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Performance evaluation in the arts

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PROPOSITIONS

Belonging to the PhD thesis

Performance Evaluation in The Arts: From The Margins of Accounting to The Core of Accountability

by Francesco Chiaravalloti

1. Publicly funded arts organizations should be evaluated primarily on their ability to create and distribute arts, and secondarily on the extent to which the creation and distribution of arts are supported by a sound and sustainable organization and financial structure.
2. Performance evaluation systems can only be relevant to publicly funded arts organizations and their stakeholders if the artistic performance of such organizations is evaluated by taking into account the specific institutional and organizational contexts in which the individual organizations create and distribute art.
3. The evaluation of the artistic performance of publicly funded arts organizations is not a purely procedural and technical issue relating to the production of better performance information, but it is above all a substantive and political one relating to the nature of the arts and the function of publicly funded arts organizations in individual communities and in society in general.
4. Managers of publicly funded arts organizations form their judgments about the artistic performance of their organizations based on information that is mostly qualitative, unwritten and tacit.
5. The performance information that influences the managers' judgments about the artistic performance of their organizations relates to the artistic processes and is evaluated through a process of intersubjective sense-making of the expectations and opinions of those internal and external stakeholders who are close to those processes.
6. Information about supporting processes, as well as the expectations and opinions of those internal and external stakeholders who are distant from the artistic processes, do not influence the managers' judgments about artistic performance.
7. The different groups of managers of publicly funded opera companies (artistic, administrative, technical) evaluate the artistic performance of their organizations according to a common rationality; i.e., an 'opera rationality'.
8. Mechanistic forms of evaluation in use in publicly funded arts organizations are not necessarily the result of the forms of accountability imposed by 'New Public Management'-oriented reforms, but they mirror the nature of the evaluated processes. While the organic nature of the artistic processes is evaluated through organic forms of evaluation, the more mechanistic nature of the supporting processes is evaluated through mechanistic forms of evaluation.
9. The discipline of arts management can only establish itself as a legitimate, distinct academic discipline if it shifts its research focus from the *managerial* to the *artistic* in managing arts organizations.
10. The arts have possibly a stronger natural barrier against accounting colonization than other sub-sectors which have traditionally belonged to the public sector.