

# Cultural Management and Policy in the “Migration Society”: Inequalities and starting points for a critical reorientation

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses exclusions in the public cultural sector of German-speaking Europe and focuses on the need for fundamental structural changes to ensure that the “normality” of diversity in a migration society prevails in the field of arts and culture. The article presents the concept of the “migration society”, which was originally developed in the context of pedagogical theory, and recommends it for a critical examination of cultural management and cultural policy. The perspective of the “migration society” looks at our society as a whole, not at migrants as imaginary groups or individuals. The focus is intersectional, taking in both the existing social standing of migrants and the processes that create and maintain asymmetries, as well as the privileges of the majority society. Based on this concept, the author argues for the adoption of a discrimination-sensitive perspective toward employees and in programs and audiences in established cultural institutions, in the independent scene and in cultural policy. She also develops starting points and measures for a migration-oriented realignment of the cultural sector.

### Keywords:

Migration Society

Inequalities

Discrimination-sensitive

Cultural Management

Social Inclusion

## Introduction

Although migration is a universal human practice that has long shaped our society decisively, the field of arts and culture has proven to be highly resistant to fundamental change. It continues to reproduce a *white*<sup>1</sup> and male dominance at different levels and hegemonic inequalities. Thus, this field, which, in the German-speaking world, is largely financed by public funds and is politically controlled, is also at odds with a democratic cultural policy (cf. Mokre, 2005), the task of which is to focus and promote art and culture in such a way that the population is represented in its entirety and its diversity, and is empowered to act. This would also have to result in comprehensive – not least financial – support for people, artistic perspectives and practices that have been marginalized and/or even excluded (educationally, socially, economically). In a further consequence, this would lead to greater distributive justice and heterogeneity in the artistic and cultural field. A cultural sector oriented in such a way could provide important impulses for other social fields.

What must be done to ensure that the “normality” of diversity<sup>2</sup> in a migration society prevails in the art and cultural sector? And indeed in the sense that diversity is not only thematically, temporarily and superficially “integrated,” but that a transformation<sup>3</sup> in the form of a deeper structural change on different levels takes place? This is the question under examination in this contribution. To this end, I will briefly outline the state of the cultural sector in German-speaking Europe and present the most important aspects with regard to exclusions in the context of developments in a migration society. In the last section, the concept of the “migration society” and its potential for a critical examination of the cultural sector will be discussed in order to work out the concrete starting points for a migration-oriented realignment.

## Trends in the cultural sector: Migration as a source of themes and migrants as a “target group”

For a better understanding of the following explanations, I would like to begin by briefly outlining the essential structural aspects of the cultural sector. In German-speaking Europe, the cultural sector is a complex field made up of individual institutions and projects, their actors (artists, cultural managers, curators and mediators), intermediaries and cultural-political frameworks (cf. Zembylas, 2004; Heinrichs, 2006). With regard to sponsorship and funding, a distinction can be made between state institutions, private commercial institutions in the for-profit sector and private non-profit institutions. The last, which are typically organized in smaller structures and work independently from established institutions, are often subsumed under the term “free scene” (cf. Moser, 2015).

The three areas are characterized by mixed forms as well as various overlaps and mutual influences. The most significant differences can be found in terms of their cultural and political security and financing, with established state institutions being in a much more privileged situation than the chronically underfinanced free-producing artists, collectives and initiatives. Another aspect is that state cultural institutions are more tightly bound to the implementation of cultural policy mandates than are private non-profit institutions. Cultural policy, in turn, is – at least in Austria – largely shaped by a bourgeois understanding of art and culture aimed at representation (cf. Wimmer 2011: 376ff.). As a result, state institutions usually have less room for critical or experimental formats. Free cultural work – which emerged in the 1970s out of the need for self-organization, independence of content and the development of a particular socio-culture – is characterized by a socio-critical self-image and often more unconventional approaches (cf. *ibid.*; Moser, 2016). To a certain degree, the field offers opportunities – especially for minority groups – to initiate self-organized artistic and cultural collaborations. Overall,

<sup>1</sup> The term *white*, written in lowercase and italics, is – as it is used in the present text – an analytical term developed by Black theorists to describe structurally anchored white dominance and power relationships and the privileges and racisms associated with them (cf. Kuria, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Mark Terkessidis (2017) speaks generally with respect to institutions and establishments in an “immigration society” of “diversity plans” (*ibid.*: 42ff.), which are to be developed in our diverse society in order to bring about a change of perspective and a readjustment to the organizations. He sees migration as “a kind of *passe-partout*” (*ibid.*: 9) for discussing numerous fundamental aspects of change.

<sup>3</sup> For several years, the term “transformation” has increasingly been used in connection with art and culture and addressed from different perspectives in the context of demographic change, digitalization, etc., including in relation to cultural management and policy (cf. Knoblich, 2018; Kolland, 2016; Sievers, Föhl & Knoblich, 2016; Föhl, Wolfram & Peper, 2016; Föhl & Sievers, 2015), museum studies (cf. CARMAH, 2018), critical art education (cf. Mörsch, 2009; Settele & Mörsch, 2012) or in connection with neoliberalism, the culture industry and artistic criticism (cf. Raunig & Wuggenig, 2016 [2007]).

