2. Political Statements about Culture, Art and Society in the Netherlands: the National Government

Dutch cultural policy can be regarded as a joint effort of the national, provincial and municipal governments. When researching the functioning of the performing arts in a city in the Netherlands, the national political agenda and local politics both have to be taken into account because the national government is largely responsible for subsidizing theatre groups, dance companies and symphony orchestras as well as jazz and classical music ensembles.\(^1\) The theatres and concert halls in the Netherlands are exclusively paid for by municipalities. Provincial government is less crucial to this analysis because, being limited to youth theatre, it has a far smaller role in subsidizing the performing arts.\(^2\) Even though the larger cities in the Netherlands developed a cultural policy concerning the performing arts before the national government did, the analysis of the cultural policy documents starts with the national government.\(^3\)

---

\(^1\) This division of responsibilities concerning the performing arts was introduced in 1983, from a situation where theatre companies and symphony orchestras could have up to twenty subsidizing governmental bodies. With the exception of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, all responsibility for subsidizing production in the performing arts has been transferred to the state.

\(^2\) The Dutch manual for cultural policy concludes: '(The) pillars of the national system for subsidies (...) are founded on an intricate network of locally funded accommodations (...). Within this thorough framework of a national and local infrastructure the provincial government has free reign. (...) The only fixed responsibility for the provinces is the sustenance of youth theatre (which in the mean time is in most cases partly funded by the national government as well) (Slegers 2005, pp. I.12-13). The total expenditure of the Dutch provinces in the field of the performing arts in 2007 was € 17 million as opposed to € 243 million by the national government and € 325 million by the Dutch municipalities (this last figure includes € 265 million expenditure on venues (source: CBS statline, accessed on 4 December 2009).

\(^3\) In his history of Dutch cultural policy, Pots (2006) describes how the national cultural policy evolved after 1795, the year the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands ended and a central national government was installed. Up to then, the cities were the most important governmental bodies that concerned themselves with cultural policy. The absence of a strong central government in the Republic left cultural activities to private initiative.

The fact that the initiators usually operated in urban settings and city administrations were often prepared to support their requirements contributed to the cities gaining experience with certain forms of ‘cultural policy’ long before the introduction of the central state, and thus developing as cultural centres (Pots, 2006, p. 420).

This situation continued until the Second World War. After the war, a cultural policy developed at state level and a process was started which gave the state a dominant role over local governments and private initiative in Dutch cultural policy (ibid., p. 424), even though the expenditure of the national
In 2002 the *Ministerie van OCW* (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences) published a document describing Dutch cultural policy as part of a comparative project by the Council for Europe. The historic overview reveals that, before the Second World War, cultural policy in Holland was dominated by the political interests of the so-called ‘pillar structure’ (*zuilen*) which divided Dutch society into strictly separated groups based on their own school of thought: denominational, social democratic and liberal (*Ministerie OCW*, 2002, p. 20, 21). The leaders of the different ‘pillars’ were in agreement that the main purpose of cultural policy was to prevent unwanted messages getting across to their own constituencies. They way they reacted to the advent of the mass media is an excellent example of this. Socialist leaders viewed the entertainment industry as one-sided. It was regarded as a threat to the emancipation of the working class. The leaders of the religious ‘pillars’ regarded the growing mass culture as tangible evidence for the secularization of society. This meant that there was a broad political agreement to fight mass culture through censorship and taxes, measures that were legitimized with an appeal to civic order and public decency (*ibid.*, p. 34).

After World War II, a more elaborate system of government support for the arts developed which finally led to the adoption of the *Wet op het Specifieke Cultuurbeleid* (Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy) in 1993. Quality and diversity became the official aims of the cultural policy. This was possible because the ‘pillars’ increasingly lost their influence and people moved more freely between different social circles. The 1960s are a turning point in the development towards a more tolerant cultural policy.

Fear of stage performances, pictures or films having a deleterious effect on morality ebbed away. There were fewer prosecutions and the government stopped intervening preventively. Changes in the law played only a minor role. (...) Another area where moral, political and religious values are steadily losing ground is in the awarding of arts subsidies and prizes by municipal and central government: quality is now the criterion for deciding which artists, art works or institutions are eligible for support. To begin with, the criterion was only applied to museums and heritage sites; nowadays it plays a pivotal role across the entire cultural spectrum. (*Ministerie van OCW*, 2002, p. 35)

The Council for Europe report describes the different points of view that have been dominating cultural policy. In the sixties, free expression and creativity were the focal points. Tradition and acquired skills were viewed as restricting the natural creativity of people (*Ministerie OCW*, 2002, p. 54). The link between education policy and cultural policy had been severed. In the seventies, social relevance became a dominant concept. The focus shifted to activities and work forms that were aimed at reducing social deprivation. However, the writers of the report conclude that these principles did not influence actual government was still largely exceeded by the combined expenditure of municipalities and provinces. After 1992, many cities adopted the same four-year cycle in cultural policy and, in doing so, reinforced the dominance of the state. A discussion of contemporary policy documents in the Netherlands should therefore start at national level.

---

4 Note that the report has since been updated, e.g. in 2006 (*Ministerie van OCW / Boekmanstichting*, 2006). However, the 2002 edition is the most elaborate and will be referred to here.
2. The National Government

subsidy decisions (ibid., p. 54). The cultural policy and budget as well as the number of organizations subsidized by the government grew as a result to these different points of view. ‘The primacy of “welfare” ideology in the seventies did not stand in the way of arts institutions gaining greater autonomy’ (ibid., p. 54). In the 1980s, quality became a policy aim in itself and much emphasis was placed on the deregulation and professionalization of cultural institutions (ibid., p. 55). This change in policy orientation is crucial for the present study because it led to a growing gap between artists and their audiences. Oosterbaan Martinius states that the growing emphasis on quality legitimized a more autonomous position for artists.

One can describe the autonomization process in art as a development in which aesthetic standards for the production and assessment of art gain in importance, while ethical (moral and political) criteria lose influence. The representation and design of artworks are increasingly determined by artists and less and less by the church, the state and rich clients. The consequences of this development – which is in itself an aspect of the professionalization of the artistic vocation – are many and varied. As a result, art itself is becoming increasingly mobile and unpredictable. Styles and movements succeed one another rapidly and without direction. Artists consistently seek new avenues; art is increasingly becoming a medium for self-expression. (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 18)

This has led to a situation where only specialists are able to follow the ever-changing developments in the art world, with the general public no longer able to follow these. This leads to a paradox in legitimizing cultural policy, for the policy itself is directed toward furthering artistic quality, but this – unintentionally – strengthens the trend towards autonomization of the arts and therefore does not secure public support for the arts (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 18). In the 1990s, one of the measures to counterbalance the effects of the autonomization process was to reinforce cultural education. The link between cultural and educational policy has been re-established, with cultural policy being made part of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Sciences (since 1994).

This short overview of Dutch cultural policy is somewhat shocking because there seem to be no guiding principles for Dutch cultural policy apart from quality and diversity. But these principles do not seem to be derived from a notion about the function of culture and art in society. It seems that the needs of the art world itself have been the overriding influence on the development of a cultural policy, instead of views on the functioning of culture in society. Oosterbaan Martinius’s analysis confirms that the needs of the art world itself have

5 The report concludes that ‘In practice all it amounted to in many cases was sloganizing. With hindsight, not a single grant was reviewed because of a supposed lack of social relevance’ (Ministerie van OCW, 2002, p. 54). This seems to imply that the policies had no influence in the artistic practices of the time. However, when subsidy decisions do not change, this still leaves open the possibility that the art institutions did change their management decisions to comply with the new policy trends. Moreover, it is very likely that the policy makers based their changing focus on trends within the cultural institutions themselves.

6 Note that Oosterbaan Martinius focuses on the visual arts as in his view this problem is most markedly present in the field of visual arts. He claims that his analysis can be extended to other art forms. As will be shown the discrepancy between audiences and artists is a recurring theme in the policy documents concerning the performing arts as well.
been a major contributing factor to the development of a cultural policy. In itself, the process of autonomization is an aspect of the professionalization of the artists. Abbing (2002) and Van Klink (2005) claim that cultural policy first and foremost serves the needs of artists. However, this does not preclude the policy documents containing notions of art’s functioning in society. It may be the case that artists were able to secure support form politicians for their own interests. But this does not exclude the possibility that politicians were susceptible to these interests because of the benefits they expect from the work of artists in society. Furthermore it is probable that expectations of art’s functioning in society are present within the art world itself and, with the influence of the art world on policy development, such views have become part of the policy. In the following sections, the cultural policy documents themselves will be examined to establish which notions on the functioning of the (performing) arts in society are being expressed. The cultural policy documents have been produced in a four-year cycle since the adoption of the Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy.

Method of examination
The policy documents of the national government have been examined, starting in 1992. The texts have been checked for notions alluding to the functioning of art in (urban) society. Because this research aims at the functioning of art in urban society, the documents have also been checked for statements on cities and regions. Only the general chapters and the chapters on arts and performing arts (when existent) have been examined. In the following sections, the relevant quotes from the policy documents will be discussed briefly. The discussion of each document starts with the intrinsic effects of culture and art which can be found in the document. The autonomy of culture is a recurring issue.

2.1. 1993-1996: Investing in Culture

The first document, *Investeren in Cultuur* (Investing in Culture), was published under the responsibility of Minister Hedy D’Ancona (social-democratic Labour Party) in 1992. As a former member of the European Parliament she stressed the international aspects of cultural policy. A second theme in the document is the trend of dwindling numbers of spectators for subsidized cultural activities. *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) is the first comprehensive policy document on national cultural policy. Until then, there had been separate documents on media, literature and libraries, cultural heritage and the arts. Therefore much attention is paid to the relation with the *Notitie Cultuurbeleid* (1985).

---

7 From an economic perspective, Abbing (1989) and Van Klink (2005) have also come to the conclusion that the cultural policy caters particularly to the employment needs of artists themselves to. Abbing adds that the attention for dissemination of culture and art in cultural policy is only a rationalization of a policy that serves the purpose of safeguarding the economic feasibility of the consumption habits of a restricted proportion of society (Abbing, 1989, pp. 225-6). Though such pressures from artists and elite audiences are evident in Dutch cultural policy, the continued political attention to dissemination, through cultural education for instance, does suggest that the government has taken the functions of culture and art for each member of Dutch society seriously from the 1990s onwards.
2. The National Government

2.1. Intrinsic Functions

A statement on the importance of culture in society can be found on the first pages of the policy document.

In addition to personal development, culture is important due to its binding effect. Culture is also the embodiment of the need of people, individually and collectively, to come to terms with the past and to express ideas and perceptions in an authentic way, time and again. And to share these with others. And exactly this last element, this common generation of experiences, is of the utmost importance. Culture, in its function of significance-assignment, forms a link between the individual and society. As a society, we cannot afford not to make full use of this link. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 1)

According to this extract, participating in cultural activities has effects on the personal and the societal level. Participating in cultural activities:

(a) stimulates personal development,
(b) brings people together (‘binding effect’),
(c) gives an opportunity to relate oneself to history,
(d) is a way to express ideas and views in an authentic manner,
(e) is a way to share these ideas and views with others, or make them into shared experiences.

The question arises as to whether or not all of these functions are intrinsic. Especially (b) and (e) could be regarded as objectives of social rather than cultural policies. There are two reasons to regard these functions as intrinsic. First, ‘intrinsic’ has not been defined in terms of the policy area to which the functioning belongs. Second, the definition of culture and art is closely linked to the concept of identity. Bringing people together on the basis of a shared identity and shared ideas and perceptions (through authentic aesthetic means) is a way of asserting or developing an identity.

