



CULTURE THE SUBSTRUCTURE FOR A EUROPEAN COMMON

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

4

CHAPTER I - CULTURE, THE SUBSTRUCTURE FOR A EUROPEAN COMMON

6

The Measure of Culture	7
Socialization	8
Qualifying	10
Subjectification	12
The Dismasure of Culture	14
Avant-garde	15
Creativity	18
The Core Business of the Cultural Sectors	21
Europe without common?	24
Politics and Culture	27
The Dismantlement of the Welfare State	28
Culture, Creativity and Art in Times of Neoliberalism	34
Autonomy of Culture	36
Autonomy of Creativity	38
Autonomy of Art	40
The Community of Culture – The Culture of Community	42
Commonism	50

CHAPTER II - MEASURED & MEASURABLE VALUES OF CULTURE

58

Cognitive effects	58
Health	59
Experiential values	60
Economic effects	61
Social effects	62
Some reflections on the relative success of measuring the value of culture	63

Foreword

What is the 'return on investment' of public funding for culture? Fierce debates rage about this question, in which both advocates and opponents of an active cultural policy take position on the basis of presuppositions and shaky claims. To give the debate more solid foundations, fifteen intermediary organisations supporting the Flemish cultural sectors (the arts, heritage and socio-cultural work) joined forces. They sent out a call for research to academics and universities. What is the core value of culture in society? Is there scientific proof of positive (side) effects or impact on other domains in society, also outside of the cultural field?

In a research report on 'The Value of Culture', Pascal Gielen, Sophie Elkhuisen Quirijn van den Hoogen, Thijs Lijster and Hanka Otte, a team of sociologists, philosophers and art scholars from the Rijksuniversiteit of Groningen, assembled a series of research results on the value, meaning and impact of the arts and culture on people within society. The research team re-framed our commission in an inspiring way. They indeed developed a conceptual framework of measurable effects of arts and culture on society and they compiled an inventory of concrete research results. But foremost, their book is a plea for placing the non measurable impact of culture in the heart of the debate. The question about the value of culture touches upon crucial issues about (the decline of) shared and common values in our society and upon the way we give meaning to our lives. The arts and culture are important building blocks of open, democratic and diverse societies. But because we have increasingly begun to see culture as a commodity, the 'communality' of culture is at stake.

In Flanders, the research report on 'The Value of Culture' nourished political debates in the run-up to the parliament elections of May 2014. Today we are presenting the translation of a new summary of this research report, in order to stimulate exchanges with different countries and also at the European level. In various countries within Europe, there is discussion about governmental funding in the arts and culture. While traditional arguments are losing potency, and the debate is continually becoming carried out more in economic and statistical terms, cultural professionals as well as policymakers are feeling an increasing need for a new discourse on the place of the arts and culture within society. This calls for a trans-boundary debate about visions, arguments and strategies. That is why we want to share the results of the Flemish research with an international audience of policy makers, researchers and cultural actors. Let us collaborate on new policy approaches in order to make the value of culture visible and to take initiatives for more cultural interpretations of policy, both at the national and European level.

Cultuurnet Vlaanderen, Circuscentrum, Demos, FARO, Flanders Arts Institute, Flemish Audiovisual Fund, Forum voor Amateurkunsten, LOCUS/Bibnet, Socius.

CULTURE

THE SUBSTRUCTURE
FOR A EUROPEAN COMMON

The Measure of Culture

Before addressing the meaning of culture for Europe it seems wise to remind ourselves of what culture actually is. The question about the meaning of culture may sound both extremely heavy and unbearably light. After all, culture is ubiquitous, which sometimes makes us forget that we are dealing with culture. 'Culture is ordinary', as the British sociologist Raymond Williams already stated in his seminal essay of the same title (Williams, 1977). This lightness sometimes obscures the deep and grand values encompassed by the concept. This is why philosophers, sociologists and psychologists have pondered the phenomenon throughout the centuries. In the twentieth century, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, as well as the philosopher Martin Heidegger and the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman reached the same conclusion: culture only emerges in the face of death. Only the awareness of our mortality makes us need culture to give meaning to our own finite lives on this planet. This may sound very profound and heavy, but it is in fact quite logical and obvious. Bauman (Bauman, 2008) at least makes this quite clear in stating that people who are aware that they are mortal will inevitably look for the sense *in* and the meaning *of* their lives. This meaning can only be afforded by others and therefore in relationships with others. Therefore culture always has a social dimension.

In that sense we can still agree with the definition given by the Belgian sociologist Rudi Laermans (Laermans, 2002) who stated that *culture is a socially shared reservoir or repertoire of signs*. In doing so we assume that this 'repertoire of signs' refers not only to a formal semiotic game of similarity and differentiation, but also to *assigning* meaning as *sense* that gives direction and reason for existence to both people and societies. Perhaps this is the most fundamental importance of culture for Europe and also the reason why Europe had better not leave culture exclusively to the free market or to the competition between cities and member states. The European project can only gain more meaning and support if it allows citizens to really assign meaning to it. It is primarily the responsibility of the policymakers at the European level to provide enough room for this assigning of meaning and to expressly encourage it.

Let us further elaborate Laermans' definition of culture and take a closer look at its various components. The word 'sign' refers to the meaning we assign to things, at least in the science of semantics, which distinguishes between signifier, signified and meaning. A further discussion of the insights of semantics is beyond the scope of this book. With regard to Europe, what matters here is that culture is about more than this formal game. Culture is all about *assigning meaning* and it tells us something about what we think is of value in life and how we view the world. Assigning meaning also assumes a *practice*. Culture is not a collection of objects; it is shaped by the actions of people. Culture is kept alive by people – by repetition, adaptation, actualization, interpretation and criticism – and is therefore continuously in development.

Socialization

The words 'socially shared' in the above definition of culture are very relevant to the debate about Europe. They refer to the fact that signs have no meaning at all unless they are supported by a collective. In other words, a number of people have to assign a relatively similar meaning to them. Culture is only viable if it has shared meanings, if it has a 'common' or communality. As Bauman too states, culture always presupposes an 'among/between': interaction among people but also between humans and objects, buildings, et cetera. When culture is understood as giving meaning to a person's life, to a group or to society as a whole, it is not surprising that it touches upon values, normative ideas and fixed customs. Culture touches upon what people think they have in common and therefore upon a community that might be called Europe.

This is why the word 'repertoire' in Laermans' definition seems more apt than 'reservoir'. The former notion expresses much more the temporal and historical nature of cultural interpretations. Within a culture, shared meanings build up in historical layers. They become ingrained as customs, familiar things and heritage, which are therefore always more or less charged with affect. So, people get used to certain customs or cultural traditions and are unwilling to let go of them. Culture is therefore always slightly preser-

vative, even 'conservative' in the a-moral and a-political sense of the word. Within a cultural community, customs and traditions are preserved and it is only because of this that there can be shared meanings and therefore communication and mutual understanding as well. Or, again, only because of this a European common is possible.

The primary role of culture then is a *socializing one*: *it helps individuals to become integrated in a specific social, political and economic order. Culture teaches people existing ways of acting and being within a particular society and in doing so it lends meaning to people's lives in that society.* This is exactly why culture enhances social integration or social cohesion. Let there be no doubt about it: it is not so much the family but rather the *culture that is the cornerstone of a society.*

All this doesn't make societies necessarily harmonious. The definition of culture applied here does not preclude the co-existence of many different cultures within a society, that can rub against each other or even come into conflict. According to some philosophers, this tense relationship is in fact typical of the common and of a dynamic culture, which may be to Europe's advantage. In a globalized world, cultures are diversified, complex and in an equally complex manner are interwoven with other cultures, which makes it hard sometimes to define the borders between them (Featherstone and Lash, 1999: 10). Communication is therefore only possible through a shared system of signs. In other words, the notion of society as multicultural or even at conflict is also based on a shared system of signs by which that society can be defined as such in the first place. Culture remains an important binding agent that makes communication possible. This is why Europe should continually invest in such a shared system of signs.

In short, we can understand culture as a *provider of meaning* both in a formal and in a deeply existential sense. It consists of a game by which people, groups and societies give meaning to their existence. That is why culture in this anthropological sense of a 'way of life' is the foundation of societies. That is also why we can speak of an economic, social, political or educational culture. All *are* after all culture and the value of culture is in the first place that it offers people opportunities in all these respects to give *value* to their lives, to lead *valuable* lives.

Perhaps some readers were not actually thinking of culture in this sense when reading the title of this book. Maybe they had club life, or the arts, or at least organized cultural production and distribution in mind. Still, it is useful to reacquaint ourselves with this basic anthropological notion of culture, all the more so because it may provide us with the most important tool for understanding the organized supply of culture in Europe as well. Because primarily in the cultural sector in the broadest sense of the word this anthropological notion of culture is used reflectively. Here one realizes that culture is not only a social matter, but that it can also shape our living together. It is also in the cultural domain that we see how people assign meaning to their lives on a daily basis and that they can only do so in relationships with other people. In other words, cultural sectors have the tools to help shape the nature of cultures and the direction in which meaning is assigned. However, up till now, very few structural instruments or active policies have been developed at the European level to include its own project in that process of assigning meaning. It is no wonder then that there is so little support for it.

Qualifying

It is important to note that the broad anthropological concept we opt for here differs from another and older understanding of culture as ‘civilization’. In that sense, culture (derived from the Latin *colere*, which means to tend, till or cultivate, as in ‘agriculture’, to ‘work’ the land) is used in a normative way: people are ‘cultured’ or not (preferably the first). This older concept of culture not only has a temporal dimension – the notion from the Enlightenment that humanity would become increasingly civilized over time – but also a clear hierarchy. As Norbert Elias wrote in his *The Civilizing Process* (1939), the assumption is that culture ‘trickles down’ from the higher classes to the lower ones. When people at court started eating with knives and forks, the upper classes would imitate this until finally it would become the norm for the entire society.

This hierarchical notion of culture is of interest because traditional cultural policy in most European countries has always taken a normative notion of culture as its start-

ing point, either implicitly or explicitly. There was 'high' and 'low' culture, and the former deserved to be promoted and subsidized. Mind you: this notion is not necessarily tied to any political colour. While conservative politics wishes to guard the culture of 'the elite', leftist politicians are keen to bring 'the masses' into contact with great art. The point is that this idea of culture as 'civilization' still resounds nowadays in both the legitimization of cultural policy and in various art and cultural reviews. The verdict of the art critic or the decision made by a jury or advisory committee are still based on a value judgement in which a distinction is made between so-called high and low culture, good and bad art, or simply between art and non-art. In the field of cultural heritage one important professional activity is to distinguish between what is supposed to be historically important and what isn't, what should be preserved, restored and maintained and what should not. Classic processes of canonization also always assume a hierarchy in culture, and over the past few decades the cultural sector especially has become very aware of the fact that this is a work of active construction.

Besides socialization, another important characteristic of culture becomes apparent here. Culture also always assumes *processes of qualification*. In a society, just as in education (Biesta, 2013), there is a continuous process of evaluation of what is deemed important or not, and even of what is of vital necessity or not. Educational programmes, instructions on how to raise children, guidance programmes and even individual coaching projects all originate in this value hierarchy. Within these qualifications it is not only determined more or less objectively what one should know and be capable of in order to be a member of a certain community (e.g., social etiquette, the level of proficiency in the language), but also what one should know and be capable of to be a good dancer, singer, writer, actor, filmmaker or sculptor. Qualification defines in relatively measurable terms the skills, knowledge and competencies that are required to be part of a culture or at least be able to function reasonably well in it. All cultures have a 'curriculum', as it were, that has to be learned in order to 'belong'. Anyone who has anything to do with education or training in Europe probably understands exactly what is meant by this qualification work. Of course this qualification work and what is needed to realize it may be different for each member state and the qualifications will very much

depend on their national histories. Any European project will therefore only be successful when it takes a variety of qualification systems into account and actually protects this diversity. One should be very wary of policies that promote uniformization and standardization, as with the 'Bologna reforms' in education.

