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Thomas Höpel/Torben Ibs (Ed.)

Cultural Policy and Culture in Transformation: Central and Eastern Europe since 1989

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Matthias Middell und Hannes Siegrist

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Cultural Policy and Culture in Transformation: Central and Eastern Europe since 1989

Ed. by Thomas Höpel and Torben Ibs



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Editorial

The transformation of East-Central Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union is often identified with serious changes in property relations and corresponding restructuring of societies, an increase in intra-societal inequality and an adaptation to the institutional structure of the West. The field of culture appears as a derived sector in which, on the one hand, the penetration of Western practices and norms is also stated, but on the other hand, the processing of subjective perceptions and the emotional reworking of the perceived injuries is localized. This also seems compatible with ideas in which culture, and especially its nationalized and nationalizing form, serves as the remaining bracket for socio-economically drifting apart societies. Such framings of culture seem to help explaining the conspicuous nationalism in East-Central Europe.

With its focus on cultural policy in East-Central Europe, this issue takes a different perspective, asking how the transformation of the cultural scene took place, how the understanding of culture and cultural policy changed, who initiated these changes and gained interpretive sovereignty over them, and how this kind of transformation in turn had an effect on the West, offering it a new kind of engagement with experiences of globalization, which were more or less accepted and used.

In doing so, the authors must confront an evident contradiction in the research literature, in which some assume a diffusion of Western patterns, while others claim that, in contrast to the economy, the transformation in the cultural sphere followed entirely national traditions (with the interesting exception of the GDR, which was incorporated into the Federal Republic and had therefore no autonomous tradition to be followed). These astonishingly contradictory interpretations indicate that empirical evidence cannot be that far off, but rather that examples have so far been sought to illustrate preconceived interpretations. This is not surprising when one considers the enormous political charge that accompanies the interpretation of transformation, for each of these interpretations legitimizes a different policy in the present, for which the narrative shaping of the past forms the basis.

The same is true for the thematic field of cultural policy: an approach that not only connects the phenomena under investigation with a spatial format, very often the nation-state, but also takes into account the multi-scalar and interwoven situation under the

global condition, is the main way out of this trap. Transformation cannot be understood solely as a transnational process or even as a global convergence, nor is it sufficient to move to the micro-level of the local and regional or to observe solely the regulation by national legislation and institutions. Cultural policy (like many other social dimensions, for that matter) is much more complexly spatialized and each of these dimensions follows a different geography and different traditions and temporalities. As Thomas Höpel shows with the help of Polish and East German examples, this has completely opposite consequences for larger metropolises and for the countryside and smaller cities, the latter being much more dependent on subsidies from higher-level entities such as the state or the European Union or from landscapes of culture organized to sustain cultural infrastructures.

The course of the transformation is understood incompletely when taking its beginning as a zero hour in which everything starts anew as if on a *tabula rasa* and nothing remains as it was. On the contrary, many practices and institutional settings continued, were adapted to new social contexts or even became places of resistance against certain dimensions of the transformation - such as the Berlin Volksbühne, which Antje Dietze presents in her article.

The studies on Poland and Hungary provided by Przemysław Czapliński and Kristóf Nagy/Márton Szarvas again reveal a caesura at the nation-state level, which, after the state's withdrawal from regulating the cultural sector since the mid-2010s, led to a new kind of interference in culture and even the intention to control it with instruments of censorship and positive discrimination against national conservative tendencies. However, these efforts are by no means easy to impose, but come up against the cultural preferences of the public and the orientation of a significant part of cultural actors towards international trends, which are reinforced by their integration into patterns of European cultural policy and, above all, by the presence of new media.

Thus, the example of cultural policy in Eastern Europe since 1989 proves to be a lesson in new approaches to transnational history that is not satisfied with stating cross-border interconnections (or observing nationalization as their opposite), but instead focuses attention on the diversity of new spatializations that can offer a key to understanding global processes.

Matthias Middell / Katja Castryck-Naumann

Cultural Policy and Culture in Transformation. Central and Eastern Europe since 1989. An Introduction¹

Thomas Höpel

The collapse of the state-socialist states in 1989/90 led to a transformation of the societies in Central and Eastern Europe. This is evident in the change of political systems and economic structures and, in addition, in the field of culture. Although, especially in the 1990s, culture and cultural policy were fundamentally reshaped both institutionally and conceptually in the course of the transformation, transformation research has long focused primarily on the areas of politics and economics.² In fact, however, culture and cultural policy have played a central role in creating new integrative offers of identification in the former state-socialist states and in the initiation of international cooperations and opening as well. Despite this significance of culture as an integrative instrument, above all for nation states in transition, and as the most important field of soft power³ in international cooperation, the number and breadth of research on cultural policy and cultural production after 1989 in the Central and Eastern European countries is still very

- 1 I would like to thank Franziska Reif for translating this introduction and for copy-editing most of the articles with regard to English orthography and style. I am also grateful to the Bundesstiftung Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur for funding the copy-editing and the translation.
- 2 R. Kollmorgen, *Postsozialistische Transformationen des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, in: R. Kollmorgen/W. Merkel/H.-J. Wagener (eds.), *Handbuch Transformationsforschung*, Wiesbaden 2015, pp. 421–440. This handbook does not treat cultural policy or culture with a separate article. If culture has been addressed in transformation research, it has mainly been with regard to economic-cultural change or change in political culture. See H.-H. Schröder (ed.), *Kultur als Bestimmungsfaktor der Transformation im Osten Europas*, Bremen 2001; C. Meier/H. Pleines/H.-H. Schröder (eds.), *Ökonomie – Kultur – Politik. Transformationsprozesse in Osteuropa*, Bremen 2003.
- 3 J. S. Nye, *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York 2004, on the role of culture especially pp. 44–55; R. Los, *Soft Power in Contemporary International Relations*, Lodz 2017, pp. 65–100.

limited; especially systematic comparative studies and studies examining international transfers and interconnections are almost non-existent.

In the 1990s, the transformation of culture and cultural policy in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 gained comparative attention with a practical orientation chiefly by cultural policy-makers and cultural managers. The analyses were based on a limited social-science research design and mostly stated an increasingly convergent development in the cultural sector, as a result of which market-economy and liberal Western European principles became guiding at many levels.⁴

When the East-Central European countries joined the European Union in 2004, the first studies began to pay firm attention to cultural policy developments from a comparative perspective. The focus was essentially on educational and science policy in East-Central Europe. In this course, Peter Bachmaier has determined a growing adaptation to neoliberal Anglo-American standards.⁵ It was a sociological study from 2006 that, for the first time, systematically compared the transformation process in the cultural sector in the East-Central European countries. This study was dedicated to the “third system” in Central and Eastern European cities, i.e., associations, foundations, and non-profit societies in the cultural field acting as non-profit organisations independent of the public and commercial system.⁶ It comes to the conclusion that the pressure of global transformation processes and the simultaneous system transformation led to an approximation to Western standards definitely incorporating local structures. Overall, the authors consider the “third system” a cornerstone of democratisation.⁷

However, the systematic comparison of the transformation of cultural policy in four former state-socialist states after 1989 by Maria Davydchik in 2012 establishes that the cultural policy was substantially shaped exclusively based on the national traditions within society, without transnational or inner-European transfers of cultural policy models and instruments, although this may also be due to the study’s limited source base. It finds an extensive adoption of West German institutions for East Germany only.⁸

The study of the East German transformation in the cultural sector after 1989 was not comparative in most cases, despite the common general structural conditions of the former state-socialist countries after 1989 including the GDR; at most, the East German development was measured starting from West German structures and institutions. The GDR was treated as a special case since the transformation was effected by the accession to the Federal Republic; its institutions and structures were evidently adopted

4 See the contributions by V. Nitulescu, L. Scott, and A. Palka, in: S. Wesner (ed.), *Herausforderungen an Kulturpolitik und Kulturmanagement in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, Leipzig 1997.

5 P. Bachmaier, *Der Wertewandel in Ostmitteleuropa*, in: P. Bachmaier/B. Blehova (eds.), *Der kulturelle Umbruch in Ostmitteleuropa*, Frankfurt am Main 2005, pp. 19–23.

6 P. Ostermann/K.-S. Rehberg/K. Voigt, *Transformationsprozesse im Kulturbereich*, Leipzig 2006.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 121–127.

8 M. Davydchik, *Transformation der Kulturpolitik. Kulturpolitische Veränderungen nach dem Zusammenbruch des sozialistischen Systems in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, Wiesbaden 2012. The study is based on the evaluation of official government documents and interviews with a few selected cultural managers in a city in each of the nations studied.

quickly and to a large extent. It was only in light of the refugee crisis and an increasing renationalisation that the significance of supranational structural breaks for the transformation in the cultural and cultural-political sphere has come to the fore roughly during the last decade.⁹ What has also come into focus now were the specific design and the new contents of cultural policy that allow more for the needs of social integration and identification in times of rapid social change and rising migration.¹⁰ Questions were also increasingly asked about the repercussions and impulses of the cultural restructuring in the new German federal states for the development of the cultural policy in the Federal Republic as a whole after 1990. Furthermore, the question arose to which extent the transformation process in the Central and Eastern European countries was part of the structural change since the 1970s.

This thematic issue focuses on cultural policy strategies in Hungary, Poland, and East Germany based on the objectives of the different actors at the local or national level. It is not based on normative objectives, though, that take up certain obligatory tasks to cultural policy.¹¹ During the transformation of the state-socialist cultural regimes, the influence of political actors was pushed back, in particular their active intervention in artistic canons, contents, forms, and reception processes. Nonetheless, even in the liberal cultural regime, politics decisively determines the development and the social use of arts and culture by some means or other. Moreover, the contributions address the international transfer and the interconnections in the transformation of cultural policy instruments, ideas, and models, too. In doing so, transformation is not understood as the restructuring of cultural infrastructure only, but also as the change of interpretive patterns, rules, ideas, and narratives. The articles here examine both the transformation of state, regional, and local cultural policy and the developments in individual fields and media of art and culture.

The contributions brought together in this thematic issue originated from a conference cancelled at short notice due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The conference had been planned for March 2020 and with the support of the Federal Foundation for the Study of the SED-Dictatorship at the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO). The articles show that the transformation of the cultural regimes in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary in the 1990s followed similar premises and was characterised by comparable demands and restraints. The cultural sector was under

9 For example, the *Jahrbuch für Kulturpolitik* 2015/16 explicitly dealt with the topic "transformational cultural policy": *Jahrbuch für Kulturpolitik* 2015/16, vol. 15: Transformatorische Kulturpolitik, Bielefeld 2016.

10 See especially the pioneering study by Antje Dietze (*Ambivalenz des Übergangs. Die Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin in den neunziger Jahren*, Göttingen 2015), which uses the example of the development of the Volksbühne in Berlin after 1989 to make clear the role culture played in the social debates after reunification about identity, cultural funding, and left-wing utopias, and how a critical, alternative contemporary theatre was associated with new elements of event culture and thus gained integrative power, social relevance, and attractiveness.

11 This is what Maria Davydych demands for the cultural policy in the Eastern European countries after 1989 or, for example, Alexander Endress for the federal cultural policy. Davydych, *Transformation der Kulturpolitik*, pp. 211–213; A. Endress, *Die Kulturpolitik des Bundes*, Berlin 2005, pp. 231–237.

considerable funding pressure in the decade following 1989. Thus, restructuring the cultural landscape in the former GDR and in Poland, Hungary, and the other former state-socialist countries as well, was shaped by privatisation tendencies, the renegotiation of the political mandate of state-funded cultural institutions, and a reorganisation of their financing under neoliberal conditions.¹² This was quite similar to what has already been determined for the education sector.¹³ The transfer of New Public Management¹⁴ approaches to cultural institutions led to a reorientation of the institutions on economic and content-related level: the consequence was their increased self-reliance, which, however, was often associated with less funding from the public sector, as the texts by *Przemysław Czapliński*, *Antje Dietze*, and *Torben Ibs* reveal. *Kristóf Nagy* and *Márton Szarvas* identify such tendencies in Hungary as early as the 1970s; and this development can, in rudiments, also be evidenced for Poland in the 1970s.¹⁵ Therefore, the structural change of the 1970s could already be noticed in the cultural production in state-socialist countries, especially in Hungary. The fundamental restructuring of cultural regimes after 1989 accelerated this development. This was associated with a shift from supply orientation to demand orientation, a change in consumer or cultural user behaviour, and a certain erosion of high-cultural forms, since the boundaries between high and popular culture became more fluid with regard to the artistic, institutional, and discursive levels. Although the cultural regime's transformation opened up new possibilities and freedoms for artists, irrespective of whether they tended to conform to the state-socialist system or rather belonged to the oppositional or subcultural scene, the upheaval of 1989 also forced them to reorient themselves fundamentally, as *Christian Saehrendt's* contribution on the art exhibitions of East German artists in the USA in 1989 and 1990 shows. The "social capital" they had accumulated before 1989 fell in value rapidly after the political upheaval.

The municipalities gained cultural policy competences while the state, especially in Poland and Hungary, withdrew to a certain extent as a cultural policy actor and financier of culture after 1989 and, on a neoliberal maxim, increasingly left culture to demand. *Thomas Höpel's* contribution makes clear with the examples of Leipzig and Krakow that large cities and metropolises in particular developed a committed and active cultural policy in the 1990s, building on local traditions and incorporating Western European concepts in the restructuring of urban cultural institutions. Thus, contrary to what could be established for small municipalities and rural areas¹⁶, the cultural infrastructure in the metropolises was not dismantled substantially, but rather restructured. Even if economic

12 Concerning the Czech Republic, Ivo Bock gives a good overview of the development of cultural policy up to 2002. He also reveals that state cultural funding in the Czech Republic during this period was significantly higher than in the other East-Central European countries: I. Bock, *Die Kulturpolitik Tschechiens nach der Wende von 1989*, in: Bachmaier/Blehova (eds.), *Der kulturelle Umbruch in Ostmitteleuropa*, pp. 107–129.

13 Bachmaier, *Der Wertewandel in Ostmitteleuropa*, pp. 15–31.

14 K. Schedler and I. Proeller, *New Public Management*, Stuttgart 2011.

15 T. Höpel, *Kulturpolitik in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2017, pp. 236–238.

16 In 2015, Klaus Hebborn, a councillor of the German Association of Cities and Towns (Deutscher Städtetag), spoke of a "serious dismantling of cultural infrastructure". K. Hebborn, *Kommunale Kulturpolitik und deutsche*

considerations were decisive in the larger cities as well, expenditures on culture there did not decline in the course of the 1990s and even grew again in the second half of the 1990s.

In addition, the contributions by *Thomas Höpel* and *Antje Dietze* also point out that traditions from the state-socialist period were by no means completely devalued but had a continued effect in the reshaping of urban culture. The increasing renationalisation of culture in Poland and Hungary since the second decade of the twenty-first century also tied in with an unease in large parts of society about the arbitrariness of neoliberal cultural policy after 1989, which had devalued national traditions to some extent.

Torben Ibs shows that in East Germany, on the one hand, administrative structures in the cultural sector were taken over from the old Federal Republic, though there was a tendency to more neoliberal models in restructuring theatres. These models had previously been applied mainly in Great Britain, but also in France.¹⁷ Hence, East Germany became a testing ground for the restructuring of cultural institutions subsequently carried out in the old federal states, too. The transformation in the cultural sector in the 1990s therefore led to an adaptation to Western European ideas and models of cultural policy in many areas. Nonetheless, *Antje Dietze's* contribution on the cultural policy transformation in Berlin after 1989 also illustrates that a simple adoption of Western models in the area of cultural funding, but also in the area of artistic aesthetics and concepts, would be a false notion. Traditions from East and West were interwoven with new concepts in order to be able to meet the requirements of a cultural show window role for the new German capital. Eventually, the development in East Germany also had lasting effects on the promotion of culture in the old federal states and in national German cultural policy in general. Furthermore, it was also a matter of integrating Berlin into European and global networks, an orientation generally moved forward in the large metropolises after 1989. In the second half of the 1990s, Berlin, like Leipzig and Krakow before, joined the "Eurocities" network of cities and, among other things, was active in its cultural forum: in 2010, Berlin was head of the working group "Resources for Culture".¹⁸ Culture became more and more relevant as a locational and economic factor, which fits in with global trends starting, for instance, in the 1980s in the USA and Great Britain.¹⁹ Therefore, the narrative of Germany's special path of transformation after 1989 definitely has to be scrutinised.

However, since the first decade of the twenty-first century, divergent tendencies have been on the rise again in East-Central Europe, initially in Poland, then in Hungary. The paradigm of a neoliberal state cultural policy that had dominated the 1990s was replaced

Einheit, in: *Jahrbuch für Kulturpolitik* 2015/16, vol. 15: Transformatorische Kulturpolitik, Bielefeld 2016, pp. 77–83, at 77.

17 On the transformation of the major French opera houses see Höpel, *Kulturpolitik in Europa*, p. 295.

18 E. Völkel, *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen europäischer Städtenetzwerke für die städtische Kulturpolitik*, BA thesis, Leipzig 2010, p. 43.

19 Höpel, *Cultural Policy in Europe*, pp. 324–326; F. Bianchini, *Remaking European Cities: The Role of Cultural Policies*, in: F. Bianchini/M. Parkinson (eds.), *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration*, Manchester 1993, pp. 1–19.

or supplemented in both countries by a cultural policy placing national identification offers in the foreground and developing a new “national” cultural canon, as is described in the contributions by *Przemysław Czapliński* and *Kristóf Nagy/Márton Szarvas*. This policy was secured by directing state subsidies and a staff change in the governing bodies of cultural institutions that were important for the dissemination of a national and nationalist idea of culture. In Hungary, this has resulted in a broad wave of protest since 2012. Young artists and art students have upheld the ideals of liberal cosmopolitan modern art and have been supported by international organisations such as the foundation Erste Stiftung.

Nevertheless, the example of Hungary also makes clear that the liberal mechanisms in sub-areas of cultural production, especially in the mass cultural sector and the creative industries, certainly remained valid. At the same time, this made the social situation of young cultural workers increasingly precarious. In Hungary, liberal economic elements went well together with a state cultural policy oriented towards national representation. The result was, as *Kristóf Nagy* and *Márton Szarvas* underline, that Hungarian politics attempted to integrate young artists with a liberal cosmopolitan understanding of art in the field of popular and mass culture while giving preference to conservative nationalist intellectuals and artists in high culture.

The two authors predict that the Covid-19 pandemic will reinforce the hegemonic penetration of culture by the Orban regime because it will make cultural workers even more dependent on state structures. The situation is similar in Poland, where the PiS government put a tax on advertisements into play at the beginning of 2021 as a “solidarity contribution” to finance anti-corona measures and culture, but which critics interpret as a means of exerting pressure on independent media. At the same time, the public media have received a renewed state subsidy of two million zlotys in 2021. Thus, Polish cultural policy is clearly moving away from the values and rules of European cultural policy, which, in addition to European networking, increasingly focuses on the liberalisation in the area of art production, competition law, and media concentration in the member states.²⁰

The contributions show that the transformation in the field of culture and cultural policy in the former state-socialist states of East-Central Europe can neither be explained solely by the continued effects of earlier influences from the first half of the twentieth century or the state-socialist period, nor that it was oriented towards a normative end point. Rather, the cultural and cultural policy actors combined traditional influences with new instruments and models in an open transformation situation. As a result, new cultural policy structures emerged at municipal and state level. They cannot be depicted by only referring to the convergence or divergence of European cultural policy ideas, as each of them found specific political answers to specific challenges. The role of culture and cultural policy for collective identification, having always maintained an important func-

tion at the local level, increasingly came into focus again at the state level after the turn of the millennium; this could happen with a very one-sided national, even nationalistic orientation, as in Hungary and Poland. But the discussion about how cultural policy can contribute to the internal cohesion of a society received renewed impetus also in the Federal Republic, as the 8th Federal Congress on Cultural Policy in 2015 demonstrated, where, for instance, the President of the Bundestag Norbert Lammert called for a “fundamental consensus in need of canonisation” that must be negotiated in a “continuous reflexive discourse among all citizens of a society”.²¹ The contributions in this volume also focus on the level of international associations and cooperations of municipal and state cultural policy as well as on the level of art producers. It is to be hoped that they will help to initiate further research in this field.

21 N. Lammert, Kulturnationen in einer globalisierten Welt, in: *Jahrbuch für Kulturpolitik* 2015/16, vol. 15: Transformatorische Kulturpolitik, Bielefeld 2016, pp. 143–148, at 148.

Berlin's Theatre Landscape after 1989: Cultural Policy Strategies and Multi-Level Transformations¹

Antje Dietze

ABSTRACTS

Der Artikel untersucht den Wandel der Kulturförderung nach 1989 am Beispiel der Ost- und West-Berliner Theaterlandschaften, die nach dem Ende der jahrzehntelangen Teilung der Stadt zusammengeführt werden mussten. Der Beitrag verfolgt diese kulturpolitische Neuordnung sowohl hinsichtlich der öffentlichen Finanzierung als auch der künstlerischen Profilierungen der Häuser. Die Transformation beinhaltete nicht allein die Anpassung Ost-Berliner Kulturbetriebe an westliche Förder- und Organisationsstrukturen. Vielmehr wurden alle Berliner Theater daraufhin geprüft, ob sie im Prozess der Neuerfindung Berlins als Hauptstadt der vereinten Bundesrepublik und als internationale Kulturmetropole noch eine wichtige Funktion einnehmen konnten. Zugleich musste in Folge der deutschen Vereinigung die Kulturfinanzierung zwischen Bund, Ländern und Kommunen grundlegend neu ausgerichtet werden, was zu einer Stärkung der kulturpolitischen Rolle des Bundes führte. Darüber hinaus rückte die Kultur immer mehr als wirtschaftliche Ressource in den Blick, und kulturpolitische Strategien umfassten neben repräsentativen und soziokulturellen Zielen zunehmend auch die Förderung der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft.

