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Performing arts and the city

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9. Extrinsic Functioning of the Performing Arts: The Social Domain

9.1. Social Policy Issues in the Cultural Policy Documents

Although the policy documents relate cultural policy to social policy issues (see Table 4.5), they are not clear on how art and culture function in the societal domain. One issue that has been referred to is that culture and art help develop social cohesion: they provide a scene for shared experiences, bring people together despite their differences and prevent social exclusion. The fact that the performing arts by definition constitute a social activity is important here. Furthermore, culture and art are regarded as conducive to attracting inhabitants with spending power, which can aid in developing the social climate in a city or district. Obviously the social and economic domains coincide in this case. A third issue in the policy documents is tolerance. Culture and art provide an open living climate to accommodate different ways of cultural expression.[1] In this respect, culture and art have been linked to the civilization process of society. None of these connections relate to the nature of the experiences afforded. Thus art's functioning in the social domain is regarded as extrinsic.

However, based upon the description of aesthetic experience in Chapters 6 and 7, it has been suggested that the functioning of art in the social domain is related to what has been categorized as intrinsic functioning (both non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values and functions).[2] Two issues stand out. First, personal identity is a key factor in relating aesthetic experience to the social domain (see Chapter 7). Second, it is easy to see that personal development is closely linked to a person's position in society (personal identity) and therefore the personal development that occurs through participation in cultural activities influences personal identity. This has been categorized as an intrinsic function of culture and art. In addition, collective identities are also formed through personal identity. This again relates the functioning of culture and art to the social domain (and the collective level).

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[1] The economic ramifications of an open living climate have been researched in the previous chapter through the concept of the 'creative economy'.

[2] This can also be seen in the policy documents themselves, see e.g. Rotterdam (2003, p. 3), where borough regeneration is related to the capacity of performing arts to foster identity-building and the ability to make independent choices, or *Meer dan de Som* (2003, p. 16), where mental development through artistic activities is regarded as a means to further participation in society, which suggest that a link between intrinsic and extrinsic functions, especially through personal development. The policy document of Groningen (2005, p. 3) even suggests that there is a link between artistic *quality* and extrinsic outcomes.

Thus, for the purpose of the present research, two questions are important:

1. How can the values and functions of aesthetic experiences that occur for individual audience members have an effect at collective level? In other words: how can the performing arts that function for individual audience members also function for the relations between performance attendees and for those who do not attend performing arts in the community?

2. Are these effects at collective level so closely related to the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience, as described in this research, that they should be regarded as intrinsic rather than extrinsic? This question can also be phrased differently: what is the specific artistic aspect of art's functioning in the social domain?

In order to answer these questions, some other issues need to be addressed as well. First, something more needs to be said about the relationship between individuals and communities and/or society. Second, investigation should be carried out to establish which goals are categorized under social policy issues in cultural sociological literature, and whether or not these goals coincide with those mentioned in the policy documents. These two issues will be addressed in the Sections 9.2 and 9.3. Section 9.4 deals with the issue of personal development in relation to social policy issues. Section 9.5 deals with image and identity. Finally, in section 9.6, a theory of the functioning of culture and art in the social domain is developed. This theory can answer the two questions mentioned above.

9.2. The Individual, Society and Community

The social policy issues typically relate the individual who is having an aesthetic experience to the collective level. Therefore, the question concerning the way in which individuals relate to groups or communities needs to be addressed. For this research, the question concerning the way people relate to the level of the city community is specifically relevant. In the policy documents, the level of city districts has also been mentioned, specifically in relation to social policy outcomes. Community art or community theatre is a prominent term in the documents and literature as well, and thus should be clarified here.

Chapter 1 has shown that culture, art and identity are related concepts (see Section 1.2). Based upon definitions provided by Zijderveld (1983), Fischer-Lichte (2002) and Newman (2004), identity has been described as people's most essential personal characteristic. It is the answer to the question 'Who am I?' A personal identity is composed of a person's membership of various social groups, this relating a person to the collective level. Identity has various sources: geographical location (the village or city district, town or country one lives in), ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and so on. As was discussed in Chapter 6, aesthetic experiences can either affirm such identities or develop them. It is important to bear in mind that identity is not a fixed phenomenon and that the development of identities is not simply a matter of switching from one (pre-existing) identity to the next. A lot has happened since the times of antiquity, in which context Fisher-Lichte describes

theatre practices as an act of representation of a communal identity of the Greek *poleis* (Fisher-Lichte, 2002). Technological and economic developments have made it possible for the individual to choose more freely among the available alternatives for self-representation.[3]

The elements of identity as described by Newman (2004) may seem fixed: race, ethnicity, religion and gender. But in contemporary society this is less and less the case. The decline of the standard family weakens its ability to designate a clear identity (see e.g. Castells, 2004). Gender surgery has blurred the gender divide, and skin whitener products even threaten the (outwardly visible) boundaries determined by racial background. The increase of upward (and downward) social and economical mobility has weakened discrimination based upon the more flexible elements of identity such as education levels or affluence. The forces of globalization, regarded as a process 'through which people's lives all around the world become increasingly interconnected – economically, politically, environmentally and culturally' (Newman, 2004, p. 34), even weaken the identity-building power of geographical location because place becomes less relevant for production, distribution and decision-making. Although society may have a macro-structure that still persists, which consists of statuses, roles, groups, organizations and institutions (*ibid.*, pp. 24-5, see also Field, 2008, p. 10), many sociologists point to the fact that identity should be regarded in terms of fragments, flux and an endless process of self-creation, even to the point that it seems that identities can be assumed and discarded at whim in contemporary society (Elliott, 2001, p. 131), although there is debate concerning the extent to which this actually occurs. People in contemporary society have multiple identities that can even contain contending elements. This being the case, the relationship between individuals, groups and communities has altered. Where once a carnival parade in a city district, or its drum band and (amateur) theatre group could represent *the* identity of the district's community, it can in no way be claimed that the aesthetic manifestations of these community, such as performing arts events, can be regarded as manifestations of *the* identity of this community.

This leads to the very interesting point of community arts or community theatre. In Dutch cultural policy, there has been debate on this issue. Trienekens (2005) has developed a 'working definition' of the term: Art projects with a societal aim and with a process and group-oriented method. Such art projects appear to have five central components:
  (a) There is active participation by a community.
  (b) The community consists (primarily) of persons not accustomed to consuming institutionalized art forms and cultural education.
  (c) The use of artistic professionals with the aim of an artistic outcome.
  (d) Projects comprise art disciplines which can fall outside the classical canon; usually a combination of art forms is used.
  (e) The project has societal aims and outcomes.

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[3] A process which has been mentioned in the policy document *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995): 'Although people are handed down these cultural systems of meaning from predecessors and contemporaries, they are reasonably free in relation to these, certainly in our society' (p. 4).

She recognizes that especially the last point is debatable, for it is not clear what can be considered as a societal outcome. It is important to add that, in this working definition, the word 'art' is used in the institutional sense, not denoting the specific values it may generate. More attention will be paid to community arts in the closing section of this chapter. Thus, identity is not a fixed phenomenon. Identities are fluid even to the point that nowadays a person's identity consists of many different elements which may not cohere and may even be contending. Identity relates a person to the collective level. In this research, the term 'community' will be used to denote this level for two reasons. The first reason is that the term 'community' is frequently used in the literature on societal outcomes of culture and art. The second reason is that this term allows one to differentiate between culture in its anthropological meaning, culture in its narrow meaning (as the manifestations of cultural practices), and various groups or subgroups in urban society.

9.3. Social Policy in Relation to Art policy: Views from Cultural Sociology

The question concerning the way in which cultural activities relate to social policy issues has received much attention in the literature on cultural sociology. Some of these studies have been written to defend subsidies to cultural activities, by offering broader support for their benefits to society (McCarthy, et al., 2004). This has led to a debate (which has already been alluded to in the Introduction to the present research) on the question as to whether or not social benefits are rightfully expected of cultural activities (see Merli, 2002; Matarasso, 2003; Belfiore, 2002 and 2004; and Belfiore and Bennett, 2009). Most research in this area (see e.g. Hughes, 2002, and Newman and McLean, 2004) focuses on participatory activities specifically designed for specific groups. The present research, however, focuses on the effects of the general public's attendance at the professional performing arts. Therefore these studies will not be used as a basis for developing a theory on the functioning of art in the social domain. In this section, attention will be given to four major issues that seem to dominate the debate on the relationship between cultural activities and social policy. The first is the issue of cultural diversity and representation of under-represented groups, which is a concern within policies striving for what has been called 'inclusive societies'. Community arts have also received attention in recent years as an instrument to cater to under-represented groups or to target specific groups. A third issue is health in relation to art policy. In Chapter 6, health was identified as a function of cultural activity not mentioned in the policy documents. A fourth issue has already been encountered in the previous chapter: city (borough) regeneration.

9.3.1. Cultural Diversity and under-represented Groups

Scholars in various countries have concerned themselves with issues of cultural diversity in cultural policy.[4] The view on aesthetic experience taken in the present research does not differentiate between specific ethnic groups in society. Although the aesthetic traditions of

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[4] See e.g. Van den Hoogen and Van den Berg (1997), Skot-Hansen (2002), Yim (2002) and De Haas et al. (2003).

migrant communities and the functionality of cultural expressions in their traditions may differ from Western traditions, there need not be a difference between ethnic and western communities with respect to the values and functions that can be derived from aesthetic experience.[5] The policy issue of cultural diversity in the present research is reduced to the question of access to the official cultural amenities as has described in Chapter 5. [6]

Matarasso (2005b) specifically mentions the policy goal of giving scope for expression to underrepresented groups. For instance, he mentions people with severe psychological health problems, or alcohol and drug addicts. He claims that the fact that they can express themselves as individuals through cultural activities may improve their position in society, certainly more than the situation where they are identified as a problem group by others (in power to do so). Wang (2004) refers to multiple-ethnic identities in Taiwanese society, some of which have been under-represented and have only recently found room for expression. In a similar way, Shusterman describes rap music as a form of authentic expression for black minority groups in ghettos in large American cities (see Chapter 6). Another example can be found in the 'balls' that black and Hispanic transvestites organized during the eighties in major American cities. In this way, they staged their own beauty contests, contrasting with the dominant white-female beauty image as occurs in Miss World competitions.[7] These examples all relate to the issue of self-awareness which can occur through participation in cultural activities that are intimately related to the specific socio-economic and/or ethnic groups in question. The present chapter must cover the question as to how the personal development of participating individuals that occurs through their cultural activities relates to the social position of the group as a whole. This is a topic for Section 9.5.

9.3.2. Community Arts: from Participants to Audiences

Though Matarasso's work on art in the social domain focuses on participatory arts projects, more specifically the so-called 'community arts', it should be discussed here. The publication of *Use or Ornament* in 1997 formed a starting point for the debate on the social impact of participation in the arts in the UK.[8] His research claims that the functioning of art in the social domain starts from the fact that participation in the arts is an effective route for

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[5] Research into the differences is necessary, but falls outside the scope of the present research. However, the main difference between Western and non-Western audiences appears to be that cultural activities for migrant communities are far less separated from ordinary life than those in Western tradition (see Van den Hoogen and Van den Berg, 1997). This may be true of the institutionalized art world, but the vehement defence of aesthetic experience as part of ordinary life, as voiced by Shusterman (1992 and 2000), leads to the conclusion that the differences are not as prominent as they are sometimes thought to be.

