BETWEEN "WHAT IS" AND "WHAT MIGHT BE": TOWARDS A PARTICIPATORY UNDERSTANDING OF ARTS AND CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT: Recent concepts of a democratic public sphere have repercussions for arts and cultural management and lead to defining the production of a polyphonic discourse as cultural management's guiding principle. My article maps out this idea, which is based on a research project that investigated how arts and cultural management processes can initiate and professionally coordinate processes of cultural meaning production. On the basis of a cultural studies approach, cultural production in this sense is defined as a collaborative and circular process in which perspectives and attitudes are publicly generated, gathered, and distributed. The key result of the study is a moderation model for arts and cultural managers: Their main task and cultural-political responsibility is hereby seen as rooted within a mediation process of hegemonic and alternative attributions of meaning.

KEYWORDS: Participatory arts management, cultural meaning production, active audiences, public(-sphere) building processes

INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS PARTICIPATORY CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Current trends toward civic participation in, and co-shaping of, culture mean that various, also contradictory, perspectives are given space for articulation. These developments become especially virulent in participatory art projects as such projects refer to concrete social phenomena that are collaboratively negotiated with civic participation. In this way, participatory art projects refer to the demand to shift social issues directly into the viewing field of artistic creation and develop access to and communication spaces for cultural attributions. By enabling participation, such projects initiate cultural meaning processes.

Accordingly, the question arises of whether coordination processes within these participatory art projects allow for the development of new perspectives for arts and cultural management research and practice. In their conceptual design, participatory art projects refer to changes in the field of cultural management that are shaped by breaking out of traditional roles, multiple working fields, technological–thereby associated and potentially democratic—possibilities, and collaborative processes of meaning production. In addition, participatory art projects meet the demands of a shift in meaning and re-thinking of Cultural Management: Recent debates focusing on the societal dimensions of arts and culture take into account cultural management's diverse levels of action and advocate for contextualization beyond a purely cultural-economic focus.

With a view to participatory art projects, yet at the same time, pointing beyond these, the following article discusses how, and to what extent, art can be comprehended as an intervening motor of cultural meaning production. The argument is thus made that a specific space between "fact" and "fiction" acts as fertile ground for the production of a polyphonic discourse, and thereby cultural meaning production. Establishing these "in-between spaces" and initiating and moderating these (participatory) processes of cultural production are seen as the core task of arts and cultural managers.

The article is based on a dissertation project "Art goes Culture – Zum Handlungsfeld Kulturmanagement im Kontext zeitgenössischer Kunst und kultureller Produktion" (Art goes Culture – Cultural management in the context of contemporary art and cultural production) at the University of Salzburg[1], and follows the structure of this project. First, I will briefly introduce the design of the analysis and context of the research. Second, I will present the main concepts and interdisciplinary considerations involved in a participatory understanding of arts and cultural management. Finally, I will link these findings

with the results of empirical research by presenting a graph that summarizes the processes of moderating participatory management processes as collaborative (negotiation) processes of cultural meaning production.

DESIGN OF ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT FOR RESEARCH

Combining a hermeneutic approach with an empirical study, the "Art goes Culture" project attempted to develop communicative action spaces for cultural organization and mediation processes, and discussed the question of how "managing culture" can refer to a field of contemporary art and culture production.

Referring to an understanding of cultural production that is based on civic participants' active in shaping culture, the *hermeneutic part* considered concepts that enable such participation, for example, the concept of cultural citizenship (Stevenson 2002, Klaus/Lünenborg), the three-tier model of the public sphere (Klaus 1998), and participatory culture (Jenkins et all 2005). These concepts were examined for their relevance to the arts and cultural sector, in particular the societal dimension of arts and culture. These findings—combined with the empirical study—were discussed in terms of their relevance to re-thinking arts and cultural management.

[2] Five projects, which all positioned themselves in the "independent art scene," were analyzed in-depth.

