aspects of their profile. The Technical Director has a professional background (education and experience) as construction engineer, and for engineers the efficiency of processes is a primary concern. Differently from him, the Chief of Production Management has grown within the classical music world. Apart from the conservatory study, his experience is characterized by learning-by-doing in the area of opera production. His professional background does not seem to justify the substantive relevance he gives to the financial dimension of performance. This seems to originate rather in his function and, in particular, in his responsibility for the overall budget of the production team. Nevertheless, the Production Manager has a similar function and a similar responsibility as the Chief of Production Management, although his responsibility is restricted to the individual productions he is in charge of. My assumption about the relation between function in the organization and substantive relevance

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[89] Annual reports at the organization refer to calendar years and not to seasons.

of the financial dimension of evaluation would imply that also the Production Manager should give substantive relevance to the financial dimension of performance, which is not the case. A fundamental difference between the responsibilities of the two managers is that the Chief of Production Management has to report directly to the Managing Director on the budget of his department. The Production Manager instead has the role of intermediary between the individual production teams and the direction when tensions arise between artistic, financial and technical needs and/or claims, which is often the case, as the Chief of Production Management explains. A production manager in general has thus to be flexible and to understand the artists' point of view. The Production Manager shows this attitude in the interview. According to him, the high degree of freedom for the artistic team is sometimes problematic, since one has to reinvent things and solutions every time. Nevertheless, he is sympathetic with artistic freedom and finds it positive that the organization is always doing something new and is not working in a style that he defines the style of a "German theatre factory". His attitude, which emerges as necessary for his function, can explain why for him the financial dimension does not have the same weight - and is thus not substantively relevant - as for the Chief of Production Management, who is accountable above all on financial measures indeed.

Organizational dimension of performance

Considering the individual functions of the three managers with technical background, it is not surprising that for all of them the organizational dimension of performance is procedurally relevant. The Technical Director has to prepare information related to safety and sustainability for his regular meetings with the Managing Director. At the technical evaluation meetings, apart from budget, also safety and sustainability issues, as well as processes and technique are discussed. The Production Manager has to use information concerning time-planning and safety issues, and the Chief of Production Management has to use information related to personal management issues.

What is rather surprising is that only for the Technical Director the organizational dimension of performance is also substantively relevant. How the way to the première was, whether the team worked efficiently, whether the atmosphere within the team was good, whether there was no accident, are all aspects that seem to influence his judgment of individual productions together with what he sees happening on stage. These aspects do not seem to influence the other two managers with technical profile: the Chief of Production Management and the Production Manager. One possible explanation might be found in their long experience at the organization, respectively 31 and 25 years at the time of the interviews - against the 12 years of the Technical Director. The Chief of Production Management and the Production Manager have spent practically their whole working life within the organization. It can be assumed that they have adopted the general attitude of the organization towards the evaluation of artistic processes and results. This attitude is expressed by the total number of occurrences of substantive relevance in the interviews with all managers of the organization. The organizational dimension of performance has the lowest number of occurrences as substantively relevant of all (sub-)dimensions of performance, indeed, and would even remain the least substantively relevant if these two managers would not be considered. From this perspective, it is not surprising that the Chief of Production Management and the Production Manager do not assign substantive relevance to the organizational dimension of performance. It is rather the attitude of the Technical Director towards the organizational dimension of performance which is different from the attitude of most managers in the organization, and this can be explained, as seen

above, by his background as an engineer and the importance of well-functioning processes in his work.

Social dimension of performance

While all managers with technical profile assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance, a procedural relevance emerges only from the interview with the Technical Director. The fact that the Chief of Production Management and the Production Manager assign no procedural relevance to the social dimension of performance reflects their responsibilities within the organization, where outreach and audience development do not play any role. The Technical Director is involved in the direction meetings and thus in discussions about topics that go beyond the work of the technical department and that include also issues such as outreach and audience development.

With respect to the procedurally relevant aspects, criteria and indicators, the Technical Director only mentions the audience surveys that are conducted on a production basis, with questions about the quality of hospitality, the building, the technique, and the visited production indeed. As already emerged from the interviews with the administrative managers, in the audience surveys the main role is played by the social dimension of performance, since most questions refer to the quality of the services delivered. The substantively relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance mentioned by the Technical Director are much more. The way a message is able to reach an audience and thus to support building audience frequency and loyalty is a criterion to judge the work of an Artistic Director. To what extent is his artistic vision clear to the public and to what extent is he connected to the public he wants to reach with his message? Outreach is also fundamental in judging the performance of an opera company in general. Evaluating the results of an opera means to see to what extent the place the opera claims in the community (locally, nationally, and internationally) is experienced as such also by the ones the opera is expected to work for, that is, the general public and, more specifically, the audience. Audience outreach means for him aiming at a representative average of society and that the different segments of the audience finally go and see the productions. The first criterion mentioned by the Technical Director when referring to a successful season is to have sold-out productions, indeed. But also in the media a discussion should be visible about the individual productions and seasons, and this can be supported by good public relations. An indicator of outreach is, according to the Technical Director, also the number of recordings (for DVD or broadcasting) in a season.

For the Chief of Production Management and the Production Manager the social dimension of performance is only substantively relevant. Also for the Chief of Production Management presence in the media in general and seat occupancy can be seen as indicators of outreach. A high seat occupancy is definitely an indicator of a successful season, but how high must the seat occupancy be in order to consider a production successful depends on the individual production. If you produce a contemporary opera as a world première, then 85% seat occupancy is a huge success. According to the Production Manager, an opera company has to be considered successful if audience always go with high expectations to the shows; if audience are "stimulated to get once again stimulated" by the opera company; if they have the expectation that they're going to do something beautiful, something that is "life-changing", a special experience. These aspects are all linked to the ability to

build audience frequency and loyalty, which, supported by marketing and education activities, can lead to more outreach.

The substantive relevance unanimously assigned to the social dimension of performance by the managers with technical profile shows again how genuinely outreach and audience development considerations merge with the purely artistic one.

<u>Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension programming</u>

The Technical Director assigns both procedural and substantive relevance to the sub-dimension programming of the artistic dimension of performance. The Chief of Production Management assigns only substantive relevance to this dimension. Finally, the Production Manager does not speak at all about this sub-dimension in the interview.

The sub-dimension programming assumes procedural relevance only for the Technical Director, which can be explained by his role in the direction. Although he has no responsibility what concerns artistic choices, he is informed about the artistic policy of the organization and has to give his formal approval to the policy plans. In addition, as seen above, the Technical Director reports to the Managing Director on the amount of man-hours and money spent in comparison to the budget he gets for opera and ballet. Programming choices are thus also at the origin of the budgeting for the technical department he directs, and it seems logical that he keeps informed about them. The Technical Director mentions that the annual reports of the organization carefully describe the individual productions of the previous year[90] from three points of view: artistic, financial, and technical. With respect to the artistic point of view, above all aspects relating to the sub-dimension programming are mentioned in the descriptions included in the annual report, making this sub-dimension of artistic performance procedurally relevant.

With respect to the substantive relevance, having long term plans with a clear vision is one of the criteria based on which an opera company should be evaluated.

For the Chief of Production Management the sub-dimension programming is only substantively relevant. He considers a good cast the most important factor for a production's success, an aspect that can be related both to the sub-dimensions programming and production. Nevertheless, he confirms the substantive relevance given to the sub-dimension programming by saying that casting is also central in determining a season's success, together with the diversity of repertoire. Both are strongly dependent on the quality of the artistic director, which can be seen in whom he invites, especially with respect to stage directors and designers - also with respect to their personality and ability to work well in a team - and in his repertoire choices indeed.

As seen above, the Production Manager does not speak at all about the sub-dimension programming in the interview. On the one hand, he is not responsible for programming but for supporting individual productions, which might explain while this dimension is not procedurally relevant for him. On the other hand, the fact that his responsibilities are all within individual productions would make me suppose that he would talk a lot about the importance of finding the right match between the individual artists in the cast, and similar aspects related to programming, and thus give substantive relevance to the sub-dimension programming. As it emerges from the analysis of the

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[90] Annual reports at the organization refer to calendar years and not to seasons.

other two sub-dimensions of the artistic dimension of performance, for the Production Manager production- and reception-related aspects, criteria and indicators of performance are fundamental for the judgment of the artistic value created by the organization. It is plausible that these are just more important for him than the programming-related ones and that he consequently does not mention the latter in the interview.

Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension production

All three managers with technical profile assign substantive relevance to the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance. The Technical Director and the Chief of Production Management assign also procedural relevance to this sub-dimension, which can be explained by their responsibilities for the technique used and created for the productions in general. Also the Production Manager is responsible for the "physical" part of individual productions: stage design, light, organization, logistic aspects of opera production. Nevertheless, he does not assign any procedural relevance to the sub-dimension production. This depends probably on the practical limits and the structure of the interview, where more time and attention have been spent to understand the relevance of aspects, criteria, and indicators of performance, rather than to obtain an exhaustive enumeration of all possible procedures and rules.[91]

With respect to the individual, procedurally relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance related to the sub-dimension production, the Technical Director mentions a requirement catalogue compiled at the presentation of the model and concept of each production. For every aspect of the presented model and concept, details are written about what the meaning is, what has to be done, how it has to look like, etc. In this way it is possible to compare what the technical staff has understood of the concept with what the artistic team really meant. This document can be used for instance by designers as a base for their drawings, and for a control check at the time when the scenery is delivered in order to see whether the actual scenery suits the original idea. As such, the requirement catalogue can be considered as a kind of procedurally relevant information related to the production process. The dimensions involved in the judgment forming of the Technical Director about the artistic value created by the organization refers both to artistic processes and their results. With respect to processes, it is fundamental for the Technical Director to ascertain that the product of the technical department satisfies its users. The product includes the scenery, the lighting, the props and the design. The scenery, the lighting, the props and the design are an integral component of the artistic concept of the production, indeed they can be considered the most tangible and concrete translation of it. In this sense, they relate to the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance, and assume a substantive relevance for the Technical Director.

According to the Chief of Production Management, at the technical evaluation a discussion of the quality of the artistic concept of a production in relation to the artistic policy of the organization, if conducted at all, actually concerns the practical realization of the original design idea, as presented firstly as a scale model, than as a trial scenery, and finally with the definitive choice of material. Since, as seen above, the final design of the stage is a component of the artistic concept and its experience by the audience, the information exchanged in this regular meeting, though mainly practical, regards the artistic dimension of performance, sub-dimension production and is

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[91] Questions about the existing procedures of evaluation and the function of these procedure within the organization's processes were asked in the third of the fourth section of the interview.

procedurally relevant. Substantively relevant are for the Chief of Production Management the cast, since he considers a good cast the most important factor for a production's success. This aspect can be related both to the sub-dimensions programming and production, as seen above. Other production-related aspects are at the same time necessary; all the components of opera (music, scenery, and lighting) must be good and fit in the general concept of the production.

As mentioned above, for the Production Manager the sub-dimension production is only substantively relevant. Apart from the heavy weight he gives to reception-related criteria of evaluation that I will analyze later, according to him it is also possible to give a professional judgment, based on technical aspects, even when one has been not moved personally. Technical, handicraft criteria of evaluation are typical of the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance.

<u>Artistic dimension of performance: sub-dimension reception</u>

For the sub-dimension reception, procedural relevance emerges only from the interview with the Technical Director who also assigns substantive relevance to this sub-dimension, like the Production Manager. This sub-dimension does not emerge from the interview with the Chief of Production Management.

What concerns the procedural relevance of the sub-dimension reception, the Technical Director speaks about audience surveys that are conducted on a production basis, with - as seen above - most questions concerning the social dimension of performance (hospitality, building, technique) but also, apparently, with questions about the visited production. The limited role left for the evaluation of the production by the audience can be interpreted as a sort of procedurally relevant information of performance concerning the sub-dimension reception of the artistic dimension of performance. The little procedural relevance given to the audience appreciation of a production overlaps with the most important, substantively relevant criterion of evaluation for the Technical Director. For him the core criterion for evaluating a production is the process of experiencing the production. Not just the satisfaction with a production is important, but the way this initiated a communicative process, as the following quote testifies:

> "I find a production successful, and I enjoy it the most, if in the theatre the perception through the audience is [...] excited [...] And if there's also a part of the audience that says, well, I didn't like it at all. And if we succeed in bringing a dialogue between them, then it's been successful [...] There are 1,600 spectators in the theatre, there must be some controversy. If it's only 'hosanna', than there must be something wrong".

The fact that the audience react, write, have an opinion on what the opera does with them, means that that opera production is being successful, since creating a dialogue and communicating a message is what productions are made for. You want that the message arrives at the audience and that they reflect on it. Opera must be able to enrich, to give depth to lives and the audience should write and talk with pleasure about the productions. In that case an opera company can be considered successful.

Also for the Production Manager an opera production is successful if the spectator is surprised, endeared, moved, touched; if he can participate in the experience of something composed hundreds

of years ago and be touched by it. The senses have to be touched and spectators can even be shocked.

In general, a clear gap emerges between the very little procedural relevance and the dominant substantive relevance of the sub-dimension reception, also for the managers with technical profile.

Summary of the dimensions of performance for managers with technical profile

From my analysis of the interviews with the managers with technical profile, the financial and organizational dimensions of performance emerge unanimously as procedurally relevant. Nevertheless, they do not influence the judgments of all three managers about the artistic value created by the organization. Efficiency and economy are the criteria related to the financial dimension of performance that influence the judgments of the two managers with technical profile who assign substantive relevance to the financial dimension of performance. In particular, these criteria seem to influence their judgments of the results of the work of the technical department, that, by delivering the 'physical' components of the productions (scenery, dresses, make-up, props, lighting, sound), substantially contribute to the final artistic performance. The assignment of substantive relevance to the financial dimension of performance has been explained by looking at specific aspects of the managers' personal profile (professional background, function within the organization and skills required to fulfill a certain task).

Differently from what might have been expected from managers with technical profile, the organizational dimension is given scarce substantive relevance. In fact, the organizational dimension of performance emerges as substantively relevant even less frequently than for the managers of the other two groups. Apart from specific aspects of the personal profile of the three managers (e.g. years of experience within the organization), this can be explained by the fact that the managers with technical profile unanimously assign substantive relevance to the sub-dimension production of the artistic dimension of performance and, in general, more frequently than the managers from the other two groups. Process-related aspects, criteria and indicators of performance have, for these managers, strictly to do with the creation of the scenery, and thus belong rather to the sub-dimension production than to the organizational dimension of performance. The sub-dimension production is the only one out of the three sub-dimensions of the artistic dimension of performance that is unanimously considered substantively relevant by the managers with technical profile. Finally, two of these managers are production managers indeed. In addition, amongst the dimensions and sub-dimensions that emerge as more substantively than procedurally relevant, it is the only one where the variety of procedurally relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance mentioned in the interviews is as rich as the variety of the substantively relevant ones.

The judgment about the artistic value created by the organization is formed mainly based on the social and the artistic dimension of performance. What concerns them, apart from the sub-dimension production, there emerges a gap between the few procedurally relevant aspects, criteria and indicators mentioned in the interviews, and the variety and richness of the substantively relevant ones. For instance, what concerns the social dimension of performance, only audience surveys are mentioned in the interviews with the managers with technical profile as regularly gathered information about outreach. Whether and how the results of these surveys are used, remain unclear. The sub-dimension programming has a relatively low relevance between this group of managers, which could not always been explained through their functions within the organization.

The gap between procedurally and substantively relevant information is the largest within the sub-dimension reception, which emerges as the most important one in determining artistic success. Whether and to what extent the spectator is surprised, endeared, moved, touched; whether he understands works composed hundreds of years ago and is touched by them; whether the senses of

the spectators have been touched and even shocked, are all criteria of artistic success that cannot be found in any procedure, definitely not in the only question about the appreciation of the production that is asked in audience surveys which, consequently, are substantively irrelevant for the judgments of the managers with technical profile about the artistic value created by the organization.