Subjectification

In contrast to the idea of civilization, our anthropological notion of culture is based on diversity and horizontality. This is in line with a shift in cultural theory and cultural policy that took place during the 1970s and 1980s, when the emphasis was no longer exclusively on qualification and promoting 'quality' (whatever that may mean), but culture was seen as valuable no matter what. Policies became oriented towards not only the material side of culture (the conservation and qualification of cultural goods, although it remained one of the core tasks), but also towards culture as an everyday practice that took place in a domain where people simply meet.

Socio-cultural sectors also consciously develop strategies and methods to bring people together and in doing so they generate, in a modest way, certain forms of living together. Cultural sectors have important instruments to influence society. Keeping in mind the above anthropological definition of culture, this means that they also influence their economic, political or educational cultures and even the mental and physical health of their citizens. These are all after all part of a system of giving meaning, called culture. The cultural sectors have the means to consolidate certain economic, political or educational structures or, by contrast, point to alternative ways of living together. Even more so, they can effectively make these alternatives a reality.

To give a basic example: when a cooking club meets every week in a community centre or cultural centre, doesn't it at the same time teach the participants how to function within an alternative economy? To begin with, they learn recipes without having to buy a cookery book and without having to watch a cook on television. The added joy of tasting dishes together and simply being together is a free bonus. And doesn't a local library also teach that there are much cheaper ways of enjoying literature and of acquiring knowledge? In more abstract terms, is it not so that the cooking club and

the local library teach people that financial transactions can be replaced by social interactions? That there can be, besides the culture of the free market, such things as borrowing, exchanging or a mutual gift economy? But even without these local, often face-to-face relationships, Wikipedia demonstrates that we can generate our exchanges of information and our knowledge economy quite differently from how we have organized our economic exchanges up till now.

These modest examples demonstrate that many of the cultural sectors not only engage in socialization and qualification as described earlier, but also in *subjectification*. This last notion, by contrast, does not refer to integrating individuals into an existing or dominant cultural order, but on teaching them to take up a self-reliant, independent or autonomous – sometimes critical – position within that order. Socio-cultural sectors show both individuals and specific groups that they are not just ‘specimen’ of a dominant order (Biesta, 2013: 31), but that they can take up an alternative, unique position in it under their own steam. In other words, *socialization, qualification and subjectification belong to the core business of cultural players*.

The Dutch philosopher of education Gert Biesta (Biesta, 2013) sees these qualities as potential tasks for education. We use them here in a broader sense as the essential characteristics of a culture and therefore as the core activities that cultural sectors, in the broadest sense of the word, engage in. Through socialization, qualification and subjectification, these cultural sectors or players are constantly helping to design and shape a social common or community, or: they shape our *living together*.

All these domains in a society, such as the economy, politics or education, shape social interactions, but their final purpose is not the social sphere as such. For instance, the economy obviously depends on social interactions such as production relations and trade relations (and therefore on a culture) but the final goal of an economy is to produce and distribute goods that we need for living. Besides, the economy provides people who participate in the economic process with an income to buy these goods. Likewise, education naturally engages in socialization to a large extent, but it’s goal in the first place is the transfer of knowledge, and qualification. What greatly worries some pedagogues is

that after the Bologna uniformization very little attention is given anymore to socialization and even less to subjectification. (Biesta, 2013: 30-36).

This gives cultural sectors an ever increasing social responsibility for and in some fields even a monopoly on influencing the social sphere in a reflective manner.

The social sphere is their core business and they increasingly have the knowledge and methods to be active in, for instance, integration and citizenship or to initiate processes of social innovation. The cultural heritage sector also plays a central role in processes of socialization, qualification and subjectification. Many museums and other heritage initiatives reflect on existential questions such as: who am I? Why am I here? At the very least they offer information about the cultural order we, or newcomers, find ourselves in. By gaining insight into history and cultural customs these newcomers have a better grip on the social order in which they are living now. At the same time they can learn in how far their own background differs or even to what extent they intentionally wish to deviate from this background.

In other words, both socio-cultural actors and cultural heritage sectors possess the information, knowledge and methods to either confirm the existing cultural order or undermine it. They have all the means to offer, try out and implement alternatives. All of them are capable of socialization, qualification and subjectification.

The Dismasure of Culture

If cultural players would confine themselves to socialization and qualification, a culture would come to a halt. Simply put, they would only bring people into the existing order and qualify and quantify them by applying set value hierarchies. However, the socio-cultural and the cultural heritage sector and both professional and amateur arts also have the possibility to subjectify. Among other things, this means encouraging autonomous and alternative voices and make room for them. So often, besides the 'measure' of a

culture, a 'dismeasure' is also introduced. When, for instance, the socio-cultural sector reaches out to migrants or newcomers, it makes room for a different measure than the cultural measure that we are accustomed to. Depending on the methods that are developed, this sector can also more or less transform the familiar social order and allow it to mutate. The cultural heritage sector has similar capacities at its disposal, in that it can often uncover unknown histories or provide a fundamentally different look at already known ones. This may change the view that a community has of itself and leads to a 'redirecting' of its social order and culture. Occasionally the uncovered histories can be so shocking that a completely new social order is enforced. In short, just like the socio-cultural sectors, the cultural heritage actors often intentionally introduce a 'dismeasure' into the heart of the common, forcing people to give up their familiar cultural measure and adopt a new one.

Avant-garde

With regard to do this 'dismeasure' that is introduced, an interesting observation is that ever since the modern era it has become, paradoxically, desirable to deviate from the norm. Or, to put it differently, an important role in art is to break with the rule of art. To the historical avant-garde this was in fact *the* rule, if something was to be called art at all. Or, in terms of the notions we set out before: avant-garde art applied itself to the process of subjectification by continuously introducing a dismeasure within the measure of a culture. In the words of the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno:

'Great 20th-century avant-garde art from C elan to Brecht and Montale, has demonstrated the crisis of experiential units of measure. It is as if the platinum metre bar kept in Paris to define the standard length of a metre suddenly measured 90 or 110 centimetres. This emphasis on immoderation, disproportion and the crisis in units of measure is to be credited greatly to avant-garde art. ... It is as if the metre, the standard set to measure cognitive and affective experience, no longer works.' (Virno, in Gielen and Lavaert, 2009)

This dismeasure is not necessarily only aesthetic or formal in nature. It can also be political or – as Virno implies – cognitive and affective in nature. For instance, if we are made to laugh while watching a scene in a play that would perhaps make us cringe or cry in real life, we can speak of an affective dismeasure that derails the measure of our everyday cultural experience.

Although certainly not everyone in the current art world will still subscribe to the adage of the historical avant-garde, it can hardly be denied that this game with the dominant measure in a culture is an important code that keeps resurfacing. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière calls this code the starting point of modern art or of what he calls the ‘aesthetic regime’: ‘the common factor of dis-measure or chaos now gives art its power’ (Rancière, 2010: 52). The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann doesn’t limit the rule of deviation to avant-garde either. When he asks himself, within his functionalistic scheme what the true role of art in modern society is – art that is often viewed as ‘useless’ and therefore without function by society – Luhmann concludes that art creates a *sense of possibility*. ‘Nothing is either necessary or impossible’, or ‘everything that is, can also always be otherwise’ (Luhmann, 1997) is the message of art in modern society. Precisely by setting a dismeasure, art shows us that the measure of a culture is only relative. In other words, every dismeasure can become the measure, making all that was the measure before into dismeasure.

According to this view, art and culture relate dialectically, and art often questions or challenges cultural customs and traditions. Art is often disturbing because it may unhinge fixed cultural customs. This is why confrontations with contemporary artistic expressions often lead to debate and dissent, if only about the question whether something is art or not. It is this debate that has become an important aspect of the artistic domain ever since the modern age: to show that there can always be different views, opinions and interpretations and, very rarely, even different ways of living together.

In art the issue is not so much whether the alternative view is more beautiful or more interesting, or nearer to the truth, but rather about the always present possi-

bility of a different perspective. Anyone who reads a book by Javier Mariás, visits an exhibition by Michelangelo Pistoletto, attends a production of Romeo Castellucci or a performance by Meg Stuart, goes to a concert by Champ D'Action or Radical Slave or is confronted in the public space by the monuments of Thomas Hirshorn, can hardly escape the impression that most peculiar worlds are opening up here. Some visitors will be unaffected or forget or suppress the experience as quick as they can, while others will be profoundly moved. Maybe some people will even suddenly see the world they have taken for granted for so long with completely different eyes. Still others will understand that world much better all of a sudden or at least comprehend part of that world in a 'more correct' way and before.

Still, the arts are not engaging exclusively in the subjectification. Socializing and qualifying are just as much part of the cultural practice of the arts. For instance, those who wish to be convincing in the world of dance should at least be able to raise their legs to the right height – at least within a certain dance genre – and those who wish to 'make it' in the world of visual art had better subscribe to the social conventions, views and debates that are topical at any given time. Each little art world has its own social order or, in the words of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1992), its own 'art rules', which require socialization. The ticket for entering a specific art world still consists of certain behavioural codes, marked debating skills and desirable opinions, in short: a culture. In this respect art therefore is also socializing and qualifying with regard to artists and other professionals, but it can do the same for an audience.

Although art has to a large extent focussed on subjectification, it can also have a socializing function to both professionals and those who are not connoisseurs of art. Sometimes art participation confirms an identity, at other times it may profoundly influence our existence. Perhaps these are the most essential values that artists have to offer to a society. And it bears mentioning that they often work very hard at it, most of the time for a fee that is inversely proportional to their efforts. This balance is becoming increasingly conspicuous in Europe that claims to champion the core business of artists. After all, it is the artists who primarily engage with the value of creativity that is so highly regarded these days.

Creativity

This is the 'C word' that is quite unavoidable in view of the latest focal points in European policy. 'Creativity' seems to be contributing, slowly but surely, to the already existing confusion about the terms 'art' and 'culture'. Whereas, before the 1970s, the label was reserved for eccentrics, nowadays just about everybody is encouraged to be 'creative'. Isn't there something of an artist in all of us? Or, can't we simply regard the 'noble' arts as just another element of the creative industry?

It looks like nowadays creativity is the mission of every company and policy, and almost the moral obligation of each individual. If we take a closer look at precisely what is meant by 'creativity' (see for instance Florida, 2002 and 2005; Rickards, Runco and Moger, 2009) it appears at first glance to be covering the same ground as contemporary art as described above. After all, creativity is similarly associated with notions such as 'innovative', 'transgression', 'authenticity' and 'uniqueness'. In short, like art, creativity entertains the idea that anything that is, can also always be otherwise. Undoubtedly, creativity is an essential element of art. No wonder then that in everyday communication the borders between creativity and art tends to be vague.

To keep things straight, we will maintain a strict and formal attitude here: not all creativity is art, but all contemporary art is the product of creativity. The most important difference here is the finality. Artists, managers, teachers, scientists and policymakers alike make use of creativity, but their goals are completely different. As we said earlier, modern art is essentially about constantly creating 'dismeasure'. The finality or goal of all works of art is to always point out alternate possibilities. The goal of creativity within the arts is then to generate new creativity so that new interpretations and therefore new ways of expression become possible. Creativity stimulates the imagination of the public, but not least that of artists themselves as well. Each work of art may trigger a new work of art.

