

Accepted manuscript of:

Berkers, Pauwke. 2009. Ethnic boundaries in American, Dutch and German national literary policies, 1965-2005. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15(1):35-52.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10286630802682144?genre=article&id=doi%3A10.1080%2F10286630802682144&#.U5XEvigwAZY>

Ethnic Boundaries in American, Dutch and German National Literary Policies, 1965-2005

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Abstract

This article addresses the extent and ways in which ethnic diversity has been part of American, Dutch and German national literary policy from 1965 until 2005. By analyzing the content of policy documents of the National Endowment of the Arts and the Dutch and German literary fund, I found that ethnic boundaries were weak in the United States, moderate in the Netherlands and strong in Germany. First, national literary policy organizations made much, moderate and little use of ethnic discourse respectively. Cross-national and longitudinal variation was closely related to the need for political legitimacy. Second, ethnic minority granters and grantees were (relatively) the least underrepresented by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Dutch Literary Fund, while the German literary fund included hardly any ethnic minority panelists or authors. The differences in the representation of ethnic minorities could largely be accounted for by demographics and variations in the need for legitimacy.

Introduction

The study of symbolic boundaries has a long tradition in social science, dating back to works of Max Weber.¹ Lamont and Molnar define symbolic boundaries as “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space.” (2002, p. 168) Scholars of race and ethnicity have shown that symbolic boundaries based on ethnic distinctions are by no means the ‘natural’ result of demographic changes. Instead, ethnic boundaries are actively constructed (e.g., Barth 1969; Zolberg and Long 1999). According to Alba (2005), the strength of these ethnic boundaries is, amongst other things, related to the number of domains of social life for which they seem relevant. Most ethnic boundary research however has focused on the economic, educational and the political field (Sanders 2002), while several studies (see e.g., Griswold 1987; Corse and Griffin 1997) have shown that ethnic or racial distinctions have been relevant to the cultural field as well. Building on DiMaggio (1987), sociologists of culture have been studying symbolic boundaries in the classification of art (Dowd et al. 2002; Janssen and Verboord 2006). According to these authors, more heterogeneous societies produce, amongst other things, more differentiated artistic classifications. While the focus has been primarily on social heterogeneity, the ethnic makeup of many Western countries has also become increasingly diverse as a result of mass immigration. The degree and timing of these changes differs among traditional nations of immigration, former colonial powers and guestworker recruitment countries, in this study represented by the United States, the Netherlands and Germany respectively. For this reason, this article discusses whether ethnically more heterogeneous societies also produce ethnically more diverse artistic classifications.

National literary policy organizations make an interesting case for studying ethnic boundaries for several reasons. First, literature is often considered one of the most important cultural genres in Western societies and has played an important role in nation-building (Corse 1990). Second, although literary policy organizations are not the only actors in the literary field that draw symbolic boundaries, they operate at the crossroad of the political and the literary field. As a result, these organizations function less autonomously and are much more influenced by the political field, e.g. to fund more

ethnic minority writers. Third, state recognition does not only improve the material position of the author supported, but also increases the belief of other actors in the literary field that an artwork is legitimate (Bourdieu 1980), improving the chances of future success. The central empirical question of this study is then: to what extent and in what ways has ethnic diversity been part of American, Dutch and German national literary policy from 1965 until 2005 and how can we account for potential cross-national differences.

The extent to which these organizations have dealt with ethnic diversity will be studied by focusing on two indicators. First, to what extent has ethnic diversity been part of the organizational discourse of each nation's literary policy? Stories are important to organizations as ways of signaling to internal and external members that their activities are legitimate (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy 2004). More ethnic discourse indicates weaker ethnic boundaries. Second, to what extent are ethnic minorities represented within the national policy, both as granters and grantees? Again, the more ethnic minority granters and grantees present, the weaker the ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, comparing ethnic discourse ('what is said') with ethnic representation ('what has been done') tells us about the way in which ethnic diversity has been part of national literary policies.

I draw on three theoretical approaches to account for potential cross-national differences. First, I will research whether demographic changes co-occur with changes in the attention to ethnic diversity by literary policy organizations. Though necessary for situating our findings, mere demographics cannot account for the under- or overrepresentation of ethnic minority authors nor does it suffice to explain variations in ways of attention to ethnic diversity. Second, also at a macro-level, national cultural repertoire theory predicts relative persistent cross-national differences in the classification of literature, despite changes in structural conditions. Thirdly, at a meso-level, legitimacy theory suggests that cross-national differences depend on the degree of political autonomy of the organization, the need for legitimacy and the extent to which ethnic diversity resonates within the political field. But before going into – and trying to account for – the cross-national differences in the amount of ethnic discourse and the extent to which ethnic minorities are represented as granters and grantees, I will first address the historical context and operation of the national literary policy organizations.

Government Funding of Literature in the United States, the Netherlands and Germany

In this article, national literary policy organizations are defined as organizations (i) which are financed by the national government (directly or indirectly), (ii) whose main policy instrument is the funding of individual authors and literary organizations, and (iii) in which the panel system is the heart of granting procedure. Each country has only one national literary policy organization – the literature program of the National Endowment for the Arts,² the Dutch Literary Fund (*Fonds voor de Letteren*) and the German Literary Fund (*Deutscher Literaturfonds*) – all of which are established between 1965 and 1980.

The United States Government and Literary Policy

Widespread and Diverse Opposition

Federal support for the arts has always been a controversial issue in the United States. According to McWilliams (1985), the main oppositional force is formed by the liberal and Puritan strand of the American cultural tradition. The former sees no role for the government in the arts. It should be privately created and enjoyed. And even if the government decides to support the arts, it should be at a local, decentralized level. While Puritans contend that society needs the arts for people to express themselves, “it is necessary to guard against the human tendency to overvalue the contribution and importance of one’s own arts and interests (...)” (McWilliams 1985, p. 17). Because of its alleged funding of obscene art, especially during the Serrano-Mapplethorpe controversy in 1989, the Christian Right has continuously targeted the National Endowment for the Arts since the late 1980s (DiMaggio and Pettit 1999). In the following years it became clear that, despite being in operation for more than thirty years, the existence of the NEA was by no means guaranteed, as Republican candidates signed a ‘Contract with America,’ which, amongst other things, aimed at eliminating the NEA.