To sum up, the relevance given to the financial dimension seems to originate in the nature of the work and of the functions of the managers with technical profile rather than in any intrusion of an economic mentality. Nevertheless, tightening budgets and a growing pressure for accountability enhances the tensions between the financial and the artistic dimensions that are, in general, to be expected. Also for the managers with technical profile outreach and audience development are natural concerns of the organization, although, due to their functions, they seem to assign less relevance to the social dimension of performance than other managers. Finally, they are strongly focused on internal processes of production, since they deliver a 'sub-component' of the final artistic performance. It is thus logical that, amongst the other artistic sub-dimensions, they unanimously assign substantive relevance to production. Two of them are, finally, production managers.

Cross analysis and conclusions

Table D5 shows the number of occurrences of the dimensions of performance, both procedurally (P) and/or substantively relevant (S), in the interviews with the three groups of managers with, respectively, administrative, artistic, and technical profile.

Group of Managers / *Dimensions of performance*	Managers with Administrative Profile (7)	Managers with Artistic Profile (7)	Managers with Technical Profile (3)	Total Managers (17)
Financial	**5P**/3S	3P/**5S**	**3P**/2S	**11P**/10S
Organizational	**6P**/4S	**4P**/2S	**3P**/1S	**13P**/7S
Social	4P/**5S**	3P/**7S**	1P/**3S**	8P/**15S**
Artistic/Programming	2P/**6S**	3P/**7S**	1P/**2S**	6P/**15S**
Artistic/Production	**4S**	3P/**6S**	2P/**3S**	5P/**13S**
Artistic/Reception	2P/**7S**	**6S**	1P/**2S**	3P/**15S**
Total Dimensions of performance	19P/**29S**	16P/**33S**	11P/13S	46P/**75S**

Table D5: Dimensions of performance of the three groups of managers

As anticipated in the introduction of this section, my analysis shows that the dimensions of performance of the interviewed managers are divided in two groups:

- dimensions whose relevance is mainly procedural;
- dimensions whose relevance is mainly substantive.

The dimensions of performance that are mainly procedurally relevant are the financial and the organizational dimensions of performance. The dimensions of performance that are mainly substantively relevant are the social dimension and the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance: programming, production and reception.

In general, no substantial differences emerge between the three groups of managers. Individual differences within each group could mostly be explained through specific aspects of the personal profiles (e.g. personal background, function at the organization) or through the limitations of the research methodology adopted. The homogeneous response of the managers across the three groups (administrative, artistic, and technical) shows a common frame of reference within the organization.

What concerns the two dimensions that are mainly procedurally relevant (financial and organizational), the financial dimension is considered relatively often also as substantive relevant. The financial dimension emerges indeed as essential in setting the limits of programming choices and of technical decisions concerning the individual productions. In this sense, the financial dimension influences what will be finally produced. Nevertheless, it plays a secondary role in the evaluation of what has been produced and performed, and for only a few managers. Individual aspects of the personal profiles explain the substantive relevance assigned to the financial dimension of performance by those managers. The efficiency criterion of having tried to do the best with the available resources and the economy criterion of keeping within budget and spending as little as possible emerge as substantively relevant evaluation criteria. This does not seem to be the

direct result of the use of certain evaluation procedures but rather of an enduring trend in cutting the budget for culture. The artistic staff is getting increasingly conscious of the fact that subsidies are not obvious anymore. As a result, financial considerations become a genuine concern for the managers of the organization. Tightening budgets, together with a growing pressure for more financial accountability, also enhance the natural tensions existing between the financial and the artistic dimensions of performance that emerge in the decision making phase rather than in the evaluation phase. Nonetheless, the financial dimension of performance does not emerge only in its negative role as a 'constrainer' of artistic processes, but also in its positive role as an 'enabler'. A sound financial structure is considered necessary in order to do the artistic work properly. In general, there emerges no negative attitude towards the financial dimension of performance, as one might expect from the managers of an arts organization and, above all, from the managers with artistic profile.

The organizational dimension of performance, which is considered more frequently than all other dimensions as procedurally relevant, is at the same time considered less frequently than all other dimensions as substantively relevant. This dimension seems to form, together with the financial dimension, an 'enabler'-duo for the artistic work of the organization, but is finally not entering the artistic dimension of performance. The organization's processes, culture and people facilitate the individual productions, but the result on stage, both from the production perspective (quality of the performance) and the reception perspective (artistic impact) is evaluated regardless of them. What finally happens on the stage and between the stage and the audience is central in the evaluation of the artistic processes and results of the organization, and not the supporting activities.

The social dimension of performance is the only non-artistic dimension that is assigned more frequently substantive than procedural relevance. No substantial difference emerges between the three groups of managers concerning the substantive relevance assigned to the social dimension of performance. Also the managers with artistic profile, who are responsible for the artistic processes of the organization, unanimously assign substantive relevance to the social dimension of performance. My impression is that outreach and audience development considerations are more genuinely embedded in the artistic work of the organization than it might be assumed. Nevertheless, it cannot be excluded that this might also be the consequence of the growing pressure for taking the social role of publicly-funded arts organizations more into account in the organization's policy and activities, as well as in the evaluation procedures. In this sense, there might be here an intrusion of the social dimension of performance into the artistic one. Nevertheless, considering that the social dimension of performance emerges as even more closely related to artistic success from the interviews with the managers with artistic profile than from the interviews with the managers with administrative profile, and that the managers with administrative profile are the ones that directly face the procedures of evaluation and the regulatory pressure for more accountability, the interviews do not underpin the assumption of an intrusion of the social into the artistic dimension of performance. Commitment to the community in which the organization operates emerges as a genuine attitude of the managers of the organization.

The social dimension of performance and the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance are at the core of the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization. What concerns the three artistic sub-dimensions, from programming to reception the procedural relevance decreases constantly, showing the difficulty of grasping artistic processes and their results in evaluation

procedures. At the same time, the richness and variety of the substantively relevant aspects, criteria and indicators of performance increase, enlarging the gap between what really counts for the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization and what comes on paper. While some information about programming, such as casting choices, finds its way through the procedures pretty regularly, production-related aspects such as the musical quality of the performance are only touched quickly at regular meetings. Finally, the reception-related aspects, which emerge as the core of the evaluation, are practically absent from any procedure of evaluation.

The absence of the artistic dimension of performance in procedures might depend on the difficulty of expressing, let alone operationalizing, aspects related to the quality of the artistic director, the program and the profile; to the quality of the artistic production, the team and the performance; and to the artistic experience and impact. This difficulty, which is increased by the role of subjectivity in evaluation, in particular with respect to the sub-dimension reception, emerges as a risk for the organization in situations in which 'evaluators' with a financial background have to assess the organizational performance. They might shift their attention to quantifiable data, such as financial and audience numbers, which in general do not cover the richness and variety of the information necessary to express the content-based nature of the artistic performance.

The absence of the artistic dimension of performance in procedures might also depend on the organic nature of artistic processes and results. As a consequence, also the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization is organic and can thus hardly be grasped within procedures. As the Chief of the Artistic Department explains, the work of an opera company has an organic structure. For instance, programming is an "organic" process, and not a formal one, in the sense that the program for a season is not made at once, or based on prescribed deadlines and meetings, but incrementally, since at a certain point something needs to be cancelled or something new needs to be added. As a consequence, also the evaluation of these organic processes seems to remain untouched *by,* and is probably even 'untouchable' *through,* procedures.

The fact that the three artistic sub-dimensions of performance (programming, production, reception) are very relevant substantively shows that the three artistic processes, which emerged from the analysis of the evaluators of performance (programming, production, reception), are a precise mirror of the artistic work within the organization. In addition, the dominant substantive relevance assigned to the social dimension of performance shows that, together with the three artistic processes, audience development and outreach are also core processes of the organization. While financial and organization management emerge from my analysis as supporting processes, not only creating (programming, production, reception), but also distributing arts (audience development and outreach), emerge as core processes of the organization.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this thesis is to shift the focus of performance evaluation research in arts organizations away from the technicalities of performance measurement and towards the process of sense-making about performance, particularly with respect to artistic performance. This perspective on evaluation requires an understanding of how performance evaluation rules and procedures are embodied by those organizational actors who are involved in performance evaluation practices. This understanding is a precondition for the development of performance evaluation systems that are able to account for the organizational reality for which they are designed (Roberts and Scapens 1985).