However, within the corporate world, politics or education – to mention but three social domains – it is unthinkable that the only goal of creativity would be creativity itself. The manager who continually introduces a dismeasure in his company will soon lose the loyalty of his workforce. The policymaker or politician who does likewise will generate political instability and juridical insecurity. The teacher who introduces a new educational method each day sends students out to float on an immense ocean of knowledge without a compass. This does not mean that there can be no creativity in the social subfields of the economy, politics or education, but that it becomes dysfunctional if it only serves creativity itself. In the economy, for instance, creativity should lead to better products or more access to markets (and preferably both at the same time). In politics it should lead to the improvement of the community and in education to a better transfer of knowledge. In other words, the goal of creativity here lies outside itself and if it doesn't serve this external goal, it is better not to be creative and to obey the 'measure' for a while.

This last statement immediately clarifies the position of creativity within our triumvirate. It is a concept that continuously negotiates between the tendency of dismeasure of art and the measure of culture. Compared to culture, creativity is revolutionary, which is why the economist Joseph Schumpeter speaks of 'creative destruction': 'that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure *from within*, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one' (2010: 73). Creativity does something similar with the measure imposed by a culture, yet it does so mainly within the measure (or modestly), making it look conformist when juxtaposed with avant-garde art.

Hence our statement: art does not simply coincide with the creative industry. There are two grounds for this. (1) Within the creative industry the economic measure of marketability is taken into consideration in advance, and/or (2) the measure is imposed by the potential for technological or organizational innovation. The dismeasure that is expected from this out-of-the-box thinking is therefore always coloured by a relatively calculable measure.

Both restrictions do not preclude that within the creative industry too some things may sometimes fall completely outside the measure and be called art. In line with the avant-garde notion of art we do not regard the creative industry as medium-specific. The fact that someone paints does not necessarily mean they are engaged in art. Being interested in pop music does not necessarily mean compliance with the imposed measure of the creative industry. Neither is the notion 'creative industry' used here to denote only technically reproducible cultural products. As in Adorno and Horkheimer's (2002) notion of 'cultural industry' we are not intent on pointing out the difference between popular cultural expressions and 'high' art. Both are, after all, subjected to cultural industrialization. Industrialization then simply means 'formatting'. It is a process in which creations are checked in advance against the law of a measure. This is why the value of creative products is mainly measured in qualification processes such as the level of virtuosity, efficiency or technological innovation. However, qualification can happen with both popular cultural expressions and with what is traditionally regarded as art. Cultural industry therefore refers to a process rather than to specific products or media. This definition makes it possible to break out of the format within what is usually regarded as 'creative industry': pop music, fashion, design, gaming etc. Vice versa, practices that are expected to break out of the format, such as producing theatre performances or organizing exhibitions of contemporary art, can just as well become 'formatted'. In other words, art too can adopt a marketable measure.

Artefacts that are produced in the creative industry are of course always cultural products. Besides having a qualifying character, they also play a role in the game of socialization and subjectification. Furthermore, they can also intervene in an existing cultural order and fundamentally transform it. We need only to think of smartphones or games to see how such creative developments have a profound effect on the design of our living together. However, as stated before, this type of product only does so within the preordained, calculable measure that is often economic or technological in nature. Whereas the impact of such developments on a culture may be much bigger than that of art, they remain within the measure of qualifyability, consumerability and user-friendliness.

In short, the creative industry definitely does transmute a culture, but in a rather restrictive way towards qualifiability and free-market culture. The latter, preconditioned restriction may provide arguments for the European Union to not simply abandon a policy on arts or make it part of, say, and all-encompassing creative industry perspective. Such a decision would narrow culture to economic culture and would impose a certain a priori measure on the arts.

The Core Business of the Cultural Sectors

For now it suffices to draw the conclusion that choices have been made and that our definitions have been made clear. However, not without explicitly stating that these definitions are constructed rather one-sidedly from a European perspective. Keeping this limitation in mind we may state that culture is the all-encompassing ‘way of life’ and that creativity (in various domains such as economics, politics, education) is capable of making changes to this way of life. It is only within the arts, however, that creativity as such can be a permanent goal in itself. This is why the dominant measure that rules the arts, paradoxically, is that of the dismeasure. Or, an important rule in the arts is that the rule needs to be broken – without any economic, political, or educational restrictions and (as we know from recent art history) even without juridical, ethical, ecological or medical limitations. Even radical physical interventions such as those performed by Orlan or tattooing pigs, as Wim Delvoye does, can be elevated to the status of art in the contemporary art world.

It goes without saying that not everyone has to agree with this, and seasoned art professionals often express doubts about the artistic status of such acts. But, as we stated earlier, this debate about art versus non-art is the very core of the art world ever since the modern age. Art as the domain where a certain dismeasure is still being cultivated, is one of the few places within modern society where just about every measure (be it economic, political, ethical or medical) can be questioned. This is the very openness that the world of fiction allows since the modern age (in democracies,

anyway). Or, as the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk says, since then artists have 'the possibility to spontaneously and triumphantly discuss any subject whatsoever' (Sloterdijk, 2011: 369). Which of course does not mean that all artists do so and that all art lovers accept this, but ever since the historical avant-garde, it has always been a possibility within art.

Art thereby certainly does not have a monopoly on introducing a dismeasure in a culture and most certainly not on the subjectifying practices. As stated, the socio-cultural sector frequently provides forms of living together that fall outside of the familiar measure and the heritage sector sometimes uncovers a history that may cause an existential crisis that touches upon our subjectivity. Although a large part of the art world has made this its central ambition through the historical avant-garde, this does not mean that the arts have the greatest impact on culture. The effects generated by a socio-cultural sector by, for instance, introducing a migrants' culture; the dismeasure of a controversial history introduced by the heritage sector; or the technological innovation that is widely distributed by the creative industry, can all generate a much larger shift within a culture. This is all the more true because (1) a certain degree of playing with dismeasure is more or less expected from the field of art, which makes it inevitable that we get more or less used to this idiosyncratic behaviour, but especially because (2) art is preferably confined to the world of fiction and is therefore seen as largely inconsequential to real life. This applies much less to the 'true story' of a history that is suddenly brought to light, to the communities of migrants that are actually on our doorsteps or to the computer games and smartphones that embellish our work, public and domestic domains (and sometimes thoroughly ruin them).

To round off we may state that the core business of cultural sectors everywhere in Europe is to design and give meaning to ways of living together. Both cultural professionals and artists, including amateur artists, are involved in society by constantly applying themselves to socializing, qualifying and subjectifying cultural practices. They may guide or accompany people into the social order that is taken for granted; at other times they may establish a hierarchy within that order and assign members of a society their specific place in it; or they may empower those same members, teach them to

claim their own place, overturn a hierarchy and, very rarely, even undermine the social order or parts of it.

We could visualize the relationship between culture, creativity and art outlined in this chapter as three concentric circles. Culture is then an all-encompassing human practice, with creative activities forming a substantial part of it in our fast changing society. Art, finally, occupies only a modest territory within this complex of practices. Only now and then, the socio-cultural sector generates a societal model that is rather different from the usual one and only rarely does the heritage sector uncover a history that shakes our cultural foundation or undermines our identity. And although art has made subjectification one of its main social services, we know only too well that the voices of artists often only reach a small circle of the initiated. Within the various kind of activities of a culture, the arts occupy the smallest place, but it is a practice that can be the epicentre from which everything may be set in motion. To phrase it in somewhat poetic terms: art is like a soft song that not everyone can or wishes to hear, but that can on rare occasions make a complete society resonate with it. It is a little bit like Josephine, the little, inconspicuous mouse in Kafka's short story. Her voice is weak, but at times her singing can configure a whole new assemblage of the mouse folk (Kafka, 1924).

The value of a culture is determined by the interplay of socialization, qualification and subjectification and the value of cultural sectors is precisely that they engage in such activities in a reflective manner. Cultural professionals continuously inform the common through these activities and are important in shaping communities. Of course, other social domains such as politics, education, religion, the media and, last but not least, the economy, also determine the shape of a society. Within cultural sectors in the broadest sense of the word this happens more reflectively, however, which means that processes of socialization, qualification and subjectification are often intentionally interfered with in order to purposely steer society in a certain direction - or rather, attempt to do so. Because of the number and diversity of cultural players, all this pushing and pulling does not result in a very clear direction, let alone a harmonious way of living together. Rather, this varied group of designers produce a common of

many divergent types of interaction models and societal forms. In our view, a Europe of diversity, of various cultures, can only find collective support in such a common. Then again, that may be the very essence of what we in our European culture are used to calling 'democracy'. But what exactly is such a common?

Europe without common?

Over the last few years, the notion of the 'common' is gaining ground again within political philosophy, cultural theory, and in law. Just think of the discussion of 'creative commons' in connection with copyright issues. But even before the European Union was called a union, it proudly proclaimed the word 'Community', as a political entity. In any case there is a direct link between culture and the notion of the 'common', in Europe too. Where does this concept actually come from and why is it so important within the framework of this book?

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the concept was reintroduced by both the Dutch philosopher Hans Achterhuis (in 2010) and the American/Italian philosopher duo Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (in 2009). The common stems from the Latin word *communis*, which has as its Indo-European root *mei*, meaning 'to swap' and to 'exchange'. *Mei* stands for what people are entitled to by turn. Achterhuis refers to the communal pasture that was freely accessible to a certain community. Cattle could graze there, and people could cut peat for compost and grow crops. The right of use of the common guaranteed its users a chance of survival. Hardt and Negri also posit that the common consists not only of natural resources such as air, water, fuel, et cetera, but also of cultural resources such as language, traditions, knowledge and information, codes, et cetera. After all, no one could claim authorship of a traditional folktale or folk dance.

Although with the advent of the market economy most of the common was privatized and therefore disappeared, there are still 'common grounds' that remain

relatively accessible to anyone. There is, for instance, the relatively free access to the Internet nowadays, with especially the Internet encyclopaedia Wikipedia, which is written and edited by volunteers (and has until now been free of advertising). The safeguarding of the common is crucial for the continuation of a culture or – how could it be otherwise – a *community*. In economic science as well, various researchers point out the importance of so-called ‘externalities’, the ownership of which can be difficult to ascribe but which are crucial in making a free market economy function as it should. Although the word did not yet exist in his day and age, Adam Smith already mentioned the importance of care and education as externalities. Also, as we know by now from many studies, cultural practices and infrastructures not only play an important role in adding value to economic activities but also contribute to social cohesion, cognitive skills and other mental and physical conditions (see also, among others, Gielen, Elkhuizen, Van den Hoogen, Lijster and Otte, 2014). It is quite obvious that today domains such as mobility and communication play an crucial role in the economy, so it comes as no surprise that many governments try to keep to these domains as easily accessible as possible.

Still, the common does not simply coincide with public facilities or the public domain and neither with what economists call ‘externalities’. Hardt and Negri emphasize the fact that the common is fed by both public and private parties that both continuously fling goods, services and images into the ether or speed them through glass fibre cables, and also leave them in the physical public space, to be used by anyone relatively cheaply and sometimes even completely free of charge. As the most divergent social parties and interests confront each other in the common, this frequently results in conflicts. The common is a space of dissent, or, to quote the Belgian philosopher Chantal Mouffe, it is ‘agonistic’. It is often precisely this dissent and tension that produce the creative sparks by which a culture is constantly renewing itself and reconsidering its sources. Communities are anything but harmonious, a fact that we already hinted at before. It is precisely in dissent and not in consensus that a community is shaped. Just as a democracy is maintained by the constant play of criticism and conflict between government and opposition, likewise the com-

munity and its culture only display cohesion 'through' internal tensions, conflicts and debates. Whereas consensus leads to homogenization and therefore to a relative standstill of a culture, it is precisely the tensions between tastes, styles, subcultures, political affiliations, religious convictions and social and ethnic groups that are kept alive in the common. Cohesion then is not defined by consensus, but rather by the will to enter into conflict with each other, albeit without bloodshed. Hence Mouffe's bending of Carl Schmitt's 'antagonism' to 'agonism', from a world of enemies to one of opponents.