National Endowment for the Arts

Despite widespread opposition, government involvement in the arts slowly increased from individual arts commissions in the nineteenth century to the employment programs of the New Deal in the 1930s.³ Despite high hopes of the arts constituency, the guest lists of the White House were often the only indicators that President Kennedy was interested in the nation's art (Smith 2000, p. 172). Instead, it was Congress who pushed towards a governmental arts program and a "change of heart in the 1960s" (Heilbrun and Gray 2001, p. 228) about federal support for the arts led to the creation of the arts endowment. In 1965 the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act⁴ was signed into law by President Johnson. This act, guaranteeing the continuity of the NEA, has to be reauthorized by Congress every few years. The primary objectives of the NEA – and hereby also its literature program – have been promoting excellence and education in the arts and to reach Americans of different geographic locations (inner-cities, rural communities) and of minority and tribal backgrounds (National Endowment for the Arts 2000). Under the leadership of Nancy Hanks, the Endowment's appropriations rose steadily, but declined after 1979 (DiMaggio 1991). The funds spent on the literature program varied between \$332,000 in 1969 and \$5,125,000 in 1985. Until the severe budget cuts of 1996, an average of 3.6% of the total funds obligated was devoted to the literature program.⁵

The chairperson, a direct political appointee of the President, heads the NEA for a term of four years and selects the other NEA staff members, e.g. the Program Director of Literature. The staff is very influential in the granting procedure. Not only do they make the first selection in the grant applications, the program panels also largely depend on them for structure, direction and guidance. The discipline-based program panels consist of outside experts appointed for a four-year period by the NEA chairman and recommended by "NEA staff, arts lobbyists, cultural administrators, Council members, elected officials and other concerned parties of the cultural community." (Mulcahy 1985, p. 319) The National Council on the Arts reviews all recommendations made by the different program panels. The National Council was composed of twenty-six private citizens – mostly famous artists – appointed by the president with the NEA head as chairperson.⁶ At the end of the granting procedure the chairman has to approve the proposed grants.

The Dutch Government and Literary Policy

From Private and Pillarized Support to General Agreement

When the Netherlands became a parliamentary democracy in 1848, arts funding was relegated to the private sphere, primary due to the dominance of the liberal ideology (Pots 2000). With the statement that the government should not be the judge of science and art, liberal Prime Minister Thorbecke laid the foundations for the Dutch model of federal support for the arts, namely a system of art councils advising the government. During the 1930s the balance shifted from private to pillarized initiatives. Pillarization refers to a segmentation of society along religious and political lines in order to achieve emancipation through segregation (Entzinger 1985). These blocs, or pillars, were to a large extent autonomous, each with their own political parties, unions, broadcasting corporations and schools. Within their semi-public pillars, the Catholic, Protestant and Socialist blocks enjoyed restricted government support for their arts activities. In 1918 the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Science (*Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschap*) was installed, but its power was limited. After the Second World War, the principal objections to government support for the arts gradually waned (Oosterbaan Martinius 1990).

Fonds voor de Letteren

In 1962 and 1963 Dutch authors protested against their poor economic position and argued for more government support (Bruin 1990). As a result, the Minister of Culture established the *Fonds voor de Letteren* in 1965. In theory, the Minister of Culture can dissolve the foundation, but the intention to do so has never occurred. According to the statutes, the foundation's goal is to promote Dutch literature by, amongst other things, serving the interests of writers in any legal way possible (Fonds voor de Letteren 1968). Although the *Fonds* received some private support, most financial support comes from the central government. Every year the board has to account for its cost estimate to the Minister of Culture. And the organization has to present an elaborate policy and budget plan every four years, in which it has to tap into the goals the Ministry of Culture has set. The annual subsidies awarded to the *Fonds voor de Letteren* have been increasing ever since 1965, peaking at almost thirteen million euro

in 2003. Compared to the United States whose population and GDP are approximately twenty times larger, national funding of literature is quite elaborate in the Netherlands.

The board of the *Fonds voor de Letteren* is composed of five to seven members. Initially these board members were selected for a period of three years from specific organizations: the Art Council, writers' associations, publishers and booksellers. But in the following years the statutes were changed to include more authors. The board members put forward new candidates, including the chairman. The Minister of Culture makes the final appointment decision. The board also appoints the panel members and advisory commissions. The panels consist primarily out of authors (and translators) and literary scholars. These experts advise the board on specific grant requests. Although these panels have been accused of favoritism – primarily the result of publications by Vleesch Dubois (in 1982) and Max Pam (in 1986) – these allegations were not taken up by politicians, as has been the case in the United States. The board makes the final granting decisions and is formally responsible.

The German Government and Literary Policy

Widespread Opposition to Centralization

Before the establishment of the German Reich in 1871, Germany – in contrast to most European states – still consisted of different feudal states and city republics, each pursuing their own cultural policy. The Reich concerned itself with the cultural relation with foreign states, while the States (*Länder*) were in charge of their own cultural and educational policies. The National Socialist regime (1933-1945) replaced the federal system with harsh centralization. According to Sievers and Wagner (2006, p.2) “this experience with centralization later led to the emergence of a strong penchant for federalism in the Federal Republic of Germany.” As a result, cultural and educational policies were again made the responsibility of the *Länder* and the municipalities (Ismayr 1987). From 1970 onward the federal government has tried to increase its jurisdiction over culture, e.g. by installing a Federal Government Commissioner for Cultural Affairs and the Media and by establishing several national policy organizations as the *Deutscher Literaturfonds*.⁷ These steps towards centralization have been heavily criticized by the *Länder*, suggesting that a federal cultural policy is still controversial in Germany.

Deutscher Literaturfonds

The reasons behind the foundation of the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* are similar to those of the Dutch literature fund. Starting in the late 1960s, actors in the literary field gradually realized that they needed an organization that would support writers. After several incarnations the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* was established in 1980 with funds provided by the federal government. It is a society (*Verein*), which can only dissolve itself. The board consists of representative of seven founding organizations, namely libraries, booksellers' associations and writers' associations. The goal of the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* is to support contemporary German-language authors and to improve the literary climate in (West)-Germany. In contrast to the NEA and the *Fonds voor de Letteren*, its budget does not have to be approved by any political institution, but is fixed to 1 million DM (Euro). Although the *Deutscher Literaturfonds'* budget is much more limited than that of its American and Dutch counterparts, it can spend its more autonomously (*Selbstverwaltung*).

