

## **Introduction**

The "Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society" is, as its name clearly indicates, a multidisciplinary journal that offers an open stage for various perspectives and disciplinary approaches. This manifest pluralism is not only rooted in scepticism towards dogmatic developments within particular scientific disciplines. The linchpin of this attitude has been the objective of this journal to uncover and reflect upon the principal social characteristics of arts and culture. To use a Latin term, the arts are "res publica", and the grounds for this public nature are multiple and not solely detectable by one discipline. However, sociology is one of the major disciplines accessing this topic for several reasons:

1. As vital forms of expression and articulation the arts generate, promote and communicate interpretations of our social surroundings; they create meaning, shape representations and are thus essential social phenomena.
2. The arts constitute individual and collective identities. Identities are socially formed and negotiated; and this formation and negotiation include criticism, conflicts as well as processes of recognition and rejection, appreciation and depreciation or even vilification. All of this is reflected in the arts; the arts create identities, and identities create the arts.
3. Arts and culture are interconnected with manifold everyday practices and professional artistic activities such as production, consumption, distribution, mediation, archiving, editing, and all kinds of economic transactions.

All these issues justify that sociology pays considerable attention to arts and culture. Extending this sociological interest to arts management is thus not surprising at all.

Arts management has been traditionally closely associated with business economics and management studies. An extreme position would therefore argue that arts management represents a professional field that has no significant difference to any other business field. Hence, persons with practical experience in any business might be competent enough to maintain leading positions as arts managers in all cultural organizations. However, individuals who have been professionally socialized in the arts generally tend to conceive arts management differently; frequently they distance themselves, mostly as superior, to arts management issues. This dissociation from everyday organizational necessities is not just subjective; it is engrained in social expectations of many arts fields in varying national or other collective contexts.

In its original etymological sense "management" means "taking care of something" (see Martin Heidegger's "Besorgen", i.e., solicitude, actively caring for someone who needs help). Similarly, "economy" means "taking care of a household". Associating these meanings with the arts we can interpret arts management as caring for the goods, activities and aims of this field. This interpretation premises commitment, an intensive and passionate involvement in artistic and symbolic formation (Ernst Cassirer) in specific processes of communicative action (Jürgen Habermas) and in concrete fields of cultural production and reproduction (Pierre Bourdieu, Paul DiMaggio, and Richard Peterson). The presupposition of commitment prohibits arts management to be solely a technical issue which can be addressed by every person who has been formally or practically trained in business studies but needs an empathetic institutional context. Participation in and commitment to arts and culture appear to be crucial and indispensable to taking care of such "res publica". Management, understood as taking care of arts and culture implies having a strong concern of and being existentially engaged in this field. In addition, an ethical dimension of this activity is pivotal; commitment to arts and culture corresponds strongly with accepting responsibility for stakeholders and a broader public. The stakeholders are the immediate organisation, employees and clients; the public is the polis, i.e., the Aristotelian conception of

political community that surrounds and interferes with the arts institution. Thus, it is necessary to broaden the discourse of arts management by sociological, philosophical and other non-economic perspectives, functions and objectives.

The current issue of the *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society* thus focuses on the mutual social relations of arts organization and artistic activities through the role and influence of art management. In this context "organisation" refers to structures as well as processes, i.e., the coordination of labour and the cooperation within the team and towards the external social, political and economic players. The arguments and discussions unfolded in the articles are empirically based and often critical-reflective disclosures of underlying intentions. Both, descriptiveness and reflectivity are complementary; one aims to capture a topic in order to improve knowledge by empirical investigation and the other wishes to express concerns and potential contention about the matters discussed. No doubt, descriptiveness and reflectivity, explanation and understanding, analysis and criticism are relevant in all presented articles. Deliberately we speak of relevance and not of objectivity. Indeed, objectivity has been a principal conception of Western theory of science and has emerged in times when science struggled against any illegitimate and unjustified influence of social instances such as the church, the court or the state. The power of objectivity appeared to be almost transcendental, so that no authority on earth could challenge it. For many scientists the concept of objectivity has been founded on rationality incorporated in formal logic and systematic methodology, and thus on the belief of value-free and interest-neutral reasoning. The underlying epistemology overlooked the fact that the framework of research, i.e., the various practices of scientific work, the norms of the scientific community, and the commitment of individual researchers together constitute particular national or other collective styles of thought, different sources of cognition, and varying bases of judgement. Thus we recognise that the authors of this issue formulate their ideas and arguments not from value-neutral positions and not from a God's-eye-view upon reality (Hilary Putman) but rather from a position within their own specific academic and artistic fields. They are engaged and reflective participants in arts and culture, being embedded in social and art worlds from the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, and Russia. From each of these backgrounds they develop their legitimate concerns about issues they observe and experience about arts managements.