## “FOR SOME YEARS NOW – AND ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REFUGEE MOVEMENTS OF 2015 – THE CULTURAL SECTOR HAS BEEN EMBROILED OVER QUESTIONS OF “INTEGRATION” AND THE “INTERCULTURAL OPENING” OF ESTABLISHMENTS”

however, the free cultural field is characterized by a high level of heterogeneity and inequalities in terms of power and access. Thus, as in the state sector, exclusion, discrimination and racism are structurally anchored in the independent cultural scenes.<sup>4</sup> Because of such parallels, the present article makes a partial distinction between the segments, but largely addresses the cultural sector as a whole.

For some years now – and especially in the context of the refugee movements of 2015 – the cultural sector has been embroiled over questions of “integration” and the “intercultural opening” of establishments. Two phenomena have come to dominate: on the one hand, the focus on migrants<sup>5</sup> as a potential public, including the implementation of appropriate audience development strategies, and on the other hand, the increasing inclusion of (global) migration and related content as a theme in cultural institutions and exhibition projects.

Thus, since the 1990s, exhibitions in Europe have increasingly been aimed at overcoming Eurocentric perspectives in Western art, such as the exhibition *Inklusion: Exklusion. Kunst im Zeitalter von Postkolonialismus und globaler Migration* (“Inclusion: Exclusion. Art in the Age of Postcolonialism and Global Migration”), devised in Austria as part of *steirischer herbst '96*, which undertook an “attempt at a new cultural cartography” (Weibel, 1997: jacket text). The Biennale of Contemporary Art in Lyon (2000) or the major exhibition *Kunstwelten im Dialog – Von Gauguin zur globalen Gegenwart* (“Art Worlds in Dialogue – From Gauguin to the Global Present”), shown in Cologne in 1999-2000, also focused on non-Western art. In this way, the “other” was appropriated, presented and positioned in the art market without critically questioning Western institutions and their entanglement in (post-)colonialist power relations, incorporating non-white artists and creators of culture as experts and decision-makers or

even leaving the field open to them at all. Such projects, for all their commitment, cement the *white* – and male – predominance and perspective in the Western art sector (cf. Micossé-Aikins, 2011).

For about fifteen years, the racist exclusions on the part of institutions and their role as “preservers of colonialism” (Kravagna, 2009) have been critically examined in the German-speaking world (cf. for Austria e.g. Muttenthaler & Wonisch, 2006; Schnittpunkt, et al, 2009). In terms of content, these discussions are to some extent incorporated into the collection activities of (ethnological) museums, exhibition theories and practices, but less into the organizational structures of cultural enterprises. All the more important, therefore, are exceptional events such as *documenta 11*, which was first led by a non-European in 2002 with the Nigerian-born curator Okwui Enwezor. Enwezor carried out a change of perspective within the renowned exhibition by installing five platforms in different parts of the world – Kassel being one of them – that combined art with other knowledge systems, thus questioning and deconstructing the hierarchies and exclusions of the Western Eurocentric view of art.

Since the 2000s, migration – and particularly the history of labor migration – has increasingly found its way into institutions as an everyday cultural topic. Experts have noticed a boom in migration exhibitions (cf. Wonisch, 2012: 14), which must be viewed critically. Often these exhibitions are conceived and implemented without any or with only marginal involvement of migrants and a close focus is put on “the” culture of “the” migrants or the presentation of decontextualized, clichéd objects. A much-noted exception is the exhibition *Gastarbeiter\*innen – 40 Jahre Arbeitsmigration* (“Guest Workers – 40 Years of Labor Migration”), which was initiated by the former “guest worker” Cemalettin Efe and realized in 2004 by the Minderheiten Initiative in cooperation with the Vienna Museum (cf. Gürses, Kogoj

<sup>4</sup> Structural discrimination and racism manifest themselves in our society in social structures, in the (legal) framework, accessibility, forms of communication and the everyday routines of the institutions, in income levels, on the labor market, in the school and education system, etc. Structural changes are therefore needed to counteract these.

<sup>5</sup> I will deal with the problematic nature of this term at a later point. The present text deliberately avoids a distinction between migrants and refugees, as these categories support a discourse of distinction between legitimate and illegitimate migration, necessary flight (of “war refugees”) and less necessary flight (of “economic refugees”).

& Mattl, 2004). The exhibition, which was implemented by an interdisciplinary team that included migrant workers and anti-racism activists, told the stories of labor migration autonomously from the perspective of migrants and with a focus on social and political issues. This was the first time that the topic had been incorporated into a cultural institution in Austria. The specific conditions under which the exhibition was conceived and implemented – as a “counter-narrative” to the Austrian discourse on migration (cf. Böse, 2005) – meant that it was also visited by great numbers of (former) migrant workers. However, the broad expertise developed in the context of the project with regard to content and organizational issues has scarcely been taken up by the cultural sector. Migration is still rarely seen as a cross-disciplinary issue in the permanent exhibitions of museums or as a freestanding part of the Austrian culture of remembrance (cf. Hintermann, 2012: 137).