The *empirical study* focused on art and culture projects[2] that employed or realized participatory practices or structures in their artistic and cultural activities: A theatrical play that took up regional contemporary witness reports of the February uprising in 1934 and treated this ignored aspect of Austrian history in a powerful visual and verbal stage production (Theater Hausruck: Hunt oder der totale Februar, Hausruck, 2005); An artists' collective that transformed a long vacant shop near a bus stop into a walk-in Advent calendar in order to create a microcosm of artistic performance within and yet beyond pre-Christmas consumer inebriation – Passers-by were invited to enjoy and participate in poetic art miniatures in this heart-warming atmosphere (Untitled: Warteraum für Winterreisende, Salzburg, 2008); An artists' group placed a pink-painted garden house on an urban square in front of a church, thereby creating an unconventional communication space, which served as a zone for the mediation of a long-term conflict among residents, drug addicts, and decision makers in city politics (Wochenklausur, Kassel 2012).

Common among the initiators was that their understanding of art correlated with the social aspiration to connect art and everyday life. The audience is hereby recognized as an active part in the sense of its co-determination of the

project. Alongside the programmatic artistic objectives, each of the project initiators was involved in a collaborative leadership team. As primary artist, each was additionally responsible for the organization process as well as the related participation processes. Through guided interviews, an examination was made of how these artists, as managers of their own project initiatives, coordinate organization, communication, and participation processes. The challenges that resulted within and through the participatory course of the projects were also looked at.

RE-THINKING CULTURAL PRODUCTION: ACTIVELY SHAPING CULTURE

An active co-determination of culture is or must be at the forefront when culture—in a Cultural Studies sense—is understood as a type of lifestyle or dynamic and negotiable navigation system through everyday life. After all, "culture" is evident mainly in our everyday structures of perception, our gestures, and actions. Cultural production[3] can consequently be defined as that process in which perspectives and attitudes are generated, adopted, and distributed in a public circulation process, but, in this, also continually reproduced and renegotiated within society (cf. Zobl/Lang 2012). Production of culture hence implies that culture does not succumb to an attitude of "culture just happens," but instead, necessitates active co-determination, even co-production, by the relevant publics.

[3] The term cultural production can be traced back to Pierre Bourdieu, who clarifies in The Field of Cultural Production (Bourdieu 2003), the extent to which so-called "multiple mediators" participate in meaning ascriptions through asserting their influence, and thereby produce culture (see on this, Lang 2015: 44f.)

Culture as this dynamic process is shaped by constant adaptation, shifts, and changes. French philosopher Jacques Rancière, among others, in his address "The Emancipated Spectator" (2007) emphasized the extent to which active co-design of this process is a central characteristic of self-empowerment and democratic participation. He refers to the necessity of transgressing hierarchical borders and actively interpreting and co-determining "history": "It calls for spectators who are active interpreters, who render their own translation, who appropriate the story of themselves, and who ultimately make their own story out of it" (Rancière 2007: 280). Actively interpreting and co-determining "history," initiating a change in a social or cultural status quo, should accordingly be the intention of every cultural production process that seeks to initiate reflection on, and discourse of, cultural, social, and societal grievances (or those considered as such).

Since culture, with its wide-ranging reference system and as core of our own "history" is, however, constantly tied up with social, political, legal, economic, and technical or media-based contexts (cf. du Gay et al. 1997, Johnson 1996),

cultural changes can be triggered by a great number of these contextual factors. When cultural production is understood as this active co-determination of cultural meaning processes, mainly the relationship of culture and power(-preservation) is what must be shifted or partially forced open through civic participation.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AS PREREQUISITE OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE CONCEPTS OF *CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP* AND *PARTICIPATORY CULTURE*

Competent civic participation in cultural resources is enabled or promoted through the concept of *cultural citizenship*.[4] The concept emphasizes culture's dynamic and negotiable character, the civic base of cultural production processes, and civil society's claim to participating in its definition. Therefore, in a cultural and media studies context, Klaus/Lünenborg (2004, 2012) formulate four "rights" that enable a competent share in cultural resources and thereby in cultural developments:[5]