After 1989, cultural policy makers in Berlin faced the challenge of reorganizing the city's dual cultural structure in the context of multi-level transformations. This article analyzes their strategies, using the example of the funding and reprofiling of the city's theatre landscape. The integration of East German theatres into the federal German theatre landscape did not happen solely by adapting them to western structures. Instead, all of Berlin's theatres were reviewed to determine whether they could still assume an important function for the reinvention of the city as the capital of unified Germany and as a cultural metropolis of international importance.

1 I would like to thank Regina Bauch and Jessica Wallace for translating this article from German to English.

At the same time, the funding of the capital city's cultural infrastructure had to be renegotiated between the federal and state governments, shifting toward permanent and direct federal funding for the cultural sector. Moreover, cultural policy concepts underwent profound changes throughout the 1990s, as culture was gradually discovered as one of the city's central economic resources.

Within the context of post-socialist transformations in East-Central Europe, East Germany is a particular case. As part of reunification and within a very short period of time, it adopted the structures of the Federal Republic of Germany – including cultural funding and policy. The situation in Berlin was even more unique. Not only did the city have to deal with the transformation processes caused by national reunification, it also had to cope with reuniting the two halves of the city to form a single Bundesland (federal city state). In addition, the Reunification Treaty stipulated that Berlin should be the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany and later the city was designated the main seat of government and parliament. Another goal was for a unified Berlin to regain its status as an international metropolis and be integrated into European and global networks.² Considering the range of overlapping problems that arose in the transformation of the city, it was imperative for Berlin's cultural institutions and cultural policy makers to adapt to the new situation.

This article argues that this conglomeration of reordering processes in Berlin demonstrates several fundamental characteristics of the transformation after 1989, illustrated by the example of the funding and reprofiling of the city's theatre landscape. The integration of East German theatres into the federal German theatre landscape did not happen solely by adapting them to western funding structures and artistic styles. On the one hand, the funding of the capital city's very dense cultural infrastructure had to be renegotiated between the federal and state governments after reunification. This led to the reorganization of the multi-level framework of public cultural funding in Germany, providing a new, stronger basis for federal cultural funding. On the other hand, all of Berlin's theatres were reviewed during the transformation process to determine whether they could still assume an important function for the reinvention of the city as the centre of the unified Federal Republic of Germany and as a cultural metropolis of international importance and thus whether their funding could be legitimized. East German theatres received special funding, while two large theatres in the western half of the city were closed. Thus, not only were the East German theatre traditions and cultural concepts re-evaluated after 1989 but so were those that shaped both German states and played a role outside of Germany.

2 For more on Berlin in the 1990s, see W. Süß (ed.), *Hauptstadt Berlin*, 3 vols, Berlin 1995–1996; K. Siebenhaar (ed.), *Kulturhandbuch Berlin*, 2nd edn, Berlin 2001; B. Grésillon, *Berlin, métropole culturelle*, Paris 2002; B. Stöver, *Berlin: A Short History*, Munich 2013; W. van der Will, *Berlin as a Terrain of Cultural Policy. Outline of a Struggle*, in: *German Politics and Society* 33 (2015) 114, pp. 146–158.

To explain these unexpected dynamics, the first part of this article will outline the general situation of cultural policy in the Land Berlin and the resulting problems for public theatre throughout the 1990s. The second part of the article will discuss the reorganization of Berlin's theatre landscape in terms of the artistic profiles of the theatres, and the last part will describe how cultural policy concepts changed throughout the decade.

1. The Legacy of Division: Berlin's Dual Theatre Landscape

One fundamental problem for Berlin's cultural policy after 1989 was the dense structure of publicly subsidized theatres that had evolved over time, all of which were now under the management of the Land.³ Traditionally, Berlin had two theatre districts. The entertainment district surrounding Friedrichstrasse in the old city centre and the theatres in the western middle-class district of Charlottenburg. When Germany and Berlin were divided, these two districts were the basis for the functional duality of the theatre landscape. Important theatres and musical theatres had become part of the Soviet occupation zone and thus East Germany, some of which were rebuilt, including the Volksbühne, the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm (later the Berliner Ensemble), the Deutsches Theater, and the Staatsoper unter den Linden, the Berlin State Opera. Several new theatres were built after 1945, including the Komische Oper and the Maxim Gorki Theater.

In West Berlin, considerable investments were also made in cultural institutions after the division of Germany, and the existing theatre structure was expanded. Several theatres were amalgamated to form the Staatliche Schauspielbühnen (Berlin State Theatres). The loss of access to the theatres of the historical city centre was compensated by building the Deutsche Oper in 1961 and opening two large theatres, the Schaubühne at Hallesches Ufer (later at Lehniner Platz) in 1962 and the Theater der Freien Volksbühne in 1963. After that, each half of the city had an extensive selection of theatres and operas as well as operettas and musical and children's theatres. This dense cultural landscape was also established for political reasons. The two halves of Berlin each served as a showcase for one of the two competing political systems of the Cold War, a part of which involved a strong emphasis on promoting culture. As the capital of East Germany, East Berlin was especially important for the cultural sector. West Berlin was unable to assert a central role for itself alongside the other cultural centres in the federal organization of West Germany, even though the city did receive special support based on its insular position and representational function. Since the special funding of East and West Berlin until

3 For more on the dual Berlin theatre landscape and its development, see H. Zielske, *Thalia in urbaner Enge. Theaterstandorte und Theaterbau in Berlin 1890–1990*, in: E. Fischer-Lichte/D. Kolesch/C. Weiler (eds.), *Berliner Theater im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1998, pp. 53–75; Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin (ed.), *Theater in Berlin nach 1945*, 4 vols, Berlin 2001–2003; K. Hausbei, *Berlin: Theaterlandschaft in einer doppelten Stadt?*, in: *Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande* 49 (2017) 1, pp. 57–70. For more on the situation in the 1990s, see S. Zolchow, *The Island of Berlin*, in: D. Varney (ed.), *Theatre in the Berlin Republic. German Drama Since Reunification*, Oxford 2008, pp. 55–80; A. Dietze, *Ambivalenzen des Übergangs. Die Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin in den neunziger Jahren*, Göttingen 2015, Chapter 4.

1989 ceased fairly quickly after reunification, the Land Berlin was soon faced with the overwhelming financial burden caused by the large number of cultural institutions.

2. The Development of Berlin's Cultural Budget in the 1990s

German reunification and the integration of East Berlin led to significant changes in the budget of the Land Berlin. East Berlin cultural institutions were now also the Land's responsibility, while at the same time there were cuts in federal subsidies for Berlin's cultural sphere. In 1989, about half of West Berlin's income was made up of funds from federal aid (*Bundeshilfe*) to keep the city alive despite its insular location.⁴ A portion of these funds was also allocated to the cultural budget. After West Berlin's special status ended, however, the funds were severely cut until 1994 and then cancelled altogether. Federal funding for the Land Berlin underwent complete restructuring during the 1990s.

Since the Basic Law gives the Länder control over the cultural sphere, the federal government has only limited possibilities for influencing this sector. But due to the particular situation after German reunification, Article 35 of the Reunification Treaty was established as the basis for transitional funding from the federal government to protect the "cultural substance", as it was referred to in Paragraph 2. The federal government was thus given the possibility of temporarily supporting the unusually dense network of East German cultural institutions.⁵ The situation in Berlin was especially dramatic due to the many cultural institutions in the historic city centre. Without federal funding, the Land would not have been able to finance the additional East Berlin cultural institutions.

The federal government provided transitional funding for the cultural sector between 1991 and 1993. A significant portion of the funding went to East Berlin. However, the contributions decreased significantly from year to year.⁶ The Länder and municipalities also had to assume responsibility during this period by contributing additional funding. The federal government connected funding with the expectation that existing institutions would thus be maintained, at least in the short term. This arrangement was vital for the preservation of East Berlin's theatres.

The transitional funding for the cultural sector was to be replaced by a financing agreement for the capital (*Hauptstadtfinanzierungsvertrag*), which included federal payments for the costs incurred for Berlin as the seat of government and parliament and for its representative role for the country. However, the corresponding payments to Berlin's

4 H. W. Weinzen, *Berlin und seine Finanzen. Von der Bundeshilfe in den Finanzausgleich*, 2nd edn, Berlin 1995, p. 22.

5 Art 35 Reunification Treaty (Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik über die Herstellung der Einheit Deutschlands, 1990). See also H. Schirmer, *Kulturpolitische Wege. Der Artikel 35 und die Folgen*, in: H. Hoffmann/W. Schneider (eds.), *Kulturpolitik in der Berliner Republik*, Köln 2002, pp. 38–49; K. Bauer-Volke, *Ostdeutschlands Problem mit der kulturellen Substanz*, in: K. Bauer-Volke/I. Dietzsch (eds.), *Labor Ostdeutschland. Kulturelle Praxis im gesellschaftlichen Wandel*, Bonn 2004, pp. 37–56.

6 A. Scholz/C. Waldkirchner-Heyne, *Entwicklungstrends von Kunst, Kultur und Medien in den neuen Bundesländern*, Berlin 1994, pp. 154–73; Bundesministerium des Innern, *Fünf Jahre Kulturförderung für die neuen Länder*, Bonn 1996, pp. 140–41.

cultural budget only started in 1996, resulting in an enormous financing gap.⁷ The payments from the federal government that were allocated to the cultural budget of the Land Berlin in the interim years 1994 and 1995 amounted to DM 30 million and were thus much lower than the previous DM 138 million.⁸ During the same period, the fiscal position of the Land Berlin deteriorated further when the economic boom brought on by reunification ended and Berlin had to spend large sums to restore its infrastructure. Especially in the mid-1990s, the funding for Berlin's cultural institutions was uncertain. After special funding for reunification stopped, the federal government restricted its funding mostly to nationally significant cultural institutions (referred to as "cultural beacons"). In Berlin, the majority of this money went to the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation).⁹ As early as 1991, however, many political and cultural actors were urgently calling for the federal government to provide additional permanent funding for culture in the capital city. Nevertheless, the Capital City Funding Agreement (*Hauptstadtkulturvertrag*) was only concluded in 2001 after negotiations had been drawn out for years, partially due to differing opinions on the part of the federal government and the Land Berlin regarding the type of cultural funding the federal government should provide.¹⁰ It thus took over a decade for federal cultural funding to be resolved in the long term.

The reasoning for the federal government to back out of cultural funding so quickly was that constitutional law stipulates that cultural funding is the responsibility of the Länder and municipalities.¹¹ Over the course of the 1990s, acceptance grew for federal funding for the cultural sector, supported by the Reunification Treaty's regulations for protecting the cultural substance of East Germany. This fundamental transformation of federal structures into permanent and direct federal funding for the cultural sector also took hold outside of Berlin. The reorganization of federal cultural policy was reinforced by the newly-elected coalition government between the social-democrats (SPD) and greens in 1998, for example with the introduction of a federal commissioner for culture and the media (Germany does not have a ministry of culture) and the Federal Cultural Foundation in 2002.¹²

7 H. W. Weinzen, *Die Hauptstadt Berlin – zu teuer? Daten, Fakten und Positionen zum Streit*, in: W. Süß/R. Rytlewski (eds.), *Berlin – Die Hauptstadt. Vergangenheit und Zukunft einer europäischen Metropole*, Bonn 1999, pp. 415–34, at pp. 427–31. See also W. Ribbe (ed.), *Hauptstadtfinanzierung in Deutschland. Von der Reichsgründung bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin 2004.

8 Berlin's budget for the cultural sector received DM 210 million in federal funding (from the Bundeshilfe) in 1991, DM 160 million in 1992, and DM 138 million in 1993. See S. Sturhan, *Kunstförderung zwischen Verfassung und Finanzkrise. Probleme staatlicher Kunstfinanzierung am Beispiel Berlins*, Berlin 2003, p. 75.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 82–87; Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (ed.), *Zehn Jahre vereint. Deutschland 2000*, Berlin 2000, pp. 64–65.

10 A. Wostrak, *Kooperative Kulturpolitik. Strategien für ein Netzwerk zwischen Kultur und Politik in Berlin*, Frankfurt am Main 2008, pp. 94–110.

11 Deutscher Bundestag: *Lage der Kultur in den neuen Ländern*. Drucksache 12/6385, 12. Wahlperiode (08.12.1993), pp. 5–9; Deutscher Bundestag, Enquete-Kommission "Kultur in Deutschland": *Schlussbericht*, Berlin 2007, pp. 200–204.

12 H. Hoffmann/W. Schneider (eds.), *Kulturpolitik in der Berliner Republik*, Köln 2002; Sturhan, *Kunstförderung*, pp.

3. The New Profiling of Berlin's Theatres

An important step towards deciding the future of Berlin's theatres was a 1991 expert report on the situation of Berlin's theatres commissioned by the Senate Berlin, referred to as the "Nagel report", after the main author, Ivan Nagel.¹³ Nagel was a Hungarian-German critic, essayist, and former theatre director in West Germany and professor at the Berlin University of the Arts. Nagel also enlisted three renowned theatre experts from East and West Germany to write the report.¹⁴ The four experts presented an overall concept for the capital city's theatre landscape. A pressing problem was the issue of integrating the historically-based dual structure of Berlin's theatre landscape into a functioning and fundable whole, as well as ensuring that Berlin would maintain its status as a city of culture and theatre both on a national and international level. This would require drastic changes in the theatre landscape. The goal was not only to preserve the East Berlin theatres and adapt them to western structures but also to develop individual profiles for all of the theatres in the overall theatre landscape, thus ensuring their survival. On many points, the senator for culture followed the recommendations made by the experts to give individual theatres a new focus.¹⁵

At the time of Nagel's report, two of the large West Berlin theatres were caught in the midst of a deep financial, artistic, and administrative crisis and closed soon afterwards – the Theater der Freien Volksbühne and the Berlin State Theatres.¹⁶ The experts had recommended turning the Freie Volksbühne into a theatre for international guest performances, a "theatre of the nations", to promote the city's international profile – however, cost saving measures put off this plan until 2001. The Berlin State Theatres received DM 44 million in state funding in 1992, making them one of the most expensive spoken theatre compounds in the federal republic of Germany. Against the recommendations of the experts, they were closed on 3 October 1993. By contrast, all of the large East Berlin theatres survived the transition into the new era, despite initially being underfunded and, in some cases, lacking an artistic direction. Due to the agreements in the Reunification

207–239; Wostrak, *Kooperative Kulturpolitik*, pp. 83–180; O. Zimmermann (ed.), *Wachgeküsst. 20 Jahre Kulturpolitik des Bundes 1998–2018*, Berlin 2018.

13 I. Nagel et al., *Überlegungen zur Situation der Berliner Theater. Gutachten an den Senat von Berlin*, Berlin, 6 April 1991 [unpublished]. For a published version, see I. Nagel, *Streitschriften. Politik – Kulturpolitik – Theaterpolitik 1957–2001*, Berlin 2001, pp. 127–136. See also M. Fabel, *Kulturpolitisches Controlling. Ziele, Instrumente und Prozesse der Theaterförderung in Berlin*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 169–178.

14 Nagel enlisted the East German critic and journalist Friedrich Dieckmann, the West German theatre critic, journalist, and professor of drama at the Free University of Berlin, Henning Rischbieter, and West German theatre journalist Michael Merschmeier as additional experts.

15 For more detailed information on the changes in Berlin's theatre landscape in the 1990s, see Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin (ed.), *"Damit die Zeit nicht stehenbleibt." Nach der Wende (=Theater in Berlin nach 1945, vol. 4)*, Berlin 2003. For developments in the rest of East Germany, see S. Jennicke, *Theater als soziale Praxis. Ostdeutsches Theater nach dem Systembruch*, Berlin 2011; T. Ibs, *Umbrüche und Aufbrüche: Transformationen des Theaters in Ostdeutschland zwischen 1989 und 1995*, Berlin 2016.

16 For more on theatre closures in Berlin after 1989, see H. Röper, *Handbuch Theatermanagement. Betriebsführung, Finanzen, Legitimation und Alternativmodelle*, Köln 2001, pp. 26–34; Zolchow, *The Island*, pp. 58–61, 67–72. See also H. Treusch/R. Mangel (eds.), *Spiel auf Zeit. Theater der Freien Volksbühne 1963–1992*, Berlin 1992.

Treaty, they were better protected against closures. The special support for East Berlin's cultural institutions in the form of transitional federal funding and the requirement to preserve historical substance in Art. 35 of the Reunification Treaty had a negative impact on West Berlin's theatres.

Theatre closures in West Berlin, which amounted to an enormous loss of cultural programmes for that part of the city, were not due solely to the weak profiles of the theatres and the burdens caused by the division of the city; the reunification crisis exacerbated the problem of legitimization and financing that public theatres had been facing for decades. The root of the problem was the continuous decline in attendance and increasing costs. At the same time, city and state theatres were losing importance in the media and cultural transformation. The closure of the Berlin State Theatres in Berlin incited a wide-spread debate on the structure of the German theatre sector, which, however, only led to gradual reforms.¹⁷ Due to the acute budget crisis of the mid-1990s, the Berlin Senate shifted course in 1996 and implemented extreme austerity measures. From then on, the senate insisted on cost-savings for all theatres. Some of the city's theatres went into private hands and economic criteria increasingly gained importance.¹⁸

Other Berlin theatres are examples for how clear artistic profiles and shared German theatre traditions could protect large theatres during the reorganization process of the early 1990s. West Berlin's Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz had been a product of the 1968 student theatre movement and developed into a theatre with an international reputation.¹⁹ The Deutsches Theater in East Berlin played an important role for the development of German and European theatre since the nineteenth century.²⁰ It maintained its relevance throughout the upheavals of the twentieth century by preserving its classical humanistic legacy and developing ensemble theatre and modernist styles of stage direction. The experts deemed that both theatres were crucial for the cultural representation of the capital city and thus did not question their existence.

In addition to preserving and upgrading modern theatre traditions, two additional theatres reflected another strategic cultural policy: the cultural synthesis of the East and the West. The Berliner Ensemble in East Berlin had been an artistic and political role model for theatre producers in both parts of Germany and internationally.²¹ However, carrying Bertolt Brecht's world-famous theatre over into the period after 1989 proved to be an extremely difficult undertaking. The theatre passed into private hands in 1992 but was still publicly subsidized. The experts had recommended that it be managed by one of Brecht's students. Instead, five of Brecht's artistic successors from the East and the West

17 For a summary of the debate, which itself was a renewal of older reform debates in the theatre sector, see Röper, *Handbuch Theatermanagement*; Institut für Kulturpolitik der Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft/B. Wagner (eds.), *Thema: Theaterdebatte*, Essen 2004.

18 Weinzen, *Hauptstadt Berlin*, pp. 422–25; Fabel, *Kulturpolitisches Controlling*, pp. 250–67; Sturhan, *Kunstförderung*, pp. 159–68.

19 H. Müller/J. Schitthelm (eds.), *40 Jahre Schaubühne Berlin*, Berlin 2002.

20 *Deutsches Theater*/A. Weigel (eds.), *Das Deutsche Theater. Eine Geschichte in Bildern*, Berlin 1999.

21 D. Barnett, *A History of the Berliner Ensemble*, Cambridge, UK 2015.

were instated: directors Matthias Langhoff, Peter Palitzsch, Fritz Marquardt, and Peter Zadek and the playwright Heiner Müller, a collaboration which soon ended in dispute. This attempt to unite Eastern and Western German theatre in the capital failed, an apparent indication of the setbacks and conflicts along the path to German reunification. East Berlin's Volksbühne, like its West Berlin counterpart, had arisen out of the workers' cultural movement.²² In East Germany, it had been presented as a socialist people's theatre and now needed a new focus. Following the experts' recommendation, cultural policy makers appointed an East German artistic director who created a political theatre that addressed German reunification and its social impact. Starting with the 1992/93 season, Frank Castorf became the longest standing theatre director in the new Berlin and led the theatre to international success. Under his direction, the artistic team, which also consisted of the East German theatre director Andreas Kriegenburg, the Swiss musical director Christoph Marthaler, the Austrian choreographer Johann Kresnik, and the West German filmmaker Christoph Schlingensief, made it their mission to present a provocative aestheticization of the East. Therefore, one of Berlin's theatres finally realized the cultural unification that had been the aim of cultural policy.