[6] In the policy document of Groningen (2000a and 2000b), the issue of cultural diversity is described as an issue of under-representation of specific groups when the policy-makers claim that youth culture is being denied access to the official cultural institutions. This demonstrates how cultural diversity and under-representation can be regarded as an issue of access to cultural institutions.

[7] These sub-cultural events have been documented in films like *Paris is Burning* (1990) by Jennie Livingston.

[8] Matarasso himself describes the study as a first endeavour into the *terra incognita* that is the evaluation of the social impact of participation in the arts (Matarasso, 1997 p. iv)

personal growth. This kind of approach does dovetail with the view taken on aesthetic experience in this research, in which personal development is an important function of aesthetic experience at personal level. Therefore, in developing a theory of arts' functioning in the social domain, Matarasso's work should be included. It is important to analyze whether or not the social impact of the arts upon audiences (as is the topic of the present research) and participants (which is the topic of Matarasso's research) differs. Indeed Matarasso refers to this difference.

> There is an important difference between the experiences of participants in the arts and those of audiences; the impacts described in this report relate principally to the former. This distinction is significant because participation is the main interface between the arts, volunteering and community activism. Some (but, (…), by no means all) of the social impacts described in this report arise as much from people taking an active part in their own developments, and in the lives of their communities, as from the arts themselves. (Matarasso, 1997, p. 74)

This implies that city administrators who seriously aim at social impact should focus on participatory arts projects (community arts and amateur arts). Nevertheless, Matarasso leaves room for social impact to occur with passive participation as well. Even more so: he argues that despite the variety of the projects studied, there appeared to be no specific difference to the social impact found. Thus he argues that 'community arts are not more "effective" than amateur or professional arts' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 75). This conclusion seems rather dubious as the projects studied were mostly designed and executed with a specific place and participants group in mind. Thus the projects relate to the lives of the participants more easily than the 'regular' professional performing arts events and most amateur arts activities do. It can therefore be assumed that:

(a) The magnitude of the social impact at personal level of attending performing arts is more limited because, whereas participatory projects typically span a longer period of time, attending performances only lasts for the duration of the performance.

(b) As participatory projects can target pre-existing social groups (such as regular visitors to a youth centre) the social impact at group level may be greater because the group members remain in contact after the project, while audiences attending the professional performing arts usually disperse after the performance is over.[9]

(c) The magnitude of the social impact of attending the performing arts is smaller because some of the benefits reported by Matarasso depend on people taking an active interest in their surrounding community, which cannot be automatically said of performing-arts audiences.

(d) Participatory activities train certain capacities in the participants (e.g. they improve oracy, see McDonnell and Shellard, 2006) which non-participatory events do not address for audience members.

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[9] One might venture the notion that the fact that community arts projects are usually geared specifically to the lives of the participants may give them greater opportunity for identification with what is being performed, and thus they have a greater impact than 'regular' performances. However, this kind of assumption is dangerous because the aesthetic properties of a regular professional performance may attract specific audiences that are as eagerly 'receptive' towards what is being presented as participants in a specifically designed project.

Bearing these differences in mind, Matarasso's work can be used to develop a theory for the functioning of art in the social domain (see Section 9.4.2).

9.3.3. Health and Well-Being in Relation to Cultural Policy and the Social Domain

Another issue concerning social policies is the health and well-being of citizens. People who are healthy and who feel well can participate more easily in society. Health, specifically mental health, has already been associated with aesthetic experience (see Chapter 6). Even though health has not been mentioned in the cultural policy documents, the relationship between participation in culture and health has been discussed in cultural sociological literature.

Matarasso mentions health and well-being as one of the categories for outcomes of participatory arts projects. With this he means that such projects can support vulnerable groups in the community, that personal empowerment can ensue, and health can be promoted through education. He regards this category as 'neither a primary issue, nor a common experience among participants. Discussion suggests that the keyword here is "feeling": people were not thinking of physical cures, but an improved sense of well-being, often related to increased levels of confidence, activity and social contact' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 64).

Madden and Bloom investigate how the functioning of culture and art, which occurs at the affect level, influences psychological and physical health. They review literature on arts therapy in order to understand the relationship between artistic creation and human affect. Their article thus focuses on creation rather than reception, although they claim that this type of approach does not conflict with promoting attendance at art events (Madden and Bloom, 2004, p. 137). Their analysis is relevant for the present research, although it should be born in mind that arts therapy is usually directed at people who are in a problematic situation because of physical or mental health disorders. The present research focuses on the benefits of arts attendance for the general public.[10] Two conclusions stand out.

First, artistic activities are viewed as healing and cathartic in themselves. The work of Csikszentmihalyi where he describes 'flow experience' is quoted to support a link between artistic processes and human affect. In the model of aesthetic experience described in Chapter 6, this type of link has also been found, inasmuch as participation in the arts helps in the sublimation of affects and needs and the fulfilment of such sublimated needs. Madden and Bloom indicate that a lot of research has been done into the effects of music on mood, and on the direct physical manifestations of artistic therapy, again pertaining to music, as it may be applied to produce tranquillity across a variety of physiological indicators, such as neurological activity, blood pressure, peripheral temperature, heart rate, respiratory

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[10] The authors indeed acknowledge this fact and suggest (1) that the effects of arts activities on clinical populations work through the same mechanisms as for non-clinical populations, and (2) that not all effects that are found for clinical populations will occur for the general population.

influences and synchronizing respiration, and other motor activities. For the plastic arts, there is research in such physiological indicators as well (*ibid.*, p. 140).

Second, artistic activities in art-therapy literature are considered as clinical tools for diagnoses, prognoses and treatment. Artistic creation is seen as a means of self-communication,

> of tapping into the 'inner self' or of expressing emotions and thoughts that may be otherwise inexpressible. (…) Artistic processes are consequently portrayed as facilitating the emergence and release of inner experience and feelings and the breakdown of defences (…) Both conscious and unconscious expressiveness can thus be heightened, which has a number of effects. Self-expression is strongly linked to emotional health (…). Greater expressiveness facilitates the re-experience and resolution of inner conflict (…) and may promote personality integration by harmonizing a subject's perception of fantasy and reality, their unconscious and conscious, and their inner self and outer world (…). Greater expressiveness is also seen as a bridge to improve self-esteem, self-empowerment and self-respect. (Madden and Bloom, 2004, p. 139)

The same processes are indicated as have been discussed in the previous sections and Chapters 6 and 7 because the concepts described here for arts creation can be closely linked to the concepts linked to aesthetic experience in this research.[11] Once again affect-regulation is mentioned as a function of artistic activity. Furthermore, the experience of inner conflict (which may lead to adjusting one's schemes of perception) and the experience of already established identities are also mentioned. This last aspect needs some further elaboration: Blokland (1995) has argued the right to cultural amenities as a means of widening one's perspective on life in order to develop a personal identity. In much the same vein, Matarasso (1997) uses the concept of self-expression as a means of emancipation of underrepresented groups.

In short, Madden and Bloom conclude that a brief review of art-therapy literature supports the claim that the affective responses to art assist in furthering psychological and physical health, and thus may have a social impact. They do not specify this social impact explicitly but the following impacts can be found in their overview of literature:

1. Art helps us to 'feel better' (Madden and Bloom, 2004, p. 140) because it reduces stress and anxiety (or – such is the case with popular music – it induces stress and excitement which in turn can be followed by a sense of release, which is the active involvement Shusterman and Van Stokkom have put forward as a viable way to experience art). Thus the effects of aesthetic experience in the area of health relate to the non-artistically aesthetic function of sublimating needs and relieving sublimated needs which helps one to feel better. The active involvement that occurs during aesthetic experience is key here. Feeling well is thus an intrinsic function of aesthetic experience which should be included in a theory of the functioning of culture and art

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[11] For instance, harmonizing a person's perception of fantasy and reality within the framework of this research certainly rings a bell. In clinical settings, the fact that aesthetic experience may invite a person to use his or her power of imagination in order to compare their fantasies to actual life appears to be a helpful mechanism. For non-clinical subjects, arts participation may be a 'normal' way to reconcile fantasy and reality. Thus, their participation in aesthetic activities may be a partial explanation for why they are not clinical patients.

in the social domain. However, from the discussion of arts-therapy literature, it has not become clear which further outcomes can be related to this function.

2. At the same time 'feeling well' can be the result of the extrinsic values of performing-arts attendance. The break from routine, which attending performing arts provides, also relieves tensions. The effect here can be achieved through other leisure activities as well, such as dining out and holidays.

3. Art is a means of self-expression and self-representation. Artistic creativity can be a means to develop and promote identity, and, through this, may be a source of empowerment for the individual or group participating in the performing arts. This is an aspect stressed by Blokland (1995). Matarasso (1997) also suggests that empowerment is an important function of artistic activity. However, this effect is mostly related to participatory arts. It will be taken up in Section 9.4.

9.3.4. City Regeneration

As described in the previous chapter, the regeneration of (areas in) cities is an aspect of cultural policy. Revitalizing (part of) a city involves strengthening its economic performance, and cultural interventions can be instrumental in this. Of course, social policy includes reinforcing the economic position of underprivileged citizens. It was established that there is a link between the self-awareness of city (borough) inhabitants of derelict areas and the economic functioning of such areas (Section 8.4). Thus, city regeneration can evidently be considered as a part of both economic and social policy issues. With regard to social policies, the fact that people's views on themselves and their surroundings can change is crucial, while with regard to economic policy, the influence of such changes on their economic behaviour is relevant. Therefore, city regeneration need not be studied as a separate issue in the social policy domain when developing a model to evaluate the social impact of cultural policies.

9.3.5. Summary

The foregoing indicates that the social policy domain is a wide one. Therefore it is difficult to pinpoint exactly which policy goals are being referred to. The social policy aims related to aesthetic experience range from improving the (mental) health of the population (or specific groups), cultural diversity, allowing under-represented groups scope for authentic expression, to preventing crime and promoting district revitalization. All such aims either focus on the position of people in society (such as the rehabilitation of youth offenders) or groups in society (such as cultural diversity or borough revitalization) in order to ameliorate their social and/or economical position. To make things more complicated, such aims cannot be considered independently, they are mutually related. It is easy to see how health issues and district regeneration, for instance, can be connected. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how aesthetic experience contributes to a specific social policy goal. But – as stated in the introduction to this chapter – the question can be approached from the other direction. This means that it should be ascertained from the functions that have been related to aesthetic experience:

(a) The way in which the subject perceives his or her situation within a community.

(b) The way in which the collective nature of experiencing the performing arts relates audience members to one another and to the community.

(c) The way in which these experiences may generate outcomes for the community.

This is the approach taken in the remainder of this chapter.

Furthermore, it appears that research into participatory activities can be useful for the present research, although the difference between participants and audiences should be taken into account. It has been suggested that the specific artistic functioning related to these activities may be the same, but outcomes related to participants taking an active interest in their community differ for audiences and participants.

Finally, health issues can be considered as both a non-artistically aesthetic type and an extrinsic type of functioning in the social domain.

9.4. Personal Development and the Community: Knowledge, Skills and Personal Identity

This section discusses the work of two theorists who put personal development at the centre of attention.