Our point is that this common with its free access and all its tensions is indispensable to a dynamic European culture in the broadest sense of the word, so it is also essential to a democratic political, economic, educational and even legal culture. In any case, we find in society various facilities that no longer belong to the common, but whose organization and presentation are still based on the idea of a common. For instance, there is no democratic politics without a parliamentary system in which anyone is basically eligible for election. Likewise, there is no competition (although there are monopolies) within an economy if there is no free market that is, in principle, accessible to everyone. And there is no good, not even an efficient use of knowledge without an educational system that is, in principle, accessible to almost everyone. Finally, there is no honest administration of justice without collective laws and rights and the possibility of free legal aid. All these elements and regulations carry at least traces of the common. By this we mean that they are sometimes no longer completely free and sometimes do not guarantee free accessibility any longer, but that they do rely on the recognition of the importance of a common. However, in what follows we will show how this common has come under increasing pressure over the past few decades, and certainly also within the European Union.

Let us finally remark about this common that it is anything but a so-called 'left-wing' or even neo-Marxist concept. Neither communist nor socialists have a monopoly on the use of the term. Although nowadays quite a few critical theorists, and therefore often leftist thinkers, are hijacking the notion, no one will deny that for

instance the Roman Catholic tradition has recognized the importance of the common since way back. After all, the *Communion* is a core element of its liturgy. And those philosophers who call themselves ‘communitarianists’ (such as Charles Taylor and Alisdair MacIntyre) and stress the importance of the community are by no means leftist thinkers but rather a source of inspiration for conservative or Christian-democratic politicians.

Politics and Culture

Subjectifying and ‘autonomizing’ activities play a crucial role now, precisely because they are capable of creating new communities or of constantly renewing the common. They can also draw attention to previously invisible/in audible elements of the community (what the French philosopher Jacques Rancière calls *la partage du sensible*, the sharing of what can be perceived by the senses (Rancière, 2007)). As mentioned before, cultural sectors have the instruments, methods and insights to shape the social in a reflective manner. In what follows we will primarily discuss their subjectifying potential. We will do so by demonstrating how culture, creativity and art are related to communities. More concrete: we will primarily discuss the political dimension of communities. After all, the status of the common and what exactly is assumed to be communal and what is not, depends to a large degree on the political climate and the (cultural) policy it produces. Even if that policy, as in the case of the European Union, consists of little interference with culture this reflects a political choice that has an impact on culture. Especially over the past few years this has become quite clear, now that socio-political shifts evidently have consequences for the cultural policies in the various member states. This shift, which is often referred to with the general term ‘neoliberalization’, will be illustrated here by looking at the differences between the Rhineland and Anglo-Saxon models. We do so especially since within Europe there is quite a lot of debate going on about the advantages and disadvantages of each model.

Looking at the political situation in the various member states, we can already conclude that, in general, there are two different views on which direction to take. Is Europe leaning more towards the United Kingdom and the Netherlands or does Europe opt for innovation and strengthening of the Rhineland model, as we see happening in some of the Scandinavian countries? Perhaps nothing is either black or white and are the differences of a gradual nature. A shift towards either social democracy or neoliberalism can however have important consequences for how one deals with culture and subsequently with cultural sectors. A political-ideological slant also has consequences for how cultural sectors might operate. In what follows we aim to sketch and interpret such a scenario. After all, culture is influenced by socio-political relationships and therefore these also determine how culture and contribute to a common.

Next, we will discuss a recurring notion in the debate about cultural policy, i.e. 'autonomy'. Although this seems to be a widely shared value, in times of neoliberalism it appears to be very differently interpreted by the opponents in the debate. We will show that autonomy can only exist in and through a common in which subjectifying practices are given space. When autonomous spaces disappear, communities or at least that what they originally were intended to mean, will also evaporate. In conclusion we will return to the common of the culture and see how this notion can add an extra dimension to debates on economy and politics.

The Dismantlement of the Welfare State

All over the world governments are still dealing with the consequences of the financial crisis that erupted in late 2007. Inevitably, the public debate about this crisis has also raised the question of guilt: who is responsible for the crisis? Besides at the 'money-grabbing bankers', the 'negligent supervisors' and the 'lazy politicians', the accusing finger was also often pointed at a more elusive culprit: neoliberalism. The gradual dismantlement of the welfare state, the retreating government and the open-

ing up of the financial markets to multinationals had created the conditions in which the crisis not only could be born, but also strike with a vengeance. Especially in this debate people often referred to the distinction between the so-called 'Rhineland model' and neoliberalism with an Anglo-Saxon flavour. Over the past few years, many politicians, especially Christian-democrats and social-democrats, have argued for the return of the Rhineland model, from Angela Merkel to Yves Leterme and from Wouter Bos to François Hollande. And even conservative and downright classical liberal circles are increasingly voicing criticism of neoliberalism, as in the cases of John Gray (Gray, 2007) and Frank Ankersmit (Ankersmit and Klinkers, 2008), respectively. The latter even posits that neoliberalism is not really liberalism at all, but a form of feudalism, as responsibilities and mandates that belong to the state end up in private hands.

The 'Rhineland model' is a term that was introduced by the French economist and former head of the French bureau of economic policy, Michel Albert, in his book *Capitalisme contre capitalisme* [Capitalism Against Capitalism](1991). Against the political background of the fall of the Berlin Wall, he describes Rhineland capitalism as an alternative for both communism and the neoliberal capitalism of the post-Reagan United States. The term refers to the economic model of the countries along the Rhine River: Switzerland, Germany, France and the Netherlands, and related economies such as Belgium, Japan and the Scandinavian countries. As for Europe, we may state that most member states still apply this model. Only the United Kingdom and, more recently, the Netherlands are more outspoken dissidents.

The Rhineland capitalism that is so typical of post-war European welfare states provides a buffer zone against the market, as it were. It could be called 'capitalism with a human face'. It is a culture of consultation, in which the government frequently sits down with both employers and labour organizations (the Dutch even have a special verb for it: 'to polder', until recently a strong tradition in the Netherlands). According to proponents of this model it not only promotes a more just sharing of profits but also enhances the overall stability of the economy. Rhineland economies supposedly also take better care of citizens' well-being (instead of exclu-

sively focussing on prosperity) and also stimulate businesses to act more responsibly with both employees and the environment. They are also supposedly more sustainable than Anglo-Saxon economies, where, by contrast, keeping shareholders happy stimulates short-term thinking and short-term investing (Stiegler, 2011).

All these advantages notwithstanding, especially the Rhineland model came under heavy pressure since the 1990s. It was accused of having created tardiness in decision-making, making it impossible for these economies to function and compete in the global marketplace. Also, the Rhineland economies would have a level-ling effect that smothered creativity and 'excellence.' Under the strains of this political criticism and the 'system' pressure of the international markets, a growing number of Rhineland economies in Europe reformed themselves in line with the Anglo-Saxon, i.e. neoliberal model (incidentally, often under the leadership of those same Christian-democrats and social-democrats mentioned earlier.

What neoliberalism exactly is, is not easy to explain in a few words. David Harvey defines it as 'a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.' (Harvey 2005: 2). The most important difference between neoliberalism and the traditional liberalism of thinkers such as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill is that neoliberalism not only argues against intervening in existing markets but also states that markets should be actively created in areas that were not markets before (for instance in healthcare, education, energy, utilities, et cetera). Harvey also states that we should make a distinction between neoliberalism as a utopian project (the theoretical belief, as with Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, that *laissez-faire* capitalism is a precondition for both a just and well-functioning society and the well-being of the individual) and neoliberalism as a political project (the consolidation of power by an economic elite)(Harvey, 2005: 19). The two are hard to reconcile sometimes: the emphasis on individual freedom and the distrust of central government of the former is often at odds with the need for a strong and active state to create markets or save them when the system fails.

Nowadays, in the European context the word 'neoliberalism' is often used in a derogative sense to denote an economic policy that gradually dismantles the post-war welfare state and also corrodes or even completely devours the common we referred to earlier. More developments, effects and concomitant problems are associated with 'neoliberalization'. To name but a few:

- The transition from industrial to financial capitalism in the Western world encourages nation states to make their economies more attractive to multinationals by offering lower taxes and flexible labour policies (Mandel, 1999). A waning influence of labour unions and savings on social benefits are the results.
- The privatization of government and utility services (such as health care, education, social housing, and communication, energy and water companies) and deregulation of markets. The focus on profit instead of service supposedly generates perverse incentives, which leads to 'money-grabbing behaviour' among managers, monopolies, corruption in education, et cetera. Both national and European politics seem increasingly powerless against this, precisely because the politicians have handed over responsibility in these domains to private sectors (Ankersmit and Klinkers, 2008). In other words, even the supervision of the free market is being privatized to a large extent (Gielen, 2013).
- Making the economy more flexible (based on outsourcing and subcontracting) renders the nation state vulnerable: in their search for lower wages multinationals may suddenly move their activities elsewhere, which results in unemployment; banks may fail, taking savers and pension funds, et cetera, down with them, unless they are bailed out with taxpayers' money.
- In general, the gap between the rich and the poor is getting larger and larger because of the growing inequality in both income and capital (see Harvey, 2005; Stiglitz, 2013 and, recently, Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the 21st Century* (2014), which caused quite a stir).

These are all economic developments and effects, whereas our subject here is culture. Nevertheless we mustn't underestimate the *cultural* effects generated by neoliberalism. Some of these are:

- By making the labour market more flexible or by upscaling organizations (mergers) people feel less appreciated for the experience they have or for their 'craft' as a teacher, nurse, scientist, et cetera, for which they studied hard to become specialists (Sennett, 2006 and 2008). This also makes it harder for people to keep identifying themselves with the work they do.
- A culture emerges in which people are primarily addressed as *consumers*, instead of as producers, workers or citizens (Bauman, 1998); even in domains where a consumer identity seems less obvious, for instance in care, education or government services in general (see, for instance, Masschelein and Simons, 2006; Biesta, 2013). Patients, students or citizens who see themselves primarily as consumers who buy care, education or government services adopt a radically different attitude towards these classic institutions. This need not be only negative – it can lead to a degree of empowerment – but in practice there are definitely negative consequences: for instance, politicians who play up to citizens, or universities that aim to please students (instead of challenging them).
- Paradoxically, privatization goes hand-in-hand with an increasing *inspection* of activities, leading to feelings of distrust between employers and employees, teachers and students, government and citizens, et cetera (De Bruyne and Gielen, 2012; Gielen, 2013d). In this way the 'marketization' indirectly leads to *de-professionalization*, because the professionals (the teachers, the doctors, the judges) always have people breathing down their necks. Besides, a growing number of tools and resources that originally were controlled by professionals are ending up in the hands of a top layer of managers (Lorenz, 2013).
- In a neoliberal culture people are encouraged to always regard each other as competitors. This competition is the engine of a 'social acceleration'

(Rosa, 2013), which causes feelings of uncertainty and alienation among large parts of the population. In other words, people have the feeling of being less and less able to exert any influence on either their own lives or on society. Paradoxically, (neo)liberalization leads to a growing feeling of lack of freedom, and confusion.

- In the cultural domain the creative industry is gaining ground. Cultural goods that used to be freely accessible to everyone, are now sometimes only offered at a steep price. Within the Marxist tradition this is called the 'commodification' of culture. Harvey mentions it is an example of neoliberal 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2005: 159).