Similar to the “migration exhibitions,” an increase in the initiatives and theoretical debates on creating access “for migrants” can also be observed. A steadily growing number of audience development studies have dealt with the question of migrants as a (missing) public in the cultural sector (cf. e.g. Allmanritter, 2009, 2016, 2017; Allmanritter & Siebenhaar, 2010; Hausmann & Körner, 2009; Mandel, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2017 [2016]). Here, economic issues sometimes form the point of departure, which is primarily argued from the economically well-situated, educated bourgeois white perspective of the majority society as well as from the logic of the cultural sector. In addition to the reproduction of discriminatory fixations, constructing migrants as a (mostly homogeneous, sometimes unprofitable) “target group” also establishes a hierarchical relationship between the supposedly open institution and the expected visitors.

The starting point for audience development approaches and practical guidelines for opening up cultural institutions are often the concepts of “integration,” “interculturality” and “intercultural dialogue”. These are approaches that María do Mar Castro Varela (2002) describes as hierarchical, power-maintaining and exclusionary discourses, which are mainly conceived and directed by members of the majority, use culturally specific culturizing nostrums

and understand intercultural competence “above all as a concept of conflict avoidance or control” (ibid.: 38).<sup>6</sup> More recent studies (cf. e.g. Dätsch, 2018) have increasingly taken the concept of transculturality as their starting point. In the German-speaking world, this concept was essentially coined by Wolfgang Welsch (1995) and contrasts the idea of closed and uniform national cultures with the idea of cultures characterized by plural identities and mixing. The relationship between cultures is therefore not determined by isolation and conflict, but by interdependence and blending (cf. ibid.). But the notion of interwoven hybrid cultures, which must always be theorized in the context of questions of power (cf. Mecheril & Seukwa, 2006: 10), again presupposes (at least two) individual cultures. The critique of the static and unifying concept of culture therefore leads into the concept of transculturality, “not to an overcoming, but to the ‘multiplication’ of static culture” (ibid.: 9). As with intercultural approaches, a culturalist reduction of social and political conditions is also promoted in the context of transculturality, “because: (trans )culturalization remains culturalization” (ibid.).

It is fundamentally important and positive that, for several years now, an intensive reflection has been taking place in the cultural sector on the reduction of barriers and the creation of access. However, it is evident that this reflection often comes to a halt in individual artistic genres (such as visual arts or art mediation) and disciplines (such as audience development), or is not radical enough, in the literal sense of “going to the roots”. “Audience development in the narrower sense can make cultural institutions more attractive and relevant for a broader audience,” concludes Birgit Mandel (2017 [2016]: n.p.), “but it can only make a minor contribution to reducing the social selectivity of participation in publicly funded cultural offerings”.

Although migration affects all of the areas of the cultural sector outlined above, questions regarding the appropriate adaptation of migration are addressed primarily to cultural organizers – and not to cultural policy authorities and their agents. The focus of the dominant phenomena “migration as a theme” and “migrants as a target group” is on the programs and publics of cultural institutions. The level of personnel – a third central area in organizations in which diversity is to

<sup>6</sup> Criticisms of this kind were also formulated, for example, by the *Bündnis kritischer Kulturpraktiker\*innen* (Alliance of Critical Cultural Practitioners) in the context of the conference *Mind the Gap! – Zugangsbarrieren zu kulturellen Angeboten und Konzeptionen niedrigschwelliger Kulturvermittlung* (“Barriers to Accessing Cultural Offerings and Concepts of Low-Threshold Cultural Mediation,” 9-10 January 2014, Deutsches Theater Berlin), where it intervened with the action *Mind the Trap!* Not a single scholar, cultural practitioner or expert affected by exclusions was invited to the conference to critically examine exclusion and marginalization from this very perspective. “In the end it was a matter, to put it pointedly, of reassuring one’s own position, which is given as long as one’s own parameters are not called into question” (Sharifi & Sharifi, 2014: n.p.).

be implemented, alongside program and audience (cf. e.g. Mandel, 2016b; Schauws, 2016; Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg, 2015) – is addressed marginally, as is the question of the power of definition and decision-making in a cultural enterprise. The deficits and potentials of the independent cultural scenes as well as their interactions with established state institutions are also often ignored. Analyses that take a holistic, critical view of the institutional landscape and its dynamics of exclusion, as well as comprehensive measures based on these analyses that promote under-represented individuals and groups as actors in the cultural sector, are still rare. State institutions such as the *Diversity Arts Culture* design and consultation office for diversity development in the cultural sector,<sup>7</sup> founded by the Berlin Senate in April 2017, are the exception in German-speaking Europe and are completely absent in Austria.

## The concept of the “Migration Society” as a critical perspective on inequalities

In recent years, perspectives have continuously emerged that regard migration research as an “open project of criticism” (Mecheril et al, 2013: 41; cf. e.g. [KriMi] research group website; Kritnet website). A critical approach is taken, for example, by “Perspectives on Migration,” which was developed to a large extent in the cultural sector and particularly in the transdisciplinary *Projekt Migration*.<sup>8</sup> This is not (primarily) to be regarded as the perspective of individual migrants, but rather as a (research) attitude that breaks with current discourses and depictions of migration and “takes up migration epistemologically and methodologically as a *conditio humana*, as a total social fact and as a force changing society” (Hess, 2013: 118). Migration is grasped here as a movement that challenges the concepts of the nation-state (such as citizenship) as well as a resistant and, to a certain degree, autonomous practice that is supported by subjects acting independently and that can only be controlled and governed to a limited extent (cf. Mezzadra, 2005; Bojadžijev & Karakayali, 2007). From this perspective, the potential of the “summer of migration,”

for example, is analyzed as a fundamental critique of border regimes and as a temporary interruption and overcoming of the same (cf. Hess et al, 2016).