9.4.1. Blokland: Positive Freedom or Personal Autonomy

Blokland has published a book on Dutch cultural policy (in the broad sense of the term, thus also encompassing education policy), approaching the topic from a political scientific angle. He has introduced two conceptions of personal freedom into the cultural policy debate: negative freedom and positive freedom, or personal autonomy, a concept which he derives from the work of Isaiah Berlin.[12] Negative freedom can be described as 'the area in which a person can do whatever is within his or her capabilities without interference by others' (Blokland, 1995, p. 19). The concept of negative freedom entails that the government should intervene as least as possible. Only when the actions of individuals can cause harm to others is intervention by the government allowed. On the other hand, positive freedom, or personal autonomy, is 'a much more all-embracing and more fundamental value than its negative counterpart. It involves the capability of people to steer their lives independently, or to be master of their own existence' (*ibid.*, p. 19). Blokland argues that this conception of freedom stems from the desire to be able to make one's choices for oneself, and to justify these choices based upon one's own thoughts and purposes. In short: 'the desire to be *someone* and not just everyone' (*ibid.*, p. 20), which is the desire for a personal identity in the sense that has been used in the present research. Both liberal and socialist political 'families' share the humanistic cultural ideal of personal autonomy or positive freedom (*ibid.*, p. 20; see also Boomkens, 2008 as discussed in the Introduction).

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[12] Blokland himself uses the word 'autonomy' and not 'personal autonomy'. Here 'personal autonomy' is used to distinguish from the discussion of art's autonomy in Chapter 5.

According to Blokland, the key problem for cultural policy is the dilemma between positive and negative freedom. People will choose the cultural forms with which they have become accustomed through their socialization, but they might opt for alternatives if they knew them. But they may choose (their negative freedom) not to know these alternatives (Blokland, 1995, p. 21).[13] Two aspects are important: *self-determination*, 'when a person's actions depend on individual choices which are an expression of his identity' and *self-realisation*, 'when a person develops his capacities, talents and abilities in making "the best of oneself"' (*ibid.*, p. 257). Both are dependent upon each other. These aspects show how closely positive freedom is linked to a person's identity. Positive freedom or personal autonomy entails that a person can develop and express his or her identity through self-determination and self-realization. Although positive freedom entails 'an independent search for alternative values, ideas and knowledge (which) requires that one dares to put existing and learned conventions up for discussion' (*ibid.*, p. 259) it is clear that not everything need be doubted. One needs a point of departure in order to be able to evaluate various alternative courses of action. The existing culture, which in the model of aesthetic experience used in this research is represented in the schemes of perception of the subject, provides such a point of reference.

Thus Blokland's theory of positive freedom or personal autonomy can be related to the description of aesthetic experience in Chapter 6. It is also obvious that, within the social domain, aesthetic experience has two intrinsic functions:

- For all aesthetic experiences, it holds that the subject will experience his or her connection to the (sub)culture to which the aesthetic product belongs. This is a form of aesthetically-intrinsic functioning.[14]

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[13] Blokland writes: 'In this way, (people) must develop their capacity to judge if they want to be properly capable of making choice: they ought to learn to discern alternatives, evaluate them and to choose. To make an autonomous choice, people must also be up to date with the options. Any one who has been faced with 'popular' music his whole life long has no real choice between Mozart and Springsteen' (Blokland, 1995, p. 20). The argumentation about the ability to make independent choices is valid, but the example of Mozart versus popular music is weak. From this quote it may be implied that Blokland values experiences of Mozart's music more than those of popular artists such as Springsteen. However, it cannot be excluded that so-called popular art forms generate non-artistically and artistically-aesthetic values just as classical music does. Thus Blokland's remark can only be understood in the sense that people who are unfamiliar with the aesthetic codes of classical music might be willing to choose this type of music if they had become acquainted with it. Blokland here underpins the importance of cultural education, in which making acquaintance with various forms of aesthetic expression is crucial. He implies that people should be offered alternatives and that they should be equipped to recognize them as viable options and to evaluate these alternatives. This comes close to Bourdieu's concept of personal cultural capital. In fact, Blokland does refer to Bourdieu in this respect.

[14] From the discussion above it might be inferred that Blokland focuses on the artistically-intrinsic functioning mostly. This is not the case. He also recognises the importance of aesthetically-intrinsic functioning. See e.g. page 259 where he discusses the importance of experiencing the existing values which are embedded in civilization. In Blokland's view art is important to actively experience the justification of ethical issues in society (he here comes close to Davies' 'propositional knowledge'). Aesthetic experience does not only provide alternative visions on reality but – perhaps even more importantly – provides an active experience of the reference point against which such alternatives can be evaluated. Thus culture is an important precondition for positive freedom or personal autonomy,

- • When the experience becomes artistic in nature, the subject will be challenged to question the (sub)culture to which he or she belongs. Such questioning may lead to reinstating the dominant values of this (sub)culture, but it may also lead to rejecting these values – thus changing the scheme of perceptions – which, in turn, may lead to the person acting differently in society, thus changing his or her social position. This is an artistically-intrinsic type of functioning of the performing arts.

Blokland's theory of positive freedom fits with the description of personal development and confirms the suggestion made in Chapter 6 that social policy issues are closely linked to the intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience. This means that it can be assumed that when aesthetic experience has occurred for individuals, social development *can* follow (see Blokland, 1995, p. 275).[15] For the present research, a problem of causality exists here because the different actions of people in society may very well be attributed to their cultural participation but may also be attributed to other factors. Thus when intrinsic functioning of the performing arts takes place, the consequences in the social domain in a good case scenario can be only partly attributed to cultural participation. This means that cultural activities may not be the most efficient way to achieve social goals. Education is an important way to encourage personal development. However, cultural activities might be specifically successful with people who drop out of the regular education system. The fact that aesthetic experience occurs at the level of perception is important because this is a type of personal development that is specific to aesthetic activities. Personal development in education and journalism occurs at the level of cognition although it may, in turn, have impact at emotional and perceptual level as these forms also shape people's perception schemes.

Thus far, the discussion of Blokland's theory has merely confirmed the assumptions in Chapters 6 and 7 about the functioning of culture and art in the social domain. For the present discussion, however, a shift from the personal level to the collective level is needed. Blokland makes this shift in the following manner. In two articles (Blokland 1992 and 1994) he applies his approach to art policy. He argues that people who are personally autonomous can be considered as a collective good, because people need others in order to develop their own capacity to influence their own life in a truly autonomous way. Thus the more people that develop personal autonomy, the more others will be able to develop the same autonomy. Participation in the arts is a particularly important way to develop personal autonomy because aesthetic experience when artistic in nature enables the subject to develop

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not only to provide alternative visions on reality but also to develop one's capability for evaluating alternatives. By spreading culture one will by definition spread the possibilities for personal autonomy, though culture is not a sufficient precondition for personal autonomy (Blokland, 1995, p. 275).

[15] Note that here the societal organisation of aesthetic experience is an intervening variable within the institutional frame. Reception may be organised in such a manner that it limits aesthetic experience to specific groups – in fact it is, see chapter 5 – although it cannot be argued that the same values will never occur in non-canonised reception situations which may attract more diverse audiences.

the point of reference on which to base one's decisions.[16] Thus Blokland's theory of positive freedom demonstrates how closely the concept of identity is linked to social functioning of the performing arts. Positive freedom for individuals is dependent on the positive freedom provided by the collective. Therefore, if personal development for the individual does occur, this also has effects at collective level.

9.4.2. Matarasso: Personal Trajectories of Participants

Matarasso's *Use or Ornament* (1997) is the first large-scale research that attempts to document the social impact of participation in the arts, community arts projects in this case. In total, 16 projects have been monitored, their results (in terms of production) have been described, and participants interviewed. The research methodology rests upon the assumption that participants can articulate the benefits they experience from a project. The researchers do recognize that the outcomes are mostly intangible and specific to the circumstances of the projects, and thus may be hard to compare. Furthermore, they are aware that there is a problem of causality: it is hard to link these intangible outcomes to participation in a single project. They tackle these problems by interviewing a vast number of participants. The outcomes differ from project to project and participant to participant, and resist generalization except in the broad sense of 'changing lives'. But when one moves beyond 'the story of a young man saved from a life of crime by dance (…), consistent themes emerge' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 14). The outcomes that the participants report can be categorized around six themes, although the researchers in no way claim that these are the only relevant categories and that overlap does exist (*ibid.*, pp. 12-13). These categories are:

1. Personal development
2. Social cohesion
3. Community empowerment and self-determination
4. Local image and identity
5. Imagination and vision
6. Health and well-being[17]

The researchers regarded only the fifth category as being specific to cultural activities (they do not distinguish between culture and art). Because the research was only aimed at investigating whether or not social outcomes can be measured, no efforts have been made to further categorize the outcomes and to investigate how they can be linked to one another. It is easy to see that the categories correspond to the functions as mentioned in the policy documents, with the exception of health and well-being.

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[16] Therefore Blokland is extremely critical of Dutch theatre in particular, where hardly any classical repertoire is staged. The extreme focus on artistic renewal leads to a lack of performances which enable culturally less competent audience members to develop knowledge of theatrical traditions. (It is a matter for debate whether or not this extreme focus on experiment is still present in subsidized theatre.) Thus, they are deprived of their positive freedom to choose to go to or to abandon the theatre, whereas research has shown that knowledge of classical genres is a prerequisite to be able to follow more modern forms (Blokland, 1994). Blokland is here referring to Maas, Verhoeff, and Ganzeboom (1990) who conducted one of the most comprehensive empirical researches into the audience for the performing arts in the Netherlands at the end of the 20th century.

[17] This category has already been discussed in Section 9.3.3.

From personal benefits to collective benefits

Only categories 1 and 5 relate to outcomes at personal level, the others involve the collective level. Unfortunately, the researchers make no effort to link the outcome categories to one another. As will be shown below, personal development (here regarded as skills development) can be regarded as the starting point for the occurrence of societal impact. The researchers under 'personal development' quite specifically refer to the fact that participation in the arts widens the participants' horizons (*ibid.*, p. 16), an issue which has already been encountered in the present research. Under 'personal development' they also categorize issues such as confidence-building with regard to personal creativity, which might be considered as specific for aesthetic activities. They also mention confidence-building through the act of co-operation in a project. This is clearly a specific outcome for participatory arts projects, but may also arise from other communal activities, such as building a local children's farm.

The researchers only link the fifth category to the artistic nature of participatory art projects. 'All other effects can also be attained by good community development work or involvement in sports or volunteering' (*ibid.*, p. 56). However, this does not indicate that only category 5 is intrinsic, as defined in the present research. The researchers link many of the effects that have been described to the fact that people take an active interest in their own environment or community. Through participatory arts projects they become more actively (and more equitably) involved in local affairs (*ibid.*, p. 74). This is specific to community arts, although a similar effect can be imagined with regard to attendance at the professional performing arts. By participating in the performing arts, one (usually) adheres to the social codes that govern such activities (e.g., arriving on time, queuing to get in, listening to the music or focusing on the play or rather actively dancing to the performance). Jeannotte (2003) denotes this as 'buying in to the norms of the community' which seems a more apt description than Matarasso's.