This objective has been pursued through four autonomous pieces of research, presented in the form of four autonomous papers, which are linked together both thematically and methodologically. Thematically, the four papers represent a shift of focus of research on performance evaluation in the arts from "the margins of accounting" (Miller 1998) to the core of accountability (Robert and Scapens 1985). This means that the focus is no longer on which calculative practices should be used to evaluate artistic performance, but on how different practices of evaluation impact the work of the organization and shape patterns of accountability within the organization (Roberts and Scapens 1985). Methodologically, the four papers draw from multiple methods and forms of evidence, following Wicks and Freeman's (1998) call for the adoption of a new pragmatic approach to organization studies.

The four papers contribute to the objective of the thesis by investigating, respectively,

1. which objectives are at the core of the mission of publicly funded arts organizations and which rationale is adequate for their evaluation;
2. what approaches to the evaluation of artistic performance can be found in the arts management literature;
3. what approaches to the evaluation of artistic performance can be found in the accounting literature;
4. how the managers of publicly funded arts organizations (administrative, artistic, and technical managers) evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations and what their practice of evaluation says about accountability relationships in arts organizations.

In particular, each of the papers makes its own contributions to the two disciplines from whose perspectives the topic of evaluation of artistic performance in publicly funded arts organizations has been studied in this thesis, i.e. arts management and accounting. Consequently, the contributions of each paper can be found in the respective papers. In this conclusion, the contributions of each paper will only be briefly summarized. More room will be given to more general considerations about how the thesis contributes to the disciplines of arts management and of accounting, as well as to the main practical implications of my research for the managers of publicly funded arts organizations and for their main funder: the government. Finally, directions for further research will be suggested.

6.1. Main theoretical contributions of the thesis

6.1.1. The contribution to arts management

Each of the four papers makes its own contribution to arts management research. These individual contributions are briefly summarized below.

The first paper offers a rationale for changing the direction of performance evaluation research in arts and cultural organizations, by putting the artistic mission of the organizations and, in particular, the role of artistic experience, at the core of the evaluation. The impact of this rationale can be seen in the number of journal articles, book chapters, and master and doctoral theses that have cited it, as per Web of Science, Scopus, Cross Ref and Google Scholar.

The second paper suggests that a new pragmatic approach, stimulating the application of diverse and multifaceted research methods and techniques, and the integration of qualitative, quantitative and humanistic research approaches, offers an adequate methodological platform for the young and diverse field of arts management in order to share and integrate knowledge and to establish its own research tradition.

The third paper shows that the use of systematic reviews of the literature within the discipline, wherein the studied topic was originally introduced (in the case of my research, in accounting), can support a shift from multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary research in arts management. By multidisciplinary research I mean the 'arbitrary' and instrumental import of specific contributions from other literatures than one's own (i.e., in my case, other than the arts management literature) without taking into account the original discipline's specific discussion and context in which those contributions have appeared. By interdisciplinary research I mean that the (arts management) researcher takes seriously the complete body of knowledge of the discipline where specific topics were originally studied. This is not only more respectful of other disciplines, but also delivers a deeper understanding of the studied topics.

The fourth paper offers an in-depth analysis of the way in which performing arts organizations actually practice evaluation, going beyond the currently available inventories of procedures used (Turbide and Laurin 2009). With respect to the few other studies adopting a similar approach in other organizations within the arts and cultural sector, for instance in museums (Gstraunthaler and Piber 2007; 2012), the fourth paper adds a deeper focus on the meaning of artistic performance and its evaluation. By doing this, the paper shows that the core processes of artistic creation do not only include programming and production, but also reception. This is in line with a relational view of art as experience (Boorsma 2006). Consequently, artistic value is determined not only by those involved in programming and production, such as artists and curators (see Gstraunthaler and Piber 2012). Rather, artistic value is co-determined by those involved in the reception of the arts. Consequently, the audience has a fundamental role as a co-evaluator of artistic performance, in addition to the artists and the organization's staff in general, as well as peers and critics. The fundamental role of the audience as co-evaluator of the organization's performance is confirmed by the role of the audience in another process which emerges as a core process in the investigated organization: audience development. The audience and, more generally, the community, is an important addressee of the work of the organization. Outreach is at the core of the organization's mission: i.e., the audience can only experience art if it can access it. The importance of audience outreach as a performance dimension emerged also from Gstraunthaler and Piber's (2012) interviews with

museum managers. Together with artistic creation, artistic distribution is thus a core process of arts organizations. The core processes are supported by two fundamental supporting processes: organization and financial management. The two core processes of the investigated organization (artistic creation and distribution) and the two supporting processes (organization and financial management) reflect the four main dimensions of performance which emerged from the analysis of the practice of evaluation in the investigated opera company (artistic, social, organizational, financial). These dimensions largely overlap with the taxonomy of performance dimensions which Hadida (2013) developed in a recent literature review of empirical studies of performance in the creative industries in general. Her four dimensions were artistic merit, societal impact, managerial performance and commercial performance. This clear overlap provides a strong basis for the analytic generalization of the findings of my case study (Yin 2014). What I found in the practices of evaluation in the investigated opera company is not accidental, but reflects a pattern that is already described in a similar way in the literature reviewed by Hadida (2013).

In addition to the individual contributions made by the individual papers, there is a more general consideration that deserves attention, especially by those researchers who are interested in establishing arts management as a distinct discipline (Evrard and Colbert 2000); an endeavor that is still far from succeeding (Zan 2012). My approach to the analysis of the practice of evaluation offers an important pointer for the development of arts management as a distinct academic discipline. Analyzing the practice of evaluation of artistic performance, not simply as a set of procedures, but as activities which are naturally embedded in the artistic work of the organization, makes clear how the organization actually works. In particular, it offers insights into the artistic processes of the organization. Artistic processes are a neglected research topic in arts management research, as the focus has mainly been on the import and application of management techniques from business in the attempt to improve the supporting processes of arts organizations. By only doing this, arts management cannot become a distinct discipline, and it will remain a field of application of existing management knowledge. Understanding what management means in the arts and cultural sector, and whether there is a 'special' way of managing arts and cultural organizations, and consequently focusing on what management means in respect to the artistic processes, should produce management knowledge that is specific to the arts and cultural sector with its special characteristics (see for instance Zan 2006; 2012). Consequently, this arts management knowledge might also add to management studies in general, and even to other disciplines (e.g. cultural economics, sociology of arts, cultural studies), thereby legitimating the ambition of arts management to become a distinct academic discipline (Evrard and Colbert 2000). My study shows that this endeavor is possible if the focus of arts management research shifts from managerial procedures to the practice of management in a much broader and inclusive sense. In particular, this endeavor becomes challenging, fascinating, and rewarding if the focus of arts management research shifts from the *managerial* to the *artistic* in managing arts organizations.

6.1.2. The contribution to accounting

As with the arts management research, each of the four papers also makes its own contribution to accounting research. These individual contributions are briefly summarized below.

The first paper offers an elaboration of the Balanced Scorecard by Kaplan and Norton (1992) which is specific to publicly funded arts organizations. In addition, it brings an arts marketing topic into the

boundaries of accounting research. From an accounting perspective, considering that artistic performance should be central in the evaluation of the performance of these organizations, a main challenge would be to translate this largely qualitative and intangible dimension of performance into performance indicators that can deliver valid, reliable and, consequently, useful information to both internal and external stakeholders. The model presented in the first paper does not solve this problem, but makes it clear and urgent. In particular, it suggests that case-based research might help in finding innovative types of performance indicators. This is in line with Mautz's (1988) suggestion in one of the first accounting contributions on the arts and cultural sector to observe managers of not-for-profit arts organizations and how they evaluate success.

The second paper goes on to problematize the evaluation of artistic performance. In particular, it calls for a contextualization of approaches to the evaluation of artistic performance. Such approaches should pay attention to the organizational and institutional contexts of the organizations for which they are developed. In particular, they should take into account the role of makers and recipients of arts in order to understand what artistic performance means in that specific context. This is a precondition for the development of performance evaluation systems that can meaningfully account for artistic processes and their results.