The socially forming and transforming power of migration is also at the heart of the concept of the “migration society” as it was shaped particularly in the educational context and theorized fundamentally with regard to the role of educational processes and institutions by the education and migration researcher Paul Mecheril. Migration shapes our social reality in a specific way and to such a decisive extent that, according to the basic assumption, the term “migration society” is the appropriate designation for contemporary society (cf. Broden & Mecheril, 2007: 7). The frequently used term “immigration society,” which is to be distinguished from this, falls short in that it refers to the nation-state as a container as well as to related immigration phenomena, while a number of central aspects of migration (such as multiple affiliations, transnational life worlds, etc.) remain ignored (cf. *ibid.*).

The perspective of the “migration society” looks not at imagined groups or individual migrants, but at society as a whole, and at a broad spectrum of migration phenomena and migration-related social changes. These include, for example, new (self-)positionings and forms of action, hybrid transnational identities and spaces, constructions of foreignness, racist processes and structures, social inclusion and exclusion, as well as real-political and symbolic demarcations and transgressions. The central starting point is the assumption that experiences in the migration society are structured in a significant way by orders of belonging, whereby “belonging” indicates a relationship between an individual and a social context in which practices and concepts of differentiating between “belonging” and “not belonging” are constitutive (cf. Mecheril, 2012: 26). It must be disclosed that, in a migration society, belonging is produced along different categories such as ethnicity, nationality and religion, and through the binary distinction between groups of “us” (normally seen as *white*) and “not-us” (frequently devalued as “others”). This domination practice of “othering”, which has been theorized in particular in cultural and postcolonial studies (cf. Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985; Hall, 1997), is closely linked to representations. A multitude

<sup>7</sup> The stated aim of this institution, which emerged out of, among other things, the activist and other initiatives of various actors in the Berlin cultural sector, is to initiate diversity-oriented structural change. The work includes advising cultural institutions, providing training for cultural personnel, bolstering underrepresented artists and cultural workers through empowerment strategies, supporting the cultural administration in its movement toward diversity and collecting equality data for the Berlin cultural sector (cf. the website of the Berliner Projektbüro für Diversitätsentwicklung *Diversity Arts Culture*).

<sup>8</sup> The project was carried out at the Kölner Kunstverein from 2002 to 2006. In addition to the extensive documentation, the resulting catalog contains fundamental theoretical texts (cf. Kölner Kunstverein et al, 2005).

of descriptions, symbols and representations provide information about (national-ethno-cultural) identity and difference and (re-)produce them constantly (cf. Broden & Mecheril, 2007: 9). The migration society is, in all its relevant areas – from art to media to everyday events, science or politics – “characterized by a struggle over representations”, according to Paul Mecheril (2014: 110).

Ethnicized culture as an essential and determining focus on migratory movements, (individual) actions, attitudes or conflicts is criticized as too narrow and inappropriate, as it not only reproduces the stereotypical attributions and fixations of people to the supposedly “foreign” culture, but also often addresses social, political and structural inequalities as cultural issues or differences. The category of “migrant” or a “migrant background” is also considered a problematic attribution, since it is enormously abbreviated and masks diverse, complex facets of identity. Conversely, studies show that a “migrant background” is an important statistical factor in connection with disadvantage in educational attainment, access to upper segments of the labor market or housing. This makes specific experiences of – racist – discrimination invisible if it is not taken into account (cf. Ahyoud et al., 2018; Terkessidis, 2017: 45ff.). It is therefore important, on the one hand, to be aware of the reductionist and reproduceable potential of categories and ascriptions of identity and of the “impossibility of acknowledgment” (Mecheril, 2012). Comprehensive recognition is fundamentally impossible, since “[t]he other is not acknowledgeable because the other is not recognizable” (ibid.: 31). Acknowledgement presupposes inscribing oneself (i.e. visually) into the hegemonic discourse and reproducing its discriminatory structures to a certain extent (cf. Schaffer, 2008). Mecheril emphasizes the necessity of reflecting on the impossibility as well as the acknowledgment of the non-recognizability or indeterminacy of the Other. This “paradoxical moment” must also be a moment of general education and reflection (cf. Mecheril, 2012: 31).

On the other hand, an intersectional perspective on inequalities is also essential, reflecting the fact

that migration-related discrimination does not occur in isolation but must be analyzed in terms of its interwovenness and simultaneity with other forms of discrimination (on the basis of presumed gender, sexual orientation, class, national or cultural affiliation, etc.). Gender and queer studies, which explore heteronormativity as a discriminating social structural principle, as well as intersectionality studies are therefore central points of departure for critical migration research, as are cultural studies and postcolonial and critical whiteness studies, which examine the historical continuities of *white* supremacy in (geo-)political, social and knowledge-related contexts.