The functioning of culture at an individual level is expressed in (a), (c) and (d). Culture is a means to achieve personal growth, to express one’s views, and to relate oneself to history. On the collective level, culture serves to share individual ideas and experiences (e) and to relate oneself to others (b). These functions of culture are similar to the concept of identity as put forward by Fischer-Lichte (2002). The concept of identity is important in Investeren in Cultuur especially in relation to national cultural identity, as will be shown below. A further remark about function (b) should be made. One can argue – on the basis of more recent political developments in the Netherlands – that thinking cultural participation brings people together and furthers understanding between different social or ethnic groups is a somewhat naïve belief. The co-existence of different forms of cultural expression, i.e., the expression of different (ethnic) identities, can be the cause of friction in society as well as a source of mutual understanding and respect. A last remark should be made on function (e). As a link between the individual level and the collective level, this seems to be the most important function. But the way in which this function operates as a process in society is not made clear. This should be researched in more detail.
In *Investeren in Cultuur*, the efforts to promote participation in cultural activities are legitimized on the basis of the same functions found above.

With participation in cultural activities, apart from aspects such as enjoyment, personal experience and development, there is also mention of wider social effects. The distribution of culture (…) stimulates (…) the self-determination of citizens, the independent development of original thought. Many expressions of culture lend themselves ideally for familiarizing people with alternative visions of existence. By stimulating participation in cultural activities, one offers people the opportunity to assess their own opinions and notions against the points of view and experiences of others, to gain insight into a different realm of thought. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 41)

In this extract, culture is regarded as an important means to educate people. The functions mentioned in this quote seem to be largely the same as those in the previous quote. However, there are differences. In both quotes, a distinction is made between functions at personal level and functions at the level of society. At the personal level, three functions are mentioned: diversion, personal experience and personal development. The first two of these were not mentioned in the introduction. It is not clear what is exactly meant by ‘personal experience’. Developing the self-determination of citizens and encouraging the ability to develop and express authentic trains of thought can be regarded as different phrasings for the function mentioned under (d) above. Learning about alternative visions of reality has been mentioned under (e), sharing ideas and perceptions, and the possibility to test one’s own opinions and perceptions against those of others. Note that all these functions have been phrased as individual benefits, but these benefits can only occur through collective activity: participation in cultural activities. Thus personal development can be regarded as a container notion for all the functions mentioned in these quotes.

The document contains some remarks specifically on the performing arts. The influence of the development of audio-visual media on theatre, especially on live drama, is studied.

Due to the explicit presence of television, subsidised theatre, above all, has undergone drastic change. The vast majority of present-day theatre productions consist of ‘artistic theatre’ which tends to concentrate on the search for new methods of dramatic expression. Innovation and experiment have become important features of this theatre, even where people no longer explicitly propagate this. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 22)

A hesitant conclusion may be that a filtering of functions has taken place in the more traditional expressions of culture, largely as a result of competition from the audio-visual media. The enjoyment or entertainment function has been largely lost; the purely cultural function that refers to the ‘artistic content’ of the expression in question is becoming increasingly important. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 23)

These quotes are of interest because here a distinction is made between different functions of the performing arts. Entertainment is contrasted with artistic functions. The policy makers think that the audio-visual media fulfil the entertainment function, which is seen here as pure diversion, better than live theatre does. What remains in the theatres are ‘artistic’ productions which are supposed to have more of the other functions mentioned above. This is the cause of the dwindling number of visitors to the performing arts in the Netherlands. The question is whether or not this holds true for all of the performing arts. The rise of
2. The National Government

musical theatre and cabaret in the Netherlands (produced without direct government grants) seems to contradict this statement. The question also arises as to whether or not the audiovisual media productions could also perform some of the intrinsic functions mentioned above. For instance, one could argue that a diversionary television play, set in eighteenth-century Amsterdam, might give an opportunity for the viewers to relate themselves to history as well as offering diversion. Furthermore, there is the question as to whether or not more ‘artistic’ types of performing arts may also offer diversionary elements. These issues will not be elaborated upon here. At this point, the distinction between artistic and amusement functions is relevant. It is a matter for further investigation as to whether or not the artistic and entertainment functions are mutually exclusive or whether they can coexist.8

Furthermore, attention should be turned to the question of whether or not ‘artification’ has also occurred in other cultural disciplines. The policy document maintains that a similar process has evolved in literature. The reading audience has become an ‘in-crowd’ of practised readers. But with regard to cultural heritage, the conclusion has been drawn that there is growing public interest in museums and the preservation of cultural heritage, and therefore there seems to be no ‘artification’ in this field (ibid., pp. 22-4).9 This suggests that different forms of culture serve different functions for their audiences. Here the term ‘function’ refers to the consumers’ needs that are satisfied by participating in cultural events. In Investeren in Cultuur (1992), the term ‘function’ is used in various senses. This will be elaborated below.10

The writers of the policy document are consistently concerned with the fact that cultural participation is limited to an ‘elite audience’. In their view, a flourishing cultural climate means that people outside the ‘cultural elite’ also participate in or take note of cultural activities. People should develop themselves culturally ‘in their own way’ (ibid., p. 36).

8 In this research, this question will only be answered for the different types of performing arts (publicly funded versus commercial productions). A comparison between the functioning of live drama versus televised drama falls outside the scope of this research.

9 It should be noted that the policy makers suggest that public interest in cultural heritage is mainly due to the ‘artistic’ functions of cultural heritage. However, one could argue that the rise in interest is also due to the fact that historic sites, exhibitions and art exhibitions on 19th-century paintings, for instance, are heavily marketed as unique ‘events’. These marketing strategies seem to be based more on the entertainment function of the event than on the artistic functions.

10 Another question is whether or not the ‘artification’ of Dutch theatre is caused by the rise of audiovisual media alone. The study by Oosterbaan Martinius (1990), which was mentioned earlier, suggests that ‘artification’ can also be a result of the policy shift towards artistic quality which, in turn, is a development that concurred with the professionalization of artists. It could be examined whether or not this ‘artification’ of live drama is a specific Dutch phenomenon. Because the influence of audiovisual media is a worldwide phenomenon, it can be expected that the same process has occurred in other countries. Therefore, if the ‘artification’ of live drama is not apparent in other countries – i.e., live drama functions differently – it can be concluded that other factors also influence the functioning of the performing arts. The specific way in which the context of the performing arts is organized can be expected to have implications. However, this question is beyond the scope of this research, for it warrants international comparison.
In cultural policy, it is of essential importance to do justice to the value of cultural processes as they (can) occur in all layers of society. (...) They should also take place in the knowledge that unexpected initiatives are often developed in the ‘margin’ – frequently disparaged as such – which later turn out to be of great significance for cultural development in broader circles. The aspect of these unexpected developments is even more important because the Netherlands is increasingly displaying features that are characteristic of a heterogeneous, multicultural society. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 36)

This suggests that cultural activities can perform different functions for different social or ethnic groups. It seems obvious that a framework for describing the functioning of performing arts in a given city should take the social composition of its population into account. Moreover, this type of framework should be able to indicate whether or not the needs of different social groups are being met (provided that this is an aim of the city’s cultural policy). However, the question remains as to whether different social groups should participate in the same cultural events but for different purposes, or should participate in different cultural productions but for the same purposes, due to the differing background of social or ethnic groups in society?

This quote also suggests that different forms of cultural production serve different functions from the perspective of the cultural industry as a whole. Fringe activities are regarded as an experimental playground where forms of expression which have broader meaning in society are developed. It proposes that different art productions geared to specific social and ethnic groups can be viewed as such fringe activities.

2.1.2. International Dimension of Cultural Policy

The unification of Europe is currently receiving comprehensive attention. Much discussion and speculation is taking place about the precise consequences for our country. In this, Dutch culture is a prominent topic of discussion. Worrying expectations about the survival of our own cultural identity alternate with optimistic reflections on cultural internationalization. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 1).

These first sentences of *Investeren in Cultuur* reflect the growing unification of the European Union. Growing international contacts have different outcomes for cultural policy.

The ongoing internationalization (...) is demonstrably linked to the ‘generalization’ of culture. In the discussion about culture in its specific meaning, there is even mention of a world cultural constellation. The observed generalization is largely based on the norms, values and external features of the Western style of life.

At the same time there is also mention of a countermovement, of particularization. It can be observed that (...) a revaluation of authentic local and regional traditions is taking place. This need for distinctiveness also occurs at national level, the rekindling of the discussion on Dutch identity is proof of this. In addition, countless people and groups within Dutch society are displaying an impulse toward the forming of all kinds of subcultures – on the basis of an outspoken need to present their own identity. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, pp. 18-19)

Here we encounter culture as a means to assert identity. The products of cultural activities can be regarded as manifestations of the norms and values of the society from which they stem. The influence of the international dimension of cultural policy is twofold. On the one hand, a trend towards representation of the dominant norms and values of the Western society is evident. On the other, this prompts a trend towards growing interest in the
particular, in regional differences. The policy document therefore devotes much attention to national cultural identity. But the conclusion is also drawn that different groups within (Dutch) society develop different subcultures. The document therefore introduces the term ‘cultural identity’.

Inasmuch as our national cultural identity is expressed in policy, this occurs in culture in the broad sense of the term (i.e., anthropological, QLvdH); in other words, within the sectors that often have no direct relationship with cultural policy; public housing, the structure of our system of social security, the spatial layout of the Netherlands, the organization of club life, etc. The norms contain assumptions and agreements that form, mainly unconsciously, the fundament of our lifestyle and the way in which society is ordered in our country. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 43)

Spatial planning and systems of social security are ways in which these norms and presuppositions become apparent. The specific Dutch system for supporting the arts in itself is another example (ibid., p. 4). When looking at the specific cultural policy one can think that the national cultural identity is expressed within the various products of cultural institutions, but the writers of the document go to great lengths to argue that this is mostly not the case.

To an extent, this domain of culture (culture in its specific sense, QLvdH) self-evidently forms a reflection of culture in the broadest sense. This applies especially to language-related cultural expression. In addition, culture is largely not national but actually international, even cosmopolitan in its character. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 43)

For the present research the most important conclusion is that cultural identities can be expressed through the performing arts, as was indicated above. In the policy document, this is not the central question concerning the topic of cultural identity. The main question is whether or not the government should gear its cultural policy to the extent to which the national identity is being expressed through cultural activities. The answer to this question is negative because the government should not interfere with the ‘content and ethics of cultural activities’ (ibid., p. 44). This is a tradition in Dutch politics which is, in itself, a part of national identity. Another reason is the fact that national cultural identity is not a fixed phenomenon. It is subject to change and therefore unsuitable as a criterion for cultural policy (ibid., p. 45). A last point to be made is that there is not one national cultural identity. ‘It is of crucial importance to recognize that our national identity embodies a great diversity’ (ibid., p. 45). How the arts can function as art in the domain of cultural identity is not elaborated in the policy document. This is a matter for further investigation.