These are examples of how political-economic developments influence the *meaning* that people assign to their own lives and to living in the community. One may think initially that this only concerns our working life, our life as a nurse, a teacher, a scientist or an artist. However, it is obvious that these developments affect the lives of those who receive these services just as much: the students, the patients in hospitals, the visitors of a museum. Even family life is affected by them. Closer inspection reveals that almost all aspects of life, of the entire culture, are influenced by these political-economic developments. And this culture has an important influence on our so-called Gross National Happiness. Starting at a certain level, the accumulation of wealth and economic growth have an inversely proportional effect on this Gross National Happiness. Or, as the saying goes: 'you can't buy happiness'. This common knowledge does raise some doubts about the persistence call by European policy-makers and corporations for – still more – economic growth.

There is no doubt that these problems are on the agenda as of parties across the entire political spectrum, but the kind of solutions that they propose are radically different. Over the past few decades, one notable aspect is that refuge has been sought in social measures (usually by left-wingers) or in economic measures (usually by right-wingers), but that no one seems to be looking at culture. Nevertheless, we know from quite a lot of research with relative empirical certainty that cul-

tural and arts participation definitely contribute positively to both the mental and physical condition of populations. The more so because health is always partly defined by subjective elements too. People who are culturally integrated and are based on a firm common are able to function autonomously and have a better chance of giving real sense and meaning to their lives. So perhaps there are still unexplored possibilities hidden in the field of culture that politicians and other policymakers may use: opportunities that don't even have to be very expensive.

Culture, Creativity and Art in Times of Neoliberalism

As a result of the financial crisis, various economy measures were taken in many European countries and these measures also affected many cultural sectors. In several countries, including Great Britain, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands, heated debates and sometimes even protests about the pros and cons of cultural subsidies followed. The tone of these debates sometimes bordered on the hysterical (at a protest action in the Netherlands people literally 'screamed' for culture) and the reproach of 'cultural barbarism' was met head on with the qualification of art and culture as 'left-wing hobbies'.

Without immediately taking sides in this debate – whether or not to cut back on culture – let us begin by observing two things about this debate. Things that catch the eye because of the historic relationship between art and culture on the one hand and between art and politics on the other. First, it is striking that the distrust is primarily aimed at the arts. In the debate this distrust comes primarily from the political right (as evidenced by the qualification 'left-wing hobbies'). This is peculiar, since traditionally it was the liberal citizen who fought alongside the arts in the fight against traditionalism. Since the nineteenth century, artists were often regarded as prototypes of the liberal autonomous individual (Seigel, 1986) and the arts, again, as the engine of subjectification. To give a striking example: during the Cold War, Abstract Expressionism was even secretly financially supported by the CIA be-

cause it supposedly was proof of the creativity and intellectual freedom in western capitalist democracies.¹

Observation two: in the discussions about cutbacks on culture both sides played the 'autonomy card', as in making an appeal to autonomy as a value. Those who defended the cutbacks argued that artists and cultural institutes should learn to stand on their own feet and become less dependent upon subsidies, in other words: be more autonomous. Those who were against cutbacks argued that art and culture should be able to operate independent of the markets and that taking away subsidies would jeopardize their autonomy.

Two things are clear. First, liberalism has some link with autonomy. This is not strange, as this political ideology starts from the idea of the free, independent (autonomous) individual. However, as Immanuel Kant said, autonomy is not doing whatever you want to do, but living by your own laws (the literal meaning of *autonomos*). Even if, as stated earlier, the rule of art is to break the rules, this does not mean that artists can do whatever they feel like. The whole discourse around arts, the institutions and the critics also impose rules on them, albeit sometimes implicitly. Secondly, in the debate about cutbacks on culture the term 'autonomy' is used rather carelessly, as often it is not made explicit exactly what is defined as autonomous (art, the artist, the art institute, the aesthetic experience, social or broader cultural practices) and *in relation to what* these things are autonomous or not (the state, the market, let alone tradition, religion, et cetera)(Lijster, 2012).

It therefore seems worthwhile to take a closer and longer look at the concept of autonomy and explore what it means in the three domains mentioned above: culture, creativity and art. We will also look at the effects that the neoliberalization of these domains has for their autonomy.

¹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/modern-art-was-cia-weapon-1578808.html>

Autonomy of Culture

In light of the broad definition of culture as a ‘socially shared repertoire of signs’ that we introduced above, it may seem strange to speak of the autonomy of culture. After all, if culture is this broadly defined as the customs and ways of doing things of a community, then everything is ‘culture’ and it becomes hard to see it as a separate domain.

Nevertheless it does make sense to speak of the autonomy of culture, insofar as it consists of multiple cultures that each have their own dynamics and are self-producing (*autopoietic*, in Luhmann’s terms). So we are not talking here in the first place about individual autonomy, but rather about the collective autonomy of communities. All the same, these are closely related, since individual autonomy cannot be achieved without structurally guaranteed systems of solidarity, or, more concrete, without a basis in education, health care and culture. Culture provides us with answers to existential questions. My self-image and individual autonomy depend on how I define myself as part of an in relation to a certain shared culture. The Belgian psychoanalyst Paul Verhaeghe calls this process of identification and separation (Verhaeghe, 2012). Putting too much emphasis on either of the two carries a risk: it could lead to a culture of sameness (resulting in exclusion) or to a culture of isolated and lonely individuals, respectively. Through the process of identifying with and separating from certain cultures, these cultures maintain themselves and continue to develop.

By contrast, the heteronomy of culture would mean that it is unilaterally defined by an external factor, such as the market or the state. In this respect we can invoke Jürgen Habermas’ by now classic distinction between ‘lifeworld’ and system (Habermas, 1981). While according to the German philosopher the lifeworld consists of the whole of shared meanings by which people interact and communicate with each other, the system is a domain where people, by contrast, are primarily directed by power (the state) or money (the market). Whereas, according to Habermas, the ‘project’ of modernity consisted of separating the lifeworld from the system, he recognizes the danger of a colonization of the lifeworld by the system (in both commu-

nism and laissez-faire capitalism) in the twentieth and twenty-first century. This colonization occurs when the free exchange of arguments about, for instance, science, morality or art is endangered by a dominance of the logic of one of the systems.

We can also observe this danger in the criticism of neoliberalization. It is said that the meaning of 'good care', 'good science', 'good education' and 'good art' is changed under the influence of the market. What was good care, for instance, was traditionally determined in the interaction between doctor/nurse/therapist and patient/client. One could also say that it was (autopoietically) determined by the medical community, just as scientists defined what was good science among themselves, artists (and other professionals in the fields, such as critics, curators, et cetera) decided what was good art, and teachers (and educators) decided what was good education. They all had their own culture, which was an acknowledged right, in which most of the problems were dealt with autonomously in each community.

An often-heard complaint is that nowadays external factors such as efficiency, targets, measurability and evidence-base become increasingly important, making the actors in the communities concerned feel that they are losing control (for science see Boomkens (2008), Lorenz (2013) and Halfman and Radder (2013); for education see Masschelein and Simons (2006), Biesta (2013) and De Bruyne and Gielen, 2012; for care see Desmet, 2009; and for art institutes see De Bruyne and Gielen, 2013a and b). Finally, this not only concerns these individual communities but also entire cultures. A *heteronomous* culture then is a culture that no longer makes its own rules but is governed by a logic that is not its own. The 'own' culture, such as that of behavioural and assessment codes of medical practitioners among themselves, scientists among themselves, politicians among themselves, lawyers among themselves and also artists among themselves, is in jeopardy. This means that the values of their culture are also ignored or simply replaced by values that originally were not part of their 'lifeworld'. Surgeons who perform operations based on ethical and medical codes may perhaps act relatively differently than surgeons who think about the number of patients he needs to deal with. Likewise, judges may perhaps look at a case file differently, depending on whether they focus on justice

or on the number of cases to close. Politicians who are freely electable may advance somewhat different ideals than those who depend on a number of wealthy sponsors for their election. And someone working in the cultural heritage sector who focuses on pulling in big crowds may well dig up other histories and label them as 'relevant' than would be the case if they would operate exclusively from their historical expertise. In any case, many professionals end up facing such unsolvable dilemmas these days and this is because they can no longer determine their own culture. The shared repertoire of signs that was created and decided upon by professionals among themselves, but also by family members or, for instance, theatre enthusiasts among themselves, is generated by other 'alien' mechanisms when autonomy is lost. This is what gives people the feeling that they are losing their grip on their own culture. It should come as no surprise that in such cases many professionals, individuals, but also families and other communities lose the meaning and the satisfaction of their existence, as that satisfaction came from their autonomy in managing their own culture.

Autonomy of Creativity

We have already looked at the various ways in which creativity functions in the arts on the one hand and in the corporate world, politics and education on the other. We noted that the difference is in the finality: whereas creativity in art only produces creativity again, creativity in the corporate world, politics and education must yield other results. At first glance, it would seem obvious that we can only speak of the autonomy of creativity within the domain of the arts.

Still, creativity has its own autonomous space. Especially when creativity is embraced by the whole of society as a value and particularly when the economy itself is increasingly concerned with cultural values rather than with immediate practical value (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Žižek, 2010), the common sources of creativity must be watched over. As Hardt and Negri stated in their *Commonwealth* (2009), the econ-

omy nowadays increasingly depends on creativity, but at the same time it constitutes a danger to creativity. Every instrumentalization of creativity also ties it down, because it privatizes what belongs to the common and precisely this common is what nourishes creativity. This is why, according to Hardt and Negri, cultural capitalism is inevitably steering towards a crisis. We will return to this aspect when discussing the notion of the common or communal and what it means for a European community.

But also in other domains than the market, politics or education the ever louder sounding call for creativity is often accompanied by a narrowing of the concept. New initiatives must immediately yield, preferably measurable, results. Competition, which is rampant in a growing number of social fields, also draws heavily on creativity. After all, competing parties prefer to keep their ideas to themselves, whereas creativity benefits from the exchange of ideas and the accessibility of other people's creative output. It has been noted modern ones that the battle of patterns in science (especially in physics and medical science) and technology has negative effects on developments in those areas.²

Truly scientific and technological innovations, but also social or economic ones, are arrived at precisely in autonomous creative spaces. Or, as Masschelein and Simons say, students at a technical school only start thinking seriously about what else a car engine could do when it is regarded separately from the car in the autonomous space of education (Masschelein and Simons, 2006). And wasn't it the Philips corporation that gave its engineers every Friday afternoon off to 'just do anything' in the company labs? Gilles Holst, a former director of the Philips NatLab, had the following guidelines for his research policy: 'do not become bogged down in details; give lots of freedom; cherish idiosyncratic individualism; in case of doubt, choose anarchy; stop detailed budgeting; do not be guided exclusively by the possibility of sales; do not let the production departments dictate the budgets for research.'

² See this interview (in Dutch) with science philosopher Trudy Dehue (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen): <http://www.kennislink.nl/publicaties/medicijntests-moeten-onafhankelijk-zijn-van-medicijnbedrijven>

Holst was very much aware of the 'externalities' that were needed to keep a company going, but he also knew that the company needed a space for experiments and even for 'loss' if it wanted to arrive and more innovative insights. Tinkering and messing about, endless discussions with colleagues and even boredom are often the basic ingredients for creative thinking. Those who begrudge creativity this autonomous time-space and smother it in over-meticulous efficiency calculations and other accountability regulations will seldom sail high into the creative firmament. Or, in our jargon: creativity is then reduced to working off a neat checklist within the measure. This may be a high measure, but it is only mediocre when compared to the dismeasure that allows for the risk of an autonomous space.