The concept of the “migration society” also emphasizes the political or historical dimension of established (non-) belonging, acknowledgment and representation with its inseparable meanings of (political) representation and (symbolic) presentation. Thus, for example, the discursive and cultural consequences of the defensive-tending politics of the twentieth century are considered to be components of the cultural practices of constructing and treating “‘foreigners’, ‘migrants’, ‘people with a migrant background’ as foreigners and ‘not actually belonging’” (Mecheril, 2016a: 10) that are still significant today. Migration, understood as a phenomenon of uneasiness (cf. Mecheril, 2016b), puts the political “us” up for discussion, particularly with regard to the question of who this “us” represents

politically, who can articulate themselves as a political subject and who cannot. Migration also challenges the routines of public institutions – for instance with regard to their language – and, last but not least, questions the legitimacy of individual privileges.

What can be inferred from this in relation to a critical examination of the cultural sector in the “migration society”?

### **From “Inter-/Transcultural Opening” to a critical reorientation of the cultural sector**

In reference to the concept of the “migration society,” a focus on the powerful “othering” processes and structures that create and shape asymmetric affiliations

## **“AT THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE “MIGRATION SOCIETY” LOOKS NOT AT IMAGINED GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL MIGRANTS, BUT AT SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, AND AT A BROAD SPECTRUM OF MIGRATION PHENOMENA AND MIGRATION-RELATED SOCIAL CHANGES”**

is an important starting point in the analysis of the art and culture field on all levels. Together with this, it is necessary to uncover culturalizations, reflect critically on categories and modes of address (such as "migrants") and analyze discrimination intersectionally. A further essential point to consider is that the production and reproduction of belonging(s) and inequalities should not be seen independently of (cultural) politics and corresponding measures since, on the one hand, they systematically and structurally sanction exclusion, but on the other hand, they can also be a means of steering change. Last but not least, the privileges of the majority society must be addressed and destabilized, and critical questions must be asked as to who benefits from which structures – established in initiatives, projects, concepts or measures – and when. Much like the goals formulated in migration pedagogy (cf. e.g. Mecheril, 2016b: 106), it must also be an issue in the cultural sector, "in connection with the analysis of the social structures and hegemonic conditions made clear by migration movements, of thinking about how perspectives and [cultural] spaces can be created for all. For all!" (ibid.).<sup>9</sup>

In the context of the arts, the concept of the "migration society" has so far been used primarily in the field of critical art mediation, which engages with – and aims to change – art and culture institutions as places of education, as well as with questions of critical empowerment (cf. Mörsch, Schade & Vögele, 2018; ifa et al, 2012; Mörsch, 2009). Starting with racism and exclusion as structural phenomena, the "vision of an art mediation that counteracts exclusion mechanisms and makes art spaces useful as places of learning and action, especially for minority positions, cannot leave the self-image of cultural institutions and art mediation untouched" (Mörsch, 2012: 15). The transformation of cultural institutions such as museums from bourgeois elitist establishments into actors in the political domain is a stated demand of critical art mediation. With regard to "the operation of art mediation in a migration society", this is, on the one hand, a matter of the individual responsibility of the mediators, but it is also about collectively working out the "institutional awareness of the history of this particular institution" and the question of making historical responsibility productive for the present (ibid.: 17f.).

For a critical analysis and migration-focused orientation of the cultural sector, it is necessary to take into account the considerations of critical art mediation and to think about them further in two ways in particular:

Firstly, the concepts and measures that relate to cultural organizations should not be restricted to state institutions but should also address and include the independent scenes and examine the interactions

between the fields. As has already been emphasized, the non-profit sector is just as permeated as the major institutions by structural racisms and inequalities. This can be seen, for example, at the personnel level, which is often not very diverse in terms of the cultural backgrounds, social affiliations or physical characteristics of the employees. Programs of cabaret theaters, literary events or multidisciplinary cultural associations also produce exclusions, insofar as they often target a *white*, educated middle-class public. At the same time, however, there are numerous initiatives and projects, particularly in the field of independent cultural work, which have a great deal of expertise in such areas as diversity, the identification and reduction of discrimination and the (self-)organization and politicization of excluded persons.

The autonomous migrant organization *maiz* (cf. website), for example, has been operating at the interfaces of political cultural and educational work since its foundation in Linz in 1994. In the early 2000s, the organization was already formulating questions about structuring lines of conflict as well as criteria and requirements with regard to collaborations between migrants and artists from the majority society (cf. Salgado, 2015 [2004]) that are still relevant today, especially for cultural institutions. They criticize, among other things, concepts of participation that do not aim at an egalitarian form of cooperation, but merely mean the involvement of migrants (cf. ibid.). One of *maiz*'s principles is therefore not to enter into cooperation with artists "who come to us with already finished concepts and an invitation to participate" (ibid.: 41). Parallels to these and other considerations<sup>10</sup> of *maiz* can be found in RISE's ten-point program, *10 things you need to consider if you are an artist – not of the refugee and asylum seeker community – looking to work with our community* (cf. Canas, 2015), which was developed more than ten years later, such as point 4, "Participation is not always progressive or empowering" (ibid.: n.p.). Since 2007, the ArtSocialSpace Brunnenpassage (cf. website) has been active as a laboratory and a practice site for transcultural and participatory art in the former market hall at Vienna's Brunnenmarkt. A freely accessible, multilingual, interdisciplinary program as well as multi-year collaborations with established cultural institutions such as the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Burgtheater and the Weltmuseum are part of the core concept (cf. Pilić & Wiederhold, 2015). The WIENWOCHE cultural festival (cf. website), which has been held annually in September since 2012 on various announced topics, views cultural work as an intervention in social, political and cultural debates, and maintains that artistic and cultural practices ought to be expanded and made accessible to all social groups