Because personal development is the category that corresponds most with the view taken on aesthetic experience in this research, investigation should be carried out concerning whether or not the benefits mentioned by Matarasso can be divided in benefits that accrue to participants and benefits that accrue to audience members. This also involves distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes (as Matarasso does not make the distinction). The only intrinsic outcomes in personal development he mentions are the development of artistic skills and the widening of horizons.[18] The first obviously relates to the participatory nature of the projects studied. It can be assumed that, with regard to audience members, their skills in deciphering aesthetic codes will be developed when attending performances (cultural competence). However, this is not a function of aesthetic experience; it is a prerequisite for the occurrence of (future) meaningful experiences. What remains is the widening of horizons. Furthermore, under 'personal development', Matarasso mentions various

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[18] He also mentions that teachers reported the development of creativity and imagination for children participating in arts projects, but this can be summed up under 'artistic skills'.

outcomes that range from the development of organizational and social skills, extended involvement in social activities, stimulating interest and confidence in the arts, help build new skills and work experience, to promoting people's employability, etc… . These are not very specific categories; obviously there is overlap. However, they all stem from the fact that people take part in social activity; they do not relate to the aesthetic nature of the activity.[19] They relate to the fact that people take an active part in their community by participating in a communal project. These outcomes are all about the development of social or organizational skills which can be considered as typical for participatory projects. From the perspective of this research, the development of such skills is an extrinsic effect. This is not without merit entirely. Although it may be questionable as to whether or not the skills of an audience member will be developed by means of individual attendance at the performing arts, to the extent that greater employability may ensue, it cannot be ruled out that, due to the fact that attending performing arts is a social activity – which entails joining in society – attendance may lead to specific extrinsic outcomes that can be relevant for the present research.

A closer look at the category of 'imagination and vision' is necessary as well. This is the only category Matarasso regards as being intrinsic to arts projects. It is easy to link the development of *imagination* to the artistically-intrinsic functioning of the performing arts. By *vision*, Matarasso means that the art project becomes a symbol of what the community can achieve. This is specific to participatory projects, but not entirely irrelevant to the present research. The performing-arts activities can become a symbol for the cultural relevance of a city. The fact that specific performing-arts events are staged in a city, or a district, lends identity to the location. This is the same effect that arises for cities with a soccer team or putting in a bid to organize the Olympic Games. It relates to city image and identity, a subject covered in the previous chapter.

Matarasso's general conclusion is a strong defence of participatory-arts projects:

> Participation in the arts does bring benefits to individuals and communities. On a personal level, these touch people's confidence, creative and transferable skills and human growth, as well as their social lives through friendships, involvement in the community and enjoyment. Individual benefits translate into wider social impact by building the confidence of minority and marginalized groups, promoting contact and contributing to social cohesion. New skills and confidence can be empowering as community groups become more (and more equitably) involved in local affairs. Arts projects can strengthen people's commitment to places and their engagement in tackling problems, especially in the context of urban regeneration. They encourage and provide mechanisms for creative approaches to development and problem-solving, and offer opportunities for communities and institutions to take risks in a positive way. They have the capacity to contribute to health and social support of vulnerable people, and to education. (…) there is more than evidence to show that participation in the arts offers us, as

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[19] Possibly with the exception of 'providing a forum to explore personal right and responsibilities' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 14). This involves a participant questioning his or her identity, here defined as his or her position in society or the community, through the aesthetic activity. This involves challenging one's schemes of perception. However, this kind of research into one's position in society can also occur when participating in schooling; only then, the inquiry is not at the level of perception but at the level of cognition. Unfortunately Matarasso does not elaborate on what he means exactly.

people and communities, a wide and valuable range of benefits which we would be foolish to disregard. (Matarasso, 1997, p. 74)

This quote first of all makes clear how the benefits of aesthetic experience at personal level transfer to collective level. New skills that can be developed through cultural activities have an empowering effect, and promote individuals to take an active part in their community and community groups in society. However, cause and effect should be seen as interlinked here: being empowered promotes social activity which, in turn, builds confidence and thus stimulates them to take part in social activities. Thus it can be inferred that the social outcomes of aesthetic experience start from the values and functions at personal level, more precisely the development of skills:

- 'Artistic' skills which may lead to more creative problem-solving (artistic) and to connecting with one's surroundings, place and community (aesthetic).[20]
- Organizational and social skills which are not specific to cultural activities but can arise from all other forms of communal activities as well.

In short, Matarasso argues that positive outcomes of aesthetic experience do exist, and can be assessed and planned.[21] The last assumption may be true of participatory art projects because, in the design of the project, the specific social benefits for the specific groups that are being targeted can be established in advance. This is not the case for the social impact that arises for audiences from regular performing-arts activities. A further remark is important:

> One problem with management-oriented evaluations of arts projects (…) is that they usually confine themselves to reporting what happened up to the end of the project. As a result, even when they touch on outcomes rather than outputs, they do not allow for the fact that all such events are part of a sequence, affected by what occurs before and after. A positive outcome can easily become a negative one as a result of subsequent events. The greater the impact of a project, especially in terms of empowerment and raised expectations, the greater the potential for things to turn sour if promises are not delivered. (Matarasso, 1997, p. 70)

This refers to the problem of causality that has already been encountered before. The effects of a challenging experience may not be lasting. Matarasso points to the fact that this also holds true for extrinsic effects, such as the building of confidence through working together on a project. This implies that measuring the effects is difficult, not only because of the question as to how the effects should be measured, but also when: immediately after the

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[20] The use of 'artistic' is problematic. Matarasso does not distinguish between 'aesthetic' and 'artistic'. Furthermore, his research is specific to participatory projects. The artistic skill developed is the use of the power of imagination. The skill of deciphering cultural codes is also developed, but this skill is merely aesthetic.

[21] He certainly recognizes that this is not always the case. Not all community arts projects are planned and executed carefully and professionally, and accordingly fail or underachieve. From the research methodology used, it can be inferred that good project designs include a description of which effects are aimed at whom and how such effects can be evaluated (see Matarasso, 1997, p. 88). Furthermore, it should be recognized that the social impact of participatory arts projects is one of many factors that influence people's lives. Moreover, the effect may be negative for the participants: they can experience personal costs, the relationships of their existing social network may be put under pressure, for instance, especially when their lives do change (*ibid.*, p. ix). Such negative effects should also be considered when examining the impact of non-participatory arts projects.

performance or later on when such effects might have come to fruition but also might already have turned sour? As a result of such problems, Matarasso tried in later publications to develop an index to evaluate the culture of a community (see Matarasso, 1999), arguing that the effects should be measured at community level rather than an individual one.

Four observations conclude the discussion of Matarasso's work:
- The intrinsic functions that can be deduced from Matarasso's research coincide with the description of aesthetic experience in the present research.
- Though the societal outcomes of aesthetic experience can be assessed, a problem of causality exists: it is hard to determine when, where and how these effects should be measured.
- The development of organizational and social skills is important in evaluating the outcomes of aesthetic experience in the social domain. These outcomes are a type of extrinsic functioning.
- The development of personal skills (both intrinsic and extrinsic) translates into wider social impacts as people and communities become empowered to take active part in their society. Especially the artistically-intrinsic functioning is relevant here as it entails a change in perception schemes, in this case, a change in the self-perception both of the individual community members and of the community as a whole as a result of the development of their perception. Their heightened capacity for imagination may lead them to connect better to society in general, as they recognize better futures for themselves and their community and act differently to seize these opportunities.[22]

9.4.3. Summary
The conclusions to be drawn from Blokland's theory are quite straightforward. His conception of positive freedom is concurrent with the description of aesthetic experience when the background against which an individual weighs alternatives is considered to be the schemes of perception of an individual. Developing the schemes of perception and exercising the ability to change these schemes – as is done when invoking the power of imagination – will lead a person to a more autonomous position in society. Note that not only the artistically-intrinsic type of functioning is at stake here: aesthetically-intrinsic functioning is also important, for it enables a person to experience the preconceptions of the culture or community to which he or she belongs. Aesthetic experience is an important way to develop one's skills of perception and thus the ability to evaluate alternative courses of action. Furthermore the chances of for developing personal autonomy increase when one lives in an environment of people who are more autonomous themselves. Thus aesthetic experience is important in developing personal identity.

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[22] Note that this only applies when things go right. When things go wrong, artistic functioning may lead a community to perceive (i.e., to feel and possibly understand) the hopelessness of their situation even better, thus in fact limiting the possibilities for change.

Though Matarasso does not distinguish clearly between what in this research has been called 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' outcomes (nor between artistic and aesthetic), his work is nevertheless helpful. The transition from the personal level to the collective level occurs through empowerment of individuals who, through cultural activities, develop aesthetic skills on the one hand and social and organizational skills on the other. Skill development leads to empowerment, which helps social activation, which feeds skills development again. Note that at least a large part of the skills development can occur through other than cultural communal activities, or does not depend on the cultural or artistic nature of the activities. The fact that the activities are a social activity occurring at the level of a specific community seems most important. Aesthetic activity can be seen as a way to 'buy in to the norms and values' of one's community and society, but so can sports events or reading a newspaper. However, what is specific to cultural activity is that it is a way to critically asses such norms and to be involved at the level of perception. Therefore, it is specifically suited to developing one's identity, although lasting effects on the social level are dependent on more than only cultural activities. The effects can turn sour if they are not built upon.

9.5. From the Personal to the Collective Level: Community Identity and Development

To make the transition from the personal to the collective level, two types of questions are relevant. The first is how a performance influences the identity of audience members; i.e., the perception scheme in the performance challenges the perception scheme of the spectators. Thus development of individual audience members is realized. The next step concerns the way in which this personal development becomes relevant for the collective level of the community and for social policy issues most specifically: community revitalization, which McCarthy et al. relate to social capital theory. This will be researched in this section. However, there is a second question within this domain that is relevant. This question deals with the relationship between de identity that is present within the performance (i.e., it is encoded in the aesthetic language of the performance) and the identity of the audience *as a collective*. This is the topic of the next section where the work of Fischer-Lichte, already encountered in the first chapter, will be discussed in more detail.