4. The Transformation of Cultural Policy in the 1990s and 2000s

Cultural policy in Berlin after 1989 was particular because various transformational processes overlapped on a municipal, national, and transnational level, at times blocking one another. In addition to German reunification and post-socialist transformation, these processes included the amalgamation of the two halves of the city, the restructuring of the capital city, and Berlin's repositioning on the international stage. The intersection of these different social transformational processes had three unexpected consequences. First, despite the fact that Berlin was now the German capital, the city found itself in a financial crisis as a result of the need to renegotiate federal contributions after 1989. Second, the large theatres in East Berlin benefited from special funding and, at least temporarily, the protection of existing cultural institutions and were thus largely preserved. Third, structural crises that had been long in the making erupted in the western part of the city, endangering the cultural institutions in West Berlin that were additionally suffering from the reorganization of the cultural audience in favour of Berlin Mitte.

Against the backdrop of these complex transformations, all of Berlin's theatres had to adapt to cost saving measures in addition to one other goal, in particular, profiling. Theatres were assigned functions so that they could claim a social and artistic relevance in the German capital after 1989. In addition to preserving German theatre traditions, their profiles included innovative and political contemporary theatre and the symbolic

22 T. Irmer/H. Müller (eds.), *Zehn Jahre Volksbühne – Intendanz Frank Castorf*, Berlin 2003; T. Bogusz, *Institution und Utopie. Ost-West-Transformationen an der Berliner Volksbühne*, Bielefeld 2007; M. Carlson, *Frank Castorf and the Volksbühne*, in: M. Carlson, *Theatre Is More Beautiful Than War: German Stage Directing in the Late Twentieth Century*, Iowa 2009, pp. 96–115; Dietze, *Ambivalenzen*.

reunification of the East and the West. Furthermore, the importance of cross-border networking for the theatre sector grew after 1990, which was reflected in the plans for a “theatre of nations”. Increasingly, however, it became clear that traditional city theatres could not fully meet these demands.²³

Interestingly, despite the harsh cultural and distribution battles between the East and the West, East German theatre nonetheless enjoyed great esteem after 1989, whereas the quality deficits of the West Berlin theatres were openly addressed. Free director positions in East Berlin’s theatres were usually filled by East Germans, leading to a significant staff continuity. East German traditions were therefore not completely interrupted in 1989 and they were not devalued. The theatre landscapes in East and West Germany were both heavily rooted in the same traditions and continued to be influenced by close-knitted relations during the period of national division. These precise similarities in theatre practice in the East and the West ended up becoming a central problem for Berlin’s dual theatre landscape. Only after 1989 were West Berlin’s theatres increasingly pressured to create more distinct individual profiles and ensure their success, which was an expression of a “paradigm shift in cultural policy”.²⁴

This paradigm shift consisted of a dual movement in the capital’s cultural policy. On the one hand, the pressure increased on the cultural sector to meet criteria for profitability, functionality, and market profiling, even though it was public sector and thus protected and publicly subsidized. Recurrent cuts in public funding resulted in significant increases in efficiency. During the 1990s, Berlin’s public theatres increasingly sought out funding from private sponsors and public institutions and raised their overall box-office earnings. Yet at the same time, this new direction was part of a fundamental redefinition of the function of culture in the capital city. After 1989, Berlin’s cultural institutions no longer had to represent the culture of two competing political systems. Initially, the focus was on establishing culture as a heritage worth preserving within a unified Germany and convincing the federal government to recognize the importance of funding for the representative function of the capital. At the same time, the Reunification Treaty had justified the necessity of preserving the “cultural substance” of East Germany by asserting the integrative function of high and popular culture. In the late 1990s, culture in the capital city was assigned another function in addition to its representative and socio-cultural roles and was gradually discovered as one of the city’s central economic resources.

Due in part to the fact that the city’s economic development fell short of expectations, the focus shifted to the role of cultural infrastructure as part of the city’s appeal and a

23 Consequently, the theatre compound Hebbel am Ufer (HAU) was opened in 2003. It had no ensemble of its own and was largely financed by project funds. Its hosting of guest performances and co-productions made it possible to tap into the increasing flexibility and transnationalization of contemporary avantgarde and performance theatre as well as the independent theatre scene. See K. Hehmeyer/M. Pees (eds.), *Import Export. Arbeitsbuch zum HAU Berlin*, Berlin 2012.

24 K. Siebenhaar, *Ewige Kolonialstadt und verspätete Metropole. Entwicklungslinien der Berliner Kulturgeschichte*, in: Siebenhaar, *Kulturhandbuch Berlin*, pp. 11–43, at p. 39. For further developments in German cultural policy debates, see N. Sievers/P. S. Föhl/T. J. Knoblich (eds.), *Thema: Transformatorische Kulturpolitik*, Bielefeld 2015.

business factor in the late 1990s. Internationally, active political support for the cultural and creative industries had been gaining appeal since the 1980s, becoming a global trend by the millennium.²⁵ In 2000, the BerlinStudie, which had been commissioned based on similar strategic plans commissioned for other European capitals like London and Vienna, attested the important role of culture for urban planning – especially considering the ongoing transition to a knowledge-based society and the increased significance of immigration and international relations.²⁶ Culture, like research and science, was categorized as one of the city's future resources, and it was recommended that it be funded more heavily. However, this recommendation was slow to be adapted.²⁷ In 2004, the Land Berlin started a cultural economic initiative to support the growth of that sector and strengthen its ties with publicly funded culture.²⁸ But due to the ongoing structural deficits, it was still necessary to save costs, so that the recognition of the importance of culture for the city barely had an effect on the cultural budget.

While cultural funding in Berlin during the 1990s underwent several precarious phases, it is possible to say in retrospect that most of the city's dual theatre and cultural landscape was successfully preserved and united. This certainly contributed to Berlin's revival as a city of culture and modern trends, bolstered by the interplay of high culture, subculture, event culture, creative industries, symbolic politics, and urban marketing as well as the classical representative cultural institutions. Their influence has been clearly demonstrated by events like Wrapped Reichstag in 1995, the revival of the Love Parade and club culture, the city's self-marketing as "the new Berlin" in the late nineties and as a hub for the German creative industries since the 2000s.²⁹ The myth of a culturally appealing post-reunification Berlin that was thus established has been virtually unchallenged by transnational comparisons and transfer analyses.³⁰ However, it would be worthwhile to

25 F. Bianchini/M. Parkinson (eds.), *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration. The West European Experience*, Manchester 1993; F. Eckardt/L. Nyström (eds.), *Culture and the City*, Berlin 2009; M. Banks/J. O'Connor, *Inside the Whale (And How to Get Out of There): Moving on From Two Decades of Creative Industries Research*, in: *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 20 (2017) 6, pp. 637–654.

26 The BerlinStudie was commissioned by the Land Berlin with support from the European Commission. Der Regierende Bürgermeister von Berlin/Senatskanzlei (eds.), *Die BerlinStudie – Strategien für die Stadt*, Berlin 2000.

27 S. Klotz, *Schlussbericht der Enquete-Kommission "Eine Zukunft für Berlin"*. Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, 15. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 15/4000, Berlin 2005; Wostrak, *Kooperative Kulturpolitik*, pp. 171–80.

28 Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Frauen in Berlin/Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (eds.), *Kulturwirtschaft in Berlin. Entwicklung und Potentiale*, Berlin 2005. See also DIW Berlin (ed.), *Kultur als Wirtschaftsfaktor in Berlin*, Berlin 2002; and for the national context: *Deutscher Bundestag, Kulturförderung, Kulturausgaben und Kulturwirtschaft. Daten und Informationen zu ausgewählten Bereichen des Kultursektors*, WD 10–3000–035, Berlin 2012.

29 S. Krätke/R. Borst, *Berlin. Metropole zwischen Boom und Krise*, Opladen 2000; T. Biskup/M. Schalenberg (eds.), *Selling Berlin. Imagebildung und Stadtmarketing von der preußischen Residenz bis zur Bundeshauptstadt*, Stuttgart 2008; B. Lange et al., *Berlin's Creative Industries: Governing Creativity?*, in: *Industry and Innovation*, 15 (2008) 5, pp. 531–48; C. Colomb, *Staging the New Berlin: Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention Post-1989*, New York 2011.

30 Cf. J. Merkel, *Berliner Kulturpolitik in international vergleichender Perspektive*, Hertie School of Governance, Center for Cultural Policy, Berlin 2015. For comparative perspectives more generally, see K. K. Patel (ed.), *The Cultural Politics of Europe: European Capitals of Culture and European Union since the 1980s*, Abingdon 2013; T. Höpel, *Kulturpolitik in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert. Metropolen als Akteure und Orte der Innovation*, Göttingen 2017; C. Balme/T. Fisher (eds.), *Theatre Institutions in Crisis. European Perspectives*, London 2020.

closely examine this particular (East) German case in terms of different types of cultural policy in other post-socialist settings and in western co-transformation,³¹ the increasing recognition of and growing self-confidence in eastern European art and culture of the 1990s, and the integrative power and developmental potential of different cultural models (representative, socio- and multi-cultural and creative industries) in Central and Eastern Europe.

31 For the concept of co-transformation, see P. Ther, *Europe Since 1989: A History*, Princeton 2016. For an overview of integrated perspectives on Eastern and Western German history, see F. Bösch, *A History Shared and Divided: East and West Germany Since the 1970s*, New York 2018.

Transformation East Fuels Transformation West: Tendencies in Cultural Politics and Its Transformations in the Process of German Unification

Torben Ibs

ABSTRACTS

Die Vereinigung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1990 stellte die Kultur in der ehemaligen DDR vor große Herausforderungen. Im Theaterbereich mussten die bisherigen Trägerschaften überprüft und wirtschaftlich tragfähige Modelle gefunden werden, um gleichzeitig Modernisierung und Erhalt der Theaterhäuser zu gewährleisten. Da die Bundesländer diese neuen Herausforderungen nicht bewältigen konnten oder wollten, intensivierte die Bundesregierung als Ergebnis des Artikel 35 des Einigungsvertrags ihr finanzielles Engagement im Kultursektor, ein Bedeutungszuwachs, der nachhaltig das kulturpolitische System Deutschlands verändert hat.

Die Theater wurden zudem zu einem Experimentierfeld für neue Verwaltungsautonomiemodelle im Zuge des New Public Management, das bisher in Deutschland und seinen Kulturbetrieben noch nicht angekommen war. Mit Fusionen und Zweckverbänden sollte auch die Trägerschaft auf eine breitere Basis gestellt werden, wobei jedes ostdeutsche Bundesland einen eigenständigen Entwicklungspfad eingeschlagen hat, besonders in Hinblick auf die finanzielle Beteiligung an den meist kommunalen Theaterhäusern.

Die Transformationen in Ostdeutschland sind dabei nicht als singuläre Ereignisse zu verstehen, vielmehr bildeten sie die Blaupause, um in der Folge der 1990er auch in Westdeutschland neoliberal inspirierte Strukturreformen anzustoßen.

The unification of the two German states in 1990 presented great challenges to cultural professionals in the former GDR. In order to maintain and modernize the existing theatres their organizational forms had to be adjusted and new economic models had to be implemented. Since the Länder were not willing to or able to meet the new challenges with their own resour-

ces, the Federal Government generated investments on its own according to article 35 of the *Einigungsvertrag*, thus shaping a new system of cultural politics.

Theatres were a field of experimentation to seek new and more autonomous models of administration. This was especially proposed by the advocates of New Public Management that had not been applied to the cultural sector until the early 1990s. Mergers and regional cooperation created new formations of stakeholders. In this process, each of the *Länder* in East Germany followed its own path, especially focusing on the distribution of funding between the local authorities and the *Länder*. Finally, the transformations in East Germany cannot be seen as a singular process but as a blueprint to foster neo-liberal reformations of structures throughout the 1990s in West Germany as well.

“The situation of the theatres in the GDR is worrying. The accomplished transfer of the new currency and the rising costs in the theatres, the paid subventions do not reflect the actual needs. Especially middle and small theatres are in the threat of closing.”¹ It was with these words that the Deutsche Bühnenverein (German stage association), the coordinating council of the German theatre managers, demanded quick changes and answers from West German political leaders in 1990 to secure the survival of the 68 theatres in the then still existing German Democratic Republic (GDR). With the unclear developments of unification ahead and the poor economic structure of the Eastern area, theatres seemed to be at stake. While many theatres played a crucial role in organizing rallies and giving rooms and infrastructure to civil society during the peaceful revolution in 1989, they now had to adapt to the new times; the threat of being closed for good hanging over their heads like the sword of Damocles.

This article gives an overview of the transformations and outcomes of cultural politics in the GDR during the early 1990s. Some of these changes were planned, some simply emerged from the circumstances. The article also reflects how measures and adjustments taken worked in the same way as a blueprint for the reorganization of certain arrangements in the theatre system in the Western part of Germany. This results in the argumentation of Gert Joachim Glaesner and Rolf Reisig who claimed already in the 1990s that the transformations after 1989 affected both sides of the former Iron Curtain: a double transformation.² The double transformation, of course, did not run equally – and not equally visible, one may add – but the neo-liberal hegemonic spirit, set free by the assumed end of history,³ worked in all places at the same time. However, the ways were not the same in East and West since certain path dependencies had to be taken in account that altered the outcomes. In an international perspective these neo-liberal tendencies

1 As quoted in: R. Weinert/F.-Z. Gilles, *Der Zusammenbruch des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (FDGB). Zunehmender Entscheidungsdruck, institutionalisierte Handlungsschwächung und Zerfall der hierarchischen Organisationsstruktur*, Opladen 1999, pp. 141–142.

2 G.-J. Gläeßner, *Der schwierige Weg zur Demokratie. Vom Ende der DDR zur deutschen Einheit*, Opladen 1991, p. 213; R. Reißig, *Transformationsprozeß Ostdeutschlands. Entwicklungsstand – Konflikte – Perspektiven*, in: R. Reißig (ed.), *Rückweg in die Zukunft. Über den schwierigen Transformationsprozess in Ostdeutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, pp. 11–48, at 18.

3 F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York 1992.

were fostered by the administrations of US president Ronald Reagan and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher (and they were implemented by their successors as well). Under these preconditions the neo-liberal concept started its successful struggle for hegemony around the Western world and also reached the ex-socialist countries. In Germany, in a general view, those neo-liberal strategies were mainly tested in the East before being transferred to the West. This article will show how the cultural field was affected by these winds of change of liberalization and privatization of former common goods. The particular German path in the field of cultural politics will be described focusing on two main shifts: firstly, the implementation of new legal forms, more oriented on economic players than bureaucratic administrative structures and, secondly, the new balances of power in the field of cultural policy and public financing of culture implied by the *Einigungsvertrag* (contract of unification) between the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), which gave the central government a new role to play in cultural politics.

1. Changes in the Framework of Cultural Politics in Germany

The unification was an unprecedented endeavour with implications for all sectors in society, especially in the former GDR, which now was reorganized in five new *Bundesländer* (federal states) and, of course, a unified Berlin with its parallel structures in East and West. To create guidelines and get national and international support and legitimacy, the federal government had to find a legally binding form for the whole process both internally and internationally; it was headed by chancellor Helmut Kohl with Wolfgang Schäuble as minister of internal affairs, the department organizing the legal terms of the unification. Therefore, both German governments negotiated a treaty with the USA, France, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, settling the occupation agreements after 1945 once and for all, known as the Two Plus Four Agreement. Internally the above-mentioned *Einigungsvertrag* was negotiated between the new democratically elected government of the GDR, led by Lothar de Maizière, who was member of the Christian Democratic Union and its Western counterparts (as were Kohl and Schäuble). In the treaty the field of culture was mentioned only in Article 35 proclaiming in its second paragraph: “The cultural substance in the area defined in Article 3 shall not be damaged.”⁴ A short phrase with huge implications for the field of culture and the evolution of cultural policy. In general, West Germany’s cultural politics in those times were managed by the *Bundesländer* and the local administrations, the latter of which are usually trusted with the funding of their cultural institutions such as theatres, orchestras, museums, public libraries, etc. The federal government had only competences in foreign cultural affairs as, for example, the maintenance of the Goethe Institutes.

4 Bundesrepublik Deutschland/Deutsche Demokratische Republik, *Einigungsvertrag*, in: *Einigungsvertrag*. Sonderdruck aus der Sammlung Das deutsche Bundesrecht, Baden-Baden 1990, Art. 35.

These arrangements were partly the same in the GDR where 46 theatres were funded by local authorities like towns and counties, although the central state commissioned the budgets to the local authorities, and there was no free space to discuss the budgets internally. Furthermore, 13 theatres were funded by the 14 *Bezirke* (districts), an administrative unit created by the socialist government in 1954. The *Bezirke* were larger than the counties but smaller than the former states (*Länder*). The states were then dissolved and newly founded in 1990. Five theatres had been directly funded by the central government, all of them located in East Berlin. In the GDR, of course, there had been an expansive control by the socialist party and its hierarchy as well as by the socialist labour union and other mass organizations interfering with the artistic outcomes and plans on several levels. However, the main connection between local public administrations and theatres was never cut. These were merely the last connections that could prevail after all other bounds with the state party had been dissolved due to the democratic process in 1989/90. Taking this into account the ongoing transformation in the cultural sector also has to be understood as a form of decentralization, as an implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. This concept was well-known and had a long practice in West Germany but was without tradition in socialist East Germany where in cases of conflict the socialist party and/or the socialist government always had the last word. Especially in the first years after unification this new autonomy led to a certain insecurity. It has to be born in mind that the decision-makers in local politics were often new in the field in a way that learning and deciding had to take place simultaneously. Nevertheless, there was also a high intrinsic motivation, as Ulf Großmann, the first elected councillor of culture, in Görlitz describes: "All of us who were thrown in this adventure were fuelled with the spirit to create a – probably their particular – contribution to the ongoing transitional work."⁵ Later on, especially in the bigger cities, experienced Western specialists were hired by local authorities as can be seen in the case of Leipzig.⁶

The theatres in the towns and cities were quite strongly involved in the ongoing turmoil, which, in 1990, was dominated by a mix of revolutionary enthusiasm (the "short year of anarchy" as Christoph Links puts it)⁷ and a great insecurity about the future existence of the cultural institutions, the latter due to the lack of financial powers. This also applied to local and regional stakeholders, i.e., those primarily responsible for the maintaining and funding of the cultural institutions in their respective areas. The Western *Länder* (states, singular *Land*) also clearly communicated their limited financial abilities in the process.⁸ The fund *Deutsche Einheit* (German unity) included DEM 47,5 billion by the *Länder* and DEM 67,5 billion by the federal government. Since the demands of the cultural players and the demands of politicians and administration leaders rose quickly, the

5 U. Großmann, Retrospektive: Zehn Jahre Umbau einer städtischen Kulturlandschaft, in: O. Scheytt (ed.), Was bleibt? Kulturpolitik in persönlicher Bilanz, Essen 2001, pp. 188–198, at 188.

6 See the article by Thomas Höpel in this edition, which examines the case of Leipzig.

7 C. Links/S. Nitsche/A. Taffelt (eds.), Das wunderbare Jahr der Anarchie. Von der Kraft des zivilen Ungehorsams 1989/90, Berlin 2004.

8 W. Schäuble, Der Vertrag. Wie ich über die deutsche Einheit verhandelte, Stuttgart 1991, p. 176.

federal government soon established several programmes to match especially the needs of cultural institutions added to the fund just established. Between 1990 and 1993 in total DEM 2,5 billion were transferred to the theatres by the federal government with the aim to consolidate the cultural substance and to create an environment for decisions on the reform of the supported institutions. The amount of cultural spending in the total expenditures of the federal government more than tripled from 0.1 per cent in the 1980s to a share of 0.35 per cent in 1996.⁹ Nevertheless, the federal government did only spend money to existing cultural institutions and did not take over control of existing theatres and museums. This enlarged pre-existent institutions such as the foundation *Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Prussian cultural heritage foundation) with its great museums or the *Berliner Festspiele* (Berlin festival). In the long run, this stronger involvement of the federal government in the field of cultural politics strengthened its position in a sustainable manner. The changes at the beginning of the 1990s resulted in the creation of a small state ministry of culture and media within the framework of the chancellery in 1998. Later on, new institutions were founded and funded such as the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes* (Federal Cultural Foundation) in 2002, the main objective of which is to support nationally relevant cultural players and to bring about new innovative networks. These results show how the involvements in the 1990s allowed the federal government to appear as a new player in the cultural field. It created new institutions to set new agendas and booster cultural politics above the heads of the *Länder*, which until then had a monopoly on the funding of cultural infrastructure, together, of course, with the local and regional administrations still shouldering the main share for cultural enterprises.

2. Organizational Reforms in the Light of New Public Management

Back in the early 1990s with the transformation process still ahead, these shoulders were quite weak. On the one hand the breakdown of all economic and industrial structures in the GDR was followed by mass unemployment and tossed away the financial possibilities of the local administrations. On the other hand, the new local elites were often unsure how to act in the new system. On the level of administration, this system was a pure implementation of West Germany's structures and processes. For the leading persons, it was often totally new to manage and steer such processes since many of the old elites had vanished or circulated to other fields of works. At the level of the *Länder* the administrations were soon filled with public workers from the Western *Länder* to reform the existing or the new institutions built up according to West German blueprints. Estimations calculate that up to 80 per cent of the new administrative leaders on the *Länder* level came from West Germany to establish the Western model of administration.¹⁰ But

9 K. Beyme, *Kulturpolitik in Deutschland. Von der Staatsförderung zur Kreativwirtschaft*, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 112.