<sup>9</sup> Paul Mecheril (2016b: 106) is speaking specifically of the creation of "educational perspectives" and "educational spaces".

<sup>10</sup> Another principle identified by *maiz* is to make decisions regarding cooperation on the basis of certain criteria, such as the willingness and interest of the artists to engage in a "dialogical process that should unfold outside of the logic of the victim role and a Eurocentric perspective" (Salgado, 2015 [2004]: 42). There must also be consistency in terms of the project's objectives, with *maiz* articulating an explicit socio-critical interest and the mediation of counter-hegemonic positions. All phases and levels of the projects should also be permeated by critical reflection with regard to racism and sexism within the project.

## “IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ARTS, THE CONCEPT OF THE “MIGRATION SOCIETY” HAS SO FAR BEEN USED PRIMARILY IN THE FIELD OF CRITICAL ART MEDIATION, WHICH ENGAGES WITH – AND AIMS TO CHANGE – ART AND CULTURE INSTITUTIONS AS PLACES OF EDUCATION, AS WELL AS WITH QUESTIONS OF CRITICAL EMPOWERMENT”

living in the city. WIENWOCHE offers comprehensive support for the conception and implementation of projects and thus makes an important contribution to the professionalization of cultural workers.

The knowledge developed and tested in these exemplary establishments and projects is often lacking in institutions (cf. Moser & Gülcü, 2018), which is why it is not only targeted measures that must be taken to ensure that such knowledge is incorporated and implemented, but also budgetary redistributions to strengthen the overall field of independent cultural work that are needed.

Secondly, a broad implementation of the demands for a change in the cultural sector beyond the sphere of individual cultural institutions should be considered by addressing cultural policy<sup>11</sup> and administration with concrete (cultural) political measures (cf. e.g. Kolland, 2016; Mandel, 2016b). The cultural policy dimension is essential because, as Mark Terkessidis also emphasizes in relation to organizations in general, change often requires an impetus in the sense of political influence (cf. 2017: 43f.). According to the expert report by Joshua Kwesi Aikins and Daniel Gyamerah, *Handlungsoptionen zur Diversifizierung des Berliner Kultursektors* ("Action options for diversifying the Berlin cultural sector", 2016), the "promotion of diversity" is to be seen as a "target-oriented interaction between politics, administration and cultural institutions" and can only succeed "if it is understood and communicated by Parliament as well as the head of the cultural administration as a priority and a permanent political task" (ibid.: 16).

In summation, it can be said that the migration-related orientation of the cultural sector is not about an ("intercultural" or "transcultural") opening up of individual cultural institutions, the thematic negotiation of migration or a change from established institutions to open, critical places of learning, but rather it is about a comprehensive change and a systematic, discrimination-sensitive readjustment of the cultural sector (cf. Baumgartinger & Moser, 2018; Prabha Nising & Mörsch, 2018). It must be recognized that this necessary reorientation is a long-term, complex and

difficult undertaking. As will be shown in the following, a gradual approach to it can be achieved through the continuous implementation of numerous small, pragmatic measures within the individual cultural institutions and in cultural policy. A particular practical challenge will be to develop successful concepts for the implementation of changes in existing institutions and practices and for their evaluation.