2.1.3. Quality and Diversity
Quality and diversity are the two guiding principles of Dutch cultural policy. They are stated in de Wet op het Specifiek Cultuurbeleid (1993) and Investeren in Cultuur uses them in anticipation of the adoption of the law (ibid., p. 16). The document concludes that the strict use of quality as a criterion for cultural policy has a downside:

(...) the phenomenon of ‘upward pressure’ that appears to emanate from strict application of the quality principle in real-life practice may not lead to the feeling that the individual significance of the cultural functions to be distinguished and the often very specific value of the various levels are being lost. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 38)
'Upward pressure' refers to a trend towards more experimental structures and new cultural forms. This trend results from the practice where the advisory boards consist of specialists and artists who evaluate the quality of cultural institutions (a judgement which is at the basis of decisions on subsidizing institutions). They value experiment and development in art more than the general public does (ibid., p. 37). The process of autonomization which was described by Oosterbaan Martinius (1990) is referred to in this context. In the policy document, a similar concern is expressed inasmuch as gearing policy decisions to the quality criterion exclusively disregards other functions of culture. It seems that culture has different functions on different levels. This quote does not allow a determination of which different functions are being referred to. Moreover, the writers of the document are not very specific in what they refer to when using the term ‘level’. From the text directly preceding this quote, one can deduce that they are referring to national and international level as opposed to local and regional contexts. They express a concern that all attention is being drawn to (inter)national cultural developments, to the spectacular, and not to the smaller cultural events that function more locally. They make an analogy with sports:

Maintaining that the level of cultural developments and events that are interesting in a national and international context is sufficient to describe the thriving cultural life in our society (...) is just as valid as maintaining that only top sport can be regarded as the standard for the positive significance of sport in our society. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 37)

In other words, a thriving cultural climate is not only about spectacular ‘premier league’ productions but also about ‘regular’, more conventional or artistically less challenging productions as well as amateurs and grass-roots initiatives.11

Thus, the writers of the policy document devote attention to the relationship between quality and diversity, the second principle for cultural policy. With the diversity criterion they try to balance a strong trend towards experiment and development. First, they conclude that the two principles should be weighted differently in different forms of culture. For instance, diversity is the most important principle in the press and library policy, as opposed to the visual arts where furthering artistic quality seems to be the most important (ibid., p. 38). Second, they conclude that diversity is also important within a given form of culture. For instance, within literature, the document distinguishes prose, poetry, and children’s and adolescent literature. Quality standards apply to each of these forms of literature. Some forms are supposed to function specifically to advance their reach in society (ibid., p. 39). The term ‘cultural function’ is introduced to indicate the function of a cultural institution within the production system of a given cultural discipline. This is explained using museum policy as an example. The central goal of preserving and presenting cultural heritage is split up into specific tasks for specific museums: restoration, collecting, scientific research and presentation. Cultural institutions can also have specific tasks for specific groups in society or for a specific geographical region (ibid., p. 39-40). At this point, the policy document reads as an analysis of specific branches of industry, namely, specific cultural industries. Within

11 It is also debatable whether or not the use of the term ‘culture’ in these quotes is correct. It seems that a specific part of cultural production is being referred to, namely the arts.
these industries, cultural institutions perform a specific function or task, such as youth theatre groups within the theatrical industry for instance. From a policy point of view, this method of analysis seems perfectly useful because it enables one to identify which functions should be present within the cultural field in order to speak of a flourishing infrastructure (cultural and societal) and to weigh the quality of the different institutions as well. Therefore:

The cultural function of institutions will be elucidated more precisely than before in the tasks to be distinguished. This is of great importance to enhance the diversity of activities and to guarantee that not only the spectacular aspects but also the essential aspects for cultural participation, such as cultural education, supporting activities or co-operation with other local or regional cultural facilities, are paid sufficient attention. (Ministerie van OCW, 1992, p. 53)

For the present research on the functioning of the performing arts in urban society, however, this poses a few problems because the term ‘function’ now is being used in various senses.

First, one can discern different functions of different cultural disciplines. The media and libraries are fields that should reflect the diversity of society (i.e. that is their function on societal level). Quality in these fields is something entirely different from that in the arts. Cultural heritage has a function in preserving the past, and the arts seem to function more as an area of research and development. So not every cultural or art form has the same function. This need not be a problem for this research because it is limited to the performing arts. However it should be determined whether or not these different ways of functioning (preserving the past, for instance) should also be present within this single discipline, as performing the classical repertoire in the performing arts can be thought of as a specific function.

Second, one can discern different functions within the specific industry of an art form. At least two different forms of functioning have been mentioned. Producing for specific audiences, as in the theatre for instance: theatre for toddlers, youth theatre and theatre for grown-ups, and also theatre for youngsters from higher and lower levels of education, and for specific ethnic groups. And producing specific specialist cultural forms, in authentic performance practices in music for instance, performing the predominant classical and romantic repertoire or music by contemporary composers, cross-overs, etc. Or in the theatre: staging classical drama or contemporary repertoire. For these different functions it may be best to use the term ‘tasks’ instead of ‘functions’.

Third, the term ‘functioning’ has a social and geographical dimension. Different art forms can have different functions for different groups in society. Moreover culture and art can have a different function in different regions.

It should be noted that single productions can perform several of the functions mentioned above simultaneously. For the present research, particularly the last two types of functioning are relevant.

2.1.4. Economic Functioning

*Investeren in Cultuur* points to the economic effects of culture from the perspective of cities and regions in relation to the topic of internationalization:
Part I: Functioning of the Performing Arts in Dutch Cultural Policy

(…) cultural amenities are being increasingly assigned a role in the economic competitive struggle between cities and regions in Europe. In the framework of the *Vierde nota over de ruimtelijke ordening* (Fourth Memo on Spatial Planning) culture is allocated an important task in, for example, the augmentation of the significance of the Randstad as an international location area. In this context, the preservation of historic buildings, or more precisely, the conscientious treatment of historical city centres, is regarded as an important trump card in the creation of an attractive location climate.

The cultural assortment is increasingly being seen as a factor of importance for the tourist industry. Dutch cultural heritage can make a major contribution to the national and local economy, and stimulate employment, certainly also in the cultural sector. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, pp. 20-1)

The way in which cultural institutions function on the economic level is not extensively elaborated in the policy document. For the so-called ‘Rim City’ (*Randstad*, the urban agglomeration comprising the major cities in the Netherlands: Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague and Utrecht), culture can serve as a means to develop a climate where international corporations are willing to open up branches. The tourist industry is also mentioned. The document is not clear whether or not the performing arts can play a role in this economic competition. This may be true for the West End theatres in London or Broadway in New York. These venues attract tourists as well as local visitors. But is this function relevant for any theatre in any city? This economic function of performing arts warrants further investigation (see Chapter 8).

2.1.5. Cities and Regions

At various points in the policy document the writers state that cultural life is bound to the city, ‘not only in our time but also traditionally, the large cities in particular have formed the “focus of culture”’ (ibid., p. 41, see also p. 52). The Introduction states that ‘Institutions such as museums, theatres, libraries should not only be seen as culture providers but also as the engine of artistic and culture life in a certain city or region.’ (ibid., p. 2) In the chapter on the performing arts, attention is paid to the regional distribution of shows and concerts, for

(…) the diversity of the assortment in the region can only be realized by sufficient distribution of performances. At the same time, I acknowledge that the settlement of large-scale performing arts facilities in the region can have exceptional allure for regional cultural life that is not achieved by an assortment that only consists of ‘touring’ performances. Especially when institutions are successful in taking root in regional cultural life, they are able to achieve a cultural added value *that cannot only be measured by the number of performances and the quality of these*. (Ministerie van WVC, 1992, p. 147, italics QLvdH)

There seems to be recognition that large production facilities have specific significance in the region where they are based. Performing arts institutions that form relations with the cultural life in the region have an added value which can not be measured in terms of the artistic quality of the plays or concerts they produce. The document offers no description of this added value. Is it an added value for the regional public that can regard a theatre company or symphony orchestra as ‘its own’? Does this give better opportunities for the functioning of the plays or concerts in the ‘home region’? Or is there an added value for other cultural institutions based in the same city or region? Or does the fact that there is artistic production in a given city frame the productions of visiting companies in such a
manner that they function differently in society? These questions will be addressed in Chapter 3 when discussing the city documents.

2.2. 1997-2000: Armour or Backbone

In the political debate following the adoption of *Investeren in Cultuur*, the government proposed a different approach to producing cultural policy documents. Because of the fact that the document comprised the basic principles of cultural policy as well as the actual subsidy decisions concerning specific cultural organizations, Members of Parliament felt that the political debate about the cultural policy was not effective. They asked for a document on the basic principles themselves to discuss with the Minister before actual subsidy decisions were being made (see Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 1). D’Ancona’s successor, Aad Nuis (liberal-democrats) therefore produced a so-called ‘uitgangspuntenbrief’, a letter to parliament concerning the basic principles underlying the cultural policy of the coming four year cycle. From that moment on these documents contain statements about the legitimization of cultural policy whereas the actual ‘cultuurnota’ (cultural memo) only consists of a series of subsidy decisions. Therefore these documents have been studied in this research.

Nuis, a former literary critic and poet, lived up to the expectations about the literary quality of his policy document. He uses imagery to convey the political message. The title, *Pantser van Ruggegraat* (*Armour or Backbone*, Ministerie van OCW, 1995) refers to its key question which is whether people use their cultural identity as armour to ward off influences and ideas from other (sub)cultures, or as a backbone in order to communicate with others who do not share their beliefs and views.

Anyone using culture as a distinguishing feature, anyone who propagates cultural identity to mark the difference between one’s own group and the others, can easily end up in an infertile defensive. Culture then becomes armour against an outside world that is experienced as hostile. One seems to be able to shelter safely behind this shield, but it closes one off from the outside world and thus impedes any further development. In contrast, anyone who carries his or her cultural attainments with him or her as inner security, a support that enables sympathetic interaction with people who think differently without anxiety for loss of identity, will remain decisive and capable of change. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

Here, culture is used in its anthropological meaning. The function of culture is related to the subject of identity, as was the case in the previous policy document. But the imagery also applies to cultural institutions themselves because state sponsorships for the arts can never be used as armour to ward off societal and economic developments (*ibid.*, p. 9). This will lead to a growing gap between cultural institutions and society. The theme of autonomy of culture which was also present in the previous policy document is of importance. It will be discussed below.

In general *Pantser van Ruggegraat* reflects the reuniting of cultural and educational policy. With the advent of the new government (a coalition of Social Democrats, Liberals and Liberal Democrats, barring the Christian Democrats from government for the first time since the
Second World War), cultural policy has moved from the Ministry of Welfare and Health to
the Ministry of Education. In the policy document, much attention is given to the processes
of handing down cultural values from one generation to another. Cultural heritage is a major
theme, as is cultural education, and there are sections on the relationship between the
cultural industry and vocational education in the fields of the arts (which is – as all forms
of higher education – part of the Department of Higher Education and Sciences of the
Ministry). The humanities are regarded as part of our cultural heritage (ibid., p. 8).

2.2.1. Intrinsic Functions
A first quote refers to the reshuffling of culture between ministries.

It is self-evident that the unravelling of the former Department of WVC (Ministry of Welfare,
Public Health and Culture) should not lead to the overlap between culture policy and the socio-
cultural dimensions of government policy disappearing from sight altogether; especially
because cultural dissemination and cultural participation can reinforce social coherence, and
certainly because of the capability of certain cultural expressions to illustrate social problems in a
forceful way and to put them up for discussion. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 2, italics QvdH)

The social dimension of cultural policy must not be disregarded as a result of the split
between welfare and cultural policy. This social dimension of culture is related to two
characteristics. Culture can strengthen social structures and it can visualize problems in
society. This first function is similar to the function that was encountered in Investeren in
Cultuur (1992): that of bringing people together. The metaphor of armour and backbone
reflects the fact that Nuis is more aware of the fact that culture can also have disruptive
effects inasmuch as it prevents integration when used as a shield. The second societal
function is new to this analysis. Specific cultural activities are able to direct attention to
problems in society. It can be assumed that art is being referred to. Art is a means to
formulate critique on society.

The document also gives a description of the term ‘culture’. The notions found earlier in the
Notitie Cultuurbeleid (Ministerie WVC, 1985) are being elaborated upon.