The third paper presents the first systematic review of the accounting literature on the arts and cultural sector so far. The importance of such a review for accounting research is testified by the growing number of accounting workshops, seminars and journal special issues devoted to the arts and cultural sector (see for instance Crepaz et al. in press; Donovan and O'Brien in press; Ellwood and Greenwood in press; Jeacle and Miller in press; Oakes and Oakes in press; Ter Bogt and Tillema in press). The third paper also shows that Miller's conceptualization of the margins of accounting (1998) is useful and adequate to analyze the development of accounting research on the arts and cultural sector over the last thirty years.

The fourth paper adds a clearer focus on the evaluation of artistic performance to the nascent accounting literature on performing arts organizations (Mariani and Zan 2011; Nørreklit 2011; Sundström 2011). In addition, in line with recent findings by Amans et al. (2015), it shows that the different rationalities coexisting within performing arts organizations do not necessarily conflict with each other, as Christiansen and Skærbæk (1997) had previously noted. With respect to the literature on accountability (Laughlin 1990; Roberts 1991; Sinclair 1995; Laughlin 1996; Roberts 1996; Ezzamel et al. 2007; Messner 2009), the fourth paper shows that concepts from organization studies can enrich the existing taxonomies of accountability and explain how different systems of accountability can coexist and compete in publicly funded organizations following the introduction of NPM-oriented reforms.

In general, as explained in the introduction of the thesis, through the four papers the focus of this thesis shifts from the margins of accounting to the core of accountability. This means that the focus is no longer on which calculative practices should be used to evaluate artistic performance, but on how different practices of evaluation impact the work of the organization and shape patterns of accountability within the organization (Roberts and Scapens 1985). A deep understanding of the actual practice of evaluation in individual organizations and sub-sectors of the arts sector is a precondition for the development of accounting and evaluation procedures that reflect the organizational and institutional reality in which these organizations operate (Roberts and Scapens

1985). In the spirit of Wicks and Freeman's new pragmatic approach (1998), the understanding of the practice of evaluation and how it shapes different patterns of accountability is not an endeavor to be pursued for its own sake. The purpose is to suggest and (possibly) develop new systems of evaluation and accountability which would be useful for those involved in arts and cultural organizations and for their wider communities.

To give an example, the informative premise of accountability formulated by Zan, meaning that for a relationship of accountability to work it is necessary to have information that represents the something for which one is made accountable (Zan 2006, 6-7), remains largely unaddressed in the literature on multiple forms of accountability. As explained in the fourth paper of this thesis, the literature discusses the use of accounting information for accountability, only to criticize it. While it recognizes the existence of alternative information, it does not suggest how such alternative information could be usefully integrated into *existing*, or shape *new* accounting systems. By largely neglecting the informative premise formulated by Zan (2006), the risk is that the development and suggestion of new representations of performance in arts organizations will remain the exclusive domain of mainstream accounting research, which is generally more interested in techniques than in their organizational and social effects. A new pragmatic approach to the study of performance evaluation in the arts means that a deep understanding of the practice of evaluation is only a first, though necessary, step towards the formulation of contextually useful solutions for the different kinds of organizations within the arts sector (see also Scapens 2006).

Nevertheless, the completion of the first step is still far from being reached. In fact, the process of understanding the practice of evaluation in arts organizations is just at the beginning. As early as 1988 Mautz invited accounting researchers to observe how managers of not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations actually evaluate performance and how they form their judgments about it, in order to discover innovative solutions to the problem of accounting for the performance of these organizations. Only in the second decade of the 21st century has Mautz's invitation been finally embraced by accounting researchers (apart from this thesis, see Sundström 2011; Gstraunthaler and Piber 2012). At this initial stage it is difficult to say how many case studies, articles or theses will be necessary before a satisfactory understanding of the practice of evaluation in arts organizations will be reached; that is, an understanding that underpins the development of new performance evaluation systems that are useful for the organizations and communities that are supposed to use them. What can be said at this stage is that much more research should focus on gaining a deep understanding of the practice of evaluation in the arts sector before any meaningful suggestions about the use (or nonuse) of performance evaluation systems can be made for arts organizations and their wider communities.

My thesis takes only a first step toward understanding the practice of evaluation in publicly funded arts organizations and what this practice tells us about the relationships of accountability in the arts sector. More case studies of opera companies could, for instance, find out whether there is a general 'opera rationality' which underpins the frame of reference used for the evaluation of artistic performance, as I found in the investigated publicly funded opera company. In order to get a deep understanding of the relationships of accountability within the arts sector, such an inclusive case-based approach to the study of the practice of evaluation should be extended to other parts of the publicly funded arts sector: orchestras, theaters, museums, media, popular music, film. As Zan points out,

> [...] For the management expert however [...] this means a deep contextualist understanding of the organization under investigation, the involvement in time-wasting inquiry of the empirical realm and probably the extensive use of field-work research, in order to couple the process of establishment of managerial attitudes with the development of broad and acceptable forms of accountability. (Zan 2002, 132)

However, the current pressure for the delivery of quantifiable, short-term research outputs may inhibit researchers from getting involved in this kind of research. NPM-oriented reforms invaded universities long before the arts sector. As Ter Bogt et al. state,

> Despite major initial criticism, it can be concluded that during the past 25 to 30 years NPM has become clearly integrated into the public sector and the thinking about the public sector. Even in government sectors where traditionally the emphasis on accounting instruments and management methods from business administration may have been minor, the influence of the NPM approach can often be observed. (Ter Bogt et al. 2010, 243)

The effects of NPM-oriented reforms on the academic practice are visible to all those who are involved in this sector (see for instance Lorenz 2012). In particular, with respect to the practice of performance evaluation in universities, Ter Bogt and Scapens warn about the possible consequences of the use of quantitative, judgmental performance indicators in teaching and research:

> There is a danger that the new systems could inhibit creativity in teaching and limit contributions to the world outside the university. Furthermore, they could damage creativity and innovation in accounting research - as researchers play safe in getting the publications they need. (Ter Bogt and Scapens 2012, 451)

Consequently, getting involved in "time-wasting inquiry of the empirical realm and probably the extensive use of field-work research" in order to gain a "deep contextualist understanding" of the practice of evaluation and of the relationships of accountability in the arts sector (Zan 2002, 132), implies that researchers will have to be critical, not only with respect to the research approach to use in studying this topic, but also (and maybe even more so) with respect to their own role within the academic sector and towards its current institutional context. Otherwise, the risk is that they will choose to conduct safer and more 'profitable' research instead of relevant research. Safer and more 'profitable' research may serve the interests of an academic community that conforms to the current institutional context but it will not serve the interests of the community for which the research should be useful: the arts sector. In other words, researchers will have to be conscious of the moral and practical implications of their choices (Wicks and Freeman 1998).

With respect to the impact that New Public Management has on the arts sector, Zan (2006) suggests comparing it with the impact that New Public Management has had on other sub-sectors of the public sector. In this regard, my research makes also an initial but interesting contribution. The education sector shares important similarities with the arts sector: the core processes (respectively teaching and creating art and culture) are in the hands of professional staff educated according to norms that are widely shared in the respective fields as result of developments often dating back far into the past (Christiansen and Skærbæk 1997; Zan et al. 2000); the outcome of both types of organizations is intangible in nature and there is no appropriate moment in time to evaluate it, since the effects of teaching and of experiencing arts are manifested also - if not prevalently - in the long

term (Zan 1998); both the education and the arts sectors have traditionally belonged to the public sector and have felt the pressure of New Public Management reforms over the past 20 years (Mariani and Zan 2011; Zan et al. 2000). Accounting research on the impact of NPM-oriented reforms on the education sector shows examples of "accounting colonization" (Oakes and Berry 2009). Ezzamel et al. (2007) show for instance how the rationale of financial accountability, which has been propagated through the implementation of the Local Management of Schools reform in the UK, has partially colonized the accountability discourse of the staff in British schools. In my case study of a European publicly funded opera company, there is no sign of the 'colonization' of accounting into the 'opera rationality' through NPM-oriented reforms and, in particular, through NPM-oriented forms of accountability. The administrative, artistic and technical managers of the investigated opera company are conscious of the financial boundaries in which they have to operate. They consider financial health a precondition for good artistic work. Nevertheless, the rationale of financial accountability is largely absent from their accountability discourse, which is centered on the fulfillment of the main task for which the managers of the opera feel responsible: creating and distributing opera.