10 H. Gergs/C. Hausmann/M. Pohlmann, Political and Economic Elites in the Transformation Process in Eastern Germany, in: H. Best/U. Becker (eds.), *Elites in Transition. Elite Research in Central and Eastern Europe*, Opladen 1997, pp. 203–247, at 227.

on the local level these adoptions were massive undertakings. The theatres were, in comparison to their Western counterparts, relatively large institutions with a bigger staff both in the artistic areas and with respect to technical workers. Furthermore, the density of theatres in East Germany was one of the biggest in the world. In some cases, towns with merely 30,000 inhabitants had a fully working theatre with orchestra and ballet section. Thus, all cultural players tried to subsume their institutions under the label of cultural substance as mentioned in Article 35.

In 1990, also a dramatic loss of audience fuelled the fear of the artistic directors in the theatres, who were all new in this position. The turmoil of 1989 meant a nearly complete exchange of the leading positions in theatres. Fifty-four per cent of the new artistic directors were from East Germany while 46 per cent came from West Germany,¹¹ but the most influential houses in Berlin and in Dresden and Leipzig as well remained in the hand of directors from East Germany all the time. However, a certain experience in the West was surely helpful to gain a leading position, as the example of Wolfgang Engel shows who took over the Schauspiel Leipzig (Leipzig theater) in 1993 after several works as director in Frankfurt am Main. The biggest beneficiaries of the situation were GDR directors who would have obtained leading positions in a theatre anyway but, with this career boost, could follow this path earlier. On the one hand 54 per cent of the new leaders from the East were stage directors or dramaturgs without experiences in leading a theatre. On the other hand, nearly 50 per cent of the artistic directors transferred from West to East had such experiences, sometimes even in theatres of high rank as Günther Beelitz, the former artistic director of the Staatsschauspiel München (München state theater). Nevertheless, especially in 1990 and 1991, there were several, mostly temporary leaders who had come from the West but, for various reasons, could not adapt to the situation. In these cases, the inexperienced political leaders often decided for the West ticket even though the artistic directors chosen lacked experience and did not fulfil the requirements. The shiniest case of those surely was the engagement of Gregori von Leitis in Neustrelitz. The German director working in New York's off-off-Broadway suddenly was made the head of a theatre with orchestra, ballet, etc. His incompetence soon became obvious but the help of the ministry of culture in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania was necessary to get rid of him.¹² Such rare events – even in those troubled times – helped to paint the picture of the Western gold-digger and the ongoing colonization of the East. This picture may be true for other sectors especially when looking at the privatization orgy of the Treuhand, the organization charged with managing and, if possible, privatizing the property of the former GDR.¹³ However, it cannot stand for the cultural sector. There was simply no gold to dig: the main task for the new leaders and managers usually was to prevent the closing of the theatre and to maintain the artistic activities of the

11 A detailed analysis can be found in: T. Ibs, *Umbrüche und Aufbrüche. Transformationen des Theaters in Ostdeutschland zwischen 1989 und 1995*, Berlin 2015, pp. 119–128.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 131–134.

13 O. Jacobs (ed.), *Die Treuhand – ein deutsches Drama*, Halle 2020; M. Böick (ed.), *Die Treuhand. Ideen – Praxis – Erfahrung: 1990–1994*, Bonn 2018.

house with the given scarcity of resources. But this could be accomplished. With some exceptions nearly all theatres in the former GDR survived the transformation process. While the facades of the theatres stayed intact or got restored since the air pollution had damaged them during the 40 years of real existing socialism, the structures behind were modernized at an unforeseen speed and with outcomes that later provided new models even for Western theatre institutions.

Nevertheless, the first political settings of regulation did not point in the direction of innovation at all. One of the first decisions was to expand the Western model of working conditions to East Germany, especially the system of labour unions and the respective pre-existent collective labour agreements. When the Bühnenverein wanted to establish several exclusions from the Western agreements particularly with regard to the duration of working contracts, however, well-organized protest of the theatres prevented too harsh conditions.¹⁴ The main discussion point was the so-called 15-year rule, meaning that a worker or actor in a theatre could claim a tenure position after 15 years. Since the mobility of the workforce in GDR stages was substantially lower than in West German houses, many actors and workers fell in this category. Thus, the artistic directors and managers were afraid that this could block their flexibility and hinder the restructuring of their institutions since this implied the reduction of staff in nearly all fields. Especially the new artistic directors feared that they could not engage new actors and create an ensemble according to their visions. However, when the new settlement was established and the existing Western system of contracts was transferred to the new *Länder*, the modernization of the houses started smoothly. The large goal was to maintain the theatres and to save costs. This remodelled theatre still had to produce creative output matching the local audience's needs, according to the motto that a sold-out house is the best argument for a theatre. Since closing was not really an option, new ways of management and funding had to be found. On the administrative level of public funding the local players (often pressured by the respective *Land*) searched for partners to create a *Zweckverband* (joint body) organizing the funding. These administration unions usually consisted of local authorities and counties, which came together to coordinate a collective funding of the theatres (and other cultural institutions) in their area. Often these collective efforts led to the merging of formerly independent theatres. Between 1992 and 1995, five mergers of theatres were conducted affecting ten theatres in total. And the process went on, as more mergers took place until 2011 and there were discussions of another one until 2017.¹⁵ The reasons to start such a process were always driven by monetary aspects and not grounded on artistic considerations.¹⁶ Michael Schindhelm was manager of the Theatre Gera when the merging process with the Theatre Altenburg started. He briefly described the political mechanisms in a rather poetic way: "Where was the magnetism

14 V. Trauth, *Tarifkampf*, in: *Theater der Zeit* 6 (1991), p. 87.

15 For a detailed account of these mergers, see Ibs, *Umbrüche und Aufbrüche*, pp. 73–78.

16 P. S. Föhl, *Kooperationen und Fusionen von öffentlichen Theatern. Theoretische Grundlagen, empirische Untersuchungen und Gestaltungsempfehlungen*, Wiesbaden 2011.

strong enough to make two houses into one, to make three into two or one? Where would the resistance be the lowest, where was the pressure of suffering the highest?”¹⁷ These mergers were usually organized as a top-down process implemented by political order and pressure. In the case of Altenburg and Gera in Thuringia the theatres’ staff was reduced by 140 to 400 people. They were still large institutions, especially when taking into account that theatres often were the enterprises with most employees in some towns in the crisis in the 1990s. In addition, theatres were not the only ones affected by the merging wave, 19 orchestras were merged between 1989 and 2012.¹⁸

The internal organizational schemes did also change and not only in the merged theatres but everywhere. In both Germanies theatres were mostly organized as part of the public cultural administration until the 1990s and legally were just a department of the cultural affairs office. With the challenges presented by the unification, the scarcity of resources in particular (apart from the temporal subsidies provided by the federal programmes), most local and regional actors tended to a more independent institutional setting for the theatres than before. This independence was embraced by the theatre directors, too. Therefore, the legal form was often altered to what is called an *Eigenbetrieb*, i.e., an owner-operated municipal enterprise. These are independent enterprises no longer working in the administrative framework but comparable to normal enterprises. Although they remain part of the communal assets they are not bound to all regulations of public services since they work as private companies. The autonomy in this construct is a matter of artistic freedom granted by Art. 5 of the German constitution (*Grundgesetz*), which is also reflected in budgetary matters. The theatres usually present a budget plan to the local parliament or the *Zweckverband* and – after discussions and negotiations – the funding is granted for a given time. Once authorized negotiators made their decision the theatre managers have the complete autonomy in their spending. Thus, it was impossible to force cuts in the decided budgets. With the negotiations about a new budget, though, the dance always begins anew. As a consequence, theatres tend to get long lasting agreements. This can be problematic due to the regulations of the public budget that has to be agreed on by local parliaments. In the case of a *Zweckverband* this of course applied to all contributing entities. Another option was to set up companies with limited liability, which are called *Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (GmbH)* in German. This was also possible for non-profit organizations. In the theatre sphere such constructs were not completely new. In 1951, Gustaf Gründgens founded the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus (Düsseldorf theatre) as company with limited liability and, in 1962, the theatre Schaubühne in Berlin was established in this organizational form by Jürgen Schnitthelm. However, the legal form of these theatres and some further houses remained special arrangements for decades, until the dawn of the 1990s.

17 M. Schindhelm, *Zauber des Westens. Eine Erfahrung*, München 2001, p. 106.

18 Deutsche Orchestervereinigung, *Rechts- und Betriebsformänderungen, Auflösungen und Fusionen deutscher Kulturorchester seit der Wiedervereinigung*, 2014, <http://www.miz.org/intern/uploads/statistik95.pdf> (accessed 22 November 2020).

This striving for autonomy and to free theatres from bureaucratic boundaries must also be seen in the light of a neo-liberal modernization, which affected nearly all public areas. The *Eigenbetrieb* concept was originally applied to other types of public services such as waterworks, waste management, or public gardening. Hence, while they were managed in the manner of private companies they had not to gain in profits. In other fields former public offices were privatized in those years as can be seen with the German post service, the German telephone company, or the German railway. This development also led to a market liberalization in those fields by ending the monopoly of the former state-owned companies. This wave of liberal privatizations was a worldwide phenomenon in the 1990s; as seen, it also affected cultural institutions. The ideas and ideals of new public management emphasized the takeover of management methods from the private to the public sector in order to consolidate and boost efficiency and efficacy of public institutions.¹⁹

In the field of culture, the institutions in East Germany were the first massive rollout of such practices. Given the financial situation, this strategy seemed reasonable and additionally the transformation process itself provided a window to provoke even strong changes. Surely, we cannot talk of a shock therapy as Naomi Klein identified it as being established in the reform of Poland's economy,²⁰ but to a lesser account the all-over turmoil of society and economy favoured even more radical solutions than just a simple adaption to pre-existent West German patterns.

3. Developments in the New *Länder*

For the new *Länder* in East Germany a common path cannot be described. Saxony, Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg, and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania each created different approaches to meet the urgent needs of the cultural institutions and the local authorities in order to keep the cultural life running.

Saxony chose the most innovative path with the creation of the *Kulturraumgesetz* (cultural space law), which obliged towns and counties to work together in defined coalitions.²¹ *Kulturraum* can be translated as "space of culture" and, in the law, the Saxon government designated eight country spaces where the counties were supposed to collaborate, while the three urban cultural spaces for Chemnitz, Dresden, and Leipzig remained autonomous within the framework. The Free State of Saxony determined a sum of DEM 150 million per year, starting in 1995, which was assigned to the cultural spaces from the general budget of Saxony and divided between them by a certain key. Furthermore, the Saxon state had its own cultural institutions to be funded separately like the theatre, the opera, and the art collections in Dresden. Every *Kulturraum* should match the given sum

19 For an overview, see K. Schedler/I. Proeller, *New Public Management*, Stuttgart 2011; L. E. Lynn, *Public Management Old and New*, New York 2006.

20 N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, New York 2007, pp. 171–194.

21 For a detailed discussion of the *Kulturraumgesetz*, see Ibs, *Umbrüche und Aufbrüche*, pp. 78–82.

with own resources, which created a security of funding and planning for the institutions at hand. Throughout the years the amount of money given to the *Kulturräume* (plural of *Kulturraum*) was always a main point of discussion but the mechanism works stable and defines the cultural setting in Saxony.

The other new *Länder* did not produce such consistent long-lasting strategies. Thuringia focused on concentration via merging and got involved in the public funding of cultural institutions together with the respective partners on the local level. This phenomenon also holds for Saxony-Anhalt that co-funded the main institutions in its state. Brandenburg created state-funded theatres in cooperation with the local authorities as well. Moreover, they were obliged to tour around designated places in the country besides performing in their main cities. This accounts especially for Frankfurt on the Oder where the Kleist-Theater was closed in 1994 – the only theatre with a female artistic director in East Germany during the transformation process. The programme is fulfilled now by the theatres in Cottbus and Potsdam. Mecklenburg-West Pomerania put in place several mergers but also saw the necessity to support the theatres directly, upholding the idea of more mergers.

A special situation can be found in Berlin. Here Article 35 of the unification treaty struck in a particular way. With the unification the three big Western state-funded theatres Schaubühne, Schillertheater, and Hebbel-Theater, and the opera house Deutsche Oper had to cope with the situation that the four prestigious East Berlin theatres Volksbühne, Deutsches Theater, Berliner Ensemble and Gorki-Theater, as well as the opera houses Komische Oper and Staatsoper were part of the urban theatre mix now. In total 22 theatres were funded by public sources in Berlin in those days. Although the federal government assigned special funding for the new capital, reorganization and even the closing of one of the big houses was the strategy of Ulrich Roloff-Momin, the councillor for culture. Having in mind Article 35 and the huge traditions of all Eastern houses he decided, following the expertise of a strategic theatre paper written by Ivan Nagel,²² to close down the West Berlin Schillertheater in summer 1993 and to maintain all East Berlin theatres.²³ The smaller Theater im Palast (theatre in the palace), a special construct even in the GDR with Vera Oelschlegel as artistic director, under the command of the Staatsrat (council of the state), had been closed earlier. She was the wife of Konrad Naumann, a member of the leading heads of the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Socialist Unity Party of Germany). Therefore, the theatre was politically contaminated and had to close its doors forever in 1990 without big public discussions. But the final shut-down of the Schillertheater provoked an outcry in all German theatres, especially in the West: petitions, rallies, and protest on the spot were organized. The decision was final, but the theatres showed that they could organize public opinion and protests in those matters, hence probably hindering other politicians to even think of plans of closing

22 I. Nagel, Überlegungen zur Situation der Berliner Theater, in: Theater heute 5 (1991), pp. 37–43.

23 The perspective of Roloff-Momin in this matter can be found in: U. Roloff-Momin, Zuletzt, Kultur, Berlin 1997, pp. 93–126.

down theatres due to the overall difficult financial situation in those years. To complete the Berlin panorama: Also the Hebbel-Theater went through a rough re-organization. It merged with the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer and the Theater am Ufer to build up a centre for independent theatre called *HAU*. This was a decisive impulse to develop the international performance scene in Berlin in the 1990s and 2000s.

4. Conclusions

The transformation during the 1990s can be seen as a forced modernization of the theatre structures both in its funding prerequisites and in its organizational hull with the new legal forms applying. Moreover, it created a new layer of public funding by adding a federal level with new institutions as the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes* and the commissioner for culture and media in the rank of a minister of state. The installation of the commission of inquiry for culture in Germany (Enquete-Kommission Kultur in Deutschland) in 2007, implemented by the Bundestag, the legislative chamber of federal Germany, exhibits the new role of the federal level in the field of culture. One of the conclusions of its final report was that the change of legal forms of cultural institutions had been merely motivated by the experiences in East Germany during the transformation.²⁴ In this case the Eastern theatres were a kind of experimental room to test these new forms. Having applied the concepts of new public management to the whole cultural sector in unified Germany the results of those experiments could soon be looked at throughout the whole republic.

The unification therefore did not only transform East Germany and put it under a colonizing order by Western invaders, a picture often found in public discussions.²⁵ The processes in East Germany produced repercussions to the West where alterations to the framework were adopted as demanded by the new neo-liberal ideology, which had its global rise in those days. Wolfgang Engler described the East German people as an avant-garde²⁶ that lived the societal processes of disintegration happening to the West Germans, too, before they realized it. Hence this image is quite true at least for the field of culture. But the transformation processes of the 1990s cannot be reduced to the sphere of the former socialist republics since they can easily be found in the Western states and societies. Or as the playwright and well-informed observer of Germany Heiner Müller

24 Deutscher Bundestag, Schlussbericht der Enquete-Kommission "Kultur in Deutschland", Drucksache 16/7000, Berlin, p. 96.

25 An early example of this discursive line is: W. Dümcke/F. Vilmar (eds.), *Kolonialisierung der DDR. Kritische Analysen und Alternativen des Einigungsprozesses*, Münster 1996. Meanwhile contemporary scholars still argue that Western forces took over in East-Germany but without using the harsh term of colonization as can be seen in: I.-S. Kowalczyk, *Die Übernahme. Wie Ostdeutschland Teil der Bundesrepublik wurde*, Munich 2019. Kowalczyk disagrees strongly with the term colonization, as seen in: I.-S. Kowalczyk, *Die Aufarbeitung der Aufarbeitung – Welche Zukunft hat die DDR-Geschichte?*, in: *Deutschland Archiv*, 24.7.2019, www.bpb.de/294350 (accessed 20 December 2020).

26 W. Engler, *Die Ostdeutschen als Avantgarde*, Berlin 2002.

put it in 1994: “Now the unification takes place as a vanishing of both parts. First it looked like this part of the GDR was only consummated by the West. But that does not seem to work. Both parts are vanishing now, which creates an unnameable vacuum held together by the D-mark.”²⁷

27 H. Müller, Für immer in Hollywood oder: In Deutschland wird nicht mehr geblinzelt, in: H. Müller, Werke, vol. 12, Frankfurt am Main 2008, pp. 459–475, p. 461.

Art from the GDR: Brand Ambassador of Socialism at First, then Suddenly a Wreckage of History... East German Art Exhibitions in the USA between 1989 and 1991¹

Christian Saehrendt

ABSTRACTS

Die bildende Kunst spielt heute in der Außendarstellung von Unternehmen (Werbung), Kommunen (Standortmarketing) und Nationen (Nation Branding) eine wichtige Rolle. Bereits im Kalten Krieg wurde dieses Verfahren erprobt. So versuchte die DDR seit den 1970er Jahren systematisch den Werbeeffect der Kunst zu nutzen und sich als Kulturnation zu präsentieren. Folglich intensivierte sie den Kulturaustausch mit den westlichen Ländern. In den 1980er Jahren wurde es möglich, dass Kunst aus der DDR sogar in repräsentativen Museen in Großbritannien, Frankreich und den USA gezeigt werden konnte. Doch gerade in der erfolgreichsten Phase ihrer Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik brach die DDR zusammen. Ihre Kunst und Künstler, die noch im Herbst/Winter 1989/90 im Ausland tourten, blieben wie Wrackteile der Geschichte zurück: Sie standen nun plötzlich für sich selbst – der Staat, das System, das sie repräsentieren sollten, gab es nicht mehr. Der Beitrag untersucht drei Wanderausstellungen mit ostdeutscher Kunst, die in der Wendezeit 1989–1991 durch die USA tourten und richtet den Blick auf die nunmehr völlig veränderten Arbeitsbedingungen ostdeutscher Künstler und Künstlerinnen.

Today, the visual arts play an important role in the presentation of companies (advertising), municipalities (location marketing), and nations (nation branding). Since its foundation, the GDR tried to improve its international reputation with the help of visual arts. Nevertheless, it was not

1 The English translation was provided by Franziska Reif.

until its recognition by the Western countries that the cultural exchange with the USA, Great Britain, and other Western European countries could develop without obstacles. At the same time, the dogma of Socialist Realism dissolved during the 1970s and a wider stylistic range in art was tolerated in the GDR. In the 1980s, it became possible for art from the GDR to be shown even in representative museums in Great Britain, France, and the USA. However, it was in the most successful period of its foreign cultural policy that the GDR collapsed. Its art and artists were touring abroad still in the fall and winter of 1989/90, and they were left behind like wreckage and shipwreck victims of history: suddenly, they now were on their own; the state and the system they were supposed to represent did no longer exist. The article examines three traveling exhibitions of East German art that toured the United States between 1989 and 1991 and focuses on the then completely changed working conditions of East German artists.