What does culture mean to a person? In a broad sense, everything that people make, think,
know or believe they know, the way in which they become aware of their feelings and give
shape to their actions, belongs to culture. To be able filter this ceaseless flow of impressions and
to arrange them in an order experienced as meaningful, every person requires systems that that
give meaning. (…) Large systems of meaning-assignment (…) not only bring coherence into the
world view of the individual but also bind people together into groups – and distinguish them
to a greater or lesser extent from other groups. The entirety of often-unspoken regulations by
means of which people play the serious, endlessly varying play of imagination is such a system
which forms the foundation of the arts in particular. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

In its broad (anthropological) sense, culture refers to a system that allows people to give
meaning to the constant stream of impressions they encounter in life. Religion and sciences
are such systems. They not only structure one’s view on life but also serve to divide people
into groups. The ‘serious and endlessly varying play of imagination’ is such a system as well.
It can only be understood that ‘culture’ is being used in its specific meaning here. The play of
imagination is at the basis of art. Because this document is so differently phrased it is hard to
pinpoint exactly the differences between Investeren in Cultuur and Pantser of Ruggegraat. First,
it is evident is that art is being referred to more explicitly in *Pantser of Ruggegraat*. Second, the process of giving meaning to impressions and events in life is mentioned. This function of culture and art is not stated in the previous document. It can be related to the sharing of ideas and experiences which was mentioned in *Investeren in Cultuur*. However, it does not seem to be exactly the same because here this function seems to be bound more to the individual level, whereas the collective level is stressed in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). This could reflect the difference between a Socialist and a Liberal Democrat. Third, the writers of *Pantser of Ruggegraat* seem to be more aware of the process of handing down culture from one generation to another.

Although people are handed down these cultural systems of meaning-assignment from predecessors and contemporaries, they enjoy relative freedom in their appraisal of these, certainly in our society. They can undergo extra education and forswear, renew and rediscover, introduce their own variables on the familiar theme. In the arts and sciences, which are geared to growth and change *par excellence*, such individual adventures are even essential for the ongoing elasticity of the system. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

Here, culture is a means to relate oneself to history, although people nowadays are free to choose whether to accept or reject the systems of meaning which their predecessors hand down to them. The systems can be altered more easily than was the case several decades ago. This quote pinpoints the function of art in society. It is about personal exploration and about the renewal of the cultural system itself. To make another analogy: art is the R&D department of the ways people can express themselves. Culture is important to personal and group identity, and through this identity, culture influences the communication between groups in a society. Art is about finding new ways of communicating with each other. On the personal level, culture is about development and finding one’s place in the world. This is of special importance in our society which is changing at an increasing rate. These functions are similar to those found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). In *Pantser of Ruggegraat* culture and art are distinguished yet further:

To every person, culture is the instrument to mentally find a recognizable place in the world, even if it rapidly and unexpectedly changes. Not everyone is allocated an instrument with the same reach, precision and applicability to the situations in which he or she lands. Although a relatively meagre cultural baggage, as long as its structure in firm, is completely sufficient for a worthwhile existence, but in general a comprehensive and varied cultural forming will enable people to cope better with what the world has on offer and to react to setbacks in a more resilient way.

Moreover, culture in its more artistic aspects is an exercise in the power of imaginative thought that has the capacity to raise people above the restrictions of everyday existence. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 4)

Art functions through imagination and allows one to rise above the limitations of daily life. One could argue that this is an entertainment function, albeit of a very specific nature, namely, intellectual entertainment as opposed to relaxation. However this is not elaborated in the policy document. The power of imagination and its relationship to entertainment and relaxation therefore should be studied in more detail. In the discussion on *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) a question on entertainment was also raised. This policy document expands the question.
As mentioned above, an ‘open attitude’ in which culture is used as a backbone is being promoted. A strong sense of one’s own culture helps one face and respect the cultures of other groups. This is elaborated upon at various points in the document. This next paragraph enumerates some functions of culture again:

The advocated self-aware tolerance (referring to the attitude where culture is used as a backbone, QLH) must not be confused with the neutralization of all cultural values. Culture chooses; it is essentially a means to discern what has greater and lesser value, and what should be regarded as worthless. Shared cultural starting points enable the recognition and appreciation of exceptional achievements by others. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 4-5).

Culture is a means to determine what is of value. Shared cultural backgrounds also enable one to see the exceptional achievements of others, again determining what is of value, but at the collective level here. Therefore one ought to respect people belonging to other groups.

A solid cultural awareness is almost a precondition for an open approach to others. This applies to Dutch people in their attitude toward new cultures around them. And certainly to migrants, who can only partly take their culture with them in a physical sense, but can never completely leave their cultural luggage behind. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 17).

Here we see an example of the way ‘cultural identity’ is being used in Pantser of Ruggegraat. It is not very different from Investeren in Cultuur, although through the armour-backbone metaphor Pantser of Ruggegraat is more explicit on how cultural encounters can work. A strong sense of one’s own culture is important for a tolerant attitude towards others.

A final quote which is of interest focuses on the role of individuals who operate in the cultural domain: artists, writers, journalists and scientists.

It is often individuals who manage, by means of a strong personality, to give expression to the cultural solidarity of a society, even if this is not always directly experienced as such by everyone. Every culture has its culture-bearers, often artists, writers, journalists and practitioners of the humanities in particular. Without their occasionally recalcitrant input, a culture can become dormant; it loses its antennae for extraordinary circumstances and for the significance and value of other cultures, and it may also lose its own character. In this respect, present-day art plays an exceptional role in offering a new view of the world by drawing upon communal tradition and making use of existing opportunities. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 21-2).

Culture is described as a dynamic phenomenon. The recalcitrant input of artists (among others) keeps a culture alert.12 This enables one to recognize special circumstances, to recognize the meaning and value of other cultures, to recognize quality, and to be aware of one’s own character. Art has a specific role in this respect for it formulates new visions on the world based on existing tradition and means of expression, a function related to fringe activities in Investing in Culture.

In Pantser of Ruggegraat much attention is devoted to the fact that culture is handed down from one generation to another. As a result, many statements can be found on cultural heritage which are mostly linked to museums. Museums are crucial to establish a sense of where different cultural groups come from (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 17). The document

12 ‘Tegenstrevend’ in the words of the Notitie Cultuurbeleid (1985), see Chapter 1.
here specifically refers to migrant groups. Though most remarks on cultural heritage in the document relate to museums, one should question whether or not there is such a ‘heritage’ function for the performing arts as well. Performing plays by important playwrights from the past or the use of authentic musical instruments may constitute a similar function to preserving monuments or historic artefacts, a function also found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). An important issue in preserving monuments is to give them a new economic or societal function. The policy document states that preserving monuments can have positive effects on employment, and improve a climate where companies want to set up branches and tourism (*ibid.*, p. 24).

### 2.2.2. Autonomy of Culture

As in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992), a concern is also expressed in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* about the autonomous development of subsidized art producers without recognition of developments in society. The gap between subsidized and free producers should be bridged, indicating that non-subsidized productions can display performing functions that legitimize state-sponsorship as well. Therefore one should examine the functions that are performed as a criterion for subsidy decisions and not the cultural institutions themselves (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 9). The growing autonomy of cultural production is especially worrying, for younger generations do not have the same regard for the ‘official’ culture as sponsored by the government:

> Also many young people – born here or elsewhere, that is of little importance in this context – who are well educated, turn out to have little affinity with and interest in ‘official’ culture. The result of this is that they not only remain deprived of important ingredients for their further individual and social development, but also that our cultural life is deprived of essential impulses. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 15)

This quote is of interest to the present research because, apart from the developmental function on the personal level, it states that the relationship is reciprocal. Not only are youngsters deprived of crucial inputs in their development, the cultural world itself is deprived of impulses from this younger generation and therefore cannot develop as it should.

Apart from the younger generation, the official culture also does not represent new ethnic groups. *Pantser of Ruggegraat* articulates a conviction that confrontation with cultural products of other (ethnic) groups comprises more than just taking note of each other’s cultural products and heritage or the views they represent. There is another big difference:

> In cultures whose core has remained beyond the sphere of influence of the dominant Western pattern, the place that culture continues to occupy in everyday life is self-evidently conspicuous. The particularization of cultural activities into a specialized and professionalized

---

13 This concern still is topical. For instance, in the 2009 *Staat van het Theater* (State of the Theatre), Pierre Audi, artistic director of De Nederlandse Opera (Dutch Opera Company), was critical of Dutch field of drama in his opening speech for the annual Dutch Theatre Festival. He argued that the refusal of current companies to perform classical repertoire and focus on bringing novels and film scripts to the stage may weaken the theatre in the long run (see [http://www.tf.nl/Assets/Uploads/Documents/StaatvanhetTheater2009.pdf](http://www.tf.nl/Assets/Uploads/Documents/StaatvanhetTheater2009.pdf), accessed on 23 November 2009).
cultural business sector is usually limited to traditional art forms. Culture has retained its function of meaning-assignment in a clearer, or at least more easily demonstrable way, with a broader perspective. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 17)

The conclusion is that there is more contact between culture and society in non-Western cultures. Only traditional forms have developed to a very specific branch of industry. The writers of the document suggest that cultural production that forms more a part of everyday life has a greater role to play as a system of meaning-assignment. This means that culture which is more in touch with society functions differently from culture which has developed into a specialist branch. This is a confirmation of the supposition that different ways of organizing cultural activities have an impact on how culture functions in society.

### 2.2.3. Cities and Economic Functions

*Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) contains more statements about cities and regions than *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992). This could reflect the growing practice of consultations between the state and regionally grouped provinces and cities. Up to 1996 there had only been consultations between the state and the three largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague). Nuis also recognized the importance of smaller cities and therefore started consultations with all parts of the Netherlands, the so called ‘convenantenoverleg’ (covenant consultations). For:

> The overwhelming cultural assortment at home can be a stimulus to visit performances and shows, but can also displace these. Nevertheless, direct confrontation with expressions of art and culture are always the most satisfying form of interactivity. Jointly experiencing and discussing art and culture is essential for a flourishing, versatile and open cultural life. This life takes place in cities, large and small. The significance of these cities as regional centres and breeding grounds of art and culture will be assigned more attention in the policy (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 6-7).

This quote mentions the importance of cities as breeding places for art and culture. The cities also set the scene for the shared experience of art and culture. Sharing and jointly discussing culture is essential for a flourishing cultural climate. A same notion was expressed in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) where cultural institutions are regarded as the motor of cultural life in a city. This live character of cultural experiences in cities is once again promoted on page 18.

> Cities with a solid infrastructure of galleries, museums, cinemas, theatres, concert halls and other accommodations where interested citizens live and active artists are part of society traditionally form centres of culture. That is where direct confrontations take place between artists and the public, and where fertile soil is available for budding artists to develop their profession. Now that it is possible to listen to the highest peaks of international musical practice in the living room at any desired moment, or to display the highlights of film history on the TV screen, it is even more important that there are places where it is possible, in conjunction with others, to become acquainted with artistic expressions and to share the emotions evoked by art and culture. Art and culture that do not have the opportunity to occupy a place at the centre of society in this way eventually become hollow. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 18)

The policy makers here express a concern that, in a society where technological means have enabled us to experience works of great quality in the privacy of our homes, the city-based cultural institutions have an important role in bringing people together to share and debate
cultural experiences. This, in turn, enables art and culture to develop. The quote raises two questions. One concerns how experience generated by technologically reproduced culture at home differs from ‘live’ experiences. The second question concerns whether or not the rise in home entertainment automatically means a weakening of social ties, as the policy makers seem to imply. It could be the case that new forms of social contacts have developed through the internet to replace face-to-face contact. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 9. As in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) a flourishing cultural life is considered to be of crucial importance for cities:

> There is, after all, no mention of a unilateral relationship in which only the art and culture sector would profit from solid entrenchment (in the city). A flourishing art and cultural life, with participation by many and multifarious groups among the urban population, is also indispensable to the cities themselves. This is not only because art and culture have turned out to be practical ingredients for attracting companies and tourists, but primarily because they help generate an open urban living climate, in which sufficient tolerance and elasticity are present to allow different cultural expressions a position in the whole, and to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the varied urban cultural life that thus arises. This kind of cultural climate links people together – regardless of how much they may differ from one another. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 18)

Though this quote in no way makes clear how a vibrant arts and cultural scene realizes these effects, it enumerates functions of culture at city level: attracting businesses, inviting tourists, encouraging an open living climate in the city in order to accommodate different ways of cultural expression and (once again) bringing people together despite their differences. All these functions have been encountered before although attention should be turned to what exactly is meant by an open living climate.