Further research could enlarge our understanding of the impact of NPM-oriented reforms on the arts sector by studying other kinds of publicly funded arts organizations, as seen above. In particular, by comparing the impact of New Public Management on the arts sector with the impact on other organizations of the public sector, further research could investigate a fascinating question that implicitly arise from my finding of a non-colonized opera rationality in the investigated organization: Do the arts have a stronger natural barrier against accounting colonization than other sub-sectors, for instance education and research? Longitudinal single case studies as well as comparative case studies offer a suitable method for investigating this question.

6.2. Main practical implications of the thesis
6.2.1. The implications for managers

Based on the findings of my research, two main suggestions can be made to the managers of publicly funded arts organizations. The first suggestion relates to the practice of evaluation of audience development and outreach efforts, or, in other words, of the artistic distribution process. This is, together with the artistic creation, one of the two core processes of these organizations. The second suggestion relates to the role of a specific statutory, internal 'evaluator' of these organizations: the supervisory board.

From the investigated case it emerges that artistic performance and the qualitative objectives related to the audience development and outreach processes (e.g. having a sustainable connection to the audience of the future and the ability to understand the audience with respect to their threshold of acceptance for innovation and experimentation) are largely evaluated through an organic form of evaluation. This organic form of evaluation is naturally embedded in the work of the organization and is not covered by internal procedures of evaluation. Internal procedures of evaluation focus more on the performance of the financial and the organization management processes. Nevertheless, my case study shows that the organic form of evaluation is often enough for the managers of the organization to form solid judgments about the artistic performance of their organization. The impression is that, in the overall system of evaluation used by the investigated organization, no essential information about the artistic performance gets lost due to the absence of

specific evaluation systems. The same cannot be said about audience development and outreach. Long-term qualitative objectives related to the organization's audience development and outreach processes, such as having a sustainable connection to the audience of the future, are not only largely absent from the internal procedures of evaluation, they do not seem to be fully grasped through organic forms of evaluation either. With respect to the evaluation of the audience development and outreach efforts of the organization, the overall system of evaluation used by the investigated organization seems to suffer from the absence of a specific evaluation system.

Considering the importance of audience development and outreach as core processes, not only for funding and regulatory bodies, but also for the organization itself, managers of arts organizations might want to search for a way of systematizing the collection and elaboration of performance information about these processes. While such numerical indicators as box office results are easily available, the main challenge will be to collect information about such qualitative aspects as the ability to understand the audience with respect to their threshold of acceptance for innovation and experimentation. Interesting examples of the collection of information on these qualitative objectives can be found in the arts marketing literature (see for instance Radbourne et al. 2009; 2010).

With respect to the largely irrelevant role of the supervisory board within the practice of evaluation - especially of artistic performance - in the investigated organization, it may seem a paradox that this statutory organ of control of the organization has literally nothing to say about the artistic choices of the direction. The supervisory board has to be informed about programming and special initiatives, but it seems as if its members are not even expected to express an opinion on these topics, let alone influence the managers in their judgments about artistic performance. The supervisory board, which is a statutory body that is by definition responsible for controlling the work of the direction of the organization, is practically excluded from controlling the main value created by the organization: the artistic value.

The reasons why the supervisory board emerges as irrelevant in the evaluation of the core value created by the organization have been not investigated in this research. The members of the supervisory board were not interviewed. Nevertheless, it is surprising that the power to express opinions *on* and to influence the work *of* the direction, which the supervisory board statutorily has, is not felt at all by the members of the direction and by the other managers of the organization. By looking at the background of the five members of the supervisory board of the opera company at the time of the case study, a possible explanation can be found. Only one member had a background in the opera; he was the artistic director of another important European opera company. The other four members had a strongly economic and financial background and important positions at large corporations or international organizations. On the one hand, it is unlikely that these four members of the supervisory board could have something to say about the artistic ideas of an artistic director of such a high reputation, as the one of the investigated opera. On the other hand, how much can an artistic director of another important European opera company actually know about the opera company for which he is a member of the supervisory board? How present can he really be at the 'supervised' organization, apart from the formal meetings of the supervisory board? The impression is that a supervisory board without active 'artistic' members will only have a ceremonial role within arts organizations.

Although big artistic personalities do generally want to go their own way without any intromission, they are usually open to a content-based discussion with peers that know the 'supervised' organization and its processes well, as seen in the case study. Above all, for the long-term artistic objectives with respect to artistic creation and distribution, such a content-based form of substantive control may be beneficial to publicly funded arts organizations.

6.2.2.   The implications for governments

Based on the findings of my research, there is one main practical suggestion that I would like to make to those governments and funding bodies that are currently imposing NPM-oriented forms of accountability to arts organizations. Before implementing the next evaluation procedure, they should try to gain a better understanding of the practice of evaluation in the arts sector; in particular, of those practices of evaluation that are substantively relevant for the managers and the staff of those organizations.

The hyper activism of governments in imposing always more, and always new, procedures of evaluation to publicly funded organizations, is one of the most common symptoms of the purposive or, at least, uncritical adoption of the New Public Management rationales, by both neoliberal and new labor governments in Europe. Power found a name for this symptom more than twenty years ago: "the audit explosion" (Power 1994). Through "rituals of verification", governments want to show to the public that they are 'in control' of the organizations and of the projects that they finance. Asking organizations and project managers for formal accountability through a varied range of procedures of evaluation, governments actually aim at discharging their own accountability to the public; especially, to the voters. This may be, for instance, accountability for enhancing funding for a sector while cutting budgets for another one. Fundamental in this system is not what the evaluations say, but that they are continuously done at all.

The organization that I investigated, for instance, had to undertake two time-consuming and costly procedures of evaluation within a couple of years. Every new government wanted to conduct its own evaluation. Nevertheless, these procedures of evaluation assumed a purely ceremonial role, not only with respect to the evaluation of the artistic performance of the organization, but also with respect to the evaluation of the financial performance. The managers of the organizations doubt whether the government's decisions are influenced by these evaluations. If the government wants to cut the funds for the organization, this will happen even if the organization has over performed financially; let alone artistically! As a consequence, these procedures of evaluation do not impact the actual accountability relationships within the investigated organization. To paraphrase Power, they are 'rituals of accountability' that are completely decoupled from the forms of accountability that are embodied by the actors of the investigated organization. Without a previous, deep understanding of the embodied forms of accountability, which can be gained for instance through an inclusive study of the practice of evaluation in organizations as I have done in my case study, the procedures imposed by governments are likely to remain irrelevant, as they say nothing about the actual relationships of accountability in the organizations concerned. As a consequence, governments will eventually remain 'out of control' of the organizations they fund.

External procedures of evaluation that mirror the reality of the work in arts organizations have an higher chance of assuming substantive relevance for the organizations' managers and staff, than external procedures that are entirely decoupled from the internal practices of evaluation. The latter

is the case with the organization I investigated. There, external procedures of evaluation are in the best case only procedurally relevant; that is, the boxes are ticked because they have to be ticked. However, the actual judgment of the managers of the organization about performance - and, especially, about the artistic performance - is not influenced at all by those procedures. This is true with respect to the role of the different dimensions of performance that external procedures of evaluation intend to cover, as well as to the role of 'evaluators' that certain stakeholders of the organization are assumed to have according to those procedures. For instance, the audience has a fundamental role in the managers' judgment about artistic performance. Nevertheless, the opinions of the audience are absent from the external procedures of evaluation imposed by the government. This is consistent with the finding that the evaluation of the reception process, which is again fundamental in the managers' judgment about artistic performance and where the audience has a dominant role, is not covered by any evaluation criteria of the external evaluation procedures or, more generally, in the annual discharging of accountability of the organization to the government. Also, accountability to the government for audience development and outreach activities, which are central in recent cultural policies, is discharged through numerical indicators that are not able to cover the richness and the largely qualitative nature of these objectives (e.g. the ability to understand the audience with respect to their threshold of acceptance for innovation and experimentation, or the ability to create and maintain high expectations in the audience). A considerable amount of substantive information gets lost through the form of information which is used in procedures that are inspired by NPM-oriented forms of accountability: written and, if possible, numerical. On the contrary, most of the substantively relevant information about the performance of the core processes of arts organizations (artistic creation and distribution) is qualitative, mainly unwritten, and often tacit.