9.5.1. Collective Identity: Art and Culture as Representations of Community Identity

In art philosophy, much attention is given to the disruptive power of artistic expression. Artistic creation has been described as development of the expressive materials (Eldridge, 2003). But there is more at stake than development. Madden and Bloom (2004), for instance, point to the fact that art is also about reproducing traditional forms and thus perpetuating (aesthetic) traditions. This is an important function of culture and art: the confirmation or reconfirmation of the traditions of the community one belongs to. A closer look at the relationship between audiences and the performances themselves is needed to establish what happens between performers and audiences. The process has been clarified by Fischer-Lichte (2002), who regards the history of theatre as a history of identity in which theatre is a means

for a community to become aware of itself. For this proposition, she uses the work of Helmut Plessner who:

> determined the *condition humana* as the distance of the self from the self, as man's de-centred position. Man confronts his self/the other in order to form an image of his self as an other, which he reflects through the eyes of another, or sees reflected in the eyes of another. Or, to put it another way, man finds himself via the detour of another. (…) In this Plessner describes the basic anthropological condition as a fundamentally theatrical one (…). The actor seems to be a magical mirror for the spectator, reflecting the spectator's image as that of another, that is, the image of another as his own. (…) Through actions carried out by the actors with their bodies and language, and through the role being played, the actors stage aspects and scenes which the spectators perceive and understand as representative of society in terms of their identity as members of a particular society and as themselves. This means that it is only the distancing of man from himself (…) which allows him to cultivate his identity in any way. It follows that (…) the actor is understood to be the very symbol and embodiment of the *condition humana*. (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 2)

Thus theatre as an art form symbolizes the process of man becoming aware of himself or herself because it consists of performers distancing themselves from the collective in order to represent this collective – as a mirror for the identity of individuals *as members of this collective*. The crux of aesthetic experience thus is not merely the grasping of the identity that is being represented (in Bourdieu's terms 'deciphering' the performance, in Shusterman's terms 'understanding' it) but the experiencing of the process of distancing one from oneself. This is a unique quality of aesthetic experience which it does not share with other social activities, such as sports, journalism and science. These activities can also influence one's self-image and thus eventually one's identity: one's identity is influenced by means of developing skills (e.g., logical reasoning, physical abilities) which may lead a person to feel more secure in a variety of social situations. But only aesthetic experience makes a person aware of this development of identity. Thus, the performing arts can be a very effective route to social change because it has a liminal quality (like *rites de passages*) where someone or a group is first separated from everyday life and social milieu, then experiences a liminal phase, a phase of transformation 'between all possible states', and then is reintegrated into the community, welcomed and explicitly confirmed in his or her identity (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 3).[23] Thus, for Fischer-Lichte, the functioning of performing arts in the social domain

> is (…) to be understood as an integrated and integrating element of social reality, changes in which it can decisively influence by a permanent dynamization – for example, by offering a critique of the current concept of identity or by proposing alternatives, perhaps even by initiating them. Since theatre is a social institution which is realized in the organization of public performances, it is guaranteed the possibility of public effect as long as its critique and new alternatives are not neutralized by the censor. (Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 5)

Thus the function of culture and art which has been defined as 'formulating critique on society' in cell A of Table 4.6 is very closely linked to the development of personal and of

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[23] It even seems possible that culture and art and not only theatre have this quality, though theatre is the only art form that symbolizes it. Fischer-Lichte recognizes that the fundamental theatrical situation is present in all types of cultural performance, a term with which she also includes weddings, temple ceremonies, etc… Fundamental is that one or more members of a community present themselves for this community as representatives of the community. This representation may even be done for members of other communities (see Fischer-Lichte, 2002, p. 3).

collective identities. However, in the above quote, formulating critique is presented by either explicitly formulating critique or offering alternatives, and seems to presuppose that the performing artists have formulated their view on society before making the performance. As discussed in Chapter 6, this usually is not the case. Furthermore, it is not only the artist-creator of a performance who is able to formulate the critique, but the audiences themselves when, for instance, they read certain intentions into a performance that were not conceived by the creator (see Section 5.1.2).

This means that (both actors and) audience members can become aware of their individual and collective identity through the performing arts. This can be considered as a first step in community development. This first step is intimately bound to the aesthetic nature of the experience, thus is intrinsic. Following the model outlined in Chapter 6, the experiencing of a specific group identity (be it an ethnic or regional identity or an identity based upon one's line of work), as embodied in the work of art through the use of aesthetic codes which can be specific to the group (such as the verbal prowess of black underprivileged city populations, expressed in rap music), is an aesthetically-intrinsic type of functioning. In experiencing the culture of the group one feels one belongs to, one's identity can be strengthened. When the identity is put up for discussion in the experience, the experience becomes artistic. This means that, by definition, strengthening and building social structures are intrinsic types of the performing arts' functioning in society, and cultural policy is thus immediately related to social policy. In policy debates, social policy and cultural policies are usually separated on the basis of the concept of artistic *quality*. Social policy aims at fostering the social climate or social quality of a city, whereas the cultural policy fosters the artistic climate or artistic quality. As a result of the (incomplete) processes of autonomization of artistic activity, social and cultural policy thus part company here. From the perspective taken in this research (where the functioning of culture and art is being related to specific values and functions of the experience and not to artistic quality as such), it should be concluded that such a separation is not necessary. Artistic quality and social quality, or rather developing social quality, can coincide.

In short, for the present research, the societal functioning of the performing arts is intrinsic when it relates to the representation and/or development of identities. Furthermore, the experiencing of the distancing from oneself – which is needed in order to examine identities, both for individuals and groups – is fundamental to the human condition and an indispensable part of aesthetic experience. This experience will add significance to the conceptions realized through aesthetic experience. When the existing identities are being put up for discussion, the ensuing functioning is artistically-intrinsic. The confirmation of existing identities is aesthetically-intrinsic. Note that this can also be attained through other interventions, such as sport. The fact that the experience is a social one or the fact that a certain geographical identity can be strengthened through regional or national teams (though never questioned) is important, as the team players represent their community *to the community*. For the present research, these extrinsic values and functions are relevant as well;

they can be useful side-effects of cultural activity. However, theatre in particular has a liminal nature that is experienced both in aesthetic experience of theatre, which cannot be said for sports.

9.5.2. The Notion of Social Capital

Around the turn of the century, the concept of social capital started to receive much academic attention (see Franke, 2005, and Field, 2008, for an overview) and later on the concept also was studied extensively in relation to public policy in the United Kingdom, the OECD, and the World Bank (see Field, 2008, pp.147-51) and also in Canada (Franke, 2005). This interest was instigated by the publications of Putnam (1993 and 2000). His article and the later book sketch the steady decline of social capital in the United States from the fifties until the turn of the century.[24] For Putnam social capital refers to 'the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). People use social capital to achieve their goals in life. They turn to their friends, neighbours and relatives for help (mending a fence, baby-sitting, etc…), comfort and emotional support. But social capital can also have more far-reaching outcomes that veer into the realm of economics: many people use their social networks to search for job opportunities. Typically this last goal is pursued through types of social relations that differ from the first. Emotional support and help in the practicalities of daily life are typically solicited from close friends, neighbours, relatives and co-workers – generally people with similar characteristics. Putnam denotes this type of social capital as bonding: ties between people that are alike. Usually bonding ties are ties with people who have similar resources at their disposal and because of the close nature of the ties they are willing to share these resources. A job search however is more successful when access is gained to resources that are not readily available to the individual. Thus, they are not likely to be available to the close friends and relationships either. Here, bridging social capital – ties between different people in different circumstances – is more effective.[25] In general, the ties with people with different characteristics are weaker and thus the other may not be as eager to make resources available, but with more bridging social capital the resources available to the individual will be more diverse and thus he or she may be more successful in goal attainment. In this respect, Granovetter speaks of 'the strengths of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973). Note that the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital need not always be clear. Most social groups mix bonding and bridging capital, they can be bonding on some characteristics and at the same time be bridging on others (Putnam and Goss, 2002, p. 12). For instance, ethnic

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[24] Putnam symbolizes the decline in social capital by mentioning the misfortunes of amateur bowling leagues in the United States. Where people once went to bowling allies as teams to play against each other, they now bowl alone, hence the title of this book *Bowling Alone*.

[25] Woolcock (2001) distinguishes three types of social capital: *bonding* (as it is used here), *bridging* (ties between similar people who are geographically distant, e.g. work relations and acquaintances rather than friends), and *linking* (ties between different people in different circumstances). However, the distinction between bonding and bridging is usually made, and the geographical proximity of people is less relevant for the distinction, although Woolcock is certainly right in assuming that geographical distance usually leads to weaker ties. However, strong and weak ties can exist in bonding and for bridging capital, although usually bonding ties are stronger.

organizations may bond on the characteristic of race and bridge differences in education levels. Both types of social capital should be invested in to gain their rewards. Hence the word 'capital' is used as in the economic sciences. Putnam identifies five reasons why social capital is beneficial to individuals and to society:

1. Social capital helps to resolve collective problems. The norms of reciprocity invite people to take part in collective problem-solving and, at the same time, the social network that sustains these norms can be used as the vehicle to implement collective action.

2. Trust reduces the costs of social transactions and thus social capital translates into financial (or economic) capital.

3. Social capital is conducive to widening the awareness that people's fates are linked and thus produces tolerance in society.

4. The social networks that sustain social capital serve as conduits for the flow of information that people use to achieve their goals, such as finding a (new) job for instance.

5. Social capital helps to cope with traumas and sickness (see Putnam, 2000, pp. 288-9).

Apparently social networks are the core of social capital. Here Putnam's theory parts company with Bourdieu who used the term earlier. Putnam is aware that his use of the term is not new, he even traces its origins as far back as 1916, when Hanifan wrote on the importance of community involvement in local schools (Putnam, 2000, p. 19, see also Putnam and Goss, 2002). He does acknowledge his debt to Bourdieu in this respect.[26] To Bourdieu, capital is something which is instilled in individuals. The major classes of conditions of existence can be distinguished on the basis of the differences in the distribution of economic, cultural and social capital – understood as the set of 'actually usable resources and powers' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 114). Thus Bourdieu defines social capital as

> the sum of the resources, actual and virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. (Bourdieu interviewed by Wacquant, reported in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119)

In Bourdieu's thinking, social capital is an asset of an individual (or a group), it implies that a person, through a network of social relations, has access to resources. For Bourdieu, this is relevant because he is interested in questions of distribution of different capitals, and thus power, in society.[27] For Putnam however, social capital is a characteristic of social relations or

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[26] Putnam also mentions Coleman as an important influence. For the sake of brevity the specific approach of Coleman will be left aside because it does not relate to cultural capital (see also Field, 2008).

[27] Besides social capital, Bourdieu distinguishes cultural capital, which has been discussed in Chapter 5, and economic capital, which should be understood as the possession of money or other forms of productive capital. Furthermore, Bourdieu distinguishes symbolic capital which is a very complex notion (see Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119) which can take any of these forms: cultural, economic or social capital. The specific of symbolic capital is that it is attributed to an individual by others. One cannot invest in it oneself. Incidentally, Bourdieu's definition of social capital cited here seems to imply that social capital is somehow a precursor of economic capital. This is no surprise as

a community as a whole. He does not analyse power relations – and thus misses out on reasons why some individuals have access to a wider variety of resources than others – but rather uses social capital to describe levels of trust in communities.[28] However, both stress the importance of social relations for gaining access to resources. In Bourdieu's definition, the resources to which an individual has access constitute his or her (individual) social capital. For Putnam, social capital relates to the social networks with their inherent norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness *and* the benefits these networks generate for both the individual and the community. His definition comprises both cause and result. On the one hand, this seems right, because it can be assumed that the one follows from the other: the more relationships, the more access to resources and the more trust; at the same time, trust and relationships can be regarded as a basis for establishing more relationships thus enlarging the networks and possibilities for its associated benefits. On the other hand, this obscures a clear picture of how social capital produces its benefits for individuals and communities.[29]

Field (2008) has reviewed the literature and policy documents that have come out since Putnam popularized the concept of social capital. He argues that, theoretically, the concept has not matured yet (Field, 2008, p. 157). None the less, the concept is valuable because it brings to social theory an emphasis on relationships and values as significant factors in explaining structures and behaviour. It proposes a focus on the meso-level of family, neighbourhood, voluntary associations and public institutions as mediating between the individual and society. Moreover, the concept combines structural elements (networks), behaviour (participation in society) and the cognitive dimension (norms) in its analysis of behaviour and society (*ibid.*, p. 160). Social capital is viewed as a resource available to individuals through networks. It therefore

> must be understood as a relational construct. It can only provide access to resources where individuals have not only formed ties with others but have internalized the shared values of the group. For this reason, it is important to treat the concept as a property of relationships (Field, 2008, p. 161).