The representatives of the member organizations meet at least once a year (*Mitgliederversammlung*). They appoint the administration (*Vorstand*), consisting of a head and two members, and the review panel (*Kuratorium*). The panel is made up out of seven members – one out of each organization – and their replacements. The two other (advising) panelists are commissioned by the national government and the State Cultural Foundation (*Kulturstiftung der Länder*) and – from 2002 – onward the Federal Cultural Foundation (*Kulturstiftung des Bundes*). This panel decides which authors are funded. There have been a few minor discussions – but no real controversies – over this panel system in the early years of the *Literaturfonds* (1984-1987).

Cross-National Differences in Ethnic Discourse and Representation

To research the extent and the ways in which ethnic diversity has been part of American, Dutch and German national literary policy from 1965 until 2005, I analyzed the contents of the policy reports of the National Endowment of the Arts, the *Fonds voor the Letteren* and the *Deutscher Literaturfonds*.⁸ Two different content analyses were performed (see Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005): 1) on ethnic diversity

in organizational discourse, and 2) on the representation of ethnic minority granters and authors. But before I elaborate on these analyses and their results, I first have to define ethnic diversity.

Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic diversity and ethnic minorities mean different things in different countries. For reasons of comparability and because of the small number of minorities in Germany and the Netherlands, ethnic minorities have been primarily analyzed as an aggregate group. Following the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American ethnic minorities are defined as belonging to one of the four main ethno-racial groups: Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaska Native. According to the Dutch Bureau of the Census (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*) one belongs to an ethnic minority if at least one parent was born in a foreign country. A further differentiation is made between Western and non-Western minorities. The latter group includes the main Dutch ethnic minority groups (*allochtonen*): the Turkish, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans. Therefore I defined Dutch ethnic minorities to include all non-Western minorities. Germany primarily differentiates between Germans and foreigners (*Ausländer*). In the case of Germany, the Turkish minority was chosen as a proxy for non-Western minorities. First, the German Bureau of the Census (*Statistisches Bundesamt*) has no comparable data on other non-Western minority groups (and related naturalizations). Second, the Turkish minority is by far the largest non-Western minority group in Germany.

Ethnic Diversity in Organizational Discourse

All policy reports contained a foreword or statement, usually signed by the chairman or the head of the organization.⁹ The discourse used in these forewords tells us what the organization wants to communicate to the outside world, primarily the political field. To examine whether ethnic diversity has been part of this organizational discourse, I performed a computer-assisted content analysis using Wordstat.¹⁰ An 'ethnic' dictionary was constructed by manually assigning all ethnic terms used in the forewords to this list. I included all conjugations of aggregate terms like 'ethnic' and 'race,' minority

group terms as ‘African-American’ or ‘Asian’ and ideological or policy-related terms like ‘multicultural’ and ‘intercultural’. Geographic terms (e.g. Puerto Rico) were not included.

Table 1 shows both the absolute and relative number of ethnic terms used in each foreword of the policy reports.¹¹ It indicates that ethnic diversity has been part of the National Endowment for the Arts’ discourse from 1972 onward. However, there are some clear peaks in the use of ethnic discourse in 1989 and 1995. The discourse itself mostly addresses one of the four ethno-racial groups in general (e.g., ‘black communities,’ or ‘Hispanic components of the population’) or the specific ethnic background of an artist (e.g., ‘Chinese-American jing ehru player,’ or ‘Hispanic and Latin American artists’) artwork or event (e.g., ‘Black Arts festival’) or arts organization (e.g., ‘a Hispanic visual arts center’). The amount of ethnic discourse used by the *Fonds voor de Letteren* is very limited: 3 terms in 2001 and 1 term in 2002 (see Table 1). The discourse refers in all cases to the Intercultural Literary Policy, a small sub-policy of the *Fonds voor de Letteren* (see next paragraph). The German reports did not contain any ethnic terms whatsoever (see Table 1). Moreover, the introductory statements of the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* oftentimes remained the same for several years.

Table 1 about here

Representation of Ethnic Minority Granters and Grantees

Besides ‘mere’ discourse, the policy reports contained information on what the organization has actually done, primarily which authors have been supported and who were the panelists involved in the granting procedure. From 1970 onward, all panelists (both minority and majority) mentioned in the reports were included in my analysis, except translation and foreign (e.g. Flemish) panelists.¹² For the NEA, I also recorded the National Council on the Arts members, because it would make an interesting comparison with the more autonomously appointed literary panel members. Because the *Fonds voor Letteren* did not list its grantees until 1969, I also began my analysis of funded authors in 1970. Due to sheer numbers, I took a sample (1970, 1975, 1980, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005) instead of looking at all grantees, with exception of the *Deutscher Literaturfonds*. I recorded the authors who had received

Creative Writers Fellowships (United States), an individual grant¹³ (Netherlands) or a stipend (Germany). Again, primarily Flemish, Swiss and Austrian authors were excluded from my analyses (see above). The main sources used to research the ethnicity of both the panelists and authors were the *Literature Resource Center* in GaleNet, de *Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren* and *Perlentaucher* (Internet databases).

Figures 1a-c show (i) the share of ethnic minorities of the total population, and (ii) the percentage of ethnic minority panelists and writers of the total granter and grantee population for each country from 1970 tot 2005. Figure 1a indicates that, despite poor representation during the early 1970s and mid 1980s and significant overrepresentation in 1981, the share of ethnic minority panelists – on average – follows the population. The data on the National Council on the Arts show a trend towards (slightly) increasing underrepresentation of ethnic minority panel members. Thus, the politically appointed National Council on the Arts is less ethnically diverse than the more autonomously appointed literary panel. The share of ethnic minority authors of the total grantee population has varied from 8.6% (2000) to 29.2% (1970). But ethnic minority authors have been underrepresented – as compared to their share in the general population – during almost the entire period. Moreover, their share has been declining ever since 1970.