- *Right to information* – as access to, but also transparency of, data, facts, and information in order to arrive at a collaborative decision-making base

- *Right to experience* – as space in which diverse ways of living and identity concepts are or can be expressed

- *Right to knowledge* – as introduction of prior knowledge and claims to competence, necessary for making independent interpretations

- *Right to participation* – as an active and open forum for the expression of opinion and interpretations

In guaranteeing these four rights, communication processes are initiated that are located between the poles of "recognition" (of known and familiar) and "discovery" (of the new). As Klaus/Lünenborg explain, only between these poles can processes of developing social and individual meaning occur that emphasize the connection of culture and everyday life rather than, per se, intend a reproduction of hegemonic and dominating cultural attributions: "Cultural citizenship locates the substantial meaning of citizenship in the everyday practices of sharing space and forming and exchanging ideas" (2010: 221, quoted in Klaus/Lünenborg 2012: 202).

[4] The concept of Cultural Citizenship presents an expansion and differentiation of Thomas M. Marshall's (see 1992) concept of citizenship based on rights and obligations and focuses particularly on citizens' civil rights by including cultural practices that develop against the backdrop of unequal power relations, and make it possible to partake in society's symbolic resources (see Klaus/Lünenborg 2004).

[5] These rights are demands a society makes of media. In the context of the analysis, these demands were transferred to the artistic-cultural production process; the right to cultural productions also explicitly embraces the enabling of an active part in shaping cultural meaning processes. The moderation of this process can analogously be regarded as a mediating authority.

Initiating processes for the negotiation of "culture" and cultural ascriptions that engage civil society and that (might) also contradict existing power relations, can be seen as an expression of a participatory culture (cf. Jenkins et al. 2006). Participatory culture thus denotes

> "...[a] culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created)" (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 3).

This concept considers the development of a participatory culture a prerequisite for the creation of low-barrier spaces of action that enable equal participation in, and co-determination of knowledge production processes. Therefore Jenkins et al. define four parameters of a *participatory culture*:

- *Affiliations* (as development of a sense of belonging and structure of a participatory public)

- *Expressions* (as having a productive share in shaping culture—or a cultural project)

- *Collaborative problem-solving* (as collaborative work towards a shared goal)

- *Circulations* (as public circulation processes)

It is primarily the significance of this sense of belonging and the necessity of a collaborative resolution practice that support civic engagement in processes of cultural meaning production.[6]

PROCESSES OF CULTURAL CHANGE: INTERWEAVING THREE LEVELS OF PUBLICS

In these current approaches to enable civic participation in culture, diverse forms and forums of communication define the public and have a part in production of the public sphere. Among several concepts and recent considerations that aim to redefine the public sphere in its diversity (Fraser 1998, Wimmer 2007, Mouffe 2008), Elisabeth Klaus's *three-tier model of the public sphere*

[6] On the basis of the four parameters formulated by Jenkins et al., the empirical part examined whether structures and mechanisms can be detected that—at least temporarily—have supported the production of a participatory culture, and if so, which ones.

makes distinctions primarily on the basis of social and communicative relations (cf. Klaus 1998: 137f and 2001: 22). She thus distinguishes between simple, middle, and complex publics, which in their relation to one another are a crucial part of processes of cultural meaning production.

Simple publics, which can be characterized mainly by direct, interpersonal, and narrative forms, emerge in "spontaneously developing communications in everyday life" (Klaus 1998: 137). *Middle or mid-level publics* are often related to these simple publics, as they present a structured, organized forum for mutual interests and fields of action. A prototype of this level of public is a gathering whose constitution is determined by the purpose, theme, and regulation for the communication process. Often, in this level of public, individual life experiences are bundled as group experiences (cf. Klaus 2001: 22). With their division of labour and stable structures, mass media and professionalized public structures form the level identified as *complex publics*, and can be defined mainly through their extensive distribution capabilities and communication competence, as well as hierarchical arrangement. These three levels of publics are in a continuous interrelationship and therefore in constant exchange.