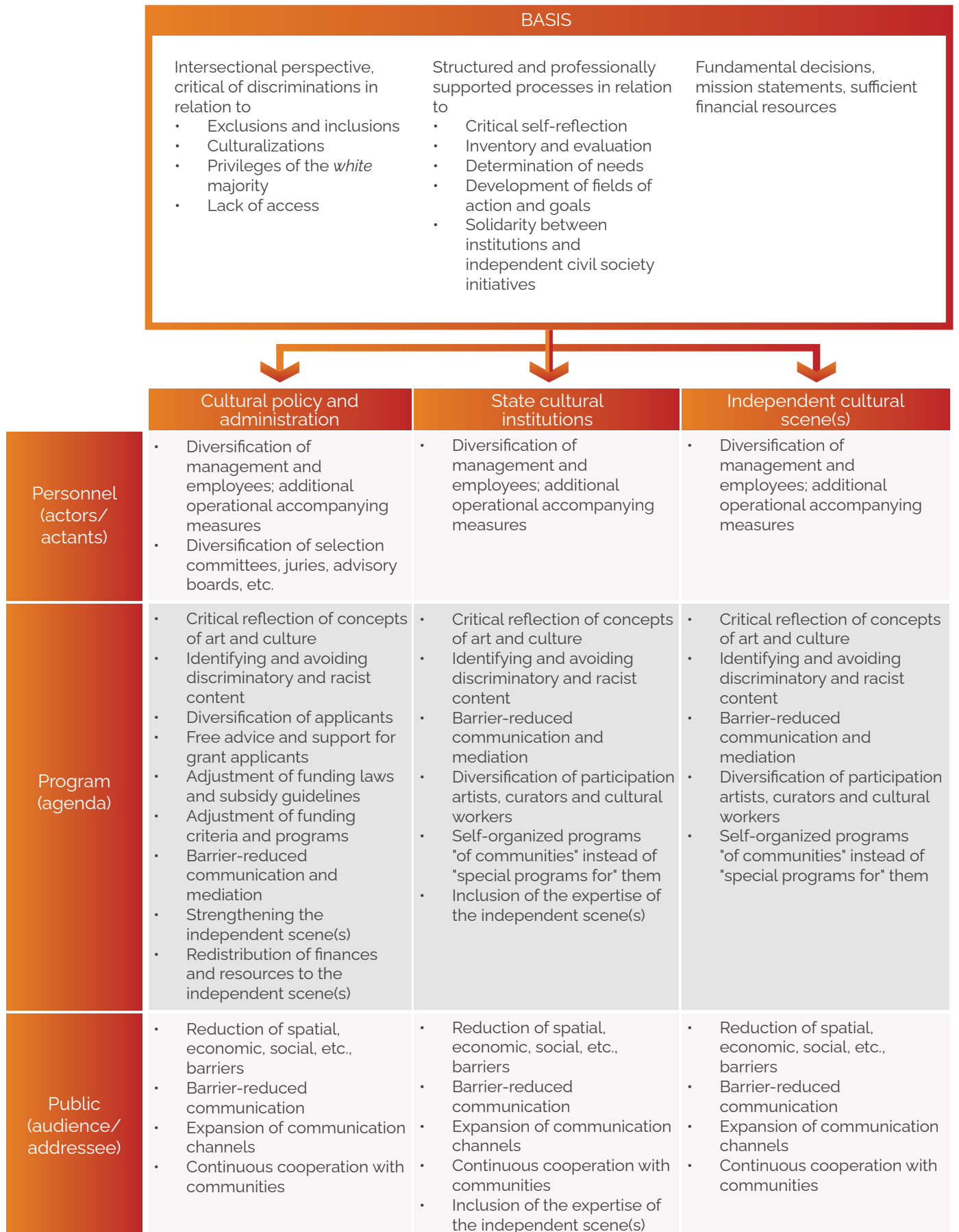
### **A discrimination-sensitive perspective on personnel, program and public in state institutions, independent scenes and cultural policy**

A readjustment of the cultural sector presupposes a differentiated examination of the "three Ps" of personnel, program and public (audience) in institutionalized and independent cultural establishments as well as in organizations of cultural policy and administration, where the three levels can be defined by the terms actors/actants, agenda and addressee. To do this, an intersectional, discrimination-critical perspective must be adopted and the focus must be placed on established affiliations, culturalizations and majority social privileges. The question of (the lack of) access is also central, as Aikins and Gyamerah illustrate with their fourth pillar (2016: 14), which complements the "three Ps." This must be posed fundamentally as an issue cutting across personnel, program and public.<sup>12</sup> Structured and professionally guided processes of critical self-reflection, stock-taking, evaluation, needs assessment and the development of fields of action and goals are the other essential foundations of a reorientation. Appropriate fundamental decisions, mission statements and the planning and provision of sufficient financial resources for the processes are also essential (cf. Fig. 1).

<sup>11</sup> In concrete terms, this refers to the different levels of cultural policy – i.e., the structural, formal and institutional policy dimensions, the content of the policy and the negotiation processes of politics – and their intertwining.

<sup>12</sup> Aikins and Gyamerah (2016: 14), however, stress the relevance of their fourth pillar, access, primarily in relation to two actors: the cultural administration (which should, among other things, ensure access to funding through a specific target group approach) and cultural institutions (which should, among other things, provide access to the professional cultural business through paid internships for the target group).





**FIGURE 1. STARTING POINTS AND MEASURES FOR A MIGRATION-ORIENTED REALIGNMENT OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR**

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Self-critical questions about personnel composition need to be asked in cultural institutions across all hierarchical levels of artistic and administrative areas, including permanent employees and freelancers. The makeup of the personnel is also highly relevant in cultural policy and administration, not only for civil servants, but especially in decision-making bodies, advisory boards and juries. The appointment of heads of cultural institutions plays a central role in this context, as this seems to be “the most effective steering measure to promote diversity” (Aikins & Gyamerah, 2016: 28). This is partly because “house directors bring their own program makers, networks and diversity-relevant concepts with them” (ibid.). When appointing new managers in particular, their commitment to promoting diversity should be taken into account. Along with the diversification of personnel and other actors in the cultural sector, further comprehensive measures are needed to accompany the implementation of the new orientation and to enable good working conditions. For example, it is necessary to reflect on how new employees are seen and treated and how “their advancement is ensured” (cf. Terkessidis, 2017: 51). It is also necessary to address the racist knowledge inscribed in institutional practices (cf. ibid.: 53f.). The personnel level plays an essential role with regard to changes in the programing and offerings as well as the public or the addressees.