Figure 1a about here

In the Netherlands, both ethnic minority panelists and authors have been underrepresented from 1970 to 2005 (Figure 1b). Ethnic minorities have been totally absent from the panels until the start of the intercultural literary policy in 1999. As this sub-policy included many ethnic minority panelists, the share of ethnic granters increased from 0% (1995) to 5.1% (2000), dropping slightly in 2005. As in the United States, ethnic minority authors have been continuously underrepresented – as compared to their share in the general population. But in contrast to the NEA, the Dutch results show a gradual increase in the percentage of ethnic minority grantees from 1970 to 2005.

Figure 1b about here

Despite the so-called Turkish turn in German literature (see Adelson 2005), figure 1c shows that the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* has not taken this turn. Out of approximately 400 authors awarded since its foundation, no more than two of them were of Turkish descent: Emine Sevgi Özadamar and Feridun Zaimoglu. At the time they received a grant from the *Deutscher Literaturfonds*, both authors had already won prestigious literary prizes. Other non-Western minorities were also largely absent (three in total). The number of ethnic minority panelists was even lower: zero.

Figure 1c about here

So an ethnically more diverse society like the United States indeed devotes more attention to ethnic diversity – both in terms of amount of ethnic discourse and the representation of ethnic minority panelists – than ethnically less diverse societies such as the Netherlands and particularly Germany. However, while the share of ethnic minority grantees has been declining in the United States, it has increased in the Netherlands and also in Germany. Finally, the results show that the way in which ethnic diversity has been part of national literary policies differs cross-nationally. Ethnic diversity has been part of the NEA both as discourse and as representation, while the *Fonds voor de Letteren* and the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* have represented ethnic minorities, but did hardly employ ethnic discourse.

Accounting for Cross-national Differences

So how can we account for these cross-national differences in the extent and ways in which ethnic diversity has been part of American, Dutch and German national literary policy? We first have to consider demographic differences.¹⁴ A simple reflection model would predict that more ethnic

diversity within a society leads to more attention to ethnic diversity, in this case more ethnically diverse literary policies. The results show that demographics do matter. In absolute terms, an ethnically more heterogeneous society (United States) devotes more attention to ethnic diversity – both as discourse and in representation – than an ethnically less diverse society as the Netherlands and particularly Germany. But although demographics are important to situate the findings, it cannot account for either the underrepresentation or the peaks in the amount of ethnic discourse and the representation of ethnic minority panelists and authors (see Table 1 and Figures 1a-c).

National Cultural Repertoires and Cultures of Ethnic Inclusion or Exclusion

Although structural factors as demographics do matter, scholars studying national cultural repertoires (e.g. Swidler 1986; Lamont 2001) have demonstrated that the way different countries are inclined to ‘deal’ with ethnic diversity is the result of historical institutionalization. Therefore, these macro-cultural repertoires react slowly to structural changes as – in this case – the change in the ethnic composition of the population in the three researched countries. According to Lamont and Thévenot (2000, p. 8-9) “each nation makes readily available to its members specific sets of tools through historical and institutional channels, which means that members of different national communities are not equally likely to draw on the same cultural tools to construct and assess the world that surrounds them.” Below, I will briefly consider the extent to which the tool of (ethnic) inclusion has been part of the national cultural repertoires of the United States, the Netherlands and Germany and whether such repertoires can clarify my findings.¹⁵

Until the 1960s the United States can be described as ethnically exclusive, especially towards the Black population. Civil Rights protests resulted several antidiscrimination laws (e.g. Civil Rights Act of 1965), providing equal right to all citizens. In the following years, the policy emphasis shifted from offering redress to discriminated individuals to preventing discrimination by protecting vulnerable groups (Harper and Reskin 2005). As these affirmative action policies required public institutions to identify the ethnic identity of students, employees or grantees, the United States became more and more a color-conscious society (Joppke 1996). Although this suggests that ethnic diversity has also been part of the national literary policy of the United States, this is only the case with regard

to the representation of ethnic minority panelists. The amount of ethnic discourse shows quite a lot annual variation, while the declining share of ethnic minority grantees seems to suggest that the American repertoire has become less inclusive.

Cultural pluralism and tolerance have traditionally been important instruments to regulate conflict between equal religious factions in the Netherlands (Zahn 1991). And in contrast to the United States, the institutionalization of pluralism resulted in the pillarization of Dutch society along religious and political lines (see second section). According to the *European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index* Dutch policy still is much more inclusive than its German counterpart (Geddes and Niessen 2005). We see some indications of this inclusive repertoire, if we look at the gradual increase in the number of ethnic minority grantees. However, the national cultural repertoire theory cannot account for the sudden increase in both the percentage of ethnic minority panelists and ethnic discourse in 2000.

In contrast to the United States and the Netherlands, citizenship in Germany is exclusively based on descent rather than on birth or territory (Brubaker 1992). This exclusive definition of citizenship has its historical roots in the concept of German nationhood as a linguistically and culturally unified group (*Volk*), a community of destiny (*Schicksalgemeinschaft*). As a consequence, Germany has very strict naturalization laws. Thus, more than 7 million foreigners (8.9 % of the German population) were living in Germany in 2000, many of whom were actually born there. Ethnic inclusion might have become more important after the federal government granted easier access to citizenship in 2000 (Geissler and Meyer 2002). And – in contrast to the United States and the Netherlands – these changes were more directly institutionalized in policy. These recent developments have however not changed the exclusive way the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* has dealt with ethnic diversity. As described earlier, the German Literary Fund has neither used ethnic discourse nor included any Turkish (or ethnic) minorities in its panels. Furthermore, the funding of ethnic minority authors seems incidental rather than showing an increase after 2000.

Literary Policy Field and Organizational Legitimacy

Although demographics and the national repertoire theory have clarified some cross-national differences, primarily regarding the representation of ethnic minorities, both approaches could not account for the variation in the use of ethnic discourse. For this reason, I will draw on organizational theories of legitimacy. Organizational legitimacy can be defined as a generalized perception that the organization is culturally accepted and its actions morally and legally proper within some socially constructed system of norms, values and beliefs (Suchman 1995; Scott 2001). An organization can be judged as legitimate in terms of three elements, which form a continuum from the taken for granted to the legally enforced (Scott 2001).