Table 1.
Abb.: Typology of partial publics (cf. Klaus 2001: 22)

Level of Public	Communicator roles	Relationship between communicators and audience	Function
simple	Without requirements	Interpersonal and equal	Determination of meaning and effect of themes
middle	Statute-regulated, professional competence required	Direct, with a simultaneous role differentiation	Mediating role: gather and preparing themes
complex	Demanding and professionalized	One-sided and indirect	Theme selection, processing, and distribution

 "Cultural agreements" or "cultural identities" (Klaus 1998: 135) are confirmed or rejected in this dynamic, three-dimensional process. Complex publics present a formative and powerful authority, especially "...in the cultural struggle for social interpretational power" (Klaus 2001: 24). However, interpersonal communication processes and those related to everyday life, are, for their part, given a central role in re-coding, that is, in the introduction of alternative cultural attributions of meaning to existing, influential perspectives and positions. "The social power relations of opposing discourses and positions are expressed [...] most likely at the simple level of the public sphere" (Klaus 2001: 24). A transformation process of existing cultural perspectives, codes, and imprints

is activated in its initial stage in that simple and (consequently also) mid-level publics take a critical stance toward complex publics, or are "no longer capable of consensus from these construed social realities" (Klaus 1998: 143). A form of counter public arises that is often oriented in opposition to the complex public, and questions its credibility. Thus, in his (similar) three-level model of (counter) publics, Wimmer speaks at the mid-level of the necessity of a so-called "participatory (counter-)public," which in a professionalized structure operates as a mouthpiece for opposing discourses and consequently can (potentially) influence the course of discourse (cf. Wimmer 2007: 237).

Cultural meaning production is thereby ideally co-determined and co-supported by all three levels of publics. Transformed cultural attributions are also, in the ideal case, re-integrated into their existing relationship to one another, which has been temporarily broken open. In this process of transformation, especially the mid-level public acts as mediator of simple and complex publics as well as their themes and interests.

(PARTICIPATORY) ART AND ITS ROLE IN PROCESSES OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

As aforementioned, cultural meaning processes are strongly regulated by diverse claims to power and exclusionary mechanisms. These processes are accordingly shaped by conflicts as well as contradictory interests. This presents one of the main reasons for so-called cultural interventions,[7] which consciously and actively seek renegotiation of an existing (cultural) status quo, or as the case may be, established perspectives and attitudes. In this way, numerous contemporary artistic projects intervene in this reference system: They critically confront our everyday framework of meaning, question what is familiar, usual, common, and draft differentiated angles of awareness.

In the art sector, participatory art projects, in particular, become manifest as cultural interventions, as in their activities, they actively seek to realize a social demand striving to combine artistic with socio-cultural practices: They reflect a cultural status quo and thereby refer to what is visible in everyday practice as common cultural ascriptions of meaning. They intervene in what is currently understood and lived as culture—by "using" the power of the arts as a specific cultural form and practice (cf. Cassirer 1990; Bayer 2006): Art allows us to see the forms of the world without explaining them. Whereas other cultural icons and practices—such as science or language—strive to explain reality structurally, "[a]rt's symbolism evokes aesthetic experiences in the beholder that are

[7] In art, the term intervention was used in the 1990s and subsequently mainly for an "art of negotiation" (Steyerl 2002).

richer and more complex than the sense experiences of everyday life" (Paetzold 2008: 92). In the form of imaginative depictions and strategies and methods specific to the arts, such as concentration, visualization, heightening, and alienation (cf. Lang 2015: 98f) a so-called *distance* becomes evident.