Autonomy of Art

Volumes have been written about the autonomy of art and we certainly do not intend to give an exhaustive analysis of the subject within the scope of this essay, but we do feel that is important to mention it here. The more so because we have noticed that although the autonomy of art has long since been discarded as a myth by the historical avant-gardes (Bürger, 1974), it still remains a value that is appealed to time and again, not in the least in debates about art and cultural policies, as mentioned earlier.

Let it be clear right away that in our view autonomy should not be contrasted with 'being part of society' or even with 'social relevance', as is so often the case in the public debate. The contrast between artistic autonomy and social relevance is a false one. On the contrary, the social relevance of the arts consists of their 'dismeasure', in other words of their capacity to show that everything that is can also always be different. This means there is a close relationship between this dismeasure and the autonomy of art. Or, in the words of Rancière, and we have quoted:

This absence of common measurement, this registration of the disjunction between registers of expression and therefore between the arts, formulated by Lessing's Laocoon, is the common core of the 'modernist' theorization of the aesthetic regime in the arts - a theorization that conceives the break with the representative regime in terms of the autonomy of art and separation between the arts.

(Rancière, 2010)

The conditions for this capacity of dismeasure are set by a domain in which creativity is not expected to yield immediate results but where it can exist for its own sake, i.e. autonomously.

Such a domain cannot be taken for granted; it has to be generated and supported by a social process. We could also say that the autonomy of art is safeguarded by society. As the German philosopher Theodor Adorno already observed, art is both autonomous and a 'social fact': it has itself 'become' social in a lengthy process of emancipation from church and court. The autonomy of art is the product of the differentiation of value regimes in modern society, which means that we can no longer judge art by criteria of truth (trueness to nature) or of morality, as was the case before the modern era. That this is a relatively recent development is illustrated by, for instance, Baudelaire and Flaubert, who both had to stand trial for corrupting morality with a literary work as late as 1857. We have since grown accustomed to the arts having their own institutions in the form of museums, academies, publishers, societies and critics, who all produce their own rules and criteria (Gielen, 2013b). That in itself is more evidence that the 'autopoietic' nature of art is rooted in the community. The doctrine of *l'art pour l'art* [art for art's sake], which is traditionally associated with the autonomy of art, can therefore justly be called a myth, if only because the autonomy of art is itself *heteronomous*, i.e. is always conditioned by society (Lijster, 2012; Gielen, 2013a).

The above analysis of the ways in which autonomy can be understood in culture, creativity and art brings us to the following tentative conclusions. First, autonomy in these fields should not be regarded as the opposite of community; on the contrary they presuppose and influence each other. Just as a community cannot exist without the autonomy of culture (in our broad definition), autonomy in these respective fields cannot exist without the support of the community. This means, secondly that this is precisely what the task and responsibility of cultural policy could be: safeguarding that autonomy, and thereby the community. We will now further investigate this concept of community.

The Community of Culture – The Culture of Community

It is hardly a secret that neoliberals are not very enthusiastic about the notion of community. Just think of Margaret Thatcher's famous statement: 'There is no such thing as society.' The starting point of neoliberalism is the atomistic individual, the *homo economicus*, detached and cut off from his cultural, ethnic or religious background. It should come as no surprise then that neoliberal policies, which are aimed at efficiency, standardization and measurability, are a threat to various forms of community. The logic of the market, which is imposed upon the whole of society, leads to hyper-individualization, undermining of solidarity (by dismantling the welfare state), weakening of citizenship and, rather obviously, of community spirit. When citizens are increasingly approached as consumers – and therefore start to regard themselves as such – or are encouraged to see their fellow citizens as competitors, it is no wonder that they no longer feel responsible for the community. This is also true, by the way, of countries where the state has traditionally played a smaller part, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. These countries have always had a close-knit and active local community life, although this has been increasingly corroded by the growing inequality in income, by unemployment (partly caused by moving production elsewhere) and by the shrinking role of local

entrepreneurship over the past few decades. Remarkably, though, community art is quite popular there (cf. De Bruyne and Gielen, 2011). Such initiatives are often started to fill in or compensate for the holes that neoliberal policies make in these communities. Community art then functions as an opiate to the grief caused by neoliberalism.

In the introduction to this chapter we already mentioned that, unlike communarians, we do not regard community as a harmonious entity. On the contrary, the community is the place where confrontations and conflicts between its members occur, but also the place where these can be articulated through subjectification and be democratically resolved. Culture – taken in the broader sense of the word to include creativity, cultural heritage and art – is the place where both subjectification and socialization take place. The community offers safety, solidarity and thereby security – all basic conditions for freedom – but at the same time it is something to react against in order to shape one’s own life in freedom. In short, there is no individual freedom without collective structures of solidarity, institutions and constitutions to fall back on.

Traditionally, the community controlled the commons or ‘commonness’ and, as mentioned above, members of the community could appeal to and make free use of these commons for their livelihoods, on the condition that they did not use them to make a profit. We know that these actual commons were shrinking on the eve of the modern era and were converted into private property, a process that is called ‘the enclosure of the commons’. This enclosure is by no means a historical phenomenon or a completed process, as it is still going on today. By this we are not only referring to the increasing privatization – meaning expropriation of the community – of communal ownership of, for instance, fossil fuels, land, water supplies or even genetic codes. Hardt and Negri extend the notion of the commons to include immaterial matters such as communication (think of Facebook), information and cultural practices. The enclosure of the commons means, for instance, that publicly performing the traditional song ‘Happy birthday to you’ now constitutes a violation of copyright, which has fallen into the hands of Warner/Chapell Music.

By referring to culture as a 'commons' we do not only wish to state that art and cultural heritage should remain easily accessible to all, as that would still imply a limited vision of culture as something that we 'consume'. The communality of culture does not simply mean that everyone has access to culture but also that culture is a shared practice that is the result of interaction. This obviously makes it important that all members of the community possess the necessary knowledge and skills (qualification), can successfully connect to the culture (socialization) and create an authentic role for themselves (subjectification). In this respect we can say that both the Rhineland model and neoliberalism focus especially on managing socialization and qualification. The first model does so through (over)regulating and bureaucratic processes, the second through quantification and by introducing management processes such as audits, accreditations and individual assessments. Both systems restrict the possibilities for subjectification.

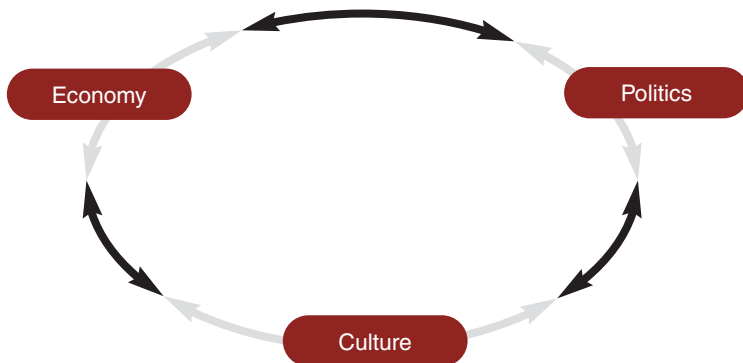
Of relevance here is the distinction made by the American Professor of Law and philosopher Lawrence Lessig. He distinguishes between a *Read Only* (RO) and a *Read/Write* (R/W) culture (Lessig, 2008). A *Read Only* culture has a vertical division between producers and consumers. In other words, there is a clear distinction between the producers of cultural goods and the public that consumes these goods. A *Read/Write* culture, by contrast, is based on the 'commonness' of a culture that is not only accessible to all but to which all also actively contribute (again, Wikipedia comes to mind). In the words of Lessig:

One emphasizes learning. The other emphasizes learning by speaking. One preserves its integrity. The other teaches integrity. One emphasizes hierarchy. The other hides the hierarchy. No one would argue we need less of the first, RO culture. But anyone who has really seen it believes we need much more of the second. (Lessig, 2008: 87-88)

As the quote shows, Lessig stresses the importance of both, but at the same time he states that in our contemporary culture, which is oriented towards consumption and commodification, the emphasis is on the first. Because we have increasingly begun to see culture as a commodity – a commodity that is also increasingly subjected to ever more strict copyrights – the communality of culture is at stake. This in spite of the fact that the commonness of culture is an important element of a democratic society, according to Lessig. This is why he stresses that the word ‘Free’ in the title of his book *Free Culture* (2004) should not be read as in ‘free beer’, i.e. that all culture should be available at no charge, but as in ‘free speech’. In other words as something that supports, facilitates and protects everyone who wishes to make use of it.

Both Lessig and Hardt & Negri believe that the exploitation of communal cultural property is not only disastrous for culture in the long run, but also for the (creative) economy, which has made itself increasingly dependent upon the creative force that emanates from culture. A sustainable economy, in other words, is only possible when it is based on a solid community.

To further clarify the relations which we discussed between the three pillars of culture (taken here in the broadest sense of the word, including creativity and art), politics and economy, we can present them in the following, admittedly rather simplistic, scheme:



In all its simplicity, the above scheme does clarify the various connections. Traditionally, the most attention by far went out to the upper relationship, that between the economy and politics. The way in which politics and the market interact and could or should mutually influence each other is of course the central theme of **political economy**, the science that we associate with names such as Smith, Ricardo and Marx, and later Keynes and Hayek. Culture was often seen as secondary to this relationship – the ‘superstructure’, as Marx called it.

However, it is clear that other connections have become increasingly important. In the first place, as we discussed, the present-day economy is running more and more on culture and creativity. The notion of **cultural economy** not only refers to the domain of the creative and cultural industries. Within traditional economies too, ‘cultural’ values are taking central stage. The dominant post-Fordist labour regime embraces art, creativity and culture in almost all branches and sectors of industry (see also Gielen, 2009) and political philosophers have been emphasizing the cultural dimension of politics ever since the 1990s. Political justice is much more than a fair distribution of goods (redistribution). It is also important to recognize, in both a legal and socio-cultural sense, the diversity of people, groups and their life projects and values in a community (recognition). The German philosopher Axel Honneth even states that only when we recognize others and empower them to express their identity (cultural, sexual, religious or otherwise) we open up the way to a more just redistribution (Fraser and Honneth, 2003). The classic Marxist distinction between base and superstructure is inverted here: a ‘politics of culture’ or **cultural policy** becomes the base of social life.

By the same token we can speak of an **economic culture** or a **political culture**. With regard to the first, we have already mentioned how the word ‘money-grabbing culture’ (which is indeed a culture too) is often used since the financial crisis broke out. More generally speaking, one could say that economic behaviour and economic relationships partly depend on the type of cultural values that we share.³ After all, an exclusive focus on profit maximization is also part of a certain cultural conviction: the conviction of what is important in the lives of human beings.⁴ Different views on or within a culture automatically lead to different views on, for instance, the importance

we attach to economic growth, a sustainable economy, differences in income, et cetera. The commons of culture is at the basis of our convictions, either implicit or explicit, about the economy. It is no coincidence that cultural projects are often places of refuge to experiment with alternative economic and business models.