Another paragraph on the cultural life in a city can be found on the same page.

> On the basis of an understandable need for counterbalance, the culture of cities and their surroundings is increasingly becoming a matter of interest, partly because of boundaries becoming blurred and supra-national connections becoming more pronounced. The attention being paid to ‘small-scale history’ is growing. People wish to know who they are and where they come from. (...) Contact with the past nourishes the feeling of cultural identity of people and the community of which they are a part. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 18)

Here, the effects of growing internationalization are studied. This development prompts a rise in interest in local history. This refers to culture in its function as lending identity and relating oneself to the past. This function is once again related to cultural heritage. In relation to the performing arts a different concern is expressed:

> In the meantime, several cities in our country have developed into cultural meeting places of allure, which has decreased the unilateral cultural accent on the Randstad (conurbation of Western Holland). However, it remains to be seen if the cultural institutions have properly adjusted to this change. (...) Drama companies, orchestras and museums often have strong national or even international orientation. In itself, there is nothing wrong with that. But a development in which these institutions enter into competition in an artistic domain - albeit much talked-about, but increasingly limited - implies an inherent risk of monotony. (...) The fear of being regarded as ‘provincial’ seems to prevent many regional cultural institutions focusing on the development of urban and regional cultural life with sufficient élan. A recent study points out that regional orchestras are hardly aware of a regional role. (...) Therefore, the
identification of the culture-loving public that does recognize the cultural traditions of a city or a region is often rather meagre. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, pp. 18-19)

The assumption is that cultural institutions in the Netherlands have a tendency to aspire to the same national quality ideal. Artistically this leads to monomorphous productions and exhibitions. By relating more to the local environment, more variation in the cultural production will ensue. It is also assumed that, as a result, the local audiences will identify themselves more with the cultural institutions. Therefore more variation in the assignment of the cultural institutions should be introduced. The assumption that institutions for the performing arts should have a relationship with their immediate environment seems logical because of the fact that cultural production plays a part in the affirmation and formation of identities, and it also can be assumed that such a thing as local identity exists. A local identity, however, only exists in relation to other identities, such as a national identity or the regional identity of a neighbouring province for instance. The question as to how the relationship between the cultural institutions and their environment is constructed is therefore very complicated. It can be assumed that there are effects on other cultural institutions in the region, therefore on cultural life in a city as a whole, and on the audience for the performing arts in that city. It can be assumed that, to some extent, subject matter and specific (regional) forms also play a part, as well as dialect or language. This is a matter for further research.

2.3. 2001-2004: Culture as Confrontation

Perhaps the most fiercely debated document on cultural policy in the Netherlands has been Cultuur als Confrontatie (Culture as Confrontation, Ministerie van OCW, 2000), which was published by Nuis’s successor, Rick van der Ploeg (social-democratic Labour Party). In hindsight, this seems peculiar because Van der Ploeg does not deviate from his predecessors. His policy document reads as an analysis of an industry and perhaps this somewhat economic approach to the cultural sector was to a large extent the cause of the vehemence of the debate. The main concern in the document – again – is the growing autonomy of the subsidized cultural sector. However, Van der Ploeg was the first to actually introduce evaluation criteria besides quality when subsidizing cultural institutions. In comparison to the other documents, Cultuur als Confrontatie seems to be more exclusively about the arts, the main concern being the growing autonomy of the subsidized art producers.

2.3.1. Intrinsic Functions

The document discusses the distinction between amusement and the artistic functions of the performing arts, specifically spoken drama. As a result of the advent of electronic media, its ‘playing field’ has shrunk:

14 Note that the researched mentioned in the quote (Goossens and Driessen, 1994) did not evaluate the programmes of the orchestras and their appeal to local audiences, but pertained to the activities of individual orchestra members outside their orchestra, such as playing in small ensembles or teaching at music schools.
Owing to the artistic renewals in the seventies, the ample availability of subsidized drama productions in the fifties and sixties, which largely aimed at amusing the masses, gradually made way for ‘artistic drama’. The broad public for subsidized drama shifted to an audience consisting predominantly of highly educated and well-informed theatre buffs. The ten per cent of the population that occasionally visited a performance of the subsidized professional drama sector in the early sixties has now dwindled to three per cent. The number of visitors has halved. Yet, there is an abundance of new productions that could reach a bigger audience, simply by increasing the number of reprises and extending the playing period. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 7)

This statement is very much the same as was found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) but here the narrowing of the scope of functions performed by Dutch subsidised theatre is related to the dwindling number of spectators in Dutch subsidized theatre as well as to the homogenization of the audiences. The functioning of the performing arts in society is directly linked to the number of spectators and the social and geographical composition of the audiences. This is logical, of course, though the question remains as to whether or not this is the only measuring criterion for the functioning of the performing arts in society. At this point of the research, the distinction between artistic and amusement functions of the performing arts is most relevant.15

Though quality remains the leading criterion for subsidy appropriation (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 25), measures were introduced in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* to take the societal impact of cultural institutions into consideration. This prompts the writers of the document to make some remarks on artistic quality which are of specific interest for this research.

It may be hard, or even impossible to give an exact definition of ‘quality’, but it can be recognized by various aspects, such as the appeal to emotions, the extent to which an experience becomes embedded, the charisma, uniqueness and international prestige. (…) These aspects may be best described in terms of still beauty, mental titillation, amazement, breaking the traditional pattern of watching, listening and other forms of perception, arousing curiosity, for the history of other cultures for example. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 25)

Here, quality is not being described as a property of the work of art in question, but as an aspect of the experience that it affords. This is an important notion which will be taken up in Chapter 6 of this research. From the quote it can be concluded that artistic consumption serves various purposes for a consumer which can be regarded as functions of the performing arts at personal level: being addressed on the emotional level, amusement, experiencing something unique, experiencing beauty, stimulation of the mind, being bewildered by an experience, experiencing new ways of looking at things, satisfying curiosity, the need to learn something unknown (for instance the history of other cultures).

A paragraph much later in the policy document, when the importance of reaching young people for the arts is being discussed, also points out benefits like these:

15 The document observes a similar concern for the Dutch film industry which has been reduced to the small niche of artistic film with its small audiences, despite the recent Oscar winners. The amusement function of film has been taken over by the American productions (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 7-8).
Part I: Functioning of the Performing Arts in Dutch Cultural Policy

Art stimulates the fantasy and curiosity of young people. Children have to be taught and familiarized with the beauty of life in general, and that of art in particular. Curiosity, bewilderment, surprise, being impressed and reflection are nourished by the cultural treasures of past, present and future, and serve as a counterbalance to our increasingly businesslike, pragmatic and commercialized society. (Ministerie van OCW, 1995, p. 49)

Some of these functions can also be found in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) and *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995). Curiously these aspects of the experience are linked to both experience of art and or heritage. This leads to the question which of these aspects are artistic and which are cultural.

In the policy document, the goal of reaching the largest possible number of spectators is put forward quite strongly, but not every cultural institution has the obligation to reach as many spectators as possible:

Likewise, institutions that are more engaged in research and experiment and to which the public factor is not of crucial importance should be able to specify the role they intend to play in society in the long term. That role could also be an intention to participate in the social, cultural or intellectual debate. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 26)

In this view, experiment and research are specific functions of the (performing) arts.16 Institutions aiming at this function should formulate their role in society in this manner and not in terms of public interest for their productions. Being a factor in the societal, cultural or intellectual debate can constitute such a role. This is a function that was not mentioned in the previous documents. The public debate on art (or on other issues but then fuelled by artistic productions) is a place where the functioning of the performing arts in society can become apparent.

In contrast to this last quote, reaching new audiences is regarded as another function of cultural institutions. Therefore a new criterion is being introduced which stipulates that at least three per cent of the subsidy should be spent to reach new audiences. This is a form of ‘function financing’ with which the policy makers want to influence the orientation of managers in the cultural institutions (*ibid.*, p. 28). In their view, reaching new audiences should be an integral part of the company strategy of cultural institutions. However, in this research, it is questionable whether or not reaching new audiences should be regarded as a function of culture. It seems logical to say that it is only a function at the level of the theatrical industry as a whole. These are tasks rather than functions.

A last quote is on the influence of commercialization on cultural life.

It is to be regretted that commerce plays a dominant role when it comes to establishing values, as it leads to deterioration and impoverishment of cultural life. In this era of globalization and

---

16 Note that the description of research and development in the document is not very precise. It is not clear for whom the research and development is being implemented. Is it for the public of for the artists themselves? It seems that, in the document, the term ‘research and development’ is used whereas in the other documents the terms ‘development of forms of expression’, ‘avant-garde’ or ‘renewal of the cultural system’ are used. Therefore this function is regarded as a function from the perspective of the artists.
2. The National Government

digitization, a rich cultural life serves as an essential and desirable counterweight to our increasingly commercialized and businesslike society. A country’s cultural image is not only established by a strong cultural audiovisual sector, but also by a flourishing cultural climate and a rich cultural heritage. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 68)

This quote seems to hold a new legitimization for cultural policy: counterbalancing the forces of commerce. In *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) a similar concern for cultural generalization has been expressed. For the present research, however, it is debatable whether or not this quote holds a new function for the performing arts in society. Investigation should be carried out into why exactly the politicians want to counter the effect of the growing commercial production of culture. Two concerns can be distinguished. First, there is growing generalization in cultural activities based on modern Western culture, as mentioned in *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992, p. 18-19). A completely commercial cultural production will therefore not be able to represent norms and values of different groups in society, for some groups are not economically interesting in terms of profitability. This argument also holds for small ethnically or nationally based cultures. Therefore the diversity of cultural forms becomes a policy aim. Here, culture has the function of representing specific subgroup identities. Second, from the discussion in the policy documents on the ‘artification’ of theatre and the relationship between subsidized and free producers, it can be deduced that the general assumption in politics is that subsidized cultural activities perform the artistic functions better than non-subsidized events. As mentioned previously, this assumption is questionable. Which artistic functions are at stake is not elaborated.

2.3.2. Growing Autonomy of the Cultural Sector

As indicated above, the most important concern in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* is the growing autonomy of the subsidized cultural institutions in the Netherlands.

Especially after World War II, the national government began to play an essential role in the conservation, production and innovation, mainly by granting subsidies. These subsidies were nearly always directed (…) at the wishes and requirements of the specialists (…) and to the preferences of other insiders, and not, at least not primarily, at a broad audience. This partial approach of what was on offer has doubtlessly been conducive to the creation of a richly variegated subsidized culture, with an unprecedented diversity of theatre, music, dance and museums (…). In my opinion, these are achievements that should not be treated carelessly. (…) Yet, it must be stated here that the dominance of these specialists and the safe haven created by the system of subsidies have also impeded the dynamics of subsidized culture. It cannot be denied that the wide variety of subsidized cultural on offer is counterbalanced by a demand, strikingly homogenous in its nature, (from) (…) well-educated, affluent, middle-aged people. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 3-4)

The autonomy of the cultural sector is a result of the influence of specialists on cultural policy. The quote implies, however, that the real value of culture in society is realized in the confrontation with the general public, not a public of specialists. The legitimization of a cultural policy apparently lies outside the field of culture itself. This concern is not limited to the performing arts. In the field of cultural heritage, there has also been a trend towards
autonomy based on the decisions made by specialists who have a one-sided focus on quality.\textsuperscript{17}

The focus on quality as an autonomous phenomenon since the 1980s is considered to be a major contributing factor to the growing autonomy of culture.