First, cultural-cognitive legitimacy relates to cultural rules (or support) that specify what types of actors are allowed to exist (Ruef and Scott 1998). The fundamental question underlying cultural-cognitive legitimacy in this study is whether the national government should use its (public) resources to support the arts. Since the 1950s government support for the arts has been taken for granted in the Netherlands. Hence, during some periods no serious questions were asked about the existence of the *Fonds voor de Letteren* (see Figure 2). In both the United States and Germany, there has always been some discussion about whether the federal government should support the arts. But unlike the NEA from 1995 to 1997, the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* has never been threatened in its existence (see Figure 2).

Second, moral legitimacy refers to values and norms ('right thing to do'), either relating to the procedures or to the outcome of such organizational procedures (Suchman 1995). The procedural moral legitimacy of all three organizations has been questioned in some instances, mainly concerning accusations of favoritism of peer reviewers. The consequential moral legitimacy of only the NEA was severely disputed with the alleged funding of immoral art during the Mapplethorpe-Serrano controversy in 1989 (see Figure 2).

Third, regulative legitimacy has to do with rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities. Although the extent and nature in which the studied organizations are subjected to such activities differs, both the NEA and the *Fonds voor de Letteren* have to go through a process of evaluation every couple of years in order to get reauthorized or their budgets renewed. These legitimacy pressures are

the strongest in the years preceding political monitoring and result in the periodical peaks we see in Figure 2.

Figure 2 about here

Figure 2 shows that the NEA has experiences severe legitimacy problems, especially around 1989 and 1995-1997. The Dutch and German literary policy organizations had only minor problems regarding their legitimacy.

Although all organizations are almost entirely funded by the national government, the degree to which the political field – as the most important stakeholder – constrains the autonomy of the organization, differs greatly between the three countries (see Nyhagen Predelli and Baklien 2003).¹⁶ We have seen that the NEA is the least autonomous organization, since the chairman is directly appointed by the President, both the organization and its budget have to be reauthorized by Congress every several years, and political actors take part in the panels. The *Deutscher Literaturfonds* operates the most autonomously of the three literary policy organizations. The members elect their own chairman, the budget is fixed and the panels consist solely of members of the participating organizations. The *Fonds voor de Letteren* holds a middle position: the chairman is nominated by the board, but appointed by the Minister of Culture, the budget has to be approved yearly and a policy plan has to be presented every four years to renew its budget and, finally, the panels consist primarily of actors from the literary field. As a result, the more (literary policy) organizations depend on the political field, the more their legitimacy depends on the organization's ability to tap into the dominant political beliefs and values (see Ruef and Scott 1998).

This might clarify why the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* has ignored ethnic diversity altogether. Its legitimacy has hardly been questioned and the organization operates almost independently from the federal government.¹⁷ The German Literary Fund simply does not have to adapt its discourse or funding practices according to changing political beliefs. The fact that the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* does not annually publish a policy report or renews its short forewords provides further support for the legitimacy theory. Although the *Fonds voor de Letteren* has only experienced minor legitimacy crises,

it cannot ignore the political field as its German counterpart does. As stated earlier, it has to tap into government beliefs about cultural policy by presenting a policy plan every four years in order to renew its budget. When Minister of Culture Van der Ploeg presented his view in the report *Cultuur als confrontatie* ('Culture as confrontation') in 2000, which was preceded by a separate policy document ('Make way for cultural diversity'), ethnic diversity became a priority in the Dutch cultural policy. As a reaction, the *Fonds voor de Letteren* published its own policy plan entitled *Het gaat om kwaliteit* ('It is all about quality'). However, the Dutch Literary Fund also launched its intercultural literary policy that same year, resulting in a rise in the percentage of ethnic minority panelists. In addition, the ethnic discourse employed by the Fund – starting in 2000 – referred solely to its own intercultural literary policy, without any mention of societal ethnic diversity or ethnic minority authors or their work. All this suggests that its moderate autonomy makes it possible to act against government beliefs, but only as discourse.

The National Endowment for the Arts has been subject to the most serious political attacks of the three organizations studied, resulting in major legitimacy crises in 1989 and from 1995 to 1997. The lower levels of legitimacy might have been an incentive for the NEA to publish policy reports more often than their European counterparts. Research on the discourse used in Congressional debates on arts funding from 1965-1995 has shown that ethnic diversity strongly resonates in the American political field (Strom and Cook 2004).¹⁸ In line with legitimacy theory, the results of my analyses show clear peaks in the amount of ethnic discourse during these legitimacy crises (see Figure 2). Compared to the Netherlands, this ethnic discourse focuses not so much on the internal functioning of the organization, but on what the organization has accomplished for various ethnic communities in general and their artists and art. This emphasis on communicating its importance to society – external to the organization itself – provides further support for the legitimacy theory. I did not find clear peaks in the percentage of ethnic minority granters or grantees during the crises years. Probably discourse is considered a more powerful and more convenient instrument to counter legitimacy crises than actual representation. This might also account for (relative) decline in the support for ethnic minority authors.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study clearly suggest that ethnically more heterogeneous societies also produce more ethnically heterogeneous artistic classifications. The most heterogeneous society – the United States – also employs the most ethnic discourse and includes the most ethnic minority granters and authors. The Netherlands holds a middle position, both with regard to societal ethnic heterogeneity as well as attention to ethnic diversity. In Germany ethnic diversity is almost absent in the national literary policy. This might not be a very surprising finding, considering the obvious differences with regard to the timeline of demographic changes and related ethnic identity politics between traditional nations of immigration, former colonial powers and guestworker recruitment countries.

However, in none of the countries does the attention to ethnic diversity in literary policy simply reflect societal ethnic diversity. The National Endowment for the Arts has addressed ethnic diversity most prominently as discourse when in need of legitimacy. The increasing underrepresentation of ethnic minority authors suggests that ethnic diversity has been primarily used as lip service to legislators and minority constituencies. A more elaborate analysis – including other legitimizing frames – might further clarify the relative importance of ethnic discourse as a way of improving legitimacy vis-à-vis other strategies. But despite all this, the ethnic boundaries were still less strong in the United States than in the Netherlands and in Germany. The *Fonds voor de Letteren* disregarded ethnic diversity for a fairly long time, until the Minister of Culture made it one of the priorities of Dutch cultural policy. And although the amount of ethnic discourse is still limited, the underrepresentation of ethnic minority authors has declined in recent years. Thus, while ethnic boundaries are still present in the Dutch literary policy, they seem to have become weaker. The *Deutscher Literaturfonds* has ignored ethnic diversity almost completely. The German Literary Fund has employed no ethnic discourse and hardly included any ethnic minority authors or ethnic panel members, indicating strong ethnic boundaries. As the German Literary Fund operates largely autonomously, it is relative immune for political claims for more ethnic diversity. These claims were not so strong in Germany either.