Instead of continuously implementing new evaluation and accountability procedures, governments should first support studies aiming to achieve a better understanding of the practice of evaluation and of accountability relationships in arts organizations. This is a precondition for the use of meaningful systems of evaluation and accountability. As long as a deep understanding of the practice of evaluation and of the relationships of accountability in the arts sector is not available, the procedures imposed by governments will remain a waste of energy. The money and time spent on them will probably continue to create an appearance of governments being 'in control'. However, eventually they will just be 'in control' of nothing. Only a deep understanding of accountability in the arts sector can support a dialogue "with professional concerns that are crucial and distinctive of these kinds of organization" (Zan 2002, 93) and prevent a complete decoupling between internal evaluation practices and NPM-oriented forms of accountability, as emerged from my case study. Governments that put 'value for money' at the core of their political activity and legitimation should be sensitive to the risk of wasting energy and might want to seriously consider those streams of research that have the potential to come up, even though not on a short term, with suggestions for more useful procedures of evaluation and more substantive forms of accountability.

6.3. Further research

From the conclusions of the four papers presented in this thesis and from the general conclusion of the thesis, some directions for further research on performance evaluation and accountability in the arts sector emerge. These mainly relate to the two premises of accountability formulated by Zan (2006). The first premise, i.e. the informative premise, refers to the necessity of exchanging

information that is able to represent the dimensions of performance for which the managers are accountable. The second premise, i.e. the organizational-institutional premise, refers to the necessity of making someone responsible for managing something, if that someone is to be held accountable for that something. In both cases the suggestions for further research embrace the new pragmatic idea explained before: deep, contextualized understanding of performance evaluation practices and accountability relationships is a precondition for the development of meaningful evaluation and accountability systems; that is, systems that are useful for the communities by which they are meant to be used.

With respect to the informative premise of accountability, the performance of the core processes of publicly funded arts organizations, i.e. artistic creation and distribution, is evaluated by the managers of the investigated organization through information that is largely qualitative, mainly unwritten and often tacit. This is exactly the opposite of the kind of information favored by NPM-oriented forms of accountability: quantitative and, at least, written. Considering that the pressure for accountability to external stakeholders is unlikely to diminish in the near future, publicly funded arts organizations are in need of finding effective ways to explain their value to external stakeholders. Consequently, a main challenge will be to translate the information about the performance of the core processes into a form that is useful to both the internal and the external stakeholders of the organization. Quantitative indicators are not desirable, due to their inclination to standardize these highly complex and strongly contextual dimensions of performance. However, a richer and deeper language of accountability for artistic objectives is both possible and desirable in order to support a content-oriented dialogue between the organizations and their external environment.

For this scope, apart from the fundamental role of accounting research, an important role is left to the humanistic side of arts management research (Sicca 1997). As it has been seen in the investigated case study, concepts from organization studies can help to define the nature of the information used to evaluate artistic performance. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that accounting and organization studies will provide a language of accountability that is able to explain the substantive aspects and criteria used for artistic evaluation. This is the task of humanities. If the arts world justifiably refuses to discuss its value only in the economic terms provided by the mainstream language of industry and business, then it should be a task for arts-related disciplines to offer arts organizations a richer and deeper language to support a content-oriented dialogue about their organizational performance with the external environment. Against the background of the current public debate on the societal relevance of the humanities (Belfiore 2015), this challenge can be considered even more urgent. For instance, in the case of opera, considering the centrality of the reception process in evaluating the artistic performance of publicly funded opera companies, research is needed on how opera-related disciplines can contribute to a language that the organizations can use to account for the artistic experiences that they induce in their audiences. Systematic literature reviews of the academic literature in the specific artistic discipline offer a useful method for exploiting existing knowledge. In-depth interviews with all those involved in the processes of programming, production and reception of arts, as well as their distribution, offer the possibility of eliciting, not only unwritten, but also tacit ways of explaining and making sense of artistic performance.

In addition, this kind of research can give insights into the extent to which institutional pressures for NPM-oriented forms of accountability threaten artistic rationalities - for instance, the 'opera rationality' emerged from my case study. On the one hand, the humanistic approach described above can help to better define such artistic rationalities. On the other hand, field research can find out to what extent artistic rationalities are impacted by institutional pressures, both at the level of the individual staff members and staff groups (in the case of the investigated opera: administrative, artistic, and technical) and at the level of the individual organizations and of the artistic fields the individual organizations belong to. As explained in the contributions of my thesis to accounting research, a fascinating question is whether the arts have a stronger natural barrier against accounting colonization than other sub-sectors of the public sector.

When the potential offered by systematic literature reviews and in-depth interviews for the identification of a new language of accountability for artistic performance has been exploited, action research could be used to test the contextual usefulness of the developed language for publicly funded arts organizations. By doing so it should be possible to say whether the new language could help such organizations to account for the intangible components of their artistic work.

The organizational-institutional premise of accountability refers to the necessity of making someone responsible for managing something, if that someone is to be held accountable for the something. This implies that the someone is able to manage the something. In the fourth paper of this thesis I have shown that it is problematic to identify just one person who can be made responsible for managing the reception process. The result of such a process is the artistic experience induced by a specific production. This is the main artistic value produced by the organization, which is co-determined by all those involved in the reception process, rather than only by those who are responsible for programming and production. As the reception process is not wholly in the hands of the organization's staff, how can one or more managers of the organization be made responsible for its results?

The formulation of this controversial question was possible through the study of the forms of accountability which are actually in use in the investigated organization, and not only of the NPM-oriented forms of accountability imposed by the government. Further research should investigate to what extent, in different kinds of publicly funded arts organizations, it is possible to identify someone that can be made accountable for the artistic processes which are the core processes of these organizations. On the one hand, this research will help to understand the interests of various stakeholders in performance evaluation; that is, the political dimension of performance evaluation. Who wants to make someone accountable for something for which that someone cannot be considered fully responsible? And why? On the other hand, it will offer a closer look at what Messner calls "the limits of accountability" (2009), referring to the continually growing pressure for the accountable self to account for something that one cannot actually account for.

In order to continue the process of understanding forms of accountability in use in publicly funded arts organizations, research should try to integrate concepts and theories coming from organization studies into the extant taxonomies of accountability. In the case that I investigated, such concepts from organization studies as organic, mechanistic, ceremonial, loosely coupled and fully decoupled closely reflect the nature of the organization and of its processes. Consequently, these concepts seem able to describe the forms of accountability in use better than extant taxonomies of

accountability. For instance, mechanistic forms of accountability used by an arts organization may not necessarily be the result of contamination through NPM-oriented forms of accountability, which are mechanistic in nature. They may just depend on the nature of the processes that have to be evaluated through those forms of accountability; for example, the processes required for the financial and organization management of the organization that I investigated. A mechanistic form of evaluation might thus be as natural in an arts organization as an organic form of evaluation. While mechanistic forms of evaluation are natural for the evaluation of mechanistic processes, organic forms of evaluation are natural for the evaluation of organic processes, regardless of the nature of the accountability procedures imposed by funding and regulatory bodies.

This finding suggests that we need to search for more detailed and graduated taxonomies of accountability for publicly funded arts organizations in particular, and for public sector organizations in general. Such taxonomies should take into account the nature of the work processes of the respective organizations in order to support a deeper understanding of the different systems of accountability coexisting and competing in publicly funded (arts) organizations, following the introduction of NPM-oriented reforms. Longitudinal, single case studies and latitudinal, comparative case studies should be conducted to collect rich empirical material to support the conceptualization of refined taxonomies of accountability.