In the eighties, (cultural) policy became increasingly governed by the concept of quality as an autonomous starting point. (…). In that view, art is not subservient to social objectives, the well-being of citizens or the emancipation of neglected classes. Art is mainly subservient to itself. That thought establishes the final cultural-political conclusion of the process of autonomization and professionalization. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 12-13)\textsuperscript{18}

The autonomous position of cultural institutions in Dutch society has led to a flourishing cultural scene. The policy makers seem convinced, however, that there is too little attention for the participation in (subsidized) cultural activities as a result.

It is exactly in the confrontation with the public that art comes to life. This requires an integral corporate philosophy from the institutions concerning what they want to convey, with which performances or exhibitions, to what audience. Preservation and public function, artistic and commercial interests, or production and marketing are not independent entities, but should be an integral part of an institute’s conception of its cultural mission. This also implies that in the cultural policy a greater importance should be attributed to the accommodation, as that is where cultural demand and supply actually meet. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, pp. 14-15)

Here, a very different approach to cultural policy from the point of view of the cultural institutions themselves is being promoted. The fact that the institutions are judged on the basis of their own ambitions is not questioned. However, the point being made is that these ambitions should include a vision on the public and the way this public should be reached, in addition to an opinion on the artistic level of the productions. Three scenarios for cultural policy are formulated.

In the first scenario, the emphasis is on artistic autonomy, in which quality judgement by professional experts plays a decisive role. The focus of attention is on the vulnerable; everything worth anything is defenceless. State interference is legitimized by its function in the research and development of art and in the intrinsic significance of our heritage. (…) This scenario leads to needless marginalization, as it inflates one particular function, the preservation of cultural heritage and research within the arts, to form the basis of the entire subsidized system. However, preservation and research should not be goals in themselves, their importance being directly related to the social functions of culture. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 19)

Research and development in art and culture are regarded as a function, but not as a function in societal terms. Of course, the development of ways of expression is vital for a flourishing cultural scene but the function of that cultural scene in societal terms is not expressed by this developmental function itself. The significance of art in society should be

\textsuperscript{17} The same problem seems to apply to cultural heritage where specialists decide on what should be preserved and shown to the public. Artefacts from the past are considered to influence cultural production in the present (\textit{ibid.}, p. 10). In the field of cultural heritage reviewed in \textit{Cultuur als Confrontatie}, a somewhat ‘economic’ approach is advocated in which the value of artefacts that are eligible for acquisition by a museum in economic terms (i.e., money value) is contrasted with ‘societal returns’, such as the expected value for the public or their value for scientific research (\textit{ibid.}, p. 11). These concerns point to the same type of functioning for the performing arts as encountered in the previous documents: playing repertoire and research of authentic performance practices.

\textsuperscript{18} This view is similar to the remark made by Oosterbaan Martinius where aesthetic values gain dominance in the production and evaluation of art (Oosterbaan Martinius, 1990, p. 18).
2. The National Government

defined outside art itself. The second scenario – that of full consumer sovereignty and therefore entailing the abolition of all subsidies for art – is not advocated. This will either result in culture not being accessible to large numbers of people because of the price of participating, or cultural activities not being produced at all because of the grave economic risks involved. The preference is for a third scenario in which the legitimization of cultural policy lies in the confrontation with the public.

Quality and cultural value cannot be established in advance, let alone be based on sales and box-office figures, but only becomes apparent after a confrontation of opinions and ideas, not only from professionals, but in particular from the general public. So, contrary to the saying, there is accounting for taste. In that respect, arts and cultural heritage are not the binding agents of society, but rather the catalysts of unarmed conflict between many different cultural views and values. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 20)

In this view, the intrinsic and other values of culture will best be realized in contact with society. It seems that stimulating unarmed confrontation, i.e. public debate, is one of the most important functions of art and cultural heritage. This implies that, though experiment and artistic research are necessary, the other functions in the cultural system should be guaranteed as well: producing for specific segments of the public, educational activities, cooperation with amateurs and international activities (ibid., p. 31). These are tasks rather than functions.

These quotes from Cultuur als Confrontatie clearly demonstrate the political view that cultural policy is legitimised because of its functioning in society, and that it is not only based upon the demands of the cultural sector itself. Although it remains to be seen whether or not the measures advocated in Cultuur als Confrontatie have had the effect of actually changing practices in the cultural sector, the assumption by Oosterbaan Martinius (1990), Abbing (1989 and 2002) and Van Klink (2005) that cultural policy mainly aims at satisfying the needs of the art world are forcefully contradicted here, at least in political rhetoric.

2.3.3. Economic Functions

Many museums (and theatres and concert halls) have been built in the Netherlands in the last few decades. These museums form a considerable stimulus to the architecture of public space, similar to churches and cathedrals in the past. It is typical that these buildings are usually reviewed as works of art, while considerations regarding position, significance and functions of the building remain underexposed. Building activity in this sector arises from considerations of a governmental, political, economic and urban development nature rather than intrinsically cultural motives. (Ministerie van OCW, 2000, p. 11)

The construction of museums, theatres and concert halls has various backgrounds. In this quote, a concern is expressed that the economic, urban-planning and political functions of these building projects have been more prominent than the cultural significance and function of the buildings. Therefore the buildings are being viewed as works of art themselves and not as the places where a social process is facilitated. For the present research it is of interest that, apart from cultural functions, there seem to be economic functions as well as

19 The Dutch word ‘bestel’ (system) used here refers to the part of the art world in which production, distribution and consumption of the subsidized arts are organized (see Van Maanen, 1997, p. 7).
considerations in the field of urban planning and politics themselves. Obviously these are extrinsic functions on a collective level.

2.4. 2005-2008: More than the Sum

Van der Ploeg’s immediate successor, Cees van Leeuwen, was a representative of the right-wing political party Lijst Pim Fortuyn which won the 2002 elections. However, the new government was short-lived owing to the unstable political climate. New elections where held and a new government led by the Christian Democratic Party took office. Its state secretary for culture, Medy van der Laan (Liberal Democratic Party), lacked the time to write a full ‘uitgangspuntenbrief’ (memo on points of departure). She therefore wrote a short ‘uitgangspuntenbrief’ which served to start up formally the procedure for a new cultural policy document in July 2003. In November 2003 she published a policy letter to parliament entitled *Meer dan de som* (More than the Sum). This policy letter contains the legitimization of the cultural policy and, as such, is therefore examined here. The policy letter refers to the coalition agreement of which deregulation and economic recovery are crucial themes.

The policy letter contains a remarkable change from its predecessor:

(...it is time for a new approach to culture. In the past few years, the classic ideal of spreading culture was increasingly interpreted as a plea for its socialization. (...) This has led to an instrumentalistic policy, predominantly aimed at the institutions. The government chooses a different approach: it is not social awareness in culture that should be increased, but cultural awareness in society. (...) This implies that attention should be paid to culture in education, the quality of public space, the urban investment climate, and leisure facilities. The strength of culture lies not only in its innovative and creative power, in its ability to embody our country’s ‘prestige’, in its cohesive power, and in the achievements of our past, but also in other ways of looking, in questioning matters we have always taken for granted, and in repeated benchmarking of values. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 2)

In other words, the central problem of cultural policy is not the fact that the cultural field has developed too autonomously from society and that it should be stimulated to take note of developments in society. Society should be more aware of the strengths of cultural activities and accomplishments. Therefore no remarks on the autonomy of culture can be found in the policy letter. The emphasis is placed on deregulation of the cultural field.

2.4.1. Intrinsic Functions

The quote mentioned above contains three intrinsic functions of culture. Culture alters how we look at things, culture brings perceived certainties up for discussion and is pivotal in re-evaluating values. Here, these functions are related to culture. In the discussion of definitions of culture and art used in the policy documents, however, these functions have been identified as being specific to art.

The policy letter starts by referring to the ‘uitgangspuntenbrief’ of July 2003.

Increasing the autonomy (of the cultural sector, QLvdH) is based on the conviction that the quality of art can only come to full bloom in complete freedom. Only then can art fulfil its
special purpose, not only as an immaterial enrichment for those who actively take part in it, but also to increase the flexibility of society as a whole. Hence, the ‘Hoofdlijnenakkoord’ (Coalition Agreement, QLvdH) stresses the importance of high-quality cultural life. It is the government’s task to safeguard freedom of art and, equally important, to see to it that this freedom is put to the best possible use in society. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 1)

In other words: the autonomy of the cultural sector should be strengthened in order to maximize the specific relevance of art in society. This relevance relates to ‘immaterial enrichment’ of those taking part in cultural activities. The text is not clear about what this immaterial enrichment actually is, but refers most likely to personal development. It also relates to an effect on societal level: art enhances the elasticity of society. From this quote it is not exactly clear what is meant by this, but one could argue that both social and economic effects are being referred to. The social effects have been mentioned in earlier policy documents where tolerance, relating oneself to others, and shared cultural experiences have been mentioned as starting points for recognizing the extraordinary achievements of others. The economic effects are a somewhat more difficult matter. On several occasions (see below) the policy letter stresses the importance of cultural creativity for the economic sector. Therefore one could argue that, besides the social effect involving the elasticity of society, the creativity involved in developing new products and services is also being referred to. Both types of functioning are present in the next quote which is also a reference to the ‘uitgangspuntenbrief’.

For a thriving culture not only contributes to the creative and innovative powers of a society, to entrepreneurship and the prestige of our country, it also works as a social binding agent as well. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 2)

This quote contains several functions of art and culture: a contribution to the creative and innovative abilities of society, a contribution to entrepreneurial spirit, the outlook of the country and bringing people together. Most of these functions are also present in the previous documents, except the outlook of the country. This function refers to the design of the public space and is specific to the fields of the visual arts, design and architecture, and therefore not relevant to the performing arts. Only the last function, bringing people together, is of an intrinsic nature. The quote elaborates on this function specifically with regard to cultural heritage. A same reasoning as in Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995) can be found: knowledge of one’s own culture is a prerequisite for an open attitude towards others. This reasoning can also be found in the paragraphs where the emphasis of Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000) on cultural diversity is criticized.

The new government faced the tasks of formulating an answer to the rising ethnic tensions in the Netherlands.

Knowledge of our cultural heritage contributes to cultural self-awareness, which is essential in the intercultural debate as well as for a strong position of Dutch culture in an international context. A debate on culture is impossible without knowledge of the previous debates. The question is how far the government should go, in its culture policy, to provoke or even force this binding power upon subsidized artists or cultural institutions. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 14)
In *Meer dan de Som* (2003) the generic policy measures of *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), such as the obligation to spend at least two per cent of the total budget on reaching new (more diverse) audiences, have been abolished. The document advocates a more selective approach in which not all cultural institutions are obliged to reach new audiences. Rather, cultural production should be geared towards the diversity of subcultures in society. One of the measures advocated consists of appointing members of different ethnic groups or age groups in the boards and in the management of cultural institutions (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, pp. 14-15).

Cultural education is seen as crucial in cultural policy. In spite of a cut in the cultural policy budget, more money is devoted to cultural education. It need not be argued here that cultural education is an indispensable part of the cultural policy. Culture belongs to the heart of education. Cultural baggage is essential for the personal development of children, young people, and young adults. Cultural education contributes to the fulfilment of one of the main goals in the Coalition Agreement: Promotion of Participation of the People. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 16)

Personal development is mentioned as a function here. Remarkably, personal development is seen as a means to achieve goals outside of cultural policy, namely, furthering participation in society as a whole. This suggests that the extrinsic functioning could be dependent on intrinsic functions, at least in the social domain.

### 2.4.2. Economic Functions

In *Meer dan de Som* (2003) attention is devoted to the relationship between culture and economy.