This *distance*, in which art appears parallel or analogous to that which it refers to, is understood—according to Ernst Cassirer—as a specific feature of art as cultural symbol and practice. After all: "Our aesthetic awareness […] contains endless possibilities within it, which remain unrealized in common sense experience" (Paetzold 2008: 92). Art's uniqueness is found in this possibility of being able to grapple with "reality" (or with forms of it) beyond the usual sense experience (cf. ibid.).

In participatory art projects, this specific feature of art as a cultural form[8] and practice is located in a social- and context-related dimension of art. This dimension of art has become part of its self-image and also part of the self-perception of artistic activities mainly since and with the 1960s. An expanded concept of art, a so-called "erweiterte Kunstbegriff" was decisive in this era, striving to define and negotiate art in its interrelationship with social, economic, political, and also technical and scientific developments and conditions. A shift in the awareness of the audience also went along with this changed understanding of art. The hitherto passive beholders and art recipients became a central, participating component of the artwork or artistic production (cf. Tepper/Ivey 2008: 5f). Developing parallel to that was the demand of addressing a broad, namely civic audience. Numerous actions that actively included the audience in the artistic production process were based on the premise of a connection to the social context, of being situated within basic social parameters.

Following this understanding of art, participatory art projects refer to the demand to shift social issues directly into the viewing field of artistic and cultural creation and to develop access to, and communication spaces for, cultural attributions: A specific current social state of affairs is addressed, and in line with its underlying cultural patterns, it is collaboratively negotiated with civic participation. **Specifying art: Spaces between "fact" and "fiction"**

Thus, artistic practices as (specific) cultural practices do not—primarily—make the claim of generating solutions, explanatory models, or models for negotiation. Instead, they open up spaces for sensual experience. Because of this, perspectives can open up beyond conventional and common structures of experience and perception. In interaction, or a back-and-forth with the imaginary-aesthetic, a type of in-between or counter space arises. This space is situated

[8] In this sense, all artifacts or artistic activities point beyond and distance themselves from these common or phenomenal references to which they refer—but become evident, in particular, in participatory art projects

between "fact" and "fiction," between the worlds of what is and what is possible and can be seen as initiator and motor of processes of cultural production. This space corresponds with the declared processes of *Cultural Citizenship*, which are located between the poles of "recognition" (of known and familiar) and "discovery" (of the new) and which enable (re-)negotiations of cultural meaning ascriptions.

Space, here in the sense of Henry Lefebvre, and critical discourse analysis understood as a product of social practice, is constituted mainly by individual and collective actions. Vice versa, specific social processes and practices, for their part, become spatial: spaces are thus characterized in that interpretations of and from "reality" are negotiated in them. On the other hand, Michel Foucault defines those localizable spatial structures in which dominant orders are opposed by other orders, and conventional thought structures are pried open, as "other spaces" (cf. Foucault 1984). Other spaces represent spatial challenges to social order, as they are within society yet step out of it. In other words, they are "absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about" (Foucault 1984). In this, they constantly refer to what can be understood as a kind of "normal" or familiar space,[9] but break through it in terms of its illusion and concentration. Apart from conventional structures and, often, dominant communication content, other spaces offer a primarily purposeless, yet nonetheless goal-oriented framework enabling alternative perception processes and triggering negotiation processes. Due to their difference, they open a space of experience that cannot (per se) be developed in and with conventional structures for perception and common schemes for interpretation. In this way, these spaces allow (conceptual) gaps to arise, which opens up those illusionary areas of freedom that activate imaginative and creative processes.

[9] Foucault also calls them "real sites."

In the art context, in particular, these spaces can also be grasped as spaces of aesthetic processes (cf. Warning 2009): "When we dedicate ourselves to an aesthetic experience, we thereby enter aesthetic spaces that are entirely different than factual spaces" (Brandstätter 2012: 176). Arising in spaces beyond conventional structures of experience is "...a field of tension between order and non-order, or apparent-order within which art [....] seems to represent the central authority of heterotopia in that it enables an experience of failure or transgression of established orders" (Tafazoly/Gray 2012: 10). In this in-between space, experiences are enabled and negotiation options opened up that in "normal space" are prevented by conventions, existing roles, and expectations. For the time frame in which an individual (or group) enters this space, or becomes involved with this "microcosm," it signifies "reality." It represents a reality of its own.