Thus Field integrates the visions of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam and, with an emphasis on shared values of the group, also incorporates what Jeannotte (2003) has denoted as 'buying into' the institutional rules. She has tried to link the concept of cultural capital as it has been developed by Bourdieu to the development of sustainable communities. Because of

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Bourdieu holds that all forms of capital can ultimately be converted into economic capital (e.g., objectified cultural capital attained by a university diploma usually 'translates' into economic capital through the ability to gain access to higher-paying jobs). Bourdieu is not very precise in how one form of capital can be transformed into the other.

[28] Although Putnam does argue that 'social capital is accumulated most among those who need it least' (Putnam, 2002, p. 415).

[29] Furthermore the inclusion of trust in the definition of social capital obscures measurement methods to track the phenomenon. Because trust is a contextual variable, it influences the extent to which individuals are inclined to rely on social network members to obtain a certain resource, as opposed to mastering a certain skill oneself (which means using individual capital) or using resources that are institutionally available, e.g. through government agencies and social security (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2004, pp. 202-3).

lack of precision in her definitions, her article does not shed a new light on the matters discussed here. However, she argues that

> cultural participation helps to connect individuals to the social spaces occupied by others and encourages 'buy in' to institutional rules and shared norms of behaviour. Without this 'buy in', individuals are unlikely to enter into willing collaboration with others and without that co-operation, civic engagement and social capital – key components of social cohesion – may be weakened. (Jeannotte, 2003, p. 47)

This 'buying in' to the institutional rules and shared norms of behaviour is obviously an important first step in community development. Aesthetic experience can be a first step to acknowledging that one indeed sees oneself as part of a certain community. The focus of further research into social capital should therefore be the relationships and the shared values that can lead to benefits both for individuals and communities.

A further criticism of Putnam is that social capital cannot be regarded as positive everywhere and anytime. It also has a dark side, for the existence of tight intra-group social capital may work against the existence of strong ties at wider community level (Field, 2008, p. 75). In other words, bonding social capital in particular can be exclusionary in its nature and thus produce negative effects for society. This criticism is not entirely justified, for Putnam himself devotes an entire chapter to what he calls 'the dark side of social capital' (see Putnam, 2000, chapter 22). None the less, his account of social capital and his obvious concerns about its supposed demise do focus on the positive side of things. His first effort seems to have been to document the decline of social capital in the United States (in *Bowling Alone*, 2000) and other Western democracies (in *Democracies in Flux*, 2002). Rather than analysing the dynamics of social capital at work in society, his efforts have been to describe changes in social capital. His main empirical evidence relies on what can be called formal social capital: records of memberships in social institutions such as parent-teachers associations, sports clubs (amongst which the exemplary bowling leagues), unions and political parties and in declining levels of trust. Rather than declining levels of social capital, this may only be documenting a change from formal forms of social capital to looser forms (informal) that suit people's current needs better. In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam already rectified his stance by showing that membership of organizations that are less demanding is rising. For instance, Greenpeace solicits memberships through mailing rather than through personal contact. 'Newer forms (of social capital, QLvdH) may be more liberating but less oriented to solidarity – representing a kind of privatization of social capital' (Putnam, 2002, p. 412).[30] Furthermore, in the conclusion to *Democracies in Flux*, he argues that traditional formal associations, such as unions, political parties and churches, are aimed at alleviating social inequality and differences in social capital. The new social associations that have replaced them, such as sports associations and the environmentalist movement, are more homogenous in composition and attract mainly the higher-educated, younger and middle-

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[30] In no way does Putnam present a definite answer here. In sociology, this issue is known as the 'community debate' in which the question is raised as to whether or not the loss of formal social ties is compensated by the gains in informal ties and proliferation of impersonal contacts through internet (see Völker, 2005, p. 12).

class social strata. Thus changes in formal social capital do indicate a decline in bridging forms of social capital (*ibid.*, p. 415).

The most important criticism levelled at Putnam is the circularity of his definition. Cause and effect are part of the definition of the phenomenon. The relationships between the elements of the definition – social networks, norms of reciprocity and trust – are not clear. Which causes which? Field argues that trust should be regarded as an effect of social capital rather than as a constitutive element of it, as Putnam holds. Furthermore, the theory does not make clear how social capital can be built and sustained (Field, 2008).[31] Nonetheless the concept is important for the present research because of its considerable popularity in policy research (see Franke, 2005) and because it has been used in arts advocacy specifically (see McCarthy et al., 2004, discussed in the next section).

Field argues – like Putnam – that policies to increase social capital in society should focus on building bridging kinds of capital. However,

> building bridging social capital may prove a greater challenge than at first appears. After all, the capacity to co-operate across weak bridging ties rests very substantially on people's *ability* to deal with others who are not similar to themselves, and who therefore bring resources that are not otherwise easily available from close connections. People involved for the first time in extended contacts with bridging ties may need to learn a 'command of variety'. A study of dining out among British businesspeople showed that the 'cultural omnivore' was able to draw on more sources of conversation in order to build wider networks and thus benefit from a wider circulation of knowledge. (Field, 2008, p. 153, italics QLvdH)

This quote is of interest for two reasons. First, it is claimed that, although bridging social capital may be harder to build, the rewards it brings to the individual and community may be substantial in terms of access to resources hitherto unavailable.[32] Second, a 'command of variety' may be interpreted as a 'wide mental scope', an asset of individuals that can be built through aesthetic experience, more specifically when the experience is challenging. The artistically-intrinsic value of testing one's views and insights thus is directly linked to generating bridging social capital.[33] All in all this suggests that clues for measuring the

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[31] Further criticisms are less convincing: Field argues that Putnam pays no attention to the influence of politics on social capital and that he ignores the fact that our common withdrawal from civic involvement is an active choice rather than something resembling a natural catastrophe befalling us. However, Putnam does provide reasons why civic involvement declines: pressures of time and money, especially in two carrier families; suburbanization, which resulted in sprawl and commuting, and electronic entertainment (television) and the privatization of leisure time and generational change (see Putnam, 2000, chapter 15). He also mentions political influences on social capital in contemporary democracies (Putnam, 2002), but his analysis here is hypothetical.

[32] Concurring with Granovetter's (1973) argument.

[33] It is not unusual to connect social capital to aesthetic experience in this manner. Putnam himself devotes attention to the arts in *Bowling Alone*, where he states that besides the fact that 'art manifestly matters for its own sake (…) art is especially useful in transcending conventional social barriers. Moreover, social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely aesthetic' (Putnam, 2000, p. 411). However, he does not elaborate the point as has been done in this chapter, and thus he seems to agree with policy documents that classify the social functioning of the arts in society as purely extrinsic. He goes on to enumerate a host of community and outreach art activities by American cultural institutions that 'produce great art, but all of them produce great

effects of aesthetic experience may be found in the efforts to measure (changes in) social capital. The literature on social capital will therefore be used in part IV of the research to develop measurement instruments for the functioning of culture and art in society.

9.5.3. Community Development: Building Social Capital through Aesthetic Experience

In 2004, RAND Corporation published a study of the benefits of the arts which was commissioned by the Wallace Foundation (McCarthy, et al., 2004). The study reviews a vast number of American and several European studies on the benefits of the arts. The reviewers conclude that the arts advocacy debate has focused on the instrumental benefits of the arts (both economic and social functions) rather than on the intrinsic benefits.[34] They have produced two models to describe the effects of the arts at personal and social level.

Instrumental benefits

| Improved test scores | Improved self-efficacy, learning skills, health | Development of social capital |
| | | Economic growth |

Private benefits | **Private benefits with public spillover** | **Public benefits**

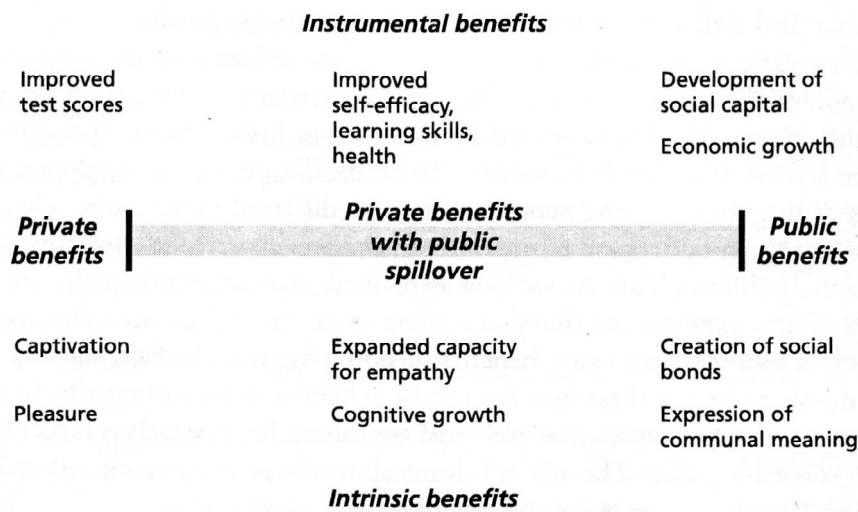| Captivation | Expanded capacity for empathy | Creation of social bonds |
| Pleasure | Cognitive growth | Expression of communal meaning |

Intrinsic benefits

Figure 9.2 Framework for understanding the benefits of the arts
(reprinted from McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 4)

They relate the functions of art in society (they use the term 'benefits') to aesthetic experience (they use the terms 'artistic experience' and 'participation'). Although they do not discern between non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values and functions, their approach resembles the approach of this research. They distinguish between private and

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bridging capital – in some respects an even more impressive achievement' (*ibid*., p. 412). The fact that his enumeration only includes community arts and specific outreach programmes by professional institutions warrants the question as to whether or not the social functioning of performing arts in society is more easily demonstrated for these types of activities rather than for the 'regular' programming by professional theatres for the general audience. See Section 9.6.3.

[34] Furthermore, the researchers claim that the empirical evidence on art's functioning in society (including economic functioning) is lacking, specifically for the instrumental functions. First, there is the problem of causality; many studies do not specify how the claimed effects are produced and how they relate to different types of arts experiences. Second, there is the problem that many studies do not account for the fact that the benefits found can also be attained through other than cultural activities. Furthermore they question the methodological and analytical techniques used in the studies (McCarthy, et al., 2004, p. 68).

public benefits on the one hand and intrinsic and instrumental benefits on the other (see Figure 9.2).

The words in the lower part of this framework – which the researchers regard as the intrinsic benefits of aesthetic experience – can be easily related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience as described in Chapter 6 and 7 of this research. Their approach adds two notions to the present research:

1. There is a sphere between private and public functioning of the arts where the two overlap. This sphere consists of private benefits that have public spill-over effects. Here the transition between personal and societal functioning of the arts is made: functions that occur for the individual are of value to society (such as cognitive development which, in this research, has been identified as development of schemes of perception).[35] Thus, functions of aesthetic experience at personal level are values of aesthetic experience at societal level. These values lead to subsequent functions on societal level: creation of social bonds and expression of communal meaning. These two can also be related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience as described in Chapter 7. Affirmation of one's identity and establishing social structures is the same as the creation of social bonds. The expression of communal meaning is the collective mirror of a value of aesthetic experience, as identified from the perspective of the artists: expressing ideas and perceptions. Thus it also relates to the representation of community identity as discussed in the previous section: cultural activities stimulate not only individuals become aware of their identity (which is part of cognitive growth), but communities as a whole experience this too.