In general, it seems that cross-national differences are mediated at the meso-level of the organization. Macro-level theories – both structural as well as cultural – could not very well account for the findings. As such, recent changes towards exclusion in the United States and the Netherlands and inclusion in Germany have not (yet) affected literary policy much. It would be interesting to look at other institutions (e.g., literary criticism) to see whether we might find similar patterns.

Acknowledgements

Support for this article's research by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO, project 277-45-001) is gratefully acknowledged. I would like to thank my advisor and director of the VICI-project Cultural Classification Systems in Transition Susanne Janssen for her support and comments. The archival research was partly conducted in the fall of 2005 at Princeton University. I am grateful to Sociology Department of Princeton University and Vereniging Trustfonds Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam for their support. In particular, I am grateful to Paul DiMaggio for inviting me as a Visiting Student Research Collaborator and his insightful feedback on earlier versions of this paper. In addition, I benefited from the comments of the other members the VICI-project Marc Verboord, Kees van Rees, Alex van Venrooij, Giseline Kuipers, Vaughn Schmutz and Timothy Dowd. A portion of this paper was presented at the 2007 Conference of the American Sociological Association at which I received valuable comments from Shyon Baumann and Josée Johnston. Last but not least, I am indebted to the Deutscher Literaturfonds for their help and the anonymous reviewers of the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* for their suggestions.

Notes

1. For a detailed overview, see Lamont (2001).
2. Although the National Endowment for the Arts also supports other artistic genres, its literature program falls within this described definition.
3. See Smith (2000) for a more detailed description.

4. This Act, establishing both National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, has been primary the success of the humanities lobby, which “succeeded where the arts had failed because of their emphasis on both education and (...) moral rhetoric.” (Kidd 2004, p. 63)
5. However, an increasing portion of the NEA’s budget went to State arts agencies, which also fund literature. Ironically, the establishment of the NEA resulted in explosion of State arts agencies, which wanted to benefit from the federal funds the NEA had to redirect to the States (DiMaggio 1991).
6. In 1998 the National Council’s size was reduced to fourteen private citizens and six members of Congress. According to Heilbrun and Gray (2001) Congress wanted to keep a closer watch on the NEA.
7. In contrast to the United States, local arts policies preceded a federal policy in Germany.
8. The NEA reports have appeared annually since the first year of full operation in 1967 (n=39). The reports of the *Fonds voor de Letteren* were published once every two years until 1976 and annually from 1977 onward (n=34). The first seven operational years of the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* were summarized in a book instead. The fiscal years 1988, 1989 and 1990 were reported individually, from 1991 until 1998 a report was brought out every two years and after that every three years (n=11).
9. Because the number of actual forewords was relatively small, I did not take a sample of the reports but chose to analyze them all. Because some reports did not contain a foreword, the total number of forewords was 31 for the NEA, 34 for the *Fond voor de Letteren* and 10 for the *Deutscher Literaturfonds*.
10. The length of the texts (number of words), the author and the reported year were also recorded in the same content analysis program.
11. Not surprisingly, the National Endowment for the Arts has had the most elaborate forewords, with an average of 1375 and a maximum of 4121 words. On average, the German literary fund used the least words in their introductory statements (340), while the *Fonds voor de Letteren* devoted approximately twice those numbers (643). The length of the forewords shows no pattern, neither a linear increase nor peaks at certain years.
12. I began my analysis in 1970, because the NEA reports included the panelists’ names from 1970 until 1999. Due to large numbers, the panelists of the *Fonds voor de Letteren* and the National Council on the Arts were recorded every five years (1970, 1975, 1980, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005).
13. Includes both *Werkbeuzen* (‘work grant’) and *Reisbeuzen* (‘travel grant’). Although the *Fonds voor de Letteren* publishes so-called *Introductiecahiers* (‘Introduction Documents’), which ‘introduce’

audiences and publishers to ethnic minority authors, I did not include these authors in my analysis. First, the authors do not receive a grant. Second, the publishers of these writers are subsidized by a different organization, the Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature.

14. The ethnic composition of the total population of fiction writers would have constituted a logical starting point for accounting for my findings. Unfortunately, such data are only available for the United States.
15. Ethnic inclusion may have lost some of its appeal in the United States and the Netherlands after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. and the murder of Theo van Gogh (Alba and Nee 2003; Prins 2004). However, since the developments described are relatively recent and national cultural repertoire change slowly, I would not expect these changes already to have impacted on literary policy.
16. The arts community also influences literary policy organizations, but in a more indirect, diffuse and less formal way.
17. We cannot simply reduce this lack of societal interest for the *Deutscher Literaturfonds* to low budget and relative peripheral position, since the National Endowment for the Arts has a comparable role and has generated much attention.
18. Of the nine “pro” arguments they distinguish, the “access” argument (“only government investment in the arts will provide adequate access across geographic, racial, and class divides”) may have never been the most important argument, but it has always ranked between second and fifth.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1 Ethnic terms in forewords of the NEA, *Fonds voor de Letteren* and the *Deutscher Literaturfonds*, 1970-2005