Democracy too is dependent upon the communal space of culture. Democracy is not just a political system where our votes are counted once every so many years; that much is clear from just the laborious attempts of the West to 'bring' democracy to countries that lack a democratic culture. Democracy presupposes the ability and possibility of citizens to inform themselves (and therefore an independent press), to reflect on values, to hold different opinions about them and to discuss them and negotiate about them. Culture is *the* place where we think about what we find important and meaningful and where we are also confronted with how other people think about these issues.⁵

It is no coincidence that we put culture at the base of the triangle in our illus-

- ³ Companies are very much aware of this, as witnessed by the growing interest of corporations for 'business narratives' or 'corporate storytelling'; meaning the transfer of the meaning and values of the company and its products through narratives, directed at both the employees and business relations.
- ⁴ The *locus classicus* of this relationship between economics and culture is of course Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
- ⁵ It is precisely for that reason that Martha Nussbaum stresses the importance of art and culture (and of education in these areas) in her pamphlet *Not For Profit* (2011). For instance, she states: 'Today we still maintain that we like democracy and selfgovernance, and we also think that we like freedom of speech, respect for difference, and understanding of others. We give these values lip service, but we think far too little about what we need to do in order to transmit them to the next generation and ensure their survival. Distracted by the pursuit of wealth, we increasingly ask our schools to turn out useful profit-makers rather than thoughtful citizens. Under pressure to cut costs, we prune away just those parts of the educational endeavor that are crucial to preserving a healthy society.' (Nussbaum, 2010: 141-142).

trative scheme. It certainly is not intended to mean that culture is like 'raw material' for the economy and politics. As we have tried to argue here, culture is rather the foundation of communal life. To invest in culture is therefore much more than financing 'hobbies', either left-wing or other. Together with education, the cultural sector has traditionally been in charge of the socialization, qualification and subjectification of citizens and that is why it is the foundation of the community. Without that foundation Thatcher's statement that 'there is no such thing as society' might very well be too close to the truth for comfort. In that case we had better speak of the European Market instead of the European Union. And, just to be clear, in that new entity there would be no task for politics either, except that of managing and controlling. Politics as 'the designing force of society' would be rather pointless then, as politicians would only serve to balance the budget, manage things well and look after consumer interests. In a society without an autonomous management of culture, citizens would be no more than consumers of goods and services which the government may or may not provide (probably mostly not).

The autonomy of the social sphere is also the reason why mass consumption cannot be entirely manipulated, precisely because this 'mass' is rather active than passive and, indeed, possesses a subjective cultural power. At the same time it explains why the state or the government has difficulty in the total (or totalitarian) control and rational organization of its political entity, precisely because the social sphere has its own rationality, or, rather, its own rationalities. The social swarming constantly escapes structures of state and market cycles, precisely because it has its own culture, or, rather, multiple cultures. As we know, both advertising and political propaganda try to anticipate that culture, but always seem to come up against its (autonomous) logic and resistance. The misjudgement of culture as an independent social practice is the very reason why political programmes as well as market strategies often fail or run aground because of their wrong assessments time and again.

The continuous political crisis in Europe might be instructive here. At one time, the European Union grew out of political as well as economic motives: after

two devastating world wars, lasting peace would be safeguarded by European collaboration and institutionalized political consultations. At the same time, economic collaboration would enhance prosperity and guarantee that Europe could hold its own in competing with the economic superpowers. However, now that Europe is in stormy economic weather and we are taking peace on the continent for granted (at least in most parts of it), the Union is steadily losing popular support. In northern Europe it can't explain, for instance, why Germans would have to declare their solidarity with Greeks, whereas in southern Europe people feel exploited by the harsh economic measures that the North is imposing on them. According to the philosopher and Europarliamentarian Gianni Vattimo, this is typically a *cultural* problem: while Europe evolved into an economic union in a unilateral and technocratic manner, the idea of a European culture retreated into the background. Politicians lack a shared narrative and common values to appeal to in pointing out the importance of European collaboration (Gabiëls and Lijster, 2013).

Both the political crisis in Europe and the current financial crisis are partly due to a lack of knowledge of culture but also to a lack of investment in it. The debate about an economic or social Europe is lacking a third dimension, the cultural one. Without cultural citizenship there can be no political trust and therefore no political support for Europe. However, as we already noted, a lack of interest in culture also generates mistrust of an economic and monetary union. And, as we also noted before, 'trust' is one of the most important intersubjective values that can typically only come from culture. Everyone knows that a competitive market as well as purely bureaucratic politics or power politics are anything but conducive to relationships based on trust. Technocratically good administration and economically efficient management are not enough to make Europe into a living community. That would indeed take a solid cultural embedding.

Commonism

Various European member states do still have a strong tradition in cultural policy, but the example of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands clearly demonstrates that this is not to be taken for granted and nothing guarantees that it will remain so in the future. The common is constantly threatened by the market and by politics, and that in turn, strangely enough, threatens the functioning of that same market and politics. A sustainable social biotope (we consciously do not address ecological issues here, not because we fail to recognize them, but because it would take us beyond the scope of this book) requires a good balance within the triumvirate culture-economy-politics as outlined before. Both the Rhineland model and neoliberalism can disturb this balance. A Rhineland model may do so because of too much bureaucracy, slow decision-making or too big a role for politics, leading to overregulation and smothering of the common. Neoliberalism may do so by overemphasizing the economy, or rather the free market, by competition and a compulsory focus on purely economic growth, thereby delivering the common completely into private hands and making it vanish.

This is why a third option is perhaps worth considering. It is a model which we propose to call, not without risk and loosely inspired on Laermans (2013), 'commonism'. It differs only in one letter from a political system that has been widely vilified in Europe. By choosing it we run the risk of being misunderstood. Still, as we understand it, commonism is not a narrow-minded one-party ideology. Just as the Rhineland and neoliberal model it could shape society though and in that respect it is political-ideological in nature, or perhaps we could say it is 'meta-ideological', as it accommodates multiple party political ideas. For instance, liberalism may reconcile itself with a commonist organization of society if it realizes that both individuals and the market can only be free when this freedom is guaranteed by a collective. Individual freedom can only be optimized when individuals are both stimulated by and can fall back on collective and structurally embedded mechanisms of solidarity. A free market that completely sucks dry the common in a frenzy of competitive accumulation will eventually run itself into the ground. It will absorb its own source, as it

were. This is why the free market will always have to be regulated to such an extent that enough flows back into the common. Then again, political parties that are traditionally religiously inspired, such as the Christian-democrats, have always realized that they need a common to make a society, including their own politics, function. We already pointed out the central meaning of Holy Communion in the Roman Catholic tradition. However, it is important that they regard the common in a broader sense than just that of community, the family or their own parish, to meet the globalized conditions of today. The same can be said of nationalistic parties. If they don't recognize that national cultures must deal with globalization trends in which other cultures are constantly transforming their 'own' culture, they will have a hard time maintaining a culturalistic perspective. Reality will soon catch up with them. As to their neo-nationalistic successors, we see how they are strategically abandoning the controversial blood-and-soil narrative in favour of more technocratic or administrative-technical variations. By accusing other nations or member states of 'bad government' they mainly hope to gain political power and votes, but they don't pay much attention to their 'own' cultural traditions. Any respect from them for commonism as proposed by us could only come from a true re-evaluation of what cultures have in common. Paradoxically, this culture-driven policy appears to be mainly absent in current nationalistic tendencies. Besides, if it surfaces at all, their political convictions make them use it against rather than in favour of Europe. Nevertheless neo-nationalistic parties could gain some advantage from a commonism that indeed embraces dissent and thereby cultural diversity within Europe. At first glance, socialism seems to have a lot of affinity with a commonalistic model, but historically it has focussed too much on the social and too little on the cultural aspect of solidarity mechanisms and equality ideals. Nevertheless culture, as we've argued before, is the foundation from which values such as solidarity and equality are introduced into society. It would in the first place mean a cultural reorientation for socialism if it were to align itself with a commonalistic model. The same may be said of ecologically inspired parties such as the Green parties. Ecological problems and imbalances can only be addressed structurally if a large-scale change of mentality takes place in people, governments and the business world, which means first

and foremost a profound change in their *culture*. The Green parties need to be convinced of the impact they could generate through cultural policy. Finally, communist regimes may be the furthest removed from what we call 'commonism' here. Especially if we look at dictatorial, undemocratic relics such as North Korea or China or at technocratic variations such as the former USSR. After all, such systems frenetically fight, or have fought, the common as we described the concept above. A model of dissent doesn't stand a chance under such regimes. All dissonant voices, on which the common thrives, are expressly placed outside the political order there and labelled as dissidents. This is why a communism could only survive within a commonism if it were to accept the possibility of many singularities. Both the philosophers Negri & Hardt (2009) and Alain Badiou (2009) seem to be looking to re-define communism in that vein, although their efforts have been mostly limited to theoretical exercises so far.

Anyway, our point is that both the Rhineland and the neoliberal model may have had their day. A new model announces itself, one that claims the interest of the common as the fundamental structure for possible ways of living together. Of course we are aware that this idea is highly speculative, and we do not know enough of political science to provide any concrete administrative advice for this model. However, we are convinced – and no more than that – that a future European constitution will have to include and embrace the common if it is to be founded on anything.

Whichever direction Europe chooses, by negating culture and thereby the social sphere's own logic, the Rhineland model and neoliberalism will in any case run aground sooner or later. Whichever path one chooses, it is relatively certain that one will encounter social barricades, actions and sometimes even blind violence. When the common becomes choked, it can turn really mean. Its internal agonism will then sour into antagonism. Social eruptions as we have witnessed in both the *banlieus* of Paris and the suburbs of London over the past few years, or more moderately in the Molenbeek quarter of Brussels, are painful evidence of that. Of course socio-economic inequalities play a part in these conflicts, but also a lack of recogni-

tion of culture. Politicians and journalists sometimes gratuitously call such violence ‘meaningless’ or ‘senseless’. Based on our analysis above we could say that they are right, except for the fact that policy and opinion makers may mean something different by it. In our view, meaningless violence erupts when people are robbed of every meaning. And, as we argued before, culture is an important carrier of meaning. Even more so, it is the *only* thing that gives meaning to people’s lives. Therefore, if the autonomy of culture is threatened, this blocks the possibilities to give meaning to our own existence – through socialization, qualification and especially subjectification. This may sound dramatic, but it is precisely the drama that is inherent in culture. Or, to rephrase it in semiotic terms: nothing is as dramatic as not being able to *signify* oneself or that one’s meaning is denied or simply not even noticed by other people. Whether you are a migrant or an illegal (*without papers - without signification*), a single mother or a ‘hard-working’ freelancer or business manager, if you can’t signify yourself you cannot obtain a place within the symbolic order, which within a culture is always also a social order. Depression up to the point of suicidal desperation at the individual level as well as collective manifestations of vandalism and violence take place at the very edge of the cultural sphere. Both individuals and collectives who feel marginalized will try to regain meaning through physical aggression against themselves or their social environment. They try to become part of a symbolic universe again the hard way, as it were; in short, to want to be recognized or ‘signified’. And only culture can provide this right to meaning. Culture is the ultimate signifier, as we have argued several times. It is therefore the most important reason why policymakers at the European level really should fundamentally rethink the ways in which they plan to feed this culture and keep it alive. To put it even more strongly: without a solid cultural policy, European politics will eventually dig its own grave.

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MEASURED
& MEASURABLE
VALUES
OF CULTURE

The value of culture has been described and analysed theoretically in the previous chapter(s). In recent years, it has also become the object of empirical research. This is in line with a growing interest in the measurable effects of culture, mostly from politicians and policy-makers who follow the principles of evidence-based policy. In times of crisis especially, these parties tend to be cautious when allocating funds, which is why the requirement of measurability is becoming increasingly important in the preparation and development of policy. The circle of evidence-based policy is rounded off by relating the evaluation back to the preparation. By investing in measures that have proven to be effective in the past, policy-makers hope to legitimize their own policies. From the perspective of evidence-based policy this seems to make sense. However, we believe it can also lead to a drastic narrowing of the concept of culture, when only types of culture with measurable effects are supported on a policy level, while not all valuable aspects of culture might also be measurable. This approach could also hinder the dynamic of culture, when what is being facilitated in the cultural sphere would be subjected to measurable restrictions beforehand. We will elaborate on this point of view in the conclusion to this chapter. First we will discuss our findings. We looked at what evidence for the effectiveness of culture was being presented or what assumptions existed about the value of culture, and distinguished the following five themes: cognitive effects, health effects, experiential values, economic effects and social effects. The results are listed below, per type of effect.¹

¹ This is a relatively short summary of a chapter of a much more extensive research report and does not contain many references or a bibliography. For the full report (in Dutch), including notes, bibliography and many more details about the research gathered in the tables, see: <http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/de-waarde-van-cultuur>.