Since its foundation, the GDR tried to improve its international reputation with the help of visual arts. Nevertheless, it was not until its recognition by the Western countries that the cultural exchange with the USA, Great Britain and other Western European countries could develop without obstacles. At the same time, the dogma of Socialist Realism dissolved during the 1970s and a wider stylistic range in art was tolerated in the GDR. In the 1980s, it became possible for art from the GDR to be shown even in representative museums in Great Britain, France and the USA. However, it was in the most successful period of its foreign cultural policy that the GDR collapsed. Its art and artists were touring abroad still in the fall and winter of 1989/90, and they were left behind like wreckage and shipwreck victims of history: suddenly, they now were on their own; the state and the system they were supposed to represent did no longer exist. For instance, in 1989, this was the case with the traveling exhibition “Twelve Artists from the GDR”. While the party dictatorship and its official culture disappeared, the social relevance of the opposition underground art scene vanished, too. In two further exhibitions in 1990, “New Territory” and “Change of Gait”, young American and Canadian curators attempted to introduce this artistic bohemia to the American public before it disappeared. The change of 1989/90, yearned for by many artists in Central Europe, ended the communist dictatorship and also resulted in the worldwide establishment of capitalism. On the one hand, arts and artists were liberated from socialist ideology and from state restrictions; on the other hand, they were mercilessly subjected to the market logic. “The new society”, wrote East German curator Christoph Tannert, “was based on growing competition and pressure to perform, isolation and distance”.² The art theorist Boris Groys went even further and diagnosed the disappearance of culture. From a historico-philosophical viewpoint, money had triumphed over the word in 1989, both in East and West: “Communism was rooted in the word. It was a post-Christian attempt to create a world beyond the commodity. The victory of money also meant the end of culture.”³ On the new market, some Eastern European artists were able to profit from their historical

2 Exhibition catalogue “Point of no return”, Museum of Fine Arts Leipzig 2019, p. 64.

3 Boris Groys in an interview in: *Lettre international* (winter 2015), p. 40.

exotic status for some time, but many could not cope with the new rules of procedure. This experience had already been made by migrants who had come to the West before 1989. The *Art Magazin* reported on some artists in the spring of 1988 who had moved to the West from the GDR, where they plunged into a creative (as well as financial) crisis. This was even accompanied by acts of destruction: when Rainer-Tobias Ebert moved into a new apartment in Hamburg in 1986, he laid his large-format paintings created in the GDR on the floor and trampled on them: "It took me half an hour. My girlfriend was crying, but I felt liberated from a trauma." His colleague Dieter Weidenbach, however, destroyed his latest production in an act of disorientation. Having painted fifteen pictures during the first weeks of his new life in West Berlin, the fifty paintings arrived that had been forwarded to him from the GDR. Confronted with this "heritage", Weidenbach repainted his West production with black paint.⁴

Cornelia Schleime had already left the GDR in 1984 and experienced the fall of the Berlin Wall as a DAAD scholarship holder at the MoMA PS1 in New York. She remembered the East German artists who now were euphoric to enter the Western art market, too:

They didn't realize what a hard time we had after leaving the country: arriving in the West with nothing, often without pictures; my whole early work was gone. These were the losses to be compensated. Furthermore, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the West was completely overwhelmed by this flood of GDR painters, which is one reason why they could hardly gain a foothold. Artists who now moved to the West and thought they would be welcomed with open arms were terribly disillusioned. The West, however, was irritated and found GDR painting too ponderous, with its gloominess, with its world of metaphors full of falling or tumbling figures and Sisyphuses directed into the past. With conceptual art, the West was on a different track.⁵

Schleime pointed out that some East German artists interpreted the rejection by the Western art market in a culturally pessimistic way. They disqualified the West as "only modern and not at all inward, not existential and only market-oriented". For Schleime, this position was very questionable: "It also contains self-deception."⁶

The experiences made by the artists in the West who had left the country were soon shared by those remaining in the GDR. Leading artists close to the state, such as Willi Sitte or Bernhard Heisig, partly had to undergo lean periods but were able to rely on proven networks and sponsors and, in some cases, even came back into official favour after a few years: Heisig was allowed to participate in the artistic furnishings of the Reichstag building in 1994, Sitte got his own museum in Merseburg in 2006, which was inaugurated by the prominent art lover and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.⁷ The rapid political changes of 1989/90 made the social reference system of

4 Art 3 (1988), p. 93f.

5 Interview in *Politik & Kultur* 9 (2020), p. 33.

6 Ibid.

7 Der Spiegel, 1 March 2006.

the East German underground art scene unnecessary; its subversive visual language, its formal and political defiance was left without a counterpart. For a while it could attract the interest of curators and art theorists, but less so of art dealers, since performance, video art and installations dominated in the underground and easily marketable flatware formed the exception. Artists of the middle generation were in the most unfavourable situation, i.e., those who neither had been particularly close to the state or the party nor decidedly opposition, and who were also too old to quickly adapt to the new Western conditions. Many of them will have given up or become hobby artists. It is undoubtedly a desideratum for research in aesthetics and art history to write about this lost East German generation of artists.

1. East German Artists in the USA before the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Only after diplomatic relations between the GDR and the USA had been established a more intensive cultural exchange between the two countries became possible. In the 1980s, the Getty Foundation and the National Gallery opened their scholarship programs also to socialist countries. This made it possible for some GDR art scholars to travel to the USA for working visits.⁸ It was generally desirable for East German artists to show their works in Western countries and to accompany their exhibitions personally. In doing so they could establish contact with Western colleagues, dealers, and collectors and, if they sold a piece, they could receive coveted foreign currency. Moreover, the international reception of their work was more satisfying than prominence just limited to the GDR. It had to be accepted that they unwillingly became representatives of the GDR, as Karla Woisnitza reported: “Actually, it may have been considered a representation of the GDR. Leaving the country or cancelling foreign exhibitions would have been the consequence. Given the few offers to be allowed and to be enabled to exhibit abroad and given the underrepresentation of female artists in general, cancellations would have been self-damaging.”⁹ Nevertheless, those artists quickly attracted the Ministry of State Security’s attention who, on their own initiative, established personal contact with American institutions, diplomats, or private persons. For instance, an art student was under secret service observance in the spring of 1986 who wanted to initiate an exhibition on American photography as part of the exhibition program of the Berlin Academy of Arts and who had got in touch with the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas.¹⁰ In the second half of the 1980s, some East German artists had their first solo appearances in the USA. The gallery owner Eva-Maria Worthman from Chicago, for example, had attempted to familiarize the American public with Bernhard Heisig with two solo exhibitions: “The historical connotations were not understood. Sales, however, were sparse.

8 Author’s conversation with Peter H. Feist, one of the scholarship holders, on 18 December 2007 in Berlin.

9 Karla Woisnitza via email to the author, 16 October 2019.

10 Archive of the BStU (Federal Commission for the Records of the Ministry for State Security of the Former GDR). MfS HA XX file “Fritz”, vol. 7, sheet 144.

Bernhard Heisig seemed to be an enigma to the American Art collection public. However, several hundred people visited his show.”¹¹ Shortly afterwards, the painter Gerd Sonntag from Berlin surprisingly got the opportunity to have a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. The Czech-American curator Charlotta Kotik had already become acquainted with his works during a visit to East Berlin in the fall of 1985. At that time, she was head of the Contemporary Art department at the Brooklyn Museum. Years later, Sonntag could arrange an exhibition with the left-oriented Castillo Cultural Center (CCC) in Greenwich Village, NYC; the Ministry of Culture in East Berlin approved that the paintings were exported to the USA. However, this exhibition had to be cancelled because the CCC was unable to provide Sonntag with adequate space.¹² As the works were already in New York now, Kotik took the opportunity to spontaneously realize her long-term plan in October 1989 to have a Gerd Sonntag exhibition at the Brooklyn Art Museum. The exhibition took place in a room on the fourth floor adjacent to the Rodin Hall,¹³ the *New York Times* and the art magazine *Art in America* reported on it. The well-known critic David Galloway was not so much interested in East German trend artists marketed with that “curious mix of idealism and commercial self-interest” in exhibitions such as “Zeitvergleich”. But with lesser-known artists like Sonntag, the renowned art critic discovered “aggressive styles – a kind of brut expressionism” and was amazed at a “near-obsessive attitude toward art-making”.¹⁴ The well-connected curator put Sonntag in touch with museum directors, collectors and dealers. Among others, he met the artist Nan Goldin and the well-known photographer Ellen Auerbach:

*In the USA I could observe that art is perceived as a phenomenon at best only touched upon by political events. In the eyes of each of those individuals also the artist from East Berlin appeared as sophisticated European.*¹⁵

The photographer Thomas Florschütz, who is widely known today, also made his exhibition debut in the USA before the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1987, he was awarded the 1st prize for Young European Photographers for his body image tableaus in the West. He was refused a travel permit by the GDR. After all, 24 hours before the award ceremony in Frankfurt, he was finally given a passport. Many artists and politicians had campaigned for this. Florschütz returned to the GDR, but only for a few weeks. Even before the fall of the Berlin Wall he could exhibit in Houston and at the MoMA, among other places. At the official level, efforts were also being made still in 1989 to intensify the cultural exchange between the USA and the GDR. Wolfgang Polak was director of the ZfK, the “Centre for Art Exhibitions in the GDR”. The centre organized numerous guest performances of East German artists abroad. At the invitation of the American

11 E.-M. Wortman, Laudation B. Heisig, in: *Gesten in dieser Zeit. Bernhard Heisig zum 80. Geburtstag*, Leipzig 2005, p. 239.

12 *New York Times*, 31 October 1989.

13 Gerd Sonntag via email to the author, 21 September 2019.

14 *Art in America*, Global Issue 7/1989, p. 59f.

15 Gerd Sonntag via email to the author, 21 September 2019.

embassy, he went on a fact-finding trip to the USA still in fall 1989 in order to establish further contact with museums and curators. But his trip was too late. When he returned in December, the GDR already began to dissolve and shortly afterwards the Centre for Art Exhibitions also became history.¹⁶

2. “Twelve Artists from the GDR”

The traveling exhibition “Twelve Artists from the GDR” was shown in the university museums of Harvard, California, and Michigan and in the museum of Albuquerque from September 1989 onwards. It was the first and last representative exhibition of contemporary art from the GDR in the United States. Peter Nisbet, curator of the Busch-Reisinger Museum in Harvard, had prepared the show for years: “The idea for the show originated with the Busch-Reisinger Museum. We found out that two independent art historians (Peter Selz and Dore Ashton) were also exploring the idea of an exhibition, and we joined forces.”¹⁷ Nisbet looked for sponsors and travelled to the GDR to meet artists and to see the tenth Art Exhibition of the GDR in Dresden. Eventually he, Dore Ashton, and Peter Selz had selected seventy works. Funds had been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the European Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the GDR’s founding, Nisbet wrote in a benevolent and diplomatic manner about the modernity and the important international role of the GDR in the exhibition catalogue. He declared: “Our project has evoked some surprise, some skepticism and above all much curiosity among our American colleagues.”¹⁸ The catalogue emphasized that the current diversity in contemporary GDR art was the result of a long struggle against the centralizing directives by the state and the party.¹⁹ For Nisbet, the influence of Expressionism on young East German art was unmistakable, too, an influence that also inspired contemporary painters in the West as Neo-Expressionism. Although the participating artist Sighard Gille had not helped to set up the exhibition, he travelled to the USA in the same year in order, among other things, to see the exhibition there. Gille noted that the East German leadership could indirectly benefit from an appreciation of East German artists: “Recognition in the West had repercussions in the GDR, mostly positive, since this state craved for acceptance and recognition.”²⁰ At the exhibition opening in Harvard on 16 September 1989, the emerging crisis of the GDR was not a topic of discussion yet. However, in the course of the exhibition tour, political events overshadowed the reception of art, as Nisbet set out:

16 Wolfgang Polak, director of the ZfK (Centre for Art Exhibitions) between 1981 and 1989, in a conversation with the author on 13 March 2007.

17 Peter Nisbet via email to the author, 29 January 2007.

18 P. Nisbet (ed.), *Twelve Artists from the German Democratic Republic*. Gerhard Altenbourg, Carlfriedrich Claus, Sighard Gille, Bernhard Heisig, Walter Libuda, Michael Morgner, Theodor Rosenhauer, Willi Sitte, Wolfgang Smy, Heinrich Tessmer, Max Uhlig, Thomas Ziegler, Cambridge, MA, 1989, p. 11.

19 Ibid., p. 12.

20 Sighard Gille via email to the author, 24. September 2019.

"I do think that our exhibition benefited from the attention to the politics but perhaps also the political developments distracted attention from the art."²¹ The exhibition was shown at the University of California, Los Angeles, in December and at the University of Michigan in February 1990. At these places the exhibition was accompanied by an art historical symposium and a colloquium with the East German artist Max Uhlig. Among American visitors the question arose more and more frequently as to whether the exhibition was already a product of the radical political changes in East Germany, as, in fact, it had been conceived well in advance of 1989. At the vernissage at the Albuquerque Museum in April 1990, West German representatives answered the question if they were responsible for the exhibition: "Not yet!"²² The titles of the speeches complementing the exhibition referred to the political situation: German scholar Thomas C. Fox (editor of the *GDR Bulletin*) spoke about "Art and politics in East Germany" on 8 April 1990 and Charles McClellan (history professor at the University of New Mexico) about "Art in an artificial nation" on 6 May 1990. Four months later the "artificial nation" was history. Thus, although the exhibition was able to raise the profile of East German art in the USA, in the sense of a "reception of the exotic", it could no longer fulfil its political purpose, i.e., to flank the GDR's political and economic rapprochement with the USA on a cultural level.

3. "New Territory"

With the rapid political change, the social reference system of an oppositional or sub-cultural East German art scene also disappeared. In two exhibitions in 1990, young American and Canadian curators attempted to introduce this art scene to the American public. The Boston student Karen Kimmel had seen "Twelve Artists from the German Democratic Republic" and intended to organize something similar in Boston. Kimmel was assistant to the director of the Gallery Grossman School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Leila Alfitano. They had the impression that it was their last opportunity now to present unadulterated, specific "art from the GDR" before it disappeared with the state.²³ The exhibition was organized by the exhibition office of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and took place at the Grossman Gallery in fall 1990. Afterwards it was shown at the Art Gallery of the University of Maryland and at the Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University. The artists Angela Hampel, Johannes Heisig, Claus Bach, Micha Brendel, Tobias Ellmann, Jürgen Wenzel, Werner Liebmman, Else Gabriel, Via Lewandowsky, Karla Woisnitza, and Doris Ziegler participated in the exhibition. Both in the exhibition catalogue and in reviews, East German art was interpreted in an expressionist perspective.²⁴ Andrea Lamberti's review, says, for example:

21 Nisbet via email to the author, 29. January 2007.

22 Conversation between the author and Gabriele Wittrin, then ZfK staff member, Berlin 25 January 2007.

23 L. Amalfitano (ed.), catalogue new territory, Boston 1990, p. 4.

24 For example, in Donald Kuspit's catalogue contribution "East German Art: The Dernier Cri of Expressionism", in: *ibid.*, p. 27ff.

*East German Artists explore the psyche not politics [...] the same angst present in the work like the German expressionists [...] the reaction to recent developments in Germany is not directly addressed in the exhibit.*²⁵

Else Gabriel and Ulf Wrede were contacted by Kimmel in early 1990 and travelled to N.Y. in October. Kimmel had been successful in attracting sponsors for the project, with the result that the artists could be accommodated in a five-star hotel or on the family's splendid estate. Gabriel and Wrede recalled that the opening day in Boston was well attended, the audience was polite and open-minded, and there was no sign of the artists' "exotic status". One artist, though, had mistaken the casual small talk of American visitors for acute buying interest and had felt absolutely confident that he faced a collector.²⁶ Doris Ziegler remembered:

*We were passed around the audience at the vernissage and at a private party following and we were constantly questioned about the events of the fall of the Berlin Wall etc. From my point of view, the stylistically very different works were friendly received but not discussed particularly. I could understand that the artefacts were simply door openers to this situation that was exotic for everyone involved; the Americans and their everyday culture were a new experience for me as well.*²⁷

Micha Brendel remembered that

during the tour's first stop in Boston, some artists were very generously invited for three weeks. Discussion rounds were held, among others around the fact that the exhibition does not represent 'the' GDR art but, in contrast, that there is a considerable difference in attitude and formal language between artists who had conformed to the state and those who had rejected it. These were ferocious debates then. It is doubtful whether this was comprehensible for the American public. In the aftermath, I am convinced that we were indeed perceived as exotics of a small, vanishing country from Europe that received its importance from the melting Iron Curtain. All the activities and performances arranged by galleries in N.Y., for example, that I started independently were without resonance. Of course, you don't want to admit this for the time being and you think and hope that it is about your own art. But there are always the questions to what extent art should constitute an expression of its time or to what extent it is instrumentalized.

This was Brendel's first encounter with the USA: "I was considered an oppositional artist and was not even permitted a day trip to West Berlin. I had illegal contacts only within Europe."²⁸

25 The Tech 110 (2 November 1990) 47, p. 9.

26 Conversation between the author, Else Gabriel, and Ulf Wrede, Berlin 9 October 2019.

27 Doris Ziegler, via email to the author, 12 October 2019.

28 Micha Brendel, via email to the author, 23 October 2019.

4. "Change of Gait"

Luise von Flotow, then a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, organized the traveling exhibition "Change of gait" in 1990, which was shown at the following places: University of Michigan, Rackham Center Gallery, Ann Arbor; The Michigan Gallery, Detroit; Art Cite Gallery Windsor, Canada; Workscene Gallery, Toronto; Concourse Gallery, Columbus; Goethe Institute, Chicago, and Goethe House in NYC. It had been conceived as an exhibition decidedly "underground" already in the summer of 1989: "The political changes that occurred over the next year have turned this exhibition into a retrospective of the young art of the 1980s in the GDR. By a curious quirk of fate, the avant-garde of GDR society has become a historical phenomenon before the West even became aware of its existence. Since the opening of the Wall, and the mass of new possibilities available to young artists, the tightly-woven subculture has weakened and diversified. The work that was produced by this subculture from the late 1970s through the 1980s, during a period of increasing civil disobedience and disregard for the SED-state, can now best be viewed as the result of a historical moment, a response to a specific socio-political situation. The show thus constitutes a retrospective of the creative work produced in the GDR during the 1980s by artists, writers, filmmakers, and musicians. It consists of 55 works of art on paper by 13 different artists, 35 documentary photographs, audio-cassettes of rock music and poetry readings, films and videocassettes of performance art and theater, and a display of samizdat books." Von Flotow summarized the reactions:

After three openings in three very different settings, I have found a tremendous interest in this work from the GDR. People have been fascinated by the importance that art was accorded by the socialist state; we have often found it hard to explain why artwork that does not seem particularly offensive by North American standards should have been subject to censorship. Audiences have also been very responsive to the lectures by Tannert, Schefke, and myself which always accompanied the openings, and which are necessary for the contextualization of the work. We have found that despite the extensive coverage of the events in the GDR in 1989–90, North Americans have little understanding of what it meant to be a creative artist or an oppositional figure in the GDR. The show made this understanding more possible.

Christoph Tannert played a substantial role in the show. Moreover, he had organized a large exhibition of 200 East German artists at La Villette in Paris in January 1990 and now he gave talks at the travelling exhibition "Change of Gait". The (former) opposition journalist and environmental activist Siegfried Schefke also had a speech during the exhibition tour in the USA.²⁹ Luise von Flotow remembers:

29 GDR Bulletin 17 (1991) 1, art. 10.

I was in East Berlin in the summer of 1989, as well as several times in 1988 and 1987. I had good friends at the environmental library and in peace and human rights circles, and I also met Christoph Tannert somehow during that time. Tannert and I discussed and planned the exhibition 'Change of Gait' together in the summer of 1989; I was the contact for Canada and the USA and Tannert was the curator. Sometime in early fall (before the fall of the Berlin wall) the artists' works arrived at my student's office at the University of Michigan. Everything smelled like oil paint! I asked the German consulate in Detroit for money to prepare the exhibition and I met a very friendly/helpful consul. He probably was a kind of connoisseur. Anyway, this consulate funded quite a lot: \$10,000. Later, the Goethe Institute took over and continued the project – to Chicago, Boston and New York.³⁰

There was not much media coverage; at least some small articles appeared in the local press. "In Ann Arbor, where it started, there were mainly academics and students", writes von Flotow.

There were exhibitions in galleries in Windsor/Detroit, buses went back and forth, across the border, and stopped at the various exhibition sites. So mainly artists from the surrounding area came or those involved with the galleries. In Toronto, the exhibition was also held at a gallery on Spadina Avenue. The visitors were people from the 'inner city'; either artists who had their studios in the same building or ladies supporting art and its entourage. In Columbus, Ohio, the exhibition at the University of Ohio ran with speeches and lectures in a large hall and was accompanied by photo exhibitions.³¹

There were some reports in the regional press: "The artists were introduced and discussed as representatives of those who could not exhibit in the GDR." People were astonished, von Flotow says, that there had been such harsh measures in the GDR against art that seemed relatively harmless to North Americans:³² "As illegal art it seems very conservative to these western eyes", wrote one reviewer, concluding: "and as the state that declared it illegal no longer exists it seems almost a non-issue." Therefore, the exhibition was rather of historical value, the journalist found, who also reacted confused about the commercial environment in which the former underground art was presented now.³³

Conclusion

It cannot be answered definitely to what extent the three exhibitions between 1989 and 1991 described above could introduce East German art to the USA and could significantly promote the careers of individual artists. Apparently, they could reach only a small

30 Luise von Flotow via email to the author, 29 January 2020.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 The Park Press (Chicago), November/December 1991.

public, in terms of numbers, and a few specialist circles. Certainly, some impulses for art theory research at American universities were possible, contributing to the fact that, temporarily, the cultural history of the GDR became almost a fashionable academic topic at US universities in the years after 2000. For most of the artists involved, the US guest performance remained a unique and exotic adventure. None of them was “discovered” in America and subsequently became a star. In this respect, the three exhibitions remained rather an isolated historical event and did not mark the beginning of a continuous American reception of East German art.

Sixteen years later, however, a further appearance of East German art created a larger stir; it was essentially initiated by the art market. The American collector couple Rubell played an important role in this development. In 2003 they bought a complete exhibition of Leipzig paintings from the Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts and brought it to the USA (“sieben mal malerei” (seven times painting) with Tim Eitel, Matthias Weischer, Tilo Baumgärtel, David Schnell, Christoph Ruckhäberle, Martin Kobe, and Peter Busch). Now the painters of the New Leipzig School created art “made in East Germany” known to a larger American public. In autumn 2007, the Metropolitan Museum in New York showed a solo exhibition of Neo Rauch – an honour given to only a few living artists. His confusing picture puzzles with figures performing Sisyphean tasks against nostalgic backgrounds reminiscent of failed utopias, curator Gary Tinterow wrote enthusiastically, were fascinating and would easily fit into a futuristic Eastern Bloc propaganda film from the 1960s.³⁴ The renowned critic Roberta Smith recognized in Rauch’s pictorial world a metaphor for the stage-like and ambiguous character of Real Socialist life. She wrote in the *New York Times*:

*His paintings resemble disjunctive avant-garde theater stage sets from an earlier time. [...] The action is left to stereotypically heroic, hard-working men and women who build walls and water ditches, open stores, discuss physics [...] or play ice hockey [...] The figures often seem unanchored, as if taken from an illustrated how-to manual [...].*³⁵

Norman Rosenthal, though, internationally active British curator, rather saw Rauch’s pictorial world as a contemporary document representing the transitional period after the Cold War: With his art, Neo Rauch would exemplarily represent this peculiar post-modern period of history.³⁶ Glenn Lowry, director of the MoMA, went on a shopping tour in Germany in January 2008: in addition to works by Beuys, Kippenberger, or Gursky he also acquired paintings by Neo Rauch for the prestigious museum’s collection. At Art Basel 2009, Hollywood star Brad Pitt bought Rauch’s painting “Etappe” for one million dollars, sending the signal that the artist is in vogue.³⁷ While, immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the enigmatic East German painting rich in history met with

34 Quoted in German in: Neo Rauch. Para (catalogue), Cologne 2007, p. 11f.

35 New York Times, 26 April 2002.

36 Quoted in German in: Neo Rauch. Para (catalogue), Cologne 2007, p. 85.

37 Tagesspiegel, 13 June 2009.

indifference in West Germany and was merely made known to an academic public as an exotic footnote in the USA, it was now in demand in the anglophone world: “New German painting is a kind of memory practise”, judged the British art magazine *Artreview*³⁸, for example. In fact, it is striking that, regardless of the wave of the New Leipzig School in the 1990s, precisely those German artists were successful in the USA who either came from the GDR and thus had authentic experiences with dictatorship (Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz, Penck) or who pointedly dealt with German topics steeped in history (Anselm Kiefer, Jonathan Meese). With regard to the internationally popular German metal band one could also speak of the “Rammstein effect”: the totalitarian past provides an exciting background to life and work, it is reflected in the aesthetics of music and art. Rammstein, Anselm Kiefer, and Neo Rauch work the same field. German history, especially the tragic and toxic history, serves art as an endless resource. The three East German exhibitions of the period of the political change in 1989/90 were highly topical and yet too early. They lacked the commercial effectiveness only marketing and sponsoring can allow for and that thus opens the door to a larger audience. It is paradoxical: only when the art market digested history and makes it visible as consumable products it can achieve a larger social resonance.

The Transformation of Urban Cultural Policy in East Germany and Poland: The Cases of Leipzig and Krakow¹

Thomas Höpel

ABSTRACTS

Der Aufsatz analysiert die Rolle von Kultur und Kulturpolitik bei der Transformation in den ehemals staatssozialistischen Staaten DDR und VR Polen in den 1990er Jahren vergleichend am Beispiel der beiden infrastrukturellen, wirtschaftlichen, aber auch kulturellen Zentren Krakau und Leipzig. Vergleichend untersucht werden zuerst die personellen und strukturellen Veränderungen im Kulturbereich in beiden Großstädten, dann die in den 1990er Jahren von den städtischen Körperschaften entworfenen Pläne zur Neuausrichtung der Kulturpolitik. Gefragt wird nach den Modellen, an denen sich die kulturpolitischen Akteure in beiden Städten orientierten, nach den Schwerpunkten, die sie setzten, und wie weit es gelang, private Akteure in die Finanzierung der städtischen Kultur einzubeziehen. Schließlich wird die Rolle des Staates beim Umbau der städtischen Kulturlandschaft behandelt.

Die vergleichende Analyse zeigt, dass die städtischen Akteure in beiden Fällen Kultur als Wirtschaftsfaktor gefördert haben. Sie knüpften dabei an lokale Entwicklungspfade und internationale Modelle an. Zudem sahen sie Kultur stets auch als Integrationsinstrument, mit dem die auseinanderdriftende Gesellschaft in den Metropolen wieder zusammengeführt werden sollte. Insgesamt ist eine neue Qualität bei der trans- und internationalen Zusammenarbeit der Städte im Kulturbereich erkennbar.

This article analyses the transformation of cultural policies in East Germany and Poland after the end of state socialism by studying the developments in the two cities Krakow and Leipzig. As economic, infrastructural, and cultural centres, Krakow as well as Leipzig had a prominent posi-

1 I have to thank Franziska Reif for proofreading the text.

tion within the national urban system and they were representative of the principal evolution in big East German and Polish cities after 1989. The contribution studies first the personal and structural developments in the cultural realm after the radical social and political changes of 1989. Secondly it discusses the plans for the strategic reorientation of urban culture and their impact on the cities' cultural institutions and landscape. The third part of the article focuses on the role of the state in the process of transforming urban cultural institutions.

The comparative analysis shows that the urban actors promoted culture as an economic factor in both cases and that the reorientation of urban cultural policy was linked to local traditions as well as to Western European models. Culture was seen as an instrument of integration that should bring together the society in the two cities. In addition, a new quality of transnational and international cooperation between cities in the field of culture emerged.

The peaceful revolutions in Poland and East Germany in 1989 led to a fundamental reorganisation of the cultural landscape. The city governments became more influential and state control was reduced. The big, economically active cities also had to deal with the structural change that had begun in Western Europe in the 1970s and which Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael described in their essay "After the Boom".² One result was the development of digital financial market capitalism, which is characterized by an individualistic economic ideology based on the spirit of monetarism, an increasing privatization of public services and a strengthened emphasis on individual creativity and autonomy.

The cities responded with new strategies for urban development attributing culture an important role as an integration and marketing tool. Big cities reacted first and worked out a new active cultural policy. Furthermore, they exchanged ideas and supported one another.³

This article analyses the consequences of these developments as exemplified by the cities of Krakow and Leipzig. These cities are representative of the major evolutions in big East German and Polish cities after 1989. As economic, infrastructural, and cultural centres, both Krakow and Leipzig held prominent positions within the national urban system. Thus, Krakow and Leipzig do not only constitute examples of general trends in Polish and East German cities but they are also role models for other cities.

The first part of this paper explores the personal and structural developments in the cultural realm after the radical social and political changes of 1989. In a second section I discuss the plans for the strategic reorientation of urban culture and their impact on the cities' cultural institutions and landscapes. Chapter three will focus on the role of the state in the process of transforming urban cultural institutions.

Additionally, I want to examine in particular the influence Western European models had on the reshaping of urban cultural policy in Poland and East Germany. It will also

2 A. Doering-Manteuffel/L. Raphael, *Nach dem Boom. Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte nach 1970*, 2nd edn, Göttingen 2010.

3 T. Höpel, *Kulturpolitik in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert. Metropolen als Akteure und Orte der Innovation*, Göttingen 2017, pp. 403–410.

be of interest to determine the extent to which the reorientation of urban cultural policy was linked to traditions from the first third of the twentieth century and, additionally, which legacies of the communist period persisted after the collapse of the state socialist regime.

1. Personal and Structural Changes after 1989

The political changes of 1989 had immediate consequences for the leading positions in cultural institutions and the cultural administration in both cities. The leaders of cultural policy were quickly replaced. The directors of all Krakow theatres were recalled and so was the long-time director of the Leipzig City Theatres Karl Kayser.⁴

When a new City Council was elected, the communist head of the Culture Department was also replaced. In October 1991, the City Council elected Georg Girardet as the new Councillor for Culture. Girardet is a doctor of law from West Germany and had previously worked for the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic in the former GDR, for the Cultural Senate of Berlin, and for the Federal Ministry of Science and Education.

In Krakow, an independent Culture Department was created in the new city administration after the City Council had been restored in 1990.⁵ It answered directly to the deputy mayor for culture and arts, who was also responsible for other tasks.

In addition to staff restructuring, East German cities gained more decision-making freedom in the field of urban culture. In May 1990 the GDR parliament passed the Local Government Act that reintroduced municipal self-government. Hence the city of Leipzig was given the freedom to decide on the amount and distribution of cultural subsidies. It also had to draft strategic orientations for its future cultural policy. As a first step, the Iskra and the Lenin memorial were closed after 1989, the museum at the Liebknecht House followed in 1992.⁶

In March 1990, Polish cities, too, were granted the right to municipal self-government. The fusion of urban and voivodeship administrations, implemented in 1975, was dissolved. However, centralisation in Poland was only partially removed. Consequently, most of the cultural institutions, even those created by the city itself, were still controlled by

4 K. Plebańczyk, *Analiza działalności teatrów krakowskich w latach 1989–1999 w kontekście zmian wizerunku*, in: Ł. Gawel/K. Plebańczyk/E. Orzechowski (eds.), *Zarządzanie w kulturze*, vol. 3, Kraków 2002, pp. 47–63; M. Pauli, *Ein Theaterimperium an der Pleiße. Studien über Leipziger Theater zu DDR-Zeiten*, Schkeuditz 2004, p. 32.

5 Uchwała Nr IV/24/90 Rady Miasta Krakowa, 27 July 1990, Archiwum Urząd Miasta Krakowa (hereafter AUMK), IV Sesja Rady Miasta w Krakowie, 27 July 1990.

6 D. Mundus, *Das Stadtgeschichtliche Museum im Alten Rathaus*, in: thema M3. *Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig: Denkmal und Geschichtslabor*, Leipzig 2002, pp. 10–19, at 16. The *Iskra* memorial was established in 1955 in memory of a print shop where Lenin had produced the illegal Russian newspaper *Iskra* at the beginning of the twentieth century.

the state.⁷ The city itself was only given authority over certain institutions of cultural dissemination.

The limitation to the so-called “small culture” does not mean that the city was not allowed to be active in high cultural fields. A law from October 1991 allowed cities to create and administer arts institutions.⁸ This law has been the basis for the creation of several urban cultural institutions in Krakow since 1994. In 1991, only two cultural institutions under state administration were dissolved in Krakow, both of them symbols of the communist cultural policy. These were the Lenin Museum on the one hand and the cultural centre “Kućnica Krakowska” on the other hand.⁹

2. Strategical Reorientation of Urban Cultural Policy

Due to the great challenges faced after 1989, the city of Leipzig introduced a cultural development plan in the 1990s. Already in February 1992, the City Council asked for the creation of a specific cultural policy outline that should guide future developments in the realm of culture.¹⁰ The debate surrounding the objectives of Leipzig’s cultural policy was closely linked to economic considerations. From 1992 to 2000, the number of posts at the Cultural Office was reduced by half, from 130 to 65.¹¹

When designing a cultural development plan, Leipzig emphatically relied on West German experience. In December 1991, the Leipzig Cultural Office set up a “Working Group for Art in Public Spaces in East and West German Cities”. The working group organized work meetings and excursions to exchange theoretical and practical experiences.¹² In addition, the Leipzig Cultural Office built on the experience of the Ludwigshafen cultural administration when drawing up the cultural development plan.¹³

In August 1995, the Councillor for Culture, Girardet, presented an extensive plan for the future cultural development in Leipzig. However, the City Council did not adopt this plan, declaring to be not qualified enough to decide on such a substantial paper. Only in 1999, the City Council accepted a revised version of the 21 cultural policy guidelines, which preceded the cultural development plan.

The cultural policy guidelines of 1999 emphasised subsidiarity to a greater extent than the 1995 plan for cultural development. The ambitious objectives of the older plan were

7 Law on local self-government, 8 March 1990, *Dziennik Ustaw* 1990, No. 16, item 95.

8 Ustawa o organizowaniu i prowadzeniu działalności kulturalnej, 25 October 1991, *Dziennik Ustaw* 1991, No. 114, item 493.

9 Małopolski Instytut Samorządu terytorialnego i administracji, 1994, *Raport o stanie kultury w Krakowie*, Kraków 1994, p. 33.

10 Archiv für Ratsangelegenheiten Leipzig (hereafter ARL), 28. Sitzung der Stadtverordnetenversammlung (meeting of the city council assembly), 19 February 1992, hour for urgent matters, pp. 17–25.

11 The staff development at the Cultural Office is documented in the budgets of the city of Leipzig.

12 ARL, *Kulturentwicklungsplan der Stadt Leipzig*, August 1995, pp. 37f.

13 E. Goudin, *Les inflexions de la politique culturelle allemande après l’unification à l’exemple de la ville de Leipzig (1990–1998)*, thèse de doctorat de l’université Paris III, 2002, pp. 296f.

reduced. Only the field of music got priority in 1999. The city of Leipzig should be promoted as a musical city. The other fields of cultural policy received significantly less attention. The development of independent and community culture ranked behind cultural marketing, the promotion of tourism, and commercial cultural activities.¹⁴

In Krakow no comparable cultural development plan was drawn up in the 1990s. Nevertheless, art and culture continued to play an important role in the long-term planning of the city. They held prominent positions in mayor Krzysztof Bachmiński's first development strategy of the city of Krakow submitted to the City Council in September 1991. Given the general economic crisis in Poland, Krakow should focus on its "original role" as a city of science and arts, as a centre of Polish culture. Culture and arts should be the starting point for the resurgence of the city. Economic aspects of tourism were also included in the development strategy. These objectives characterised the cultural policy of the following years as well and were continued by subsequent strategy papers of the city of Krakow.

The Krakow city administration first intended to rebuild the city's cultural policy based on English models. Vice President Jacek Fitt approached culture primarily from an economic point of view and commissioned the English company "Komedia" to develop an analysis of Krakow's cultural landscape and a program formulating guidelines for the work of the city administration and the city's cultural institutions.¹⁵ This very liberal view of cultural policy did not find a majority in the city council.

In Leipzig, the strategic orientations led to a further strengthening of the large cultural institutions. In 1995, they were converted into municipal enterprises (*Eigenbetriebe*). This step was taken with the intention to reduce bureaucracy and to create more economic flexibility and efficiency. The representative arts institutions of Leipzig had a prominent function in the image policy of the City Council.

In contrast to the development of the representative arts institutions and events, the city curbed support for independent and community culture. The large number of former cultural centres and youth clubs was strongly diminished in the first half of the 1990s.

These drastic cuts in the popular and socio-cultural field were balanced by the development of an independent cultural scene. It had its roots in some of the associations formed after 1990 that organised the work of former cultural centres and clubs on the model of socio-cultural centres in West Germany. From 1991, these new socio-cultural centres were financially supported by the city of Leipzig.¹⁶ In addition, a new socio-cultural centre was created in 1992 with the "Werk II – Kulturfabrik Leipzig" (work II – cultural factory Leipzig), which the city has funded since 1995.¹⁷

14 ARL, Kulturpolitische Leitlinien, Beschluss der 70. Ratsversammlung, 14 July 1999, Drucksache No. II/1939.

15 AUMK, L Sesja Rady Miasta Krakowa, 24 April 1992, p. 22.

16 "Kultur von unten" soll verwirklicht werden", in: *Wir in Leipzig*, 1 October 1991.

17 S. Tornau, Werk II – Eine Kulturfabrik im Leipziger Süden, in: *Soziokultur in Sachsen. Ein gesellschaftliches Experimentierfeld*, ed. by LAG Soziokultur Sachsen e.V. and Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, Dresden 1998, pp. 219–224.

In Krakow, culture has been seen as an important tool for urban renewal since 1990. Extensive advertising measures in the areas of monument protection, culture and art, economy, and tourism were initiated.¹⁸ As a consequence, tourist numbers and income from tourism grew in the first half of the 1990s.¹⁹

As the Polish state initially kept its authority over most important and emblematic cultural institutions in Krakow, the city pursued an active cultural foreign policy. As a Polish envoy to the Council of Europe's Cultural Heritage Commission, Jacek Purchla, the first deputy mayor for Cultural Affairs in Krakow, negotiated financial commitments from the Council of Europe for the restoration of Krakow's cultural monuments. Supported by the Polish Ministry of Culture, Purchla also initiated Krakow's application for a new EC cultural programme for Eastern Europe, the European Cultural Month, which was approved in December 1990.²⁰

A cornerstone of Krakow's foreign cultural policy was the massive expansion of Krakow's town twinning between 1991 and 1993.²¹ Cultural exchange had already been relevant for town twinning in the past. After 1989, culture was strategically used as a means of urban development. On the one hand, cultural marketing in the twin cities should stimulate tourism to Krakow; on the other hand, the city was looking for economically interesting partners who could support cultural development projects.

In 1991, the Krakow city council decided to apply for the EC program "European City of Culture" together with the twin city Nuremberg²² and Krakow was nominated for the millennium 2000 in 1995 along with eight other European cities. After its appointment, Krakow organized a five-year festival beginning in 1996 and ending in December 2000. In 2000, the cultural capital Krakow presented itself under the motto "Thinking – Spirituality – Creativity" (*Myśl – Duchowość – Twórczość*). Around 100 programme items with 574 events were organized.²³ Both cities made use of their international contacts and in the 1990s joined the city network Eurocities, participating in its working group on culture; Leipzig even held a leading position.²⁴

After 1989, all cultural institutions of Krakow had to demonstrate their usefulness for the urban society and for the national and international perception of the city. Institutions failing to meet this requirement were dissolved or merged with institutions that worked more successfully. Cultural centres, clubs, libraries, and museums therefore di-

18 Report by Jacek Fitt about city marketing (*Promocja Miasta*): AUMK, LIV Sesja Rady Miasta Krakowa, 12 June 1992, pp. 27–39.

19 J. Fitt, *Tourismus und metropolitalische Funktionen von Krakau*, in: J. Purchla (ed.), *Metropolitalne funkcje Krakowa/Metropolitalne Funktionen Krakaus*, vol. 2, Kraków 1998, pp. 171–179; K. Trafas, *Die Touristik als ein Element der strategischen Entwicklung der Stadt Krakau*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 181–186, at 182.

20 Report from J. Purchla: AUMK, XIII Sesja Rady Miejskiej w Krakowie, 30 November 1990, pp. 12–14.

21 T. Höpel, *Von der Städtepartnerschaft zum Städtenetzwerk. Die Entwicklung und Ausdifferenzierung interkommunaler Zusammenarbeit in Europa in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: C. Defrance/T. Herrmann/P. Nordblom (eds.), *Städtepartnerschaften in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2020, pp. 289–309.

22 Uchwała Nr XXXIV/232/91 Rady Miasta Krakowa, AUMK, XXXIII Sesja Rady Miasta Krakowa, 14 October 1991.

23 J. Szulborska-Lukaszewicz, *Polityka kulturalna w Krakowie*, Kraków 2009, pp. 126–128.

24 T. Höpel, *Die Herausbildung kommunaler Europapolitik – das Städtenetzwerk Eurocities*, in: *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 1 (2013), pp. 23–42.

versified their offers beyond their traditional tasks in the hope of finding approval among the population and generating additional revenue.²⁵ At the same time the city sought closer collaboration with artists in Krakow. In 1993, a Cultural Assembly was created that was composed of recognised artists and served as an advisory board for the mayor. In Leipzig, and in Krakow as well, the transformation of the city's cultural institutions also led to increasing efforts towards the integration of management methods from private economy and the cooperation with private sponsors in sustaining cultural initiatives since the mid-1990s. But there were only few initiatives in public-private partnerships in the cultural sector in Leipzig in the 1990s. One was the Leipzig Museum for Contemporary Art and another the Speck von Sternburg foundation.

The Leipzig Museum for Contemporary Art was founded as a company with limited liability by the Friends of the Leipzig Gallery for Contemporary Art, the City of Leipzig, and the federal state of Saxony in 1996.²⁶ The second important case of public-private partnership was the Speck von Sternburg foundation. The city of Leipzig succeeded, together with the state and the federal government, in acquiring the collection of Maximilian Speck von Sternburg as permanent loan for the Museum of Fine Arts. Although there was significant financial participation of private patrons in both cases, the city of Leipzig still had to bear the biggest portion of the costs. Therefore, the city remained the most important actor and patron even for these initiatives of public-private partnership. In Krakow, the city created the programme "Patron of Culture of Cracow" (*Mecenas Kultury Krakowa*) in 1996, with the aim of stimulating private cultural sponsorship.²⁷ Individuals and companies who had either given the largest financial contribution to cultural institutions or initiatives in Krakow or developed the most creative and effective cultural sponsorship were honoured by the city.²⁸ The Krakow programme was a model for similar projects in other Polish cities such as Szczecin, Warsaw and Gdansk.²⁹

3. The Role of the State in Urban Culture Funding

The federal government and the federal state of Saxony have substantially funded urban culture to allow a quick transition to local self-government without the loss of important cultural institutions.³⁰ In 1995, the Saxon cultural area law (*Kulturräumgesetz*) took the place of the transitional federal funding in Saxony. This new Saxon model of cultural

25 G. Praweńska-Skrzypek, Placówki kultury w Krakowie: analiza ich efektywności oraz pozabudżetowych źródeł finansowania, in: M. Posern-Zielińska (red.), *Monitorowanie usług publicznych w miastach*, vol. 1, część 2, Poznań 1998, pp. 9–186, here p. 83, 121.

26 ARL, 28. Öffentliche Sitzung des Stadtrates, 21 August 1996, Decision No. 590/96.

27 Uchwała Nr. LXVIII/672/96, Rady Miasta Krakowa, 30 December 1996, AUMK, LXVIII Sesja Rady Miasta Krakowa, 30 December 1996/8 January 1997.

28 Regulamin tytułu „Mecenas Kultury Krakowa”, Attachment to: Uchwała Nr. LXVIII/672/96, *ibid*.

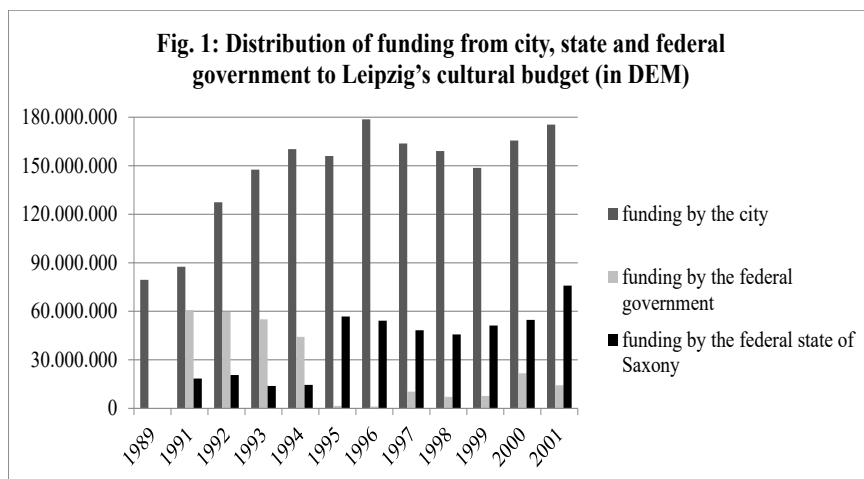
29 Szulborska-Lukaszewicz, *Polityka kulturalna w Krakowie*, pp. 188–190.

30 A. Klein, *Kulturpolitik. Eine Einführung*, Opladen 2002, pp. 106–122; T. Höpfl, *La politique culturelle en Allemagne au XXe siècle*, in: P. Poirrier (ed.), *Pour une histoire des politiques culturelles dans le monde. 1945–2011*, Paris 2011, pp. 17–47.

funding was unique in Germany but based on conceptions and experiences of cultural politicians of the old Federal Republic. The commission drafting the project was composed of West German cultural politicians who favoured ideas hitherto unrealised.³¹

The following chart shows the extent of funding of the cultural institutions of Leipzig in the 1990s by the federal government and the federal state of Saxony.

In Poland, the government retained greater authority over urban culture and arts than in East Germany after 1989. In 1990, most of the cultural institutions were not transferred under the authority of the city but to the voivodeship administration.



Various Polish governments supported the decentralisation and democratisation of the state administration after 1990. This led to the transfer of some arts institutions from the voivodeship to the city level. However, the repeated changes of government led to a delay in decentralization. Only the administrative reform of 1 January 1999 completed the long-retarded process of decentralisation and made the cities largely responsible for culture and education.³²

Conclusion

After 1989, cultural policy soon became important in Leipzig as well as in Krakow. At least since the mid-1990s, both cities have recognised arts and culture as important factors for urban development and international reputation.

31 Ch. Schramm, *Die gerettete Kultur – Sachsens Kulturräume*, in: R. Koch/H. Wagner (eds.), *Die Geschichte der Kommunalpolitik in Sachsen. Von der friedlichen Revolution bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart 2006, pp. 265–300, at 266f.

32 Szulborska-Lukaszewicz, *Polityka kulturalna w Krakowie*, pp. 20–22.

During the transformation of the cities' cultural landscape, the urban cultural policy adopted Western European models. In Leipzig leaders sought to take over West German and international models. The city appointed a Councillor for Culture from the old Federal Republic and initiated an intensive exchange with West German cultural politicians. In Krakow urban leaders pursued similar objectives by an intensification of international relations at the beginning of the 1990s.

In Krakow, the process of transformation was significantly slower than in Leipzig. The transfer of cultural institutions from the state to the city in Poland lasted ten years. The East German cultural landscape was more quickly adapted to the West German model. However, this rapid transformation required heavy state subsidies.

The cultural institutions created during the state-socialist period were treated differently after 1989 in East Germany and in Poland. In Leipzig, most of the clubs and cultural centres were dissolved. Only a few institutions continued to operate as socio-cultural centres but, eventually, by the mid-1990s, the city had passed them on to associations that were often not up to the task. The withdrawal of the city was in part due to the increasingly limited financial possibilities of the city. It resulted in a limitation of alternative or socio-cultural institutions and initiatives and supported commercialised activities. In Krakow, the clubs and cultural centres of the communist era largely continued to exist as municipal institutions. They had important tasks regarding the social integration of the heterogeneous urban structure of Krakow, the result of industrialisation efforts of the communists and the creation of the new city Nowa Huta connected to Krakow already at the beginning of the 1950s. Clubs and cultural centres also formed a key part of the artistic education of children and adolescents in Poland.

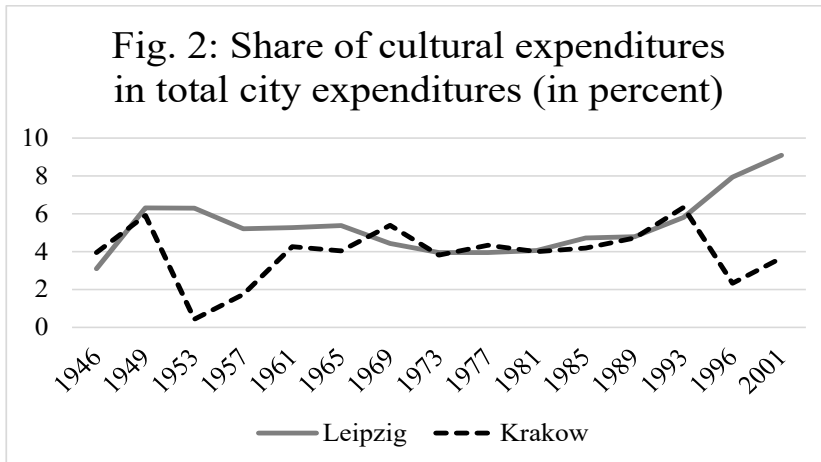
In both cities, cultural institutions partially had to adapt to the market economy. However, the efforts to stimulate private patronage and sponsorship for arts and culture were rewarded with limited success. The city of Leipzig tried to stimulate public-private partnership, but it quickly became apparent that the adoption of western advertising and marketing practices was not as easy as hoped due to the difficult economic situation in the 1990s. Even the success stories led to growing financial commitments by the city. The city of Krakow urged the municipal cultural institutions to develop innovative programmes. One part of the municipal subsidies to arts and culture was dedicated to specific projects and the municipal cultural institutions had to compete with private institutions and initiatives. With the "Patron of Culture in Krakow" programme, the city also sought to stimulate private cultural sponsorship. As this programme achieved significant success, similar programmes were launched in other major Polish cities.

In both cases, the city remained the main protagonist in the cultural area because it used culture and arts as an instrument for city marketing. Therefore, the urban cultural administration, the magistrate, and the City Council continued to influence and direct the city's cultural institutions. A privatisation of culture and arts only took place to a very limited degree. Cultural spending increased significantly in the second half of the 1990s (see fig. 2).

In Krakow, this commitment in the cultural sector stands in striking contrast to the liberal politics in other urban fields of action, in which the city has largely reduced its activities to the creation of framework conditions for private action.

It can also be seen that both cities continued the development paths they had taken in the cultural field since the beginning of the twentieth century.

During the economic crisis after 1989, Krakow relied heavily on the concept of the intellectual capital of Poland, which had been developed in the last third of the nineteenth century and had made Krakow a centre of the Polish educational and cultural landscape. The stimulation of cultural tourism was a key instrument. Here the urban actors, too, took up ideas from the 1920s and 1930s.³³ Leipzig stuck to its focus on the music, book, and trade fair city that had already been formulated in the 1920s.



Projects from the state socialist era based on earlier concepts and developments were continued by the city administration after 1989. Specific institutions of communist culture and education, however, were largely eliminated. The only exception is the wide urban network of cultural centres in Krakow.

The structural break of 1989 did neither lead to a wave of privatization, which is seen as a feature of the new digital financial market capitalism, nor to a surrender of the traditions and ties that make it possible to socially cushion the change brought about.³⁴ Rather, there was growing public engagement in the area of urban cultural policy. Based on earlier models in the two large cities, a committed cultural policy was pursued. The urban cultural policy promoted culture primarily as a pole of innovation and an economic factor. But it also saw culture as an instrument of integration by which the diverging society

33 Höpel, *Kulturpolitik in Europa*, pp. 86, 104f.

34 Doering-Manteuffel/Raphael, *Nach dem Boom*, p. 21.

in the metropolises should be brought together again. However, a similar trend can also be observed in western European cities at the end of the twentieth century.³⁵ In addition, there is a new quality of transnational and international cooperation between cities in the field of culture. This is a clear indication of the increasing interdependence of cultural-political actors and discourses in Europe since the structural change of the 1970s.

35 Höpel, *Kulturpolitik in Europa*, pp. 408–411.

In Search of the Third Canon, or Cultural Policies of the Third Republic of Poland (1989–2020)¹

Przemysław Czapliński

ABSTRACTS

Mit Kultur wurde in Polen nach 1989 auf zwei Arten verfahren. Im letzten Jahrzehnt des 20. Jahrhunderts und den ersten Jahren des 21. Jahrhunderts ging staatliche Kulturpolitik vom Dogma aus, Kultur müsse sich selbst finanzieren. Die zweite Periode wurde durch eine rechtsgerichtete Regierung im Jahr 2005 eingeleitet, die seit 2015 auf diesem Weg weiter voranschreitet. Kulturpolitik zielt in ihrem Konzept auf Versorgung mit nationalen Werten. Beide Konzepte ergeben sich aus der Überzeugung, dass es keinen normativen kulturellen Kanon gibt: Nach neoliberaler Praxis hat jeder das Recht, seinen eigenen Kanon zu schaffen; aber jeder Kanon ist nur insoweit von Bedeutung, als er zum Erfolg im Leben führt. Für die rechtsgerichtete Partei sollte der Kanon hingegen nationale, nicht klassische Werte ausdrücken. Im ersten Konzept ist Kultur zur raschen Vermarktung verurteilt, im zweiten zu Nationalisierung und Nationalismus. In der ersten Periode wurde der Kultur Unabhängigkeit unter der Bedingung gewährt, dass der Künstler für seinen Lebensunterhalt selbst sorgen würde. Außerdem wurde die Rolle der Kultur für die kollektive Identifikation und den inneren Zusammenhalt der Gesellschaft vernachlässigt. In der zweiten Phase unterstützte der Staat die Kultur zwar finanziell, beschränkte die Finanzierung jedoch auf nationalistische Initiativen und zensierte Ausdrucksformen unabhängiger Kunst. Die zu stellende Frage ist nun: Gibt es einen dritten Kanon, der diese Begrenzungen aufbrechen kann?

Culture in Poland after 1989 was managed with two different approaches. In the last decade of the twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty-first century cultural policy was based on the dogma of self-financing culture. The second period was initiated by the right-

1 I would like to thank Franziska Reif for proofreading the text.

wing government in 2005 and is still current politics. Here, cultural policy is based on the dogma of the self-sufficiency of national values. Both concepts result from the belief that the canon is empty but with different implications. In neoliberal practice, everyone has the right to have their own canon, while each canon matters only insofar as it leads to success in life. For a right-wing party, the canon should express national, not classical, values. In the first concept, culture is doomed to rapid commodification, in the second to nationalization. In the first period, culture was granted independence on the condition that artists earn their own living and, moreover, the bond-forming role of culture was neglected. In the second period, the state provides financial support to culture, but limits funding to nationalist initiatives, hence censoring expressions of independent art. The question to be asked: is there a third canon?

The cultural life of Central European countries after 1989 essentially consisted in an exchange of canons. Sociologically understood, the canon is not only a collection of the most outstanding works (literary, musical, cinematic, etc.), but also a basis for valuing all other works, a tool for selecting culture. To exchange the canon means to change its content and, moreover, to ask where it came from and what it is used for.

Such an exchange process was understandable and necessary. Throughout the post-war period, the canons in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other communist countries were derived from state policy. School reading lists for children and young people, film sets in cinemas, exhibitions in museums, and book series were all arranged in such a way as not to violate the system's foundations. The fall of communism necessitated the canon's redefinition.

1. Decentralization of Culture

The initial statement for the process of revising the canon in Poland was made by Izabela Cywińska, Minister of Culture and Art in the first post-communist government (1989–1991). She stated that the era of the political management of culture had come to an end. The political background of this declaration was understandable: Cywińska, an excellent director and long-time theatre director (Bogusławski Theatre in Kalisz 1970–1973, Nowy Theatre in Poznań 1973–1981), knew the cases of direct pressure exerted by communist party members well from her own professional biography. The 1980s in particular, following the imposition of martial law (13 December 1981), were a period of cultural policy conducted through censorship, orders, and repression. Cywińska felt this directly: she was placed in an internment camp for her performance “Accused: June Fifty-Six” (1981).

The above context explains why after 1989 the best cultural policy was considered no cultural policy. The new principle was that politics should stay away from culture. It was grounded in the belief that cultural policy could only consist in forcing artists to communicate specific content. In a government document published in 1993, “Cultural Policy of the State. Assumptions”, one could read: “Cultural policy in our country will

never again [...] consist of exercising centralized management and ideological control over cultural life and the activities of cultural institutions.”² The identification of cultural policy with centralization made decentralization the key term of the new period. In relation to culture, it referred to legal and organizational actions that delegated power over cultural institutions down the hierarchy – so that the decision-making level is as close as possible to a particular cultural institution. The ideal was to place authority over each institution within the institution itself – hence, for example, the management of a rural public library could make decisions on its own affairs without asking the governor’s permission.

This ideal, as it soon turned out, was not only impossible. It was destructive to culture.

2. Man Creates Culture

To explain this threat, it is necessary to briefly characterize the culture of the time of the communist state. It is obvious that at that time culture was inadequately supported financially and controlled excessively. Library book collections, theatre and cinema repertoires were underfunded and censored. And yet the state, though poor, took responsibility for all these institutions. It undertook specific tasks, e.g., to establish at least one library in every urban district, in every town with a population of up to 10,000, and in certain villages to serve as a library centre for neighbouring villages. A similar rule applied to cinemas: one cinema per district in large cities, one in a small town, and one for several villages. There was the principle of the relatively even distribution of poverty. The state subsidized amateur sports centres, village and community cultural centres, neighbourhood libraries, magazine reading rooms, and cinemas. To be fair, all of this worked thanks to the commitment of the people rather than a wise state cultural policy. The rudimentary and poor infrastructure needed funding and modernization. But it existed. This anachronistic and expensive infrastructure came to a head for the new state after 1989. The decentralization programme introduced then meant that there would be no orders anymore. What did this imply for, say, the management of a housing estate community centre? In such a centre there is a small library; next to it there are several rooms where classes are held for some groups every day: for modelers, for young photographers, for choir members, for seniors. For such an institution, “ideological management” is one of the smallest problems. The biggest problem is day-to-day functioning. And this was called into question: decentralization came with less supervision by the state, but had the consequence of reduced funding.

In practice – to use libraries as an example – this meant progressive liquidation: in the years 1991–1996, 928 libraries were closed (which constituted almost 10 per cent of all libraries in Poland). An even greater reduction took place among the so-called “library points”, i.e., small branches that were modestly equipped made books available to resi-

2 Polityka kulturalna państwa. Założenia [Cultural policy of the state. Assumptions], Warszawa, 10. August 1993, p. 3.

dents in areas far from regular libraries. In the years 1991–1996, 78 per cent of such outlets were closed down. It was not until the late 1990s that the closure process was slowed down: in 1998, for the first time more libraries were opened (68) than were closed (63).³ A similar reduction affected all cultural centres: theatres, museums, art galleries, and, above all, municipal and communal centres.⁴

Of course, after 1989, Poland had problems in all areas of life: debts to foreign countries exceeded USD 48 billions, the equivalent of two thirds of the national income,⁵ and unemployment reached 3.5 million people in 1994. Everything in the public sphere was underfunded – education, health care, transportation and communications, industry. From this point of view, the declining financial outlays on culture may seem like a less important matter. However, this less important issue of cultural underfunding allows us to understand the cultural policy in Poland during the transformation period. The reduction of finances did not result from poverty but from deep convictions.

Ministers and their advisors – members of society's cultural elite, former opposition activists – believed that man creates culture, not that culture creates man.⁶ A free man finds works of art suitable for her/him and discovers her/his own aesthetic preferences. S/he gets to know her/himself and shapes her/his personality through contact with culture. The cultural education of a free man consists in the fact that s/he rejects works of art that are irrelevant to her/him and retains those important and valuable. S/he does the same with regard to politics: s/he becomes acquainted with programmes and candidates, and, by discussing them, s/he defines her/his own political views. By fighting against enslavement, s/he defines the freedom s/he cares about. By choosing a particular type of culture, s/he declares a kind of allegiance – to theatre, opera, historical essays, or philosophy, for example. So, if someone reads tabloid literature, it is not because of low cultural competence but because of preference. According to this thinking, cultural competence depends on individual choices, not on the social environment one grew up in or the schools one graduated from. If no one chooses embroidery classes at the village community centre or if no one goes to the community library, it can be concluded that no one needs it. Such beliefs made it possible to treat the cultural choices made by the citizens as a factor shaping culture. And therefore, the concept of preferences empowered the state to dispense with cultural policy.

3 Data provided by: J. Kołodziejska, *Szerokie okno biblioteki* [Wide library window], Warszawa 2006; *Zainteresowanie książką w społeczeństwie polskim w 1996 roku* [Interest in the book in Polish society in 1996], Warszawa 1998; *Działalność bibliotek publicznych. Wytyczne IFLA/UNESCO* [Activities of public libraries. IFLA/UNESCO guidelines], Warszawa 2002; *Biblioteki publiczne w liczbach 2003* [Public libraries in numbers 2003], Warszawa 2004.

4 For decentralization with respect to theatres, see P. Płoski, *Pelzająca reforma* [Creeping reform], in: D. Wasyl-Jarząbek/M. Kościelniak/G. Niziolek (eds.), *20-lecie. Teatr polski po 1989* [Twenty years. Polish theater after 1989], Kraków 2010, pp. 397–417.

5 *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1990* [Statistical Yearbook 1990], Warszawa 1990, p. 232.

6 See J. Szacki, *Liberalizm po komunizmie* [Liberalism after communism], Kraków 1994, esp. chapter IV: "Protoliberalizm: autonomia jednostki i społeczeństwo obywatelskie" [Protoliberalism: individual autonomy and civil society], pp. 90–146.

3. “Breaking the State Monopoly in the Field of Education”

At the beginning of the 1990s, culture was left to its own devices, because it was believed that the free decisions of citizens determined which forms of activity could remain and which – due to the lack of persons interested – must simply disappear.

The policy regarding school reading lists corresponded to this. The first governments after 1989 recognized that the reading list was part of the old political regime: the list forced children and young people to read books not chosen by them, their parents, or teachers. Education ministers did not decide to completely abandon the school reading canon. Instead, they reduced the number of compulsory readings and expanded the list of optional readings from which all students in a given class, together with the teacher, chose several books. Moreover, in the 1990s, based on ministerial decisions, secondary school teachers were authorized to conduct the so-called author’s programmes.⁷ They gave the teacher the right to propose an individual outline to the headmaster, including – in addition to the obligatory books – a wide selection of works of European culture.⁸ Both educational innovations led to a loosening of the canon. Both also initiated activities that had been difficult to imagine before, such as allowing students to co-determine the reading list and individualizing their teaching.

This loosening of the canon interacted with the new right authorizing the establishment of private primary and secondary schools. The key decision was made in 1991. The Act of 7 September 1991 on the Educational System⁹ stipulated in Article 5.1 that a school could be either public or non-public. The term public school denoted an institution financed by the state, while non-public school referred to an institution financed from other sources (primarily tuition fees)¹⁰. The commentaries to the Act used the expression “breaking the state monopoly in the field of education”.¹¹ In 2006, private schools accounted for 10 per cent of the total number of school establishments in Poland,¹² in

7 Legal basis: Act of 7 September 1991 on the Educational System (Journal of Laws 256 (2004), item 2572, as amended), Article 22a.

8 The prevalence of authoring programmes is evidenced by the fact that already in the second half of the 1990s the first manuals for creating such programmes appeared – see Ś. Bogusław, *Edukacja autorska* [Author’s education], Kraków 1996; M. Szczepańska, *Program autorski – warto spróbować* [Author’s programme – it’s worth trying], Słupsk 1999; M. Szczepańska, *Program autorski. Jak go napisać* [Author’s programme. How to write it], Słupsk 1999.

9 Legal basis: Act of 7 September 1991 on the Educational System (Journal of Laws 1991 No. 95, item. 425). See: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19910950425> (accessed 13 January 2021).

10 Public schools are open and free on an obligatory basis, while non-public schools have the right to select applicants and are paid for.

11 I. Grzeszak, *Szkolnictwo publiczne i niepubliczne w Polsce*, <https://www.profesor.pl/publikacja,8369,Artykuly,Szkolnictwo-publiczne-i-niepubliczne-w-Polsce> (accessed 12 January 2021): “The model of education so diversified protects school education from state monopoly and creates conditions for further democratization and socialization of education. It encourages competition and efforts to improve the quality of education, upbringing and care.”

12 Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2006/2007. Informacje i opracowania statystyczne, Warszawa 2007.

2018 the proportion increased to 20 per cent.¹³ At the beginning of the third decade of the twenty-first century, every fifth school in Poland is private.

This can be considered a logical part of the transformation process. In this process, as already mentioned, government decisions on education and the decentralization of culture stemmed from the deep conviction that a free person chooses the kind of culture she or he needs. Freedom was understood negatively here – as freedom from compulsions, orders, pressures. Therefore, the cultural policy of the state consisted in restoring freedom, i.e., removing regulations, loosening restrictions, eliminating orders. This worldview entails the belief that less regulation would result in more freedom, and more freedom would have the outcome of a richer life.

This view was held not only by members of the government. The vast majority thought so. Society, with its fresh memories of poverty and the regime, was also convicted that the end of the regime would mean the beginning of prosperity. Economic transformation was accepted because it was believed that once ideological restrictions were lifted, everyone would be able to make a good life for themselves.

Thus politics, economics, and culture were considered identical. It was believed that in each of these spheres each person, free from compulsion, chooses what suits her or his preferences. The victory of a party in an election, the market success of a commodity, the popularity of a work of art are all the result of choices made by society. Such thinking led to a redefinition of the canon. It was considered not as a permanent collection of the best works, but as an empty collection that people fill with objects meeting their needs.

4. Vote for Your Canon!

Extensive processes of deregulation and decentralization took place in every sphere of life. The condition for their success was the activation of society. In the cultural sphere, the 1990s proved to be unprecedented in this regard. Never before and never since had society been so intensively encouraged to participate in selecting canons. Not one canon, but many.

The two daily newspapers with the highest circulation (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*), the most important opinion-forming weeklies (*Polityka*, *Wprost*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Newsweek*), cultural monthlies and quarterlies invited their readers to evaluate Polish literature (especially of the post-war period¹⁴) and to vote for various sets of the most

13 See Raport o szkolnictwie niepublicznym w Polsce 2019. Our Kids Media 2019, <https://ourkids.net/pl/pdf/2019-raport.pdf> (accessed 15. January 2021). The report informs (p. 8) that the number of all non-public educational institutions increased from 2014 to 2018 by 17.15 per cent (from 8,502 to 9,960). During the same period, the number of students attending them increased by 29.73 per cent (from 393,211 to 510,111), while the number of state schools increased by 0.39 per cent and the number of students decreased by 0.51 per cent. In 2014, non-public schools accounted for 18 per cent among all schools; in 2018, this percentage increased to 20 per cent.

14 See the survey in Włodzimierz Bolecki, *Pisarze niedocenieni – pisarze przecenieni*, in: *Kultura* 7/8 (1992), pp. 153–154. The questionnaire was sent to 43 prominent literary historians and critics in Poland (23 responses were

outstanding works. The elections were announced there,¹⁵ i.e., for the canon of young readers, the most outstanding Polish writers of the twentieth century¹⁶, the most outstanding world writers of the twentieth century, works of all time, the canon for children and young people,¹⁷ the canon of science-fiction literature, the canon of women's literature, the canon of all canons.¹⁸

The movement died out in the early 2000s. The government did not inspire the surveys, although the state media often publicized and supported them, increasing the elections' reach. The actions were not coordinated by anyone, and the fact that between 1990 and 1999 a wave of canon-picking swept through the Polish press was due to the economic situation and competition. The boom was born out of history: a strong caesura encouraged people to look through past resources and to check cultural capital, even if it comprised maximum reduction, gave the impression of richness. The media sensed a favourable moment of revising the past and began to compete among themselves for diverse canons.

The results of the canon action lasting over more than a decade, however, were far beyond conjuncture. First, there has been a denaturalization of the canon. The canon, of course, is not a natural creation, but until we start thinking about it, it exists like naturally inevitable, unchanging, and independent of voting. However, the decade of the 1990s made us realize that the canon is not only subject to change, but also that it is created by collective decisions. Additionally, allowing diverse social preferences to have a say led to a proliferation of canons. And the proliferation of canons has made people aware that the canon is secondary to the identity of a given social group: if there can be a feminist canon

received). The respondents were asked: "Which works of contemporary Polish literature or which writers do you think are underestimated – and why, and which writers are overestimated – and for what reason?". Most often mentioned as overrated were: A. Szczypiorski, T. Konwicki, K. Brandys, A. Zagajewski, J. Mackiewicz, P. Huelle. Most frequently mentioned as underrated were: L. Buczkowski, Z. Haupt, A. Bobkowski. For polemics see S. Barańczak, *Tylko pości*, in: *Zeszyty Literackie* 41 (1992), pp. 154-183.

- 15 See [editorial article], *Kanon lektur za ćwierć miliona*, in: *Polityka* 38, 22 September 1990, p. 32. The results of the survey "What do (young) Poles read today?" (average age of respondents: 20–35) were: 1) W. Wharton, *The Birdman*; 2) K. Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5*; 3) J. Heller, *Catch 22*; 4) K. Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; 5) M. Bulgakov, *The Master and Margaret*; 6) U. Eco, *The Name of the Rose*; 7) G. G. Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; 8) R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium*; 9) A. Solzhenitsyn, *Cancer Ward*; 10) E. M. Remarque, *Night in Lisbon*; 11) G. Grass, *The Tin Drum*; 12) A. Szczypiorski, *Początek*; 13) Cz. Miłosz, *Zniewolony umysł* (*The Captive Mind*); 14) T. Konwicki, *Kompleks polski* (*Polish Complex*); 15) G. Herling-Grudziński, *Inny świat* (*Another World*).
- 16 See the survey addressing historians and literary critics under the heading "Kanon literatury polskiej XX wieku" (*Polityka* 11, 13 March 1993, and *Polityka* 14, 4 April 1993). The most frequently mentioned works are: S. Brzozowski, *Legend of Young Poland*, W. Gombrowicz, *Trans-Atlantic and Diary*, M. Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki*, B. Leśmian, Łąka, S. Wyspiański, *Wesele*, *Wyzwolenie*, *Akropolis*.
- 17 On 18 February 2003, *Gazeta Wyborcza* announced the list of 50 titles selected as The Canon of Books for Children and Young People. Half of the titles was chosen by writers, critics, translators, and publishers (including five proposals for translation suggested by experts on the children's book market). The other half was chosen by the participants of the poll (here the winner was J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series). For an alphabetical list see <https://wyborcza.pl/1,75410,1330796.html> (accessed 10.02.2021). Until mid-2004, 17 items from the list were published.
- 18 In 1999, the editors of the *Polityka* weekly announced a triple poll: a) for the most outstanding Polish writers of the twentieth century, b) for the most outstanding foreign-language writers of the twentieth century, c) for works of all time.

and a nationalist canon, a homosexual canon¹⁹ and a Catholic canon, each collective can define its identity through its own canon. Such a group, by announcing its canon, sends a complex message to the world: “We exist, we are rooted in tradition, we have our masterpieces.” Furthermore, this act has the implication of minimal and maximal social intentions. The minimal intention is “We will define ourselves”, while the maximalist intention is “We want others to conform to our canon”. In this context, the selection of canons in the 1990s should be seen as a test run for cultural domination. The middle class with the world’s classical canon requiring high cultural competence, the “nationalists” with the Polish canon, and minority groups joined the fight. This indicated cultural colonization or cultural conflict.

By the 1990s, the middle-class canon had gained dominance. However, the freedom of elections provided the opportunity (or the illusion) of cultural balance. This is why the polls of the 1990s were an ideal substitute for cultural policy. Successive ministers felt that they could not and should not have a cultural policy. They could not because the state of public finances did not allow them to. They should not because, following liberal beliefs, cultural policy is about forcing people to participate in culture in a way the authorities consider appropriate. Meanwhile, according to politicians, culture exists thanks to the choices made by individuals. The success a particular cultural institution (theatre, museum, philharmonic) enjoys is a result of the preferences manifested by many citizens. Thus, the canonical campaign of the 1990s fulfilled the hidden dreams of governments: the people themselves chose what they considered valuable. They founded schools, launched original programmes in schools, revised the existing canons, and created new ones. The media told the public: tell what you want, and the market will provide it. Thus, the elections confirmed the rightness of the idea of no cultural policy. However, it was only apparent.

Above all, the lack of a cultural policy created the mistaken impression that culture had nothing to do with politics. Since the government does not impose anything, and people themselves choose literary/musical/film works, culture becomes a sphere of free choice. The understanding was that the emerging canons revealed a desire for domination. Furthermore, the lack of cultural policy led to a crisis of shared cultural traditions. Multiple canons arose in place of a common one, dividing society into separate groups. Plural systems of aesthetic preferences should mean that a pluralistic and tolerant society was born. However, the multiple canons of the 1990s were not so much an expression of a new social consensus but merely a social pact of non-aggression. This pact collapsed when it became clear that canons were cultural representations of collective subjects and that the middle-class canon and the nationalist canon came into conflict. The third problem was related to this: the multiplicity of canons resulted into the individualization and rationalization of contacts with culture. This assumption collapsed when it became clear that engagement with culture, combining individual preferences with collective identity,

19 See *Dyskretne namiętności: antologia polskiej prozy homoerotycznej* [Discreet Passions: An Anthology of Polish Homoerotic Prose] [J. Strykowski and others]. Selected by W. Jöhling, Poznań 1992.

is always driven by emotions. These three issues – power, conflicting collective identities, and emotions – defined cultural politics in the decades that followed.

5. A Good Change for the Worse

In 2005, a right-wing party (PiS) won the parliamentary elections and formed a coalition government with conservative and nationalist parties. The new government immediately began to implement cultural policies.

The first sign of the direction of change came with the modifications to the secondary school reading lists made in 2005 by Education Minister Roman Giertych. The corrections concerned only a few titles but were significant: the minister removed Gombrowicz, Kafka, and Dostoyevsky and introduced patriotic and religious books.²⁰ In an interview with a right-wing newspaper, he explained: “We promote [...] books that help shape characters. Such values as dutifulness, honesty, truthfulness, reliability, diligence, patriotism, prudence, etc.”²¹

At the same time the new government replaced the authorities in the Warsaw Rising Museum (WRM) and made it a tool for shaping patriotic identity. In the multi-storey building unprecedented conditions were created – multimedia means, photographs, and films were shown in the space stylizing 1944 Warsaw. Going down to the underground or walking through the corridors made the viewers feel as if they were hiding behind a break in the wall or a fragment of an insurgent barricade. Particular parts of the exhibition forced the visitors to behave actively – especially children were invited to transform the viewed objects into drawings or paintings. The WRM designers made living contact with the space to get in touch with the past. The whole composition allowed the audience not so much to understand the uprising as to experience it – to experience the emotions of running through the streets of insurgent Warsaw, shooting at Germans, hiding in the gate. The museum has gained enormous popularity: in the period between 2004 and 2014 it was visited by 4.5 million people.²²

The activity of the museum was not limited to organizing exhibitions only. In 2005 a competition for a comic book dedicated to the uprising was announced. In this way the idea of feedback communication was combined with the modernization of means of communication. The idea “caught on”: every year dozens of works were submitted, most of them created by young people. The winning works were published, which provided young artists with publicity and widened the circle of interested people. There was a significant change in the history of the contest: in 2007, the winning entry was *Ostatni koncert/The Last Concert* (script: Monika Powalisz, drawings: Tymek Jezierski); it was

20 There were three books written by Jan Dobraczyński, one work written by Pope John Paul II (Memory and Identity) and the Pope biography Wujek Karol. The Papal Priestly Years by Paweł Zuchniewicz.

21 Nasz Dziennik, 2 July 2007.

22 See O Nas, in: Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego (The Warsaw Rising Museum), <https://www.1944.pl/artykul/onas,4512.html> (accessed 14 February 2021).

about the life of civilians during the uprising and was pacifist in nature. Dissatisfied with this approach, the museum's directorate introduced a restriction to the competition regulations in 2008, requiring authors to base their work on archival photographs published on the WRM website. And since the pictures are not about everyday life but about the battle (destruction, victims), it was obvious that the museum's management was trying to control the freedom of association and social memory, directing participants towards heroism and martyrdom.

Thus, cultural policy re-appeared in 2005 – and immediately in a harsh version. Its shortest explanation can be found in the statement of one of the intellectuals who created legitimacy for the new program during the debate “Memory as an object of power”, which took place in 2007. Dariusz Gawin stated in his speech then: “A democratic and modern language of national pride was not proposed in the 1990s. A lot of bad things happened because of this.”²³ This statement signals three key issues for cultural policy in the right-nationalist version. First, the essence of cultural policy is the shaping of the collective, which means that policy must focus on the masses rather than on individuals. Second, the collective is defined nationally, which gives cultural policy the character of a mass nationalist enterprise. Third, while cultural politics is supposed to be democratic, democracy is not about increasing public participation in governance, but about increasing public participation in pride.

This programme indicated the essential and necessary moves of the government. First of all, the victorious party proceeded to staff all cultural institutions relevant to the new policy with its own people. No subsidies were increased for libraries or theatres, museums, or cultural centres. Instead, those institutions were selected that could serve the programme – mass, metropolitan ones. New directors were also appointed at scientific and cultural institutions (e.g. the Institute of National Memory, the National Cultural Centre) to assist in designing activities or assessing their ideological correctness.

By bringing “their people” into such institutions, the cultural policy programme was partially maintained after 2007, when the nationalist right wing lost power to the liberals. Thus, in 2009, the National Cultural Centre announced a competition for alternative histories; the winning books (as well as some older ones) were placed in the “Time Turners” series. The series was inaugurated by Maciej Parowski's novel *Burza* (Storm). Fourteen volumes were published over the next six years.²⁴ In the series – commissioned, paid for and selected by a state institution – almost all the texts (with the exception of Twardoch's and Inglot's novels) turned out to be biased works. The authors portrayed a heroically suffering or victorious homeland, fulfilling the compensatory task assigned to them by the institution.

23 Dyskusja, in: P. Kosiewski (ed.), *Pamięć jako przedmiot władzy [Memory as an Object of Power]*, Warszawa 2008, p. 37.

24 The full list: S. Twardoch, *Wieczny Grunwald*; Ł. Orbitowski, *Ogień*; M. Wolski, *Wallenrod* and *Jedna przegrana bitwa*; Z. Wojnarowski, *Miraz*; J. Inglot, *Quietus* (2nd edn); A. Przechrztła, *Gambit Wielopolskiego*; K. T. Lewandowski, *Orzeł bielszy niż gołębia* and *Utopie*; A. Pietrasiewicz and W. Bogaczyk, *Powroty*; W. Szyda, *Fausteria*. *Powieść antyhistoryczna* and *Sicco*; see also the anthology *Śniąc o potęgę*, ed. by A. Haska and J. Stachowicz.

Liberals, having regained power in 2007, tried to dissipate the energy of nationalist pride and channel it towards other goals – especially sports.²⁵ Their basic idea was to turn “pride” into “satisfaction” and “nationalism” into “Europeanness”. However, they did not change the fundamental idea that the recipient of culture is the individual, not the mass. In this respect, their “programme” was a repetition of the old views on mass culture. They believed that it was used to make money, that it was manufactured rather than created, and that it was dangerously emotional. They increased financial outlays on cultural institutions, launched programmes to support science, and set aside money to support individual artistic projects. But they did not practice cultural policy.

When the nationalist party returned to power in 2015, the members of the new government did not have to change anything. They had a programme and, moreover, they had an idea of how to implement that programme. So, the policy of satisfying national pride was still in place. The government only accelerated the replacement of personnel, expanding the scope of operations. Thus, while in the 2005–2007 period the government focused on the largest institutions, everything has been taken since 2015 – from the community level to the ministerial one: municipal theatres, small and large museums, municipal cultural centres, metropolitan cultural centres, councils granting money for scientific projects.²⁶ Simultaneously the educational system was reformed: “The fundamentals of school curricula were changed, emphasizing the traditional canon and patriotic education. Middle schools were also abolished, which of course promoted integration and centralization of the system [...]”²⁷ In connection with the school reform, even the principals of elementary schools were replaced.²⁸ Thus, almost all means to conduct cultural policy were appropriated. The government can influence cultural institutions in terms of content, funding, and personnel. It can also “encourage” citizens to “take matters into their own hands”, that is, to picket theatres, block theatre performances or museum exhibitions, and demand the withdrawal of state subsidies for a particular institution.

The scale of the action revealed previously hidden implications. First of all, it became apparent that the category of the nation, if it was to have a unifying function, had to be defined in opposition to “anti-nation”. On a similar note, satisfying collective pride

25 In 2008, a government programme was established to build playing fields for youths. In the period 2008–2012, 2,600 pitches were built at a total cost of PLN 1 billion.

26 See M. Kubecka, *Prawa i sprawiedliwa? Polityka kulturalna PiS*, in: *Res Publica Nowa*, 20 October 2015, <https://pubblica.pl/teksty/prawa-i-sprawiedliwa-polityka-kulturalna-pis-53554.html> (accessed 14 February 2021). See also K. Kasia, *Polityka kulturalna PiS-u: wymiana kadr, słabnące instytucje*, in: *Kultura Liberalna* 598 (2020), <https://kulturaliberalna.pl/2020/06/16/polityka-kulturalna-pis-u-wymiana-kadr-slabnace-instytucje/> (accessed 14 February 2021).

27 I. Kurz, *Powrót centrali, państwowcy wyklęci i kasa. Raport z “dobrej zmiany” w kulturze* [The return of the headquarters, the cursed state members and the cash register. Report on the “good change” in culture], Warszawa 2019, p. 14. The author writes that the change in the education system “has led to chaos, job cuts, and increased discrimination against children from rural areas and smaller centres, in other words, it has produced exactly the social phenomena criticized in the programme [legitimizing the reform of the education system].”

28 For a synthetic discussion of the changes in Polish education after 1989, see P. Sadura, *Państwo, szkoła, klasa* [State, school, class], Warszawa 2017.

required finding someone who did not deserve it. For these reasons, the production of “national strangers” (Germans, Russians, Jews, Ukrainians, Muslims) and people “undeserving” (false Poles, false elites, leftists) was attached to the agenda of cultural policy. The saturation with pride of the nation shaped in such a way is based on simultaneously recalling national victories and sufferings,²⁹ on arousing hatred to the “strangers” and on maintaining contempt for the “unworthy”. Thanks to this, the connection between culture and power was made to look like (because ministers speak the same language of hatred as ordinary people), collective identity was formed, and culture was saturated with emotions.

6. Two Emptinesses

With regard to the notion of canon, in this text proposed as a prismatic category, it can be said that both cultural policies have done away with the canon. In neoliberal practice, the canon ceases to exist not because it is proliferated, but because it proves being empty; according to the neoliberal’s beliefs, everyone has the right to choose their own works. But this approach means that culture has no relevance to politics or to society. On the one hand, the neoliberal tells society: “It is not important what you read/listen to/watch – the measure of your life is individual success.” The nationalists, on the other hand, abolish the canon because they believe it is a collection of works subservient to the needs of the state, not a collection of outstanding works (anymore?). In the first conception, culture is doomed to rapid commodification, in the second to nationalization. In the first period, culture was granted independence on the condition that the artist would earn her/his own money. In the second period, the state gives financial support to culture but limits funding to nationalistic initiatives, hence censoring manifestations of independent art.

The results of the second programme turn out to be miserable: several hundred worthless works (film, literature, painting, etc.) have been financed; the education system has been deformed, deepening the inequality among students; over a dozen serious cultural institutions have been disorganized (e.g., Teatr Polski in Wrocław, the Museum of World War II in Gdansk); and the promotion of Polish culture abroad has been ridiculed. There is not a single outstanding work of art that would prove the rightness of the nationalist cultural policy. On the other hand, works that gained national and international recognition in the second decade of the twenty-first century (e.g., *The Jacob Books* by Olga Tokarczuk or Paweł Pawlikowski’s film *Ida*) were deemed hostile, anti-Polish and leftist by nationalists, which compromises their criteria.

29 In 2015, the National Cultural Centre announced the “Trauma and Pride” programme: “In a workshop, youths document a story, event, or character that is a cause of PRIDE or TRAUMA for the local community. It is preferred that the stories uncovered are from 1939–1949” (see www.nck.pl/projekty-kulturalne/projekty/trauma-i-duma/o-programie).

Thirty years on, we know how the wrong cultural policies work. Wrong policies are those that condemn culture to market competition, disregard collective identity needs, and exclude collective emotions. Even greater harm is caused by cultural policies that reinstate censorship and incite hatred in the name of collective identity needs. Two cultural policies have produced two empty canons. Is there a third one?

Morals of Precarity: Artistic Trajectories under the Orbán Regime of Hungary¹

Kristóf Nagy / Márton Szarvas

ABSTRACTS

Der Aufsatz analysiert den Karriereweg junger Kulturschaffender in Ungarn. Er zeigt, wie sie im Ungarn Orbáns durch das Alltagsleben navigieren. Die soziale und politische Formation, die nach 2010 in Ungarn entstand, definieren wir als semiperiphere Hegemonie. Sie unterstützt bestimmte Strukturen des internationalen Kapitalismus sowie die mit dem Regime verbündeten lokalen bürgerlichen Schichten. Wir untersuchen Kultur nicht nur als ideologische Grundlage des von Orbán regierten Ungarns, sondern auch als Wirtschaftsgut, das Teil der