2. There is a transition from the private and public intrinsic functions to private and public extrinsic functions. The researchers have not focused on these linkages because, in their view, arts advocacy should not be based upon these instrumental benefits. However, they suggest that there is a link. It can be assumed that the higher test scores, improved self-efficacy, learning skills and health at least partly result from the cognitive development of subjects. Furthermore, it is easy to imagine that the expanded capacity for empathy leads to the creation of social bonds which might lead to further instrumental social benefits.

In the appendix to their overview, McCarthy et al. do discuss theoretical research into the linkages mentioned under 2. From literature in those disciplines that examine learning and behavioural change at individual level and social and economic change at community level, they developed a model for community revitalization. The model is represented in Figure 9.3 and can be described as follows:

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[35] See McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 77, where they discuss the learning process as a process of synthesizing what one experiences into scripts or schemata. 'These scripts not only provide a framework within which to make sense of particular pieces of information or experience, they are also modified when that information or experience does not fit the model' (p. 77). They refer to Piaget for this, which is also an important source used by Van Maanen. Their approach therefore fits the approach taken in the present research.

The first stage involves the development of social capital. It begins with the promotion of social interaction that leads first to the formation of social cohesion through bonds and bridges and then to the formation of social capital. Social capital is both an output of the increasing social cohesion and community identity at the community level (stage 1) and an input to the second stage of the process: the development of the organizational and leadership skills that seem to be required for building successful community coalitions and other forms of more structured collective action. The final stage of the process, community revitalization, requires a more advanced form of collective action entailing sustained intergroup co-operation and more intense and long-term forms of civic engagement, and involves economic and political as well as social processes. (…) Significant social benefits can be recognized at each stage of the process. Each stage is important in and of itself, and one stage will not necessarily lead to the next (nor necessarily should it); but each stage must be built on the stages beneath it. (McCarthy et al., 2004, pp. 86-7)

It seems that aesthetic experience can aid in the first stage of community development by promoting interaction amongst group members (attending the performing arts is, in itself, a social activity that links members of a group to one another – which is an extrinsic function of aesthetic experience), by representing personal and community identities (and thus strengthening them and instilling them in group members – which is an intrinsic functioning of aesthetic experience) and promoting social cohesion (through the strengthening of existing group identities or questioning of such identities). Bonding ties are created between community members both when their community's identity is being represented and affirmed (when the experience becomes artistic) and when the community's identity is being questioned. Bridging ties are created when the audiences (or participants) of cultural activity come from various backgrounds and present their community's identity to one another or represent an altogether new but common identity. It seems that, in both these cases, the experience immediately becomes artistic in nature, for the experience forces one to question one's identity.

Figure 9.3. Model of the theory of community revitalization
(reprinted from McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 87)

Figure 9.3 sheds light on how (individual and communal) aesthetic experiences can contribute to developing sustainable communities and promoting collective action. Four issues should be recognized:

1. Aesthetic experience does not necessarily result in strengthening social cohesion. It can question existing social structures when the experience becomes artistic in nature. However, through questioning them, social bonds can be strengthened as well as weakened.

2. Aesthetic experience is not the only factor in making collective action happen. Much more is needed, such as the development of organizational and leadership skills. Such skills can be developed through the collective activities of specific groups. Thus, they can be regarded as the specific result of community arts; in fact they frequently are seen as such (see Matarasso, 1997). None the less, in order for organizational and leadership skills to develop, the collective action from which they accrue need not be aesthetic in its nature. Other types of activities, such as sports or residents' meetings in urban housing projects, can be just as successful. This means that the second stage is not linked to the aesthetic nature of cultural activities. These functions thus are extrinsic.

3. The specific nature of aesthetic experiences is that they operate on the level of perception. Thus they are specifically prone to occur in the first stage of community development because this is the stage where individuals relate themselves to certain groups. Particularly in a situation where bridges are needed to strengthen social links, the arts can offer an effective playground, for – when generating *artistically intrinsic* values – they are conducive to examining perceptions, an activity which is needed to form bridges. Thus, rather than establishing social connections themselves, aesthetic experiences seem to create the capacity of individuals to connect to others by strengthening their existing identities as a basis for responding to others in a more open way.[36] Furthermore, subjects can widen their mental scope or capacity for empathy through aesthetic experiences that involve the use of the power of imagination.

4. The process described has a long-term perspective. This means that extended involvement in the arts by certain groups is necessary to produce collective action. Furthermore other community activities or learning abilities are needed to build on the results of aesthetic experiences. Without this, the effects can be lost or may even turn sour; matters can even be worse than prior to the cultural activity (see also Matarasso, 1997). Thus it is not possible to develop a causal link in terms of empirical research to link individual aesthetic experiences to social change (defined as collective action).

This last point in particular explains why McCarthy et al. focus on the effects of cultural education. They see the benefits of the arts accruing only when prolonged cultural participation occurs. In their view, the focus of cultural policy should not be on the supply of

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[36] Putnam also holds that bonding social capital is needed to generate bridging social capital.

cultural goods but on cultural education, i.e., fostering the ability of all members of society to benefit from cultural participation.

With the first framework, McCarty et al. draw attention to the fact that the values and functions of aesthetic experience for the individual accrue in much the same manner as Blokland has identified: the development of personal schemes of perception leads a person to be able to develop a sense of personal identity that manifests itself in individual determination.[37] At the same time, there is the development of social links (bonds and bridges). Thus the personal function is a value from the collective perspective. Some of these collective values are thus intrinsic as well: when people relate themselves to groups (community identity) or question these bonds and bridges. The theory of community revitalization sheds light on the relationships between the intrinsic and extrinsic functions as they have been identified in the present research, and on the way in which such functions also occur for people not involved in cultural activities. The artistically and aesthetically-aesthetic functions of aesthetic experience are relevant in the first stage of community revitalization: the development of networks between individuals and the benefits that these networks generate for the community. In the further stages, where community organisation capacity is being built, the functioning is extrinsic, for the development of such community capacities does not depend on the aesthetic nature of the collective experiences that foster them. In short, building social bonds and bridges is an intrinsic function of the performing arts in the social domain, while building community capacity and community action is extrinsic. The causal relationship is weak here, because many other factors influence such a development. Cultural activities may lie at the beginning of such a development of communities, but other types of activities (such as regular tenants meetings) can be the root of the development as well. None the less, in the first stage, the causal link may also be weak. Behavioural change is not caused by a single activity or influence but is always the result of many influences. Aesthetic experience may have specific influence on the level of attitude of individuals because it operates at the level of perception. Therefore, when considering possibilities to measure performing arts' functioning in the social domain, two routes are open for measurement:

- Measurement of the capacity of individuals to engage in social relations.
- Measurement of the social networks of individuals present in communities and the resources to which these networks may give access.

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[37] McCarthy et al. use the term self-efficacy which 'is concerned with judgements of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with perspective situations' (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 79) as opposed to Blokland's 'positive freedom' or 'personal autonomy'. Their term has been derived from theories on individual learning and thus differs from Blokland's. Furthermore, their term is broader: it also alludes to the self-empowerment which is prominent in Matarasso (1997) as a value of aesthetic experience.

9.6. A Theory of Arts Functioning in the Social Domain

As a conclusion to this chapter, the values and functions associated with aesthetic experience should be related to functions in the social domain. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, values of aesthetic experience at personal level lead to functions at personal level. The functions at personal level can have 'spill-over effects' at public level (McCarthy, et al., 2004). This means that these intrinsic functions at personal level can be regarded as values at societal level. These values at societal level may subsequently lead to functions at societal level.

9.6.1. Intrinsic Functioning in the Social Domain

The intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience in the social domain are depicted in the upper part of figure 9.4. The non-artistically aesthetic values at personal level are 'excitement due to the experience of non-present worlds' and 'empathizing with imagined emotions'. These may lead to the sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs. This function should be elaborated in the context of social policy. Because this function reduces stress and anxiety, it can be related to mental health: it leads a person to feel better. Furthermore empathizing with imagined emotions develops the skills of participants: it develops their capacity for empathy. Feeling well and improving one's capacity for empathy are aesthetically intrinsic functions of aesthetic experience at personal level. They are intrinsic values of aesthetic experience at societal level which may lead to intrinsic functions at societal level.

The artistically aesthetic values of aesthetic experience are the 'delight of the use of one's power of imagination', the 'experience of new perceptions' and the 'testing of one's views and insights'. This may lead to the artistically aesthetic function of changing one's views or insights, or reconfirming them. Examining or testing one's views and insights has also been described as widening the mental scope of the audience member. For instance, Blokland's theory indicates that a person may be able to make more autonomous choices because he or she is familiar with more alternatives than before the experience. Matarasso's story of community arts indicates that participants may feel that they are able to accomplish more than they had thought previously, thus changing their conception of themselves, changing their identity. Testing one's views and insights in the same manner leads a person to understand more positions or options.[38] Thus they can relate to other people (with different identities or schemes of perception) more easily, in other words: their capacity for empathy has been improved.

Feeling well, an improved capacity for empathy and having a wide mental scope all are important in interactions between a person and others. Thus, these intrinsic values at societal level aid in social bonding and social bridging. It can be argued that specifically the artistic-

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[38] 'Understanding' here should not only be interpreted as 'cognitive' understanding. Here understanding is meant at the level of perception, see the discussion on Shusterman's understanding-interpretation cycle in Chapter 6.

intrinsic value at societal level of having a wide mental scope aids in social bridging: crossing divides within society or between societies. However, feeling well (i.e., also feeling secure) and having empathy for others are important in this as well. Thus, there appears to be no difference between aesthetically and artistically aesthetic functioning, although it can be argued that artistically-intrinsic functioning in the societal domain is stronger in developing social bridges, and non-artistically aesthetic values facilitate this process. In addition, social bonding occurs as a result of both non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values at societal level. Social bonding (establishing social structures) and social bridging (developing tolerance in society) build up social capital. This can be regarded as the first stage in the functioning of culture and art in the social domain. From this description it can be concluded that it is correct to assume that the functioning of culture and art in the social domain is so closely related to the intrinsic nature of aesthetic experience that this functioning should be regarded as intrinsic. However, it should be borne in mind that the above only paints the sunny picture. It is easy to imagine social bonds and bridges being broken because of aesthetic experience:

- The sign languages or social customs used in the production may be unknown to diverse audiences. This can result in a part of the audience not understanding the performance, which means that no meaningful perception will take place. This may lead to a widening of social divides, although it may strengthen their mutual bond from the perspective of the part of the audience that does 'get' the experience.

- If a person's scheme of perception changes in the sense that he or she views social divides as just and correct as a result of the experience, bridging ties become even harder to forge. However, once again from the perspective of the audience member, this will be an experience that strengthens the social bonds with other members in the community he or she feels related to.