Creativity, being an essential production factor in the knowledge economy, is of vital importance to the development ‘from a generic policy on technology into an active policy on innovation’. After all, the latter not only relies on technology as such, but is becoming increasingly dependent on smart combinations of technology and the application of non-technical factors such as artistic design and creativity in the way information is structured. Cultural innovation is often the secret behind the commercial success of many products and services. (Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 12)

Creativity is seen as a source of income and necessary for economic development, which is a major aim of the coalition agreement. The creative industry is put in the spotlight. This term refers to a cluster of economic activities in which creativity is key to economic success. The cultural sector as a whole is part of the creative industry, but advertising companies, design and bio-technological companies and the IT sector also fall within the definition. The policy letter refers to research on the creative industry of the city of Eindhoven. This sector provides 8% of regional employment, whereas building companies only provide 7% and the educational facilities 5.5% (*ibid.*, p. 12). Because the creative industry requires low capital, is knowledge-intensive, requires intensive human labour and is environmentally friendly, European cities and regions have begun programmes to intensify the creative sector. The cultural sector is comprised in these strategies, as is the case in Rotterdam for instance, where

---

20 The policy document here refers to R. Kerste et al. (2003).
2. The National Government

a film commissioner promotes Rotterdam as a filming location in order to establish a
dynamic image of the city (ibid., p. 12). Image-building therefore can be regarded as an
economic function of culture.

Besides the role of the cultural sector in the creative industry, other economic effects of
culture are being mentioned.

Culture contributes to a country’s national prestige and its reputation of creativity,
entrepreneurship and civilization. Businesses do consider the cultural climate of a city to decide
whether or not to settle there.21 In turn, employees find it important that the city in which they
work boasts high-quality cultural services. Moreover, the cultural sector has a considerable
influence on adjacent sectors such as tourism, the catering business, and the trade sector.
(Ministerie van OCW, 2003, p. 13)

Developing national prestige is a new function of culture in the economic domain. In this
quote, it seems to be linked to developing an image of creativity, presumably for a city or a
region or a nation as a whole. These are interesting functions and research should be carried
out to establish how they are linked to the intrinsic qualities of culture and art. Above, the
development of an entrepreneurial spirit was encountered as a function of culture. The role
of culture in civilization is a new element; however this role is not elaborated upon. The
policy letter stresses the idea of a climate for attracting businesses as the most crucial
economic function of culture, next to the role it plays in the creative industry.

The policy letter mentions a third domain in which culture and art function economically.
Attention is turned to author’s rights in the digital world. The policy letter signals tension
between the application of these rights and the free flow of information and creativity. The
policy letter does not offer solutions for this tension (ibid., p. 13). In the terms of the present
research, this points to the function of generating income for artists themselves, a function
which falls in cell ‘B’ of Table 1.1. This is the first national cultural policy document to
mention a function of art and culture in this cell. This is not surprising, as intellectual
ownership has become an economic growth sector due to the growth of the creative sector
propelled by IT developments. But this type of function only seems to apply to the
performing arts inasmuch as they are virtually recorded (on film, television or DVD).
However, the present research is concerned with the functioning of live performing arts.

2.4.3. Cities and Regions

In Meer dan de Som (2003) much attention is paid to the position of cities and regions. For
instance, subsidies in the field of the visual arts will be geared more towards initiatives in
cities in order to enlarge their potential for regional functioning, as opposed to the situation
where resources were split up over numerous small initiatives that only functioned locally
(ibid., p. 7). For the performing arts, the budget cut leads to sharp choices. Even though the

21 The policy document here refers to Florida (2002). His thesis is that nowadays companies tend to
follow the settlement decisions of their employees whereas in the ‘classic’ economic practice this was
always the other way around. This is especially true for knowledge-based industries such as the IT
sector. Cities with diverse recreational facilities – of which cultural and artistic activities form an
important part – thus have an advantage in economic development, as these sectors of the economy
tend to be highly profitable.
artistic quality of institutions remains the principal criterion for subsidy decisions, an approach is advocated where deviations from artistic judgements can be allowed, recognizing that facilities should be spread over the country evenly (ibid., p. 8) and that production facilities have an added value for the region where they are based (ibid., p. 19). These notions are also present in previous policy documents. No new functions for cities and regions are mentioned in *Meer dan de Som* (2003).

### 2.5. Functions of the (Performing) Arts in the State Policy Documents

A number of functions of the (performing) arts can now be identified. In order to compare the functions in the various documents, they have been categorized in Tables 2.1 to 2.5. Similar functions in each document have been put together in one box, corresponding functions between documents have been aligned horizontally. For some functions, it is not quite clear whether they are exactly the same between one document and the other. In these cases, the functions may be mentioned more than once. When a function has been specifically linked to art or fringe activities, this is indicated. The tables are discussed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>Being addressed at emotional level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being surprised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing something unique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing beauty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being bewildered by an experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being impressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment, relaxation</td>
<td>Diversion</td>
<td>'Intellectual' entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Amusement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination / fantasy</td>
<td>Lifting one above the limitations of daily life through imagination (specifically for the arts)</td>
<td>Stimulating fantasy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.1 A first categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Personal Experience*
2. The National Government

2.5.1. Functions from the Perspective of the Audience

Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 list the functions found in the policy documents as seen from the perspective of the audience. These are all functions that are linked to the intrinsic (artistic) nature of the performing arts, possibly with the exception of the entertainment function and cultural education.

A first set of functions centres on **personal experience** (Table 2.1). The immediate effect on spectators of participating in cultural activities is described as ‘emotional’. This has been elaborated upon to the greatest extent in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000). The experiences of beauty, of unicity, surprise and bewilderment have all been associated with aesthetic experiences. The question can be raised as to whether or not these are specific to art and which further effects these experiences have for individual spectators, other than the pleasure they bring. Another specific question regards entertainment. In *Investeren in Cultuur* (1992) and *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000), the term ‘entertainment’ seems to be used in the sense of ‘relaxation’ and is opposed to the artistic functioning of performing arts. However, *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) refers to a form of intellectual stimulation which, in turn, can have a relaxing effect. This should be clarified. *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995) also introduces ‘the power of imagination’ which seems to be a function on the emotional level, for ‘it lifts one above the limitations of daily life’. It is not clear what is meant by this. Therefore the specific nature of the aesthetic experience should be studied to discover the functions that do exist for spectators, and how they are linked to the specific artistic qualities of the performing arts. This should result in a more precise definition of art as well as of entertainment. This theme will be researched in Part II (Chapter 6).

A second set of functions can be regarded as **personal development** (Table 2.2). These functions centre on personal growth through exploration, reflection, curiosity, and learning about alternative visions on reality (in one’s own culture or beyond). Personal development seems to refer to the **mental** development of the spectator. But it is not clear from the policy documents how personal development relates to personal experience through the arts. A simple reasoning could be that mental development is achieved through experiencing emotions in the case of culture and art, whereas mental development in science is achieved through a purely rational process. But this would disregard the fact that developing new insights can also give rise to pleasure, i.e., can have an effect on emotional level. This would turn the argument around. Theories on the specific nature of the aesthetic experience could shed light on this subject and are therefore studied in Part II. In the documents, at least three different aspects have been referred to:

1. A form of intellectual pleasure can be involved by stimulation of the mind. This is most markedly present in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000).
2. A function of cultural activities is to make acquaintance with alternative visions on reality. Culture and art can thus alter the way people look at things and bring perceived certainties up for discussion. One can broaden one’s own mental scope through learning or experiencing the world view of others.
3. A very specific function has been mentioned in Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995), which can best be described as rendering significance or meaning to impressions and events in life. This function seems to relate to the functions mentioned under identity, as rendering meaning lends identity on a personal level. This personal identity, of course, plays a part in the interaction with others.

In Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000) cultural education has been mentioned as a function. This function seems to be out of place here because it is an activity of the cultural institutions themselves, whereas all the other functions have been expressed as (mental) activities on the part of the audience. But cultural education does not fit anywhere else in Tables 2.1 to 2.5. It can be regarded as a task within the artworld itself, but it is the only task encountered that focuses on personal development of the audience rather than of the artists. Therefore cultural education has been placed under personal development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental development of spectators</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>Personal exploration</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Personal development (as a means to further participation in society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furthering people’s maturity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulation of the mind</td>
<td>Re-evaluating values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening the mental scope of spectators</td>
<td>Learning about alternative visions on reality</td>
<td>Recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures</td>
<td>Experiencing new ways of looking at things</td>
<td>Altering the way we look at things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfying curiosity</td>
<td>Bringing perceived certainties up for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rendering significance</td>
<td>Giving meaning to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impressions and events in life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding a secure place in the world mentally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural education</td>
<td>Educational activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 A first categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Personal Development
### Table 2.3 A first categorization of the functioning of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): intrinsic functions from the perspective of the audience: Identity and Social Interaction

A third set of functions deals with **identity and social interaction** (Table 2.3), either historically formed identities or social identities. Identity is important for the functioning of (performing) art. However it is not clear what the relationship between art and identity is exactly. Furthermore, the question has been raised as to how institutions for the performing arts should relate to their immediate surroundings. It is noteworthy that the documents do not refer to anything such as geographical (regional) identity. In *Cultuur als Confrontatie*...
The concept of identity has been mentioned in its 'confrontational' aspects. The arts are seen specifically as a means to stimulate debate, as a playground for (safe) confrontation between different identities. This perception of art as a form of social debate is also present in the other documents. Identity has at least two aspects. First, it refers to personal identity, 'who am I?' in relation to history or to other people. The second aspect refers to the collective level, for it is about confrontation between personal views or identities. In Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995) and Meer dan de Som (2003) the confrontational aspects of identity are expressed differently than in the other two documents. They are expressed from the level of an individual (determining what is of value, recognizing special circumstances, recognizing the meaning and value of other cultures, being aware of one's own character, knowledge of one's own culture). However, these individual qualities are used in confrontation with others. Therefore these functions can be regarded as the same as those mentioned in the other two documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Expressing ideas and views Expressing ideas and views authentically Formulating critique on society (art specifically)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic development</td>
<td>Developing new forms of expression (specifically fringe activities) Renewal of cultural system itself (art specifically)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Producing for specific audiences Producing for specific audiences, e.g. theatre for toddlers and youth theatre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Producing with amateurs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-operation with amateurs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4 A first categorization of the functions and tasks of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): Intrinsic Functions and Tasks from the perspective of the artists (and cultural industry)
2. The National Government

2.5.2. Functions from the Perspective of the Artists

Table 2.4 lists the functions found in the policy documents from the perspective of the performing artists. It should be noted that, in *Meer dan de Som* (2003), no functions or tasks from the perspective of the artist are mentioned. This indicates that, in this last policy document, the legitimization of the cultural policy lies exclusively outside the arts.

The first function is **expressing ideas and views**. This function seems to be the cornerstone of the artistic enterprise from a cultural policy point of view. This function is linked to the functions from the perspective of the spectators. It is the active counterpart of functions such as experiencing alternative visions on reality. Expressing ideas and views is the only concept in Table 2.4 that refers to the relationship between the artworld and society, and therefore will be regarded as a function in this research. This function is intrinsic because it is linked to the artistic qualities of cultural activities. It is the only function in Table 2.4 that can be linked to the functions from the perspective of the audience.

**Artistic development** seems to be about finding new metaphors for expressing ideas and views. From *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) it can be deduced that some cultural institutions should gear themselves to experiment with cultural forms. Others should aim at dispersing these new metaphors. The question can be raised as to whether or not this is a viable option for theatre companies, orchestras and music ensembles. In the other policy documents, the view seems to be that developing new ways of expression is a function of art in society itself, for it enables people to communicate with each other in new ways and express new circumstances. In this view, the development of new ways of expression also is a function in terms of the present research, and seems to be linked closely to the previous function of expressing ideas and views. Because new ways of expression can be (or some would argue should be) developed from older forms, the study of authentic performance practices is listed here as well.