Cognitive effects

Those investigating the cognitive effects of culture tend to see it as something that influences the contents but also the workings of the human mind, or more specifically, perception, memory, reasoning and analytical abilities, but also emotions. Seen from the perspective of cultural education, which is strongly related to the cognitive effects of culture, one can ask how cultural participation can for instance contribute to achievements in other school subjects. Furthermore, culture can be seen as a way to provoke self-reflection on our own cognition, which culture is a part of. That is why culture can be seen as a source of cultural identity.

Research on culture education currently focuses on the question of how it can relate to the cognitive development of children and adults. The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) provided an overview of this research and reported that the evidence for this relationship was scarce, due to a lack of research on these effects. This is in part the result of difficulties with measuring effects such as creativity. The researchers conclude that the strongest legitimization for culture education currently lies not in the transfer of improved cognitive skills to other school subjects, but in the fact that it offers a specific way of knowing the world, along with opportunities for self-reflection and identity development.

Recent neurological research does suggest culture has a positive impact on cognitive abilities, although we should add this research was conducted with regard to a very broad set of cultural practices (including for instance video games). The experience and practice of music showed the strongest positive impact on cognitive challenges (such as motor skills, auditory abilities, vocabulary and verbal reasoning) and social skills. However, in this case the causality raises some questions, since the practice of music occurs more often in higher socio-economic circles, where these skills tend to be developed more strongly.

Health

Although research on the effects of creative therapy, art in hospitals and the effects of art and culture for specific research is nothing new, there has been a more recent shift towards measuring the health effects on a larger – regional or national – scale. This shift seems to be motivated by societal developments such the growing number of elderly people, rising health-care costs and the economic crisis. Often population surveys are used as a means to investigate the occurrence and nature of these effects. Scientists in Norway, Scotland and Italy have all tried to investigate this mostly uncharted territory. The resulting evidence shows a correlation between engagement in cultural activities (both actively and passively) and a sense of well-being (physical and mental health, satisfaction with life). Culture participation can therefore be seen as an important indicator for well-being.

Current research does however also show that the causality is not always clear here, as the relationship is considerably complex, encompassing many different variables. Furthermore, most research uses a very broad definition of ‘cultural activity’. By controlling for relevant factors, such as economic position, it is nonetheless possible to state with empirical certainty that there is an important value in culture when it comes to mental and physical health.

Experiential values

Experiential values are those that participants of art, culture and cultural heritage ascribe to visiting the theatre, museum, library or gallery, to reading books and so on. We can distinguish 'intrinsic values', which require a 'mental bonding' with a cultural product, and 'extrinsic values', which do not depend on this bonding and take the form of, for instance, social values (meeting friends or new people). Whereas the extrinsic values will be discussed below in other categories, we focus here on intrinsic values, such as being surprised or moved, or gaining knowledge and insight.

The chosen research method for investigating these values is often audience research. This kind of research shows that arts participants indeed experience intrinsic values such as emotional engagement and reflection. This effect can also be found among participants in popular cultural forms. Research shows that cultural participation provides participants with challenging experiences and the possibility to enjoy them with others. It can be said that the culture sector does indeed generate the (intrinsic) values it attempts to realize, and which audiences actively seek. Besides, organized culture seems to incite reflection on one's culture and their own role/position within it.

Economic effects

Economic effects concern the impact of the culture sector on the economy. This impact can be measured in several ways. A common approach is the classic impact research, which investigates the economic effects of the organized (and often subsidized) cultural sector, in terms, for instance, of the generation of jobs, the purchase of materials by the organizations themselves or the additional spending (transport, accommodation and food for instance) by visitors of cultural events.

This type of research is no longer widespread, with the exception of research that charts the size of the direct employment within the cultural or creative sector, but the positive impact of the cultural sector on the economy has been shown in many different studies.

Cultural attractions or activities have been assumed to have a positive influence on the image of neighbourhoods or cities, and are therefore often used in 'culture-led regeneration' processes, with the objective of attracting either people or companies who want to settle there, or visitors from out of town. The empirical evidence for the economic effects of these projects is scarce, and the use of very different definitions of culture hinders a comparison of their effects. Most empirical evidence is anecdotal in nature and often concerns case studies with no proven general applicability. These studies often show a positive impact, but the question remains of what happened to the studies on unsuccessful projects. Although culture-led regeneration can lead to positive results, it should not be used as a 'quick fix', and the effects can often only be measured fully after 15 to 20 years. Several researchers also note the importance of connecting projects to local bottom-up initiatives and protecting the initiators as a way to ensure the sustainability of projects like these. Furthermore, projects that connect new cultural investments to existing local buildings or characteristics seem to have the best chance of long-term success.

Operationalizing the economic value of the culture sector turns out to be a considerable challenge (Guiette *et al.*, 2011). The strongest evidence exists for a link between

a rich cultural life in a city or region and real estate prices. The advantage of this research is that it departs from the actual behaviour of people. The evidence suggests that cities in particular (as a result of their size) enable a positive relationship between culture and economy. Criticism on gentrification research has however made clear that not all social classes benefit from it, as it mostly promotes the well-being of the (upper) middle-class (see for instance Kirchberg and Kagan, 2013).

Social effects

It is often said that culture contributes to social cohesion, especially in a political context. This is the result of concerns about transformation in socio-economic, geopolitical and cultural relations, such as the degeneration of the so-called 'pillarization' ('verzuiling'), the attempts at achieving a unified Europe and an increasingly multicultural society. These developments strongly influence social cohesion, or 'the bonds and connection between different entities, the smallest included, in a social system' (NWO, 2000). Culture is often employed to improve the social climate in culturally diverse neighbourhoods. The idea is that cultural projects can strengthen a sense of social unity and create new bonds between groups by increasing mutual understanding and involvement. The relationship between culture and social cohesion has been studied quite intensely from the 1990's on. The organized cultural sector seems to generate the most effect in the social sphere, or at least a lot of research has been done in this field. 'Hard empirical evidence' was not found for every investigated sector, but based on the information gathered, it can be concluded that participating in social-cultural work, amateur arts, cultural heritage and the arts contributes among other things to the forming of a community, strengthening the social fabric, emancipation and empowerment.

Some reflections on the relative success of measuring the value of culture

Overall, the results of empirical research into the value of culture support the hypothesis that the experience of art, culture and heritage contributes to realizing socially sought-after effects such as cognitive development, health, social cohesion, technological and economic development. Yet the causality of this relationship is sometimes questionable and in reality the effects cannot so easily be separated from one another. Does the evidence base support the conclusion that culture indeed contributes to processes of socialization, qualification and subjectification (cf. chapter 1)? Both the cognitive research and the audience research show that cultural participation contributes to developing skills which are necessary to this process: perception, imagination, conceptualization and reflection. Furthermore, the social values which are related to culture are essential in socially crucial processes. The public that makes use of libraries, museums and the performing arts relates to society through its participation and qualifies and, in this way, conceptualizes its own experiences in it. Although the cultural sector does what it claims to do: offer unusual, authentic and valuable experiences which incite reflection and emotion in participants, our findings did raise some questions.

First of all, one may wonder whether the aforementioned effects could not be achieved in other sectors, such as education, sports and social projects as well, or possibly even better. The question of how personally experienced values can be translated to a broader social meaning is difficult, and finding empirically convincing evidence for this transfer is quite complex. Furthermore, we conclude that research into the societal impact of culture requires a long-term focus, which most research does not employ. We want to emphasize that durable effects can only be achieved through long-term participation in (organized) culture – even if short-term effects can sometimes be measured. Another point to be made is that we have hardly found any research that takes possible negative effects of organized culture into account. One can imagine harmful effects on ecology (e.g. noise, waste of electricity), or on social cohesion (when elitist forms of culture exclude certain groups). Although we were not looking to determine any negative

effects of culture, we are left with the impression that much research done focuses on the positive, in order to implicitly legitimize organized (whether subsidized or not) culture.

Even though some research is carefully executed and some results are quite convincing, research into the effects of culture has its limitations. We believe that the evidence base for cultural policy should be handled with care.

What the gathered research reports have in common is that all of them focus on 'organized culture', or cultural activities that are initiated or offered consciously, such as making a theatre performance, organizing a cooking club or opening a library. Most researchers don't use a broader anthropological definition of culture, such as the aforementioned 'socially shared reservoir or repertoire of signs' (cf. chapter 1). This would be a daunting task, as it would encompass almost all human (inter)action, and empirical research needs to be based on concrete, tangible activities, events or organizations in order to measure their effects. The research done shows that little can actually be measured. This is not to say that effects of culture which cannot be investigated according to the customary methodological rules do not exist. Serious researchers tend to be acutely aware of this fact and do not fail to emphasize this in their scientific reports, yet their results are often misunderstood on this point.

The problem arises with the currently trendy 'evidence-based' policy. Although there is no harm in trying to measure the effects of cultural policy, problems arise when the government in question only takes measures that it knows to be measurable beforehand. It is also important to keep in mind that measuring social capital and tolerance, or the monetarisation of immaterial values, as is done with the Social Return on Investment method, cannot be applied easily to the cultural domain. Qualitative measures, which allow participants to verbally elaborate on their experiences, seems more fitting, yet this makes the evidence harder to generalize.

In a society where 'hard' scientific evidence, as delivered by the natural sciences, has become customary, the culture sector, which focuses on immaterial values, faces numerous challenges. But the question remains whether the effects of culture can or

should always be generalizable. Galloway (2009) points out that research into the societal impact of culture should not focus on establishing general rules in cultural interventions and research methods that can be replicated in many different situations, but that it is necessary to investigate the singular nature of cultural interventions: what is the nature of the project and what social effect can it have, given that nature? Processes of socialization, qualification and especially subjectification are highly complex and often lead to unique effects which can rarely be generalized. One of culture's most important functions is indeed generating uniqueness and singularity, and it is this uniqueness which is hard to quantify or measure.

Finally, we want to underline that the inventory in this chapter does not cover all the values of culture. Although we looked at the demand-side of the cultural sector because it is easier to measure, this does not automatically suggest that we believe this approach is sufficient, or even suitable. We did not find any research which takes the performative power of the arts, culture and heritage itself into account. These objects and activities generate values of which the societal effects are unmeasurable, or which people haven't deemed worth measuring. As the word itself implies: dis-measure is hard to measure.

In our opinion, the grounds which support evidence-based research seem to be quite shaky, which is why we think judging cultural values from a professional perspective remains crucial. Audiences need to find what they are looking for, but are often truly touched by the unexpected. Monuments and art works from the past remind them of glorious moments, but can also profoundly alter their perspective on their own origins. Performing artists can overwhelm them with their virtuosity, technique and expressiveness, but they often only really move and unsettle us when they go above and beyond this and offer us something that exceeds the mere virtuosic.

How are we to measure this momentum? The abovementioned cognitive effects, experiential values, health effects, but also economic and social effects, are dependent on exactly this dis-measure. Showing us the known and the unknown, the digestive and the uncomfortable, the suspected and the unsuspected is a specific value generated by professionals in the cultural field, which is necessary to evoke and sustain the true subjectification of our existence and community.

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