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DUTCH SUMMARY

Prestatie-evaluatie in de kunsten
Van de "*margins of accounting*" naar de kern van "*accountability*"

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de evaluatie van artistieke prestaties als onderdeel van de wijze waarop gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen hun algehele prestaties evalueren. Het onderzoek richt zich daarbij op het accounting- en het kunstmanagementperspectief. Het doel is om de focus van het onderzoek naar prestatie-evaluatie in gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen te verschuiven van de technische aspecten van de evaluatie van prestaties naar het proces van betekenisgeving aan prestaties, in het bijzonder met betrekking tot de artistieke prestaties. Een dergelijke focus vraagt om inzicht in de wijze waarop de regels en procedures inzake de evaluatie van de prestaties worden gepersonifieerd door de organisatie-actoren die betrokken zijn bij de evaluatie van de prestaties. Dit inzicht is een voorwaarde voor de ontwikkeling van prestatie-evaluatiesystemen waarmee informatie kan worden verstrekt over de werkelijke prestaties van de organisaties waarvoor deze systemen worden ontworpen.

Het doel van dit proefschrift wordt bereikt in vier aparte artikelen, die zowel thematisch als methodologisch met elkaar verbonden zijn. Wat betreft het thema, laten de vier artikelen de verschuiving zien in de focus van het onderzoek naar prestatie-evaluatie in de kunsten van wat Miller in zijn artikel van 1998 in het tijdschrift *European Accounting Review* "the margins of accounting" noemde naar de kern van "accountability", zoals beschreven door Robert and Scapens in hun artikel van 1985 in het tijdschrift *Accounting, Organizations and Society*. Deze verschuiving betekent dat de focus niet meer ligt op de calculatietechnieken die toegepast zouden moeten worden voor de evaluatie van artistieke prestaties, maar op de wijze waarop verschillende evaluatiepraktijken invloed hebben op de activiteiten van de organisatie en vorm geven aan patronen van "accountability" in de organisatie. Wat betreft de methodologie, worden in de vier artikelen verschillende methoden toegepast en verschillend bewijsmateriaal gebruikt, overeenkomstig de nieuwe pragmatische benadering van organisatiekunde zoals aanbevolen door Wicks and Freeman in hun artikel van 1998 in het tijdschrift *Organization Science*.

De vier artikelen dragen bij aan het doel van het proefschrift door de volgende vragen te onderzoeken:

1. Welke doelstellingen geven de kern van de missie van gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen weer en welk gronddenkbeeld is geschikt voor de evaluatie van hun prestaties?
2. Welke benaderingen inzake de evaluatie van artistieke prestaties worden in de kunstmanagementliteratuur aangetroffen?
3. Welke benaderingen inzake de evaluatie van artistieke prestaties worden in de accountingliteratuur aangetroffen?
4. Hoe evalueren managers van gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen (zakelijke, artistieke en technische managers) de artistieke prestaties van hun organisaties en hoe beïnvloeden de evaluatiepraktijken de relaties van "accountability" in kunstinstellingen?

Ieder artikel levert een specifieke bijdrage aan de twee disciplines waarbinnen het onderwerp evaluatie van artistieke prestaties in gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen is onderzocht, te weten accounting en kunstmanagement.

Het eerste artikel stelt een aanpassing voor van de Balanced Scorecard, die Kaplan en Norton in hun artikel van 1992 in het tijdschrift *Harvard Business Review* hebben ontwikkeld. Deze aanpassing is specifiek voor gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen. Door de artistieke missie van de organisatie en, in het bijzonder, de rol van de artistieke ervaring als de centrale elementen van de evaluatie te beschouwen, biedt het gepresenteerde model een gronddenkbeeld dat een nieuwe richting geeft aan het onderzoek naar prestatie-evaluatie in de kunsten. Bovendien brengt het artikel een van oorsprong aan kunstmarketing gerelateerd onderwerp binnen het accountingdomein.

Het tweede artikel gaat diepgaander in op de evaluatie van artistieke prestaties. Het bepleit een meer context-specifieke benadering van de evaluatiesystemen van artistieke prestaties, waarbij aandacht wordt geschonken aan de organisatorische en institutionele context van de instellingen waarvoor de systemen worden ontworpen. In het bijzonder moeten de evaluatiesystemen rekening houden met de rol van de makers en de gebruikers van kunst teneinde te kunnen begrijpen wat de artistieke prestaties betekenen in die specifieke context. Het tweede artikel stelt voorts een nieuwe pragmatische benadering van het onderzoek van organisaties voor. Deze nieuwe benadering stimuleert de toepassing van verschillende onderzoeksmethoden en -technieken en de integratie van kwalitatieve, kwantitatieve en geesteswetenschappelijke onderzoeksbenaderingen. Daardoor biedt de nieuwe pragmatische benadering een geschikt methodologisch platform voor het integreren en delen van kennis binnen het jonge en heterogene gebied van kunstmanagement, en kan dit platform de ontwikkeling van een eigen onderzoekstraditie bevorderen.

Het derde artikel presenteert het eerste systematische onderzoek van accountingliteratuur over kunst en cultuur. Het laat zien dat het concept "margins of accounting" van Miller de ontwikkeling van deze literatuur goed beschrijft. Bovendien laat het zien dat het systematisch onderzoeken van de literatuur van de discipline waarbinnen de oorsprong van het bestudeerde onderwerp ligt (te weten accounting), een diepgaander inzicht in kunstmanagementonderwerpen geeft, en een verschuiving stimuleert van willekeurige en instrumentele multidisciplinaire benaderingen naar systematische en integratieve interdisciplinaire benaderingen van kunstmanagementonderzoek.

Het vierde artikel biedt een diepgaande analyse van de wijze waarop gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen daadwerkelijk hun prestaties evalueren. Deze analyse is diepgaander dan bestaande beschrijvingen van gebruikte procedures. Het artikel richt zich op de evaluatie van de artistieke prestaties van een operagezelschap. Het artikel voegt inzicht in de wijze waarop artistieke prestaties in de praktijk worden geëvalueerd toe aan de jonge accountingliteratuur over podiumkunsten en laat zien dat verschillende vormen van rationaliteit in een kunstinstelling niet in strijd met elkaar hoeven te zijn. Tot slot toont het artikel aan dat organisatiekundige begrippen bestaande taxonomieën voor "accountability" kunnen verrijken, waardoor beter te verklaren is hoe verschillende systemen van "accountability" co-existeren en concurreren in gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen na de invoering van op New Public Management gebaseerde hervormingen.

Door de vier artikelen van dit proefschrift is een eerste stap gezet in de richting van een beter inzicht in de wijze waarop gesubsidieerde kunstinstellingen hun prestaties evalueren en hoe de evaluatiepraktijken de relaties van "accountability" in kunstinstellingen beïnvloeden. Bovendien laat dit proefschrift zien dat kunstmanagement zich alleen kan ontwikkelen naar een zelfstandige discipline als de focus van het onderzoek verschuift van het *managerial* naar het *artistieke* aspect in het managen van kunstinstellingen. De praktische implicaties van deze studie voor managers van kunstinstellingen en voor subsidiegevers worden besproken en suggesties voor vervolgonderzoek worden gedaan. Over het algemeen kan worden geconcludeerd dat voor het verkrijgen van een diepgaand inzicht in de evaluatiepraktijken in de kunsten nog veel onderzoek moet worden verricht. Alleen dan kunnen zinvolle suggesties worden gedaan voor het (niet-)gebruik van prestatie-evaluatiesystemen door kunstinstellingen en hun verschillende groepen belanghebbenden.

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The focus of his work is on the enhancement of the appreciation of arts, culture, and creativity in communities, organizations, and business. As a researcher, with his publications in arts management journals and his studies of accountability in leading opera houses, Francesco is becoming an authoritative voice in the field of performance evaluation in the arts. As a lecturer at the universities of Groningen, Bayreuth, Utrecht and Rotterdam he was responsible for courses in Arts Marketing, Arts Management, Cultural Entrepreneurship, and Consumer Behavior in the Arts. Since September 2012 he has been appointed Assistant Professor of Cultural Policy at the University of Amsterdam. Before starting his academic career in 2007, Francesco was a working student at Siemens AG, a management consultant at Deloitte, a senior researcher at Fraunhofer IPK, the director of A&A - Arts & Artists Management and Research, a film journalist, and a pianist. In addition, from 2006 to 2014 Francesco was a member of Philippe Rixhon Associates (former Theatre Management Associates).

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