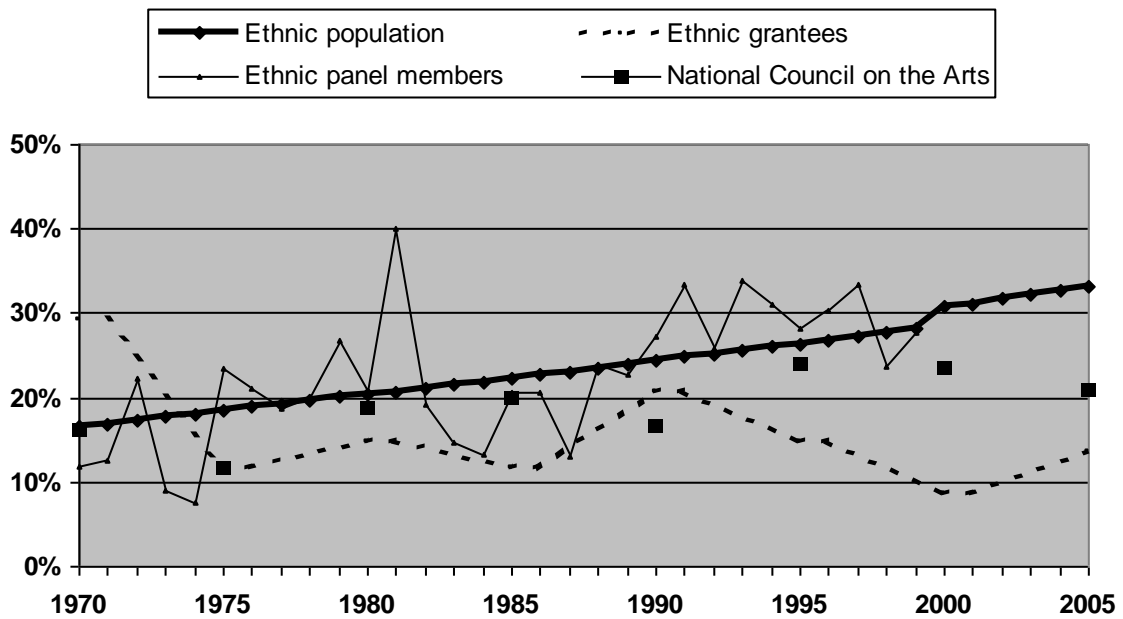
Year	NEA ^a absolute	NEA % of total	FvdL absolute	FvdL % of total	DL absolute	DL % of total
1965	^b		0	0		
1966						
1967	0	0	0	0		
1968	0	0				
1969	0	0	0	0		
1970	0	0				
1971	0	0	0	0		
1972	1	0.10				
1973	0	0	0	0		
1974	1	0.04				
1975	3	0.14	0	0		
1976	0	0				
1977	0	0	0	0		
1978	1	0.06	0	0		
1979	3	0.24	0	0		
1980	2	0.15	0	0		
1981	0	0	0	0	-	-
1982	0	0	0	0		
1983	1	0.04	0	0		
1984	1	0.05	0	0		
1985	1	0.06	0	0		
1986	7	0.32	0	0		
1987	3	0.21	0	0	0	0
1988	0	0	0	0	0	0
1989	16	0.40	0	0	0	0
1990	2	0.08	0	0	0	0
1991	- ^c	-	0	0	0	0
1992	-	-	0	0		
1993	2	0.19	0	0	0	0
1994	1	0.08	0	0		
1995	6	0.49	0	0	0	0
1996	0	0	0	0		
1997	-	-	0	0	0	0
1998	-	-	0	0		
1999	-	-	0	0	0	0
2000	1	0.07	3	0.48		
2001	-	-				
2002	-	-	1	0.23	0	0
2003	0	0	0	0		
2004	8	0.35	0	0		
2005	0	0	0	0		

Note: ^a NEA = National Endowment for the Arts; FvdL = Fonds voor de Letteren; DL = Deutscher Literaturfonds.

^b Empty cell means no report was (yet) published that particular year.

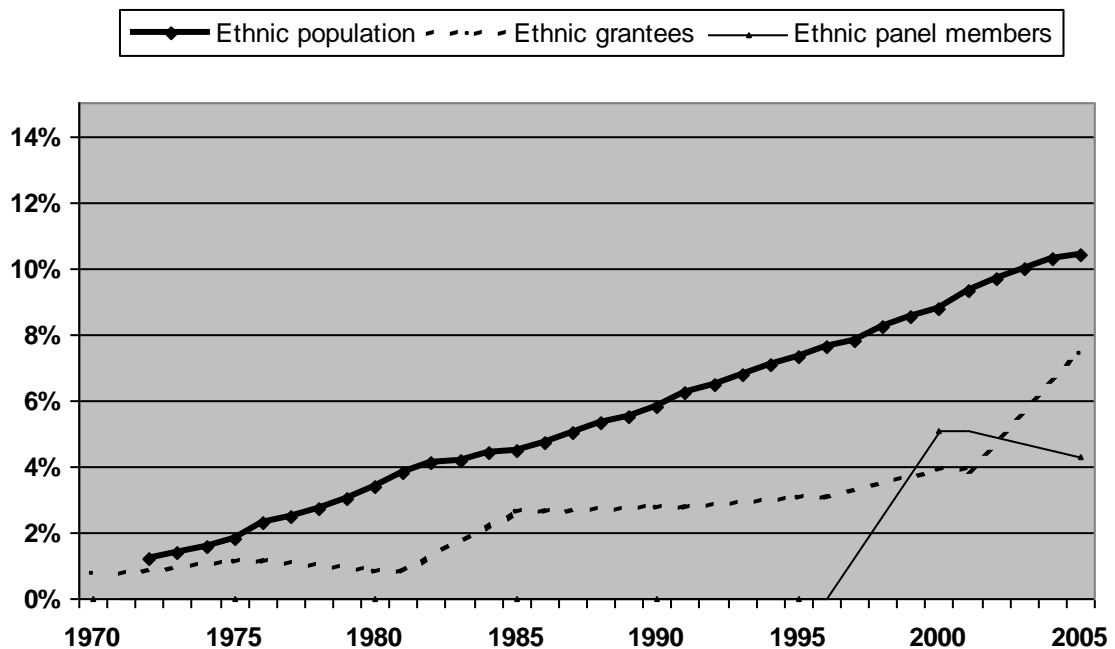
^c Report did not contain a foreword.