- Factors other than the intrinsic qualities of the performance may adversely influence the ensuing process. This is what Matarasso refers to the effects of participation turning sour, when the development achieved cannot be built upon because of socio-economic circumstances for instance (Matarasso, 1999). Therefore a closer look at the other factors influencing the experience is necessary, see Section 9.6.2.

- The organization of aesthetic experience in society may prevent functioning at community level. This is why attention should be paid to the organizational setting, see Section 9.6.3.

9.6.2. Extrinsic Functioning in the Social Domain

The extrinsic values of attending performing arts that are relevant in the social domain lie in the fact that it is a communal activity: one will meet other people (at least the performer(s)). Also attending the performing arts is typically an activity that involves going to a certain location, thus being outdoors. These values can immediately be understood as being socially active, and as what has been described as 'buying in to the norms and values of a community' (Jeannotte, 2003). These are functions at personal level and values at societal level. In conjunction with the effects of other activities in the community, and influenced by

the economic conditions of the community, this may lead to extrinsic functions at societal level of community organization and development of leadership within the community. This represents the second stage of the functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain. Community action and revitalization can result from this, which is regarded as the third stage of the functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain. Because other factors influence the second and third stages, these stages cannot be causally linked to aesthetic experience. Therefore, the specific contribution of aesthetic experience to the social domain is the building of social capital, specifically providing social bridges. The extrinsic functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain is represented in the lower part of Figure 9.4.

9.6.3. The Organizational Setting and Functioning in the Social Domain

The above account presents a scenario in which personal values and functions seem to translate automatically into collective values and functions. However, matters are not that simple. Two points should be considered.

First, the question of multiple identities – as already discussed in this chapter – hinders the translation of personal functions to collective benefits. The existence of multiple identities leads to a situation where there are no longer dominant identities, only many identities alongside each other. On many occasions, individuals adhere to several identities at the same time. The power of imagination in itself is necessary to navigate this contemporary condition, but this should be regarded as a personal benefit (though with public spill-overs) rather than as a functioning of the performing arts at collective level.

Second, one should look at the organizational setting in which the performing arts events are embedded in society. Performances are organized, stages are arranged and audiences are recruited within an organizational setting. Thus, this organizational setting, especially the distribution system, greatly influences the societal functioning of the performing arts. The current conditions where audience members buy their tickets individually (usually in small numbers as to go with partners or close friends) does not encourage meeting other people during the visit – although undoubtedly for some going to a theatre or concert can be a form to engage with others. However, the collective nature of the performing arts is hardly ever organized in the Netherlands. This raises the issues of how the experiences become more than private experiences, and whether or not these experiences should be contextualised in the organizational setting to encourage the transition from private to public benefits.

The community arts are at an advantage here as they are usually directed towards specific groups in society. This means that the participants will also meet one another outside the community arts activities, and thus private benefits may more easily be transferred to the collective level. Community arts have the property that they build social capital by boosting individuals' ability to engage on civil terms and by building organizational capacity. This is not a feature of the professional performing arts. This is specifically accomplished as community arts:

- create a venue that draws people together,
- foster trust between participants,
- provide an experience of collective efficacy and civic engagement,
- may be a source of pride for residents of the areas targeted (participants and non-participants) increasing their connection to the community,
- provide an experience to learn technical and organizational skills (apart from the aesthetic skills involved),
- increase the scope of participants' networks, and
- provide an experience for the professional organizations involved in setting up community arts projects, which enhances their ability to link to the community in question (Guetzkow, 2002, pp. 6-7).

Thus the conditions of community arts are more conducive to stimulating the transition from private to collective benefits. However, the occurrence of these transitions for the professional performing arts cannot be ruled out entirely.

The above might suggest that, in order to encourage functioning of performing arts in the social domain, city administrations should focus entirely on community arts activities. This is a matter for debate because the professional artists engaged in community arts will need an artistic environment of professional artists in order to develop their artistic skills. It can be assumed that artists function best when they can tap into an artistic 'biotope' in which they can go to plays, concerts and exhibitions themselves, and in which they meet other professional artists to develop working methods and ideas and ways of expression. This refers to cell A of Table 4.6: artistic development which is assumed to occur more easily with artists inspiring one another. The professional field and the community arts field therefore need each other in order to be resilient.

9.6.4. Cultural versus Non-Cultural Social Activities

A further issue is whether or not the effects described in this section can also be attained through other than cultural activities. In other words: can building social capital only be attained through aesthetic activities? As shown above, social bonding and bridging are intrinsic to aesthetic experience, thus they are part and parcel of it. However, this does not mean that other social activities, such as attending a football match between two national teams, for instance, can have similar effects. Therefore, the more apt question concerns the specific aesthetic aspect of the functioning of aesthetic experience in the social domain. This type of functioning cannot be found in other activities such as sports. Three things stand out.

- Cultural expression is, by nature, an expression of identity because it employs sign languages which are unique to certain identities. Thus cultural expression has the ability to 'represent' a certain identity, whereas sports events do not. Sport events rely on everyone adhering to the same rules of the game, which can be learned by any community, and then comparing one's ability to achieve a stated aim in accordance with these rules. The same holds for science and journalism, where reality is assessed in accordance with the same rules (in science: logic, in journalism: one

should hear all sides). In culture and art, the same rules do not apply. Here the epiphany involves the way in which the same common truths can be expressed through the use of different sign languages and codes. This is the liminal capacity Fischer-Lichte (2002) points at.

- It is important that aesthetic experience operates at the level of perception. All other forms of expression operate at the level of physical ability (sports) and cognition, excluding emotional aspects here (science and journalism).
- The only attribute that is unique to aesthetic experience is the ability to invoke the power of imagination.

These three points indicate that challenging aesthetic experiences can be powerful, especially in producing social bridges. Aesthetic experiences, because they operate at the level of perception, may be conducive to social policy aims especially when the perceptions of certain participants are at stake. But these perceptions can also be changed as a result of the development of other skills, such as the ability to work together (community organization) or cognition itself through education.[39] It is important to note that this discussion is not entirely relevant to the research question. As has been shown, the social functioning of culture and art is not regarded as the core reason to execute a cultural policy; it is considered a side-effect. This means that it is not necessary to compare the effects of cultural activities in the social domain in the same way as the effects of welfare policy. The dotted arrows in Figure 9.4 indicate that the functions can follow from the values/functions in the previous stages, but the causality becomes weaker moving from left to right in the figure.

9.6.5. Measuring Points for the Functioning of Culture and Art in the Social Domain

The last issue that needs to be investigated is where and how art's functioning in the societal domain can be measured. The foregoing discussion strongly indicates that measurement should be executed at several levels.

Level 1a: Occurrence of personal benefits that can have public spill-overs
This level actually coincides with the personal experience level in which the occurrence of aesthetic values and functions for individual audience members is researched in order to track the functioning of the performing arts. In addition, extrinsic values and functions of the experience are relevant to the research of functioning in the social domain. The following should be studied:

- Intrinsic personal development: the realization of intrinsic functions at personal level (see Chapter 7) which relates to positive freedom (Blokland) and aesthetic skills development (Matarasso).

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[39] Here the problem of definition of the term 'culture' becomes apparent. Journalism, science and sport events can also be considered as cultural activities. However, they do not generate aesthetic experiences. Although the functioning of culture and art – as shown above – is not only dependent on the artistically-intrinsic values of aesthetic experience, but also the non-artistically intrinsic values, it cannot be denied that only the artistically-intrinsic values are specific to aesthetic experience (see Chapter 6).

- Extrinsic personal development: social activation by going outside and joining in communal reception practices (Jeannotte: buying in to the norms and values of the community). Furthermore, feeling well as a result from a break from routine is relevant here.

- Personal Efficacy: as a result of both the intrinsic and extrinsic functions at personal level, the self-efficacy (McCarthy et al.) of individuals may rise, which is extremely relevant in the social domain.

Matarasso's research indicates that the personal trajectories of audience members can be traced to follow such developments. It involves recording the importance people attach to aesthetic experiences in their personal lives and relating these experiences to changes in their lives, changes which, however, may also result from other than aesthetic activities. Audience research using focus groups is therefore a required step. As it cannot be predicted when the functions on personal level will occur, longitudinal research is necessary.

Level 1b. Communal Experience
This level is closely linked to the inherent collective nature of performing-arts experiences. The experience and values realized through it may be a collective experience for all audience members present. This involves:
- The sense of belonging, created by being in a location at the same time and witnessing the same event (extrinsic).
- The sharing of the same perceptions offered in the performance (intrinsic). This can involve talking to other audience members about these perceptions.
- The representation of a community and the sense one belongs to this community (Fischer-Lichte).

This stage is influenced by the physical organization of the meeting between audience members and performance. Audience research (both quantitative and qualitative) and participative observations can reveal information on this type of functioning.

Level 2. Community organization
At this level, a 'spill-over' of effects of the performing arts from attendees to non-attendees may occur. It involves the development of organization within (pre-existing) communities and the development of social capital. As explained above, this level should be regarded as extrinsic as other experiences in both the personal life and the trajectory of the community strongly influence this type of functioning. The development of community organization can be traced through observation of predetermined communities and focus groups with community members. Changes in social capital can be measured quantitatively by researching the number of social relations and nature of these relations within communities. Measurement can occur at the level of pre-existing communities (targeted in community arts for example) and at the level of the general population, though measurement is here is more difficult (see Chapter 12).

Level 3. Community Action

This level involves a community acting differently as a result of changes in terms of the raised self-efficacy of its members, community organization, and changes in social capital. This level of functioning of the performing arts in society cannot be measured other than the economic performance of the community in question (see Chapter 8).

In summary, the following measuring points for the functioning of the performing arts in the social domain are relevant:

- Skills development of attendees
- Feeling of well-being of attendees
- Changes in personal efficacy
- Communal nature of the experience and sense of belonging
- Organizational development (of predetermined communities)
- Changes in social capital within communities or the general population

Methods to measure these will be discussed in Chapter 12.

Non-artistically aesthetic values at personal level		Aesthetically-intrinsic functions at personal level/ intrinsic values at societal level

Non-artistically aesthetic values at personal level
- Excitement due to the experience of non-present worlds
- Empathizing with imagined emotions

Aesthetically-intrinsic functions at personal level/ intrinsic values at societal level
- Sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs which leads to 'feeling well'
- Improving the capacity for empathy

Artistically aesthetic values at personal level
- Delight in use of power of imagination
- Experience of new perception
- Testing one's views and insights

Artistically-intrinsic function at personal level/ intrinsic values at societal level
- Change or reconfirmation of views and insights

which is the same as:

- Widening the mental scope
- Improving capacity for empathy

Intrinsic functions at societal level (stage 1)
- Social bonding
- Developing tolerance (social bridging)

which is:

Building social capital

Extrinsic values at personal level
- Meeting other people
- Being outdoors
- Break from routine

Extrinsic functions at personal level/ values at societal level
- Being socially active
- Buying in to the institutions, norms and values of the community
- Relaxation which leads to feeling well.

Extrinsic functions at societal level (stage 2)
- Community organization
- Leadership skills

Extrinsic functions at societal level (stage 3)
- Community action
- Revitalization

- Non cultural (communal) activities
- Economic circumstances
- Etc.

Figure 9.4 Values and Functions of Aesthetic Experience in the Social Domain