**Producing for specific audiences** and **producing with amateurs** are specific tasks mentioned in the policy documents. International activities can be listed here as well because this can be regarded as producing for a specific audience, namely, the international market. It seems obvious that from the perspective of the national government these tasks are relevant. However, this does not automatically mean they are relevant to cities as well. First, it seems obvious that these tasks are relevant when the cultural policy of a city declares these tasks to be a specific goal; for instance, a city which aims at reaching all toddlers with theatrical activities should incorporate these tasks when evaluating the outcome of cultural policy. However, it seems likely that this city will have other aims in formulating such a policy. Even though these tasks seem first and foremost to be related to the ‘internal’ development of the cultural system (and they are therefore intrinsic in nature), they can relate to specific extrinsic functions listed in Table 2.5, such as economic functions (producing specifically for international visitors to the city) or social policy aims (producing for specific groups that are in danger of social exclusion).
Table 2.4 provokes two questions which are of importance for the present research. The first concerns whether or not the full ‘scope’ of functions and tasks listed here should be present in the city itself. Do the performing arts function differently in a city where there is a stage specifically geared to productions that can be characterized as ‘experimental’ than they do in a city where this type of stage does not exist? The second question concerns whether or not performing-arts activities in a city should be sufficiently diverse to cater for all the different groups of the city’s population. In other words: do the performing arts function differently in a city where there are no productions for toddlers at all? Theoretically these questions are very interesting. However, they are only of importance for the present research when a city’s policy states that all kinds of performing arts activities should be present in the city and when the aim of the cultural policy is to reach all different groups in the city’s society. In other words, these are political questions rather than research questions.

2.5.3. Extrinsic Functions

The extrinsic functions have been listed in Table 2.5. They can be considered as functions on a collective level and therefore fall in cell F of Table 1. However, it is debatable whether or not some of the economic functions and functions for a city or region may be linked to the intrinsic artistic quality of the performing arts, i.e., they can also fall in cell E of Table 1.1. This will be elaborated below.

The first set of functions in this table, the added value of production facilities, is problematic. In Pantser of Ruggegraat (1995) cities are viewed as the breeding grounds of culture. In the other policy documents, the assumption has been made that the presence of (large) performing-arts production facilities is of value for a city. However, this value has not been stated clearly in the documents. The word ‘value’ is used here because it is not yet clear at this point in the research whether or not this is a kind of functioning of the performing arts in a city. Moreover, it is not exactly clear whether this type of functioning is intrinsic or extrinsic. Inclusion in this table and in cell F is therefore provisional. In addition, it has not been clearly stated who actually allots value to the production facilities. It can be assumed that the presence of performing arts production facilities in a city:

- has a value for the (regional) public in that city;
- has a value for other cultural institutions in that city;
- influences the functioning of plays or concerts in the ‘home town’ of the theatre company or orchestra;
- Frames the productions of ‘visiting’ companies, bands or orchestras in a different way so that they function differently.

In addition, the question has been raised as to how performing-arts institutions should relate to their immediate surroundings. Does the (regional) audience in their ‘home town’ have specific preferences that they should take into account? Or has the growing internationalization eradicated these regional differences in taste? And if such differences do exist, at what level do they become apparent to a performing-arts institution: at the level of language (both spoken and symbolic language), the themes addressed in productions, or the
choice of repertoire? Of course, this question is linked to the concept of identity which is also predominant in the intrinsic functioning of the performing arts.

The state policy documents do not elaborate much upon the **economic functioning** of the (performing) arts, although it is assumed that cultural activities in a city or region have an economic effect. A first function in the economic domain is to attract visitors to a city. In the policy documents, this function is mostly linked to cultural heritage but it also should be studied in relation to the performing arts. The theatre culture in London certainly attracts visitors from abroad. However, in the Dutch case, travelling theatre companies and ensembles tend to be the rule, which means that many mainstream productions can be viewed in almost all Dutch cities and that the theatre public is not obliged to travel to another city. But many productions are not spread over the country so generously. For example, (commercially produced) musicals are limited to a few venues in the country. International productions also visit just one or a few cities, as do international pop stars. The same can be said of avant-garde productions. The value of the performing arts for attracting visitors to a city therefore is a relevant topic to study in more detail.

Second, the arts play a role in attracting businesses to cities. The assumption is that cities offering a vibrant cultural scene are attractive to businesses. This holds especially true for companies that rely on knowledge workers. This is stressed to the greatest extent in *Meer dan de Som* (2003). This document also links the cultural scene of a city to creativity as a source of economic success and to developing entrepreneurial spirit. The concept of the creative class is relevant here. Research should be carried out into whether or not cities try to influence economic performance through their cultural policy. This is done in the next chapter, where the policy documents of a selection of Dutch cities will be studied.

A third set of functions refers to **social policy**. Social cohesion and tolerance have been mentioned in *Pantser of Ruggegraat* (1995), and civilization in *Meer dan de Som* (2003). At this point, it is not clear what exactly is meant by an ‘open living climate’. This should be studied in more detail. Some other extrinsic functions have been mentioned in *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (2000) and *Meer dan de Som* (2003) as well: spatial planning, political issues, image building and prestige. Research should be performed into whether or not these functions are also mentioned in policy documents of cities; otherwise they are not relevant for this research.

For all functions described in Table 2.5 – though they do not seem to be linked directly to the intrinsic nature of the performing arts – examination should be carried out as to whether or not they are linked. In other words: can the economic and social functioning of the performing arts occur without the artistic functioning of the performing arts? Or rather, is the artistic functioning of performing arts likely to generate specific contributions in the economic and social domains? This has been suggested in *More than the Sum* (2003), regarding the relationship between creativity and economic performance. These questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Added value</td>
<td>Added value of production facilities for a region or city</td>
<td>Added value of a coherent system of production and consumption facilities comprising all functions in the art industry</td>
<td>Added value of production facilities for a region or city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural life</td>
<td>Motor for artistic and cultural life</td>
<td>Breeding places for culture and art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting visitors</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>Attracting tourists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business climate</td>
<td>Attracting businesses</td>
<td>Added value for attracting businesses</td>
<td>Climate for attracting businesses, specifically by providing viable living conditions for knowledge workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative climate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution to the creative and innovative abilities of society Developing entrepreneurial spirit Creativity as a source of income and economic development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social cohesion</td>
<td>Scene for shared experience Bringing people together despite their differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part I: Functioning of the Performing Arts in Dutch Cultural Policy**
Table 2.5 A first categorization of the functions and tasks of the performing arts in society, based on documents on Dutch national cultural policy (1992-2004): Extrinsic Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Policy</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>Encourage an open living climate to accommodate different ways of cultural expression (tolerance)</th>
<th>Civilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other issues</td>
<td>Spatial planning</td>
<td>Political issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

will be studied in Chapters 8 and 9. The functions mentioned in Table 2.5 have been described only superficially in the state policy documents. It seems logical to presume that the policy documents of cities elaborate upon these functions to a greater degree. Therefore these questions will be studied in more detail on the basis of the discussion of the policy documents of several larger cities in the Netherlands in the next chapter. At this point it is possible to fill in the empty cells of Table 1 on the basis of the discussion of the policy documents of the state. This is done in table 2.6.

Some preliminary answers to the questions that terminated Chapter 1 can now be formulated. Extrinsic functions for the performing artists have not been mentioned in the national policy documents. This is consistent with the assumption that the income policy for artists falls outside the scope of cultural policy in the Netherlands. However several functions in cell A have been identified. These functions seem to be very important to the cultural policy and are linked to the functions in cells C and E.

The distinction between the individual level and collective level on the part of the audience does seem to be relevant, as was questioned in Chapter 1. A specific research question concerns whether or not personal experience can indeed be categorized on the intrinsic and non-intrinsic side. This will be investigated in Chapter 6, where the specific nature of aesthetic experience is examined. A further question involves the specific contributions of aesthetic activities to the economic and social domains. This will be investigated in Chapters 8 and 9. The added value of production facilities for a city is a complex matter. It is not clear whether or not they have been placed correctly in the Table. This will be researched on the basis of the city policy documents covered in Chapter 3.

---

22 Except from providing income through the exploitation of author’s rights, but this function does not pertain to the live performing arts.
Table 2.6 Categorization of the functions of the performing arts in society, based on state policy documents.

2.6. Developments in Dutch Cultural Policy

In section 1.4 it was established that the political orientation of elected officials has little influence on Dutch cultural policy. The discussion of the policy documents in this chapter makes clear that differences between social-democratic and liberal-democratic elected officials can be found in the documents, although they do not lead to drastic policy changes. Differences become apparent specifically at the level of identity and social interaction. The documents drawn up under a socialist politician (D’Ancona and Van der Ploeg) reflect a world view that centres on collectives. Thus they are prone to defining art’s functioning in terms of interaction and debate. The liberal-democratic politicians (Nuis and Van der Laan) approach art’s functioning from the perspective of the individual and thus stress the contribution that aesthetic experience has for individuals in navigating the social arena. Rather than pointing out different functions, the documents reflect the same type of functions from a different angle. A second difference regards the attention that is paid to the diversity of the subsidized cultural sector. While the socialists regard this issue from the perspective of the diversity of audiences, arguing for those who do not have access to cultural facilities, the liberal-democrats tend to regard it as a question of artistic quality.
which should reflect the diversity in society. Furthermore, Van der Ploeg’s efforts to steer cultural production through specific measures, e.g. minimum percentages of subsidies that should be devoted to attracting new audiences, were immediately abolished by Van der Laan as she represented a government that was concerned with reducing bureaucracy. Though this shift does coincide with the differences between a socialist and liberal-democratic view regarding the extent to which society can be engineered, the shift rather seems to be a demonstration of a more general trend in Dutch politics. Van der Laan’s successor, the socialist Ronald Plasterk, has not yet demonstrated a tendency to reinstitute some of these measures. His policies faithfully execute the agenda set into motion by Van der Laan regarding systemic change, most notably through functional decentralization of cultural policy.

Furthermore, it has become clear that the legitimization of Dutch cultural policy in the documents lies squarely outside the artworld. The tendency to introduce extrinsic arguments is most markedly present in the last two documents where Cultuur als Confrontatie (2000) introduces social policy issues such as equity in stressing cultural diversity (i.e., ethnic diversity) and Meer dan de Som (2003) takes an economic perspective stressing the contribution of creativity to economic performance. Specifically the last two documents thus contradict the claim of Oosterbaan Martinius, Abbing and Van Klink that cultural policy in fact serves the needs of cultural professionals and elite audiences. This issue relates to the most important question regarding the developments in Dutch cultural policy: the question of art’s autonomy, which is a recurring theme in the policy documents. In studying the documents, it has become clear that the Dutch art world seems to enjoy relative autonomy rather than absolute autonomy. None the less, concerns for the restricted reach in society and the perceived ‘artification’ of Dutch theatre are expressed in the documents. These issues are considered to restrict art’s functioning in society. Around the year 2000, the stress on cultural education as a means to advance the reach and the advent of cultural diversity – which here should be understood as ethnic diversity – are indicators that the national government was trying to mitigate the autonomy of the subsidized arts. On the other hand, the emphasis on the artistic quality of productions is one of the official aims of the Act Governing Specific Cultural Policy. Furthermore, specifically in Meer dan de Som (2003), the assumption has been made that the arts function in society as art. And extrinsic functioning may even ensue from this specific artistic quality. This line of reasoning clearly underpins the creative class argument that is advanced in this document. The question of art’s autonomy in relation to its functioning in society therefore needs to be researched in more detail. This is the topic of Chapter 5. We remark that national cultural policy evidently displays a trend towards the ‘social relevance’ after the stress on artistic quality in the 1980s, although with the shift to

---

23 The same difference occurs in the documents of the city of Groningen from 1995, for example, which were drawn up under a liberal-democratic alderman, and from 2000, drawn up under a socialist alderman. The latter document stresses access to authentic cultural expression for youngsters (see section 3.4).
art’s functioning as art in Meer dan de Som (2003), a common ground for artistic quality and societal relevance may have been reached.