Figure 1a Ethnic minority literature panelists and grantees in the National Endowment for the Arts, 1970-2005



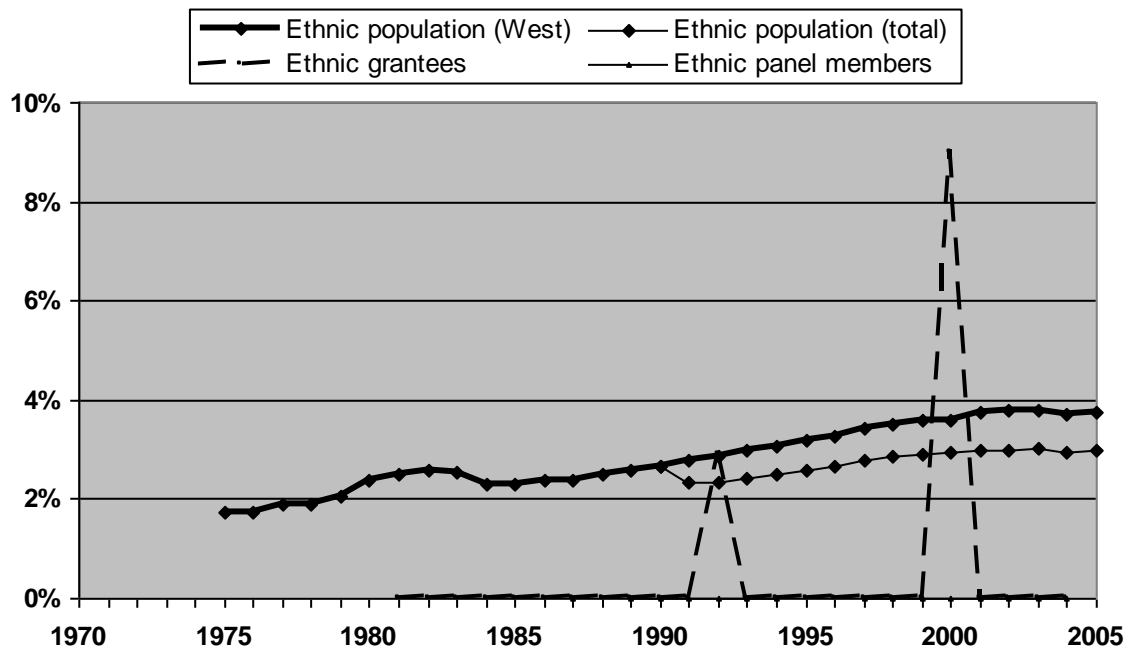
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1981 (Table 75); 2000 (Table 4, Table 16); 2007 (Table 13).

Figure 1b Ethnic minority literature panelists and grantees in the Fonds voor de Letteren, 1970-2005



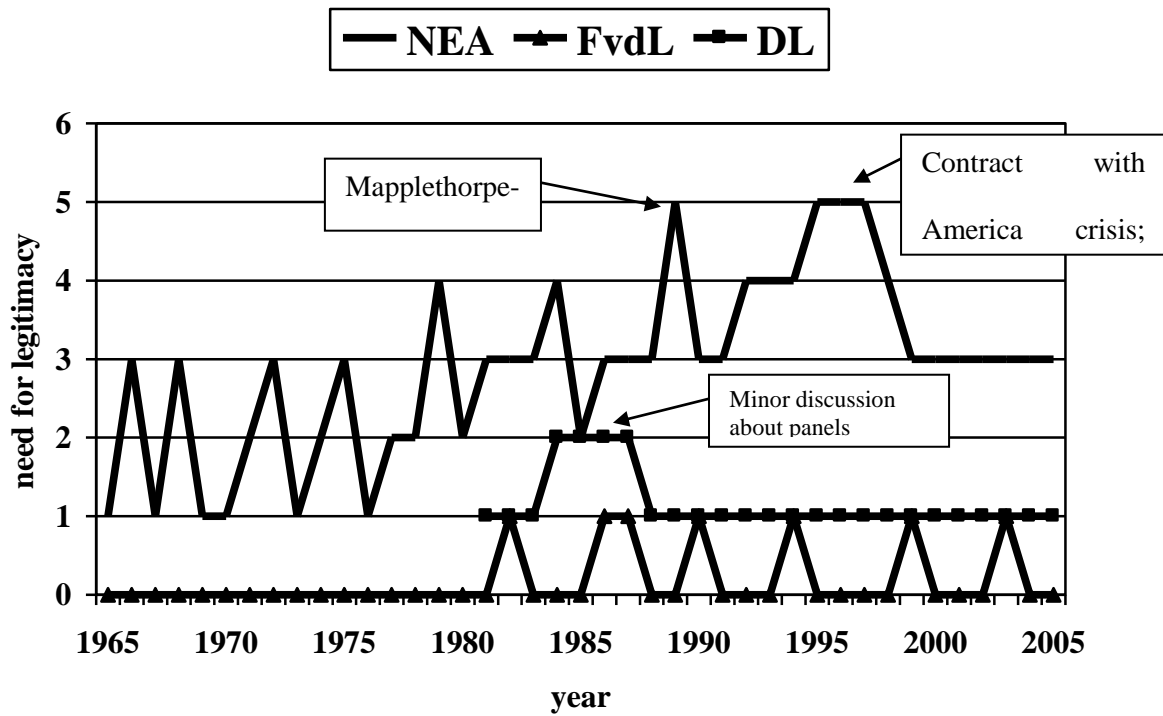
Sources: Own calculations using the Statline program of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

Figure 1c Turkish minority literature panelists and grantees in the Deutscher Literaturfonds, 1970-2005



Sources: Statistisches Bundesamt 2001 (Table 9.2); 2002; 2003; 2005; 2006.

Figure 2 The need for legitimacy for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fonds voor de Letteren and the Deutscher Literaturfonds, 1965-2005



Sources: Koch (1998), National Endowment for the Arts (2000), Deutscher Literaturfonds (1987), De Glas (1994), De Vries (1994), Fonds voor de Letteren (1999).

Note: The need for legitimacy is calculated for every fiscal year by adding up the scores on three variables. First, cultural-cognitive legitimacy refers to the extent in which government support for the arts is principally questioned (0=general agreement on government support for the arts; 1=some questions on government support for the arts; 2= general disagreement on government support for the arts). Normative legitimacy has to do with the degree in which the peer review system is questioned (0=hardly any discussion about the functioning of the panel system; 1= some questions about the functioning of the panel system; 2= functioning of the panel system heavily questioned). Regulative legitimacy has been operationalized by authorization period. Literary policy organizations most urgently need legitimacy when government evaluations (reauthorization or budget renewal) are approaching (0=year directly after government evaluation; 1=years in between evaluations; 2=year before evaluation).