In the programs of organizations and projects in the art and culture sector, on the one hand, the dissemination of discriminatory and racist knowledge and the production of stereotypes and exclusions must be examined at the content level. This continuous critical self-reflection and evaluation should be a natural part of any cultural work. On the other hand, however, it is also a matter of fundamentally questioning a preexisting, bourgeois white concept of art and culture (cf. Micossé-Aikins, 2011), the programs based on it and the barriers created by it, which are often accompanied by a broad lack of interest in the cultural production of migrant communities (cf. e.g. ibid.; Moser & Gülcü, 2018). The organization of special programs for the “migrant” target group should also be critically examined, since these promote reductionist, stereotypical fixations and sometimes fail to go beyond “tokenism” in the sense of a “short-term, fig-leaf-like involvement of various actors at the lowest hierarchical levels” (Aikins & Gyamerah, 2016: 11).

The program level of cultural administration and policy encompasses offerings, content and support structures. Here, too, a fundamental scrutinizing of the concepts of art and culture, which implicitly and explicitly underlie subsidies and produce exclusions, is necessary. Where do policies and administration

create (non-)belonging through formalities by tying the awarding of grants to citizenship or by making laws, forms and funding procedures that are incomprehensible? On the level of cultural administration, similar to the cultural organizers, the modes of addressing the public through a barrier-conscious approach<sup>13</sup> and the choice of networks and channels<sup>14</sup> are of central importance for the success or failure of communication. Following a critical inventory of the situation and adaptations in terms of content and language, specific qualification opportunities – for example, in relation to “application fitness” (cf. Aikins & Gyamerah, 2016: 11) – and access to funding programs should be guaranteed for persons affected by exclusion. In addition, a budgetary redistribution with a focus on the long-term promotion of marginalized organizations and independent cultural initiatives is recommended, which can provide important impulses for a reorientation of the cultural sector in terms organizational structures and the critical content negotiated therein.

## Concluding observations

Whenever the cultural sector in the German-speaking world talks about best-practice examples of diversity, reference is always made – and rightly so – to the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin (cf. website), which has been run by Shermin Langhoff and Jens Hillje since 2013. The state-financed theatre, which was awarded the Berlin Theatre Prize in 2016 and was voted Theatre of the Year in the 2014 and 2016 critics’ surveys by *theater heute*, clearly shows what a discrimination-sensitive cultural organization that is in keeping with the migration society can look like. Social diversity is structurally reflected at all levels. The staff is diverse in the different hierarchical levels, the projects and performances are (also visually) multilingual and the audience is very heterogeneous. The program includes pieces from different cultures and social contexts, non-canonical and canonical texts, whereby, for example, the German canon is continuously deconstructed and appropriated from new non-*white* perspectives. In the sense of a critical reorientation of the cultural sector, as this contribution argues, the Gorki Theater is pursuing a critical and political claim not only on the organizational level, but also on the content level, by negotiating volatile questions on stage: “How can we live civilized in a heterogeneous society? More pointedly: What new society do we need?” (Langhoff, 2015: n.p.).

In the public-funded state sector, examples such as the Gorki Theatre are still rare – and there can

<sup>13</sup> Part of the barrier-conscious approach of the Berlin Project Fund for Cultural Education is, for example, the provision of information about the fund’s support programs in German, Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, English, French and Hebrew (cf. Aikins & Gyamerah, 2016: 11).

<sup>14</sup> This was demonstrated, for example, in the project *Türkisch – Oper kann das* (“Turkish – opera can do it”) at the Komische Oper in Berlin. Surprised that there were no children of Turkish origin in the children’s choir, artistic director Mustafa Akca launched an appeal on the largest Turkish language channel in Berlin, to which about 200 families responded (cf. Terkessidis, 2017: 50).

also be a danger in the justified praise of institutions like this one, according to Aikins and Gyamerah (2016: 9): "These houses should not be presented as pleasant niches whose existence [...] justifies the status quo". For widespread change in the form of a deeper structural transformation at various levels of the German-speaking cultural sector, comprehensive discrimination-sensitive analyses and measures affecting established institutions, the independent scenes and cultural policy are needed, as has been described in this article. The concept of the "migration society," with its intersectional focus on systems, structures and processes that create and shape asymmetries, offers important theoretical points of reference. A particular challenge in the practical realization of a progressive reorientation of the cultural sector will be to develop successful concepts for the implementation of changes in existing institutions and for their evaluation.

On the whole, a fundamental critical reflection on the cultural sector and a broad, systematic organizational development based on this may seem like a large, difficult-to-control and scarcely feasible project that could be opposed by a number of counter-arguments from cultural workers, officials and politicians from the privileged majority society. In particular, the financial restructuring and redistribution of power that is necessary in this context will be met with resistance. Change "understood as a creative challenge" (Terkessidis, 2017: 71) therefore requires not only optimism and perseverance, but also a certain "willingness to argue", because "[i]n one said that a society of diversity is a cozy affair" (ibid.).

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