The first article by Ian Sutherland and Jonathan Gosling embark upon the sociological inquiry into arts management by answering the basic question of, "what is cultural leadership?" Their context is the reaction of arts administration and arts management to the financial and administrative crisis of major British cultural institutions around 2000. Likewise following Heidegger's concept of "taking care" by solicitude they define cultural leadership – now more than ever – as advocacy and facilitation, as affordance for world making activity, as aid for "emerging the emergent" in the art world. The second article by Christoph Behnke looks at such a case of cultural leadership. In the contemporary visual arts at the turn to the 1970s, likewise a time of cultural crises, Harald Szeemann became the role model of a curator as arts manager who does neither object the organizational and institutional pressures nor falls victim to the economic pressures of the market but uses his skills and knowledge of the 1960s social movements to manage this specific art field. Behnke derives his results from the analysis of a specific exhibition curated by Szeemann in Bern, Switzerland, in 1969, and deducts his findings first and foremost from Bourdieu's field theory and second from Mulcahy's typology of cultural entrepreneurs. The third article by Yvonne Küsters employs Luhmann's system theory of functional differentiation to explain the contemporary role of arts managers between "taking care" financially and artistically. The "splitted personality" of arts managers between the artistic and economic regulations has been identified by interviewing German arts managers who do (or, less often, who do not) regard art and economy as strictly self-referential ("autonomous") functional systems. The fourth article by Katia Segers and Annick Schramme also looks at these tensions between arts management and artists. Based on comprehensive data of Flemish performing arts organizations the two scholars

state an increasing split between these two “systems” at the cost of the artists, due to a professionalization of arts management that is the (unintended) consequence of Flemish arts policy. The fifth paper is an in-depth insight in arts management within the context of Russian society from the 1990s onward. Sofia Tchouikina provides a linkage to the first article of this issue on cultural leadership because she also deals with a crisis, a crisis that has not only been a crisis of cultural institutions but of a whole society for more than a decade. She describes how some traits of Russian cultural management react to this crisis and channel their institutions through the predicament. Here, cultural leadership is defined by accepting and employing Western arts policies and arts management rules. Imported from the West (as so many things), arts managers soon after 1990 took hold in several art fields of this society, mostly taking care of finding substitutes (foundations, sponsoring) to the dwindling former state subsidies. However, the “autonomous” field of state arts administration still remains a significant part of Russian culture, as the author’s interviews with arts managers prove. But despite the assumption that the traditional state system seems to be better fitted to secure their income many artists do not criticize the change towards a Westernized arts management because they regard it as a necessary confrontation of the traditional state bureaucracy that is still dominating the Russian art world in their own way of “cultural leadership”. As shown in all five articles, arts management has the main function of “taking care”, in different contexts in different ways. Despite an increasingly globalized world there is not one (American) but many ways of optimizing how arts management can achieve the cooperation of arts and society, each according to the specific social frameworks of society.

The basis for the peer-reviewed assortment of these articles was the induction of the new research stream “Arts Management: A Sociological Inquiry” at the 9<sup>th</sup> European Sociological Association conference in Lisbon in September 2009, a research stream initiated and organized by the two guest editors of this issue. For the very first time, in very well-attended sessions on “epistemological considerations”, “normative considerations”, “arts managers as agents of change”, “institutional structures and practices”, and “arts governance”, 20 scholars from a wider range of interested social scientists were selected and invited to present their sociological and interdisciplinary thoughts and researches on arts management at a European sociological conference. As social scientists studying arts institutions, we are grateful to the executive editors of the Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society to once again (after a likewise international issue based on papers from the ESA Sociology of the Arts Research Network meeting in Lüneburg, Germany, in 2007) have the opportunity to contribute to the discourse of the increasingly important interface of “arts management” and “society”.

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