As Siegfried Jäger, proponent of a critical discourse analysis, points out; this parallel world plays a central role in the discursive structures of (counter-) spaces (cf. Jäger 2012: 35). Through and in these counter or in-between spaces, a discourse is produced that is, indeed, tied into and refers to a current, socio-discursive context. It nonetheless has its "own materiality" (Jäger 2012: 35), which, for its part, opens new discourse approaches; that is, an "other" discourse. In "normal space," a dominant or hegemonic discourse generally predominates, which is commonly institutionally anchored within a society, for example, through laws or social structures. This dominant discourse is also usually the one that exercises a formative influence on cultural and social perspectives and discursive practices. A new view of these dominant discourses, and the meanings associated with them can be gained from spaces that constitute beyond the normal space or as "islands" within it. Also, new lines of discourse can form that strive to oppose existing, dominant discourses. This likewise implies giving a voice to ignored discourses (or themes and concerns) that are not given any space for articulation by dominant discourse and its communicative contexts. In this sense, these in-between spaces are to be understood as temporary communication spaces that concentrate various lines of discourse and (possibly) open alternative, complex discourses.

The idea of a participatory culture or the concept of Cultural Citizenship calls for precisely this enabling of spaces of articulation for ignored, conflicted or marginalized perspectives, themes, and topics in its current considerations of a diverse (and democratic) public sphere. With that, they have available that spatial constitution resting on interaction and difference that creates or can create conditions for an alternative path of development (cf. Massey 2005). In this way, these spaces attain central meaning, especially in the production of public space that can be concretely tied to cultural (meaning) production: If the public sphere, in general, should be understood as a dissent-oriented negotiation space, in which conflicting interests and values are expressed (cf: Mouffe 2007 and 2008), then it is precisely this format of a space between "fact" and "fiction" that can be grasped as a motor of collaborative meaning production.

CONSEQUENCES FOR A PARTICIPATORY UNDERSTANDING OF ARTS AND CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

In this sense and in summary, cultural managers are increasingly required to act as ambassadors of a participatory understanding of culture. A new understanding of communication policy is derived from this demand: The goal of

communication in the art and culture sector is regarded as opening a discourse, as creating space for diverse, also contradictory communication processes.

The initiated discourse must conform to an understanding of cultural participation as a decision making process that involves contradictory interpretations articulated and formed from specific individual cultural contexts and life situations. Therefore, the discourse cannot be understood (per se) as a confirmation of already existing paradigms of practice (Miessen 2011: 80). Instead, it must also be understood as a conflict-oriented field producing new and changed cultural perspectives. This implies that controversial perspectives cannot be viewed as undesirable and dangerous to an institution, but instead, must be seen as necessary and goal-promoting. In other words, what should be initiated are negotiation processes, in particular those that require a charged relationship of diverging interests and different intentions, which, for their part, are integral components of culture and cultural meaning production. Participation in the cultural sector thereby implies the specific conflict potential that first enables an exchange of knowledge and change (cf. Miessen 2011: 70 f.).

For the (artistic-)cultural production process,[10] it is necessary to consciously and contemplatively apprehend this *imaginative-relational microcosm*, which I call this space between "fact" and "fiction" produced within the aesthetic processes (of experience). Art and cultural managers are requested to spatially and discursively expand and open this space to direct experience and co-shaping by means of possibilities for direct mediation and participation. As a site where perspective is reassessed, this space, namely, triggers processes of aesthetic experience primarily when alternative or different options for interpretation can be directly experienced in the context of individual, existing competences and perspectives. Participants bring in their own prior knowledge, try out playful-fictive or—in the isolation as microcosm—unplanned, yet nonetheless reality-related differentiated perspectives and actions. The confrontation that takes place can be equated with an interaction process about the meanings of cultural symbols and therefore about the diversity of ascriptions of cultural meaning.

[10] As I call processes of *cultural production* initiated by the arts.

With this approach, the communication process that occurs in participatory projects approaches the understanding of a *participatory culture*. Parallel to that, it also approaches that understanding of public that grasps polyphonic interpretations and opposing perspectives as integral parts or characteristics of a discourse. In this context, polyphonic refers to the fact that ambiguous interpretations have space within a discourse, or comprise it, as is argued mainly by the *three-tier model of the public sphere.* Thereby, it is precisely the so

called temporary mid-level, which functions as mediator between the everyday environment of a simple public sphere and the media-shaped complex public sphere, and which is produced in participatory art projects created as an organized platform, a temporary participatory public, for intervention in an existing cultural status quo.

In a cultural-political dimension, managing participatory projects also comprises the negotiation of hegemonic cultural assignments of meaning and alternative or diverging connotations. In this negotiation process, however, the intention is to grasp the communication process itself as the goal of the artistic-cultural production process rather than develop or argue *a* perspective. With this communicative goal, cultural management does justice to not only the demands of *cultural citizenship*, but (also) the mentioned *specification of art as symbolic form*. Since art does not aim at delivering an explanation, and instead, refrains from a clear affiliation with that which it refers to (by means of distance), it initiates an open atmosphere for dialogue and mobilizes communication processes. This involves reflection on one's own perspective. Exchange with the artefact, and with those involved on and in the microcosm evokes processes for negotiating what appears in this temporary space, and what is drafted as conceptual alternatives.

The goal is to initiate a discourse with a multitude of perspectives that also includes opposing views and conflicting interests as integral components. Consequently, enabling this polysemous or polyphonic discourse, which is understood as an (articulation) space for diverse, also contradictory positions and perspectives, must be grasped as a premise for artistic-cultural production processes—and thus for arts and cultural management!

FROM INTERVENTION TO TRANSFORMATION: MODERATING ARTISTIC-CULTURAL PRODUCTION PROCESSES

Thus, what implications do these findings and considerations have for the practice of arts and cultural managers? In artistic-cultural production processes, arts and cultural managers act as those agents who initiate communicative transformation processes in the context of art and culture and moderate them as a collaborative process based on work-sharing with artists, numerous cooperation partners, and integrated (civil) partial publics. The integrative component of this communication process is, or should be, to give space to alternative and diverse interpretations of a specific cultural or social phenomenon through participation and co-determination.

On the basis of the empirical study and as reflected by daily practice, the communicative process turns out to be circular or circulation-shaped, whereby five phases could be determined:

A specific cultural phenomenon is taken up as a thematic field and collaboratively negotiated. The centre of this exchange process—and model—is that (temporary) *imaginative-relational microcosm*, which as aesthetic space of experience represents a space of communication and negotiation. It evokes and allows for the articulation of diverse associations and interpretations.

The intervention begins by referring to the present cultural status quo. This selection of a thematic field and the planned staging of a specific (cultural) phenomenon imply the initiation of a negotiation process for an existing cultural meaning ascription. In interaction with the artistic production process, references to everyday experiences and environments of the groups in question must be analysed and made visible. With respect to production processes in civil society, the moderator's task is to create access for specific partial publics—not only to the thematic field, but to the project itself. That implies building up a sense of affiliation and producing a (temporary) participatory public sphere—step by step:

- A *first phase (idea and conception)* serves primarily for sounding out the project idea, or the thematic field to be staged. A specific (cultural)

thematic field is taken up (critically). Initial approaches for the artistic realization, as well as forms of participation and participants, are explored. In this run-up to the concrete project event and in addition or parallel to economic tasks, mainly curatorial tasks (in the form of theme selection and a comprehensive analysis or research) and integrative ones (in the inclusion of cooperation partners and participants) have to be fulfilled.

- Depending on a go/no-go moment, subject to the acceptance or rejection of base financing, in a positive case, the *second phase (conception and concretization)* follows. The hitherto rough concept must be concretized and participatory and participative processes initiated, or a (professional) framework for diverse formats for participation created. This also means determining at an artistic level, the extent to which participants are able to become involved in the artistic realization.

- The concrete event or staging as artistic (-cultural) program defines the next, increasingly, publicly visible part of the project, which can be defined as a *third phase (staging and event).* This can involve, for example, the premiere of a theatre production, an exhibition opening, or a concert appearance. This phase is shaped mainly by a concentration of numerous lines of production and forms of participation. In this particular project event phase, the "microcosm" becomes evident, although it forms a spatial constant for the collaborative production process through the entire course of the project.

- Subsequent to the project event, the moderator must then gather, focus, and make visible or tangible, once again for a complex public, those transformation processes initiated by means of alternative and polysemous interpretations of meaning in the microcosm. This includes responsibilities of (media-based) documentation as well as communicative, public relations measures and offers of art or culture mediation for reflection and articulation. In this *fourth phase (distribution and circulation),* the project event and its contextual relations are publicly communicated and diverse interpretations are distributed. In addition to media-based documentation and distribution, opportunities for art and cultural mediation also play a central role here (building on phases 2 and 3).

- In the concluding *fifth phase (documentation and transformation)*, the course of the project and the project event are documented and reflected upon and frequently re-formatted for different publics. In this

phase, also the cultural manager's cultural mediation responsibility can be particularly requested, for example, when concrete appeals for action are made of cultural contexts in the course of the project. Thus, in the ideal case, here all previous phases flow into a feedback process for everyday practices of simple (and mid-level) publics. The level of a complex public thereby once again plays a central role as it determines the integration of diverging perspectives in a cultural field of meaning, and the acceptance of shifts within a discourse field.

On the basis of these five phases, which consolidate this communicative process to a type of circulation as fluid and overlapping partial processes rather than as closed entities, and with a view to public-forming processes, the model reproduces a prototypical, and hence also idealized communicative negotiation process. It illustrates how the process of cultural meaning production can be initiated and professionally coordinated by moderating the cooperation of the project's managerial, artistic, and civic production levels.[11] Linking these three production levels is necessary to perceive cultural meaning production as a collaboratively negotiated task. This implies taking into account the entanglement of artistic and cultural production conditions, while still allowing for change.

A FUTURE TASK: ESTABLISHING PARTICIPATORY SPACES OF EMANCIPATION

Arts and Cultural managers' mediation responsibility consequently comprises an interaction process, which not only takes place between art and society, but also at a cultural-political dimension. It encompasses the negotiation of hegemonic cultural attributions of meaning that are often bound up with established power relations and alternative or diverging connotations. Since interventions often aim at creating space for marginalized positions, this might mean, for cultural management research and practice, that independent and so-called sub-cultural scenes and minority positions should, or must, be granted more attention and significance. Precisely these (counter-)positions demonstrate those alternative attributions of meaning that are essential for cultural transformation and thereby, also cultural developments. A "future task"—as Max Fuchs, Chairman of the German Cultural Committee, formulates with regard to cultural transformation—would "...therefore consist of preserving spaces of emancipation in contexts of ever more subtle power relations" (Fuchs 2012: 67) or, for arts and cultural managers, to consciously produce and develop these spaces. Both the model and article seek to make a methodological contribution to this postulate in order to achieve its realization within cultural managerial practice.

[11]With regard to the (general) collaboration of art and cultural production, this direct interweaving of these three levels is not given, per se, but instead comprises a field of tasks and production based on the division of labor of artists, curators, mediators, and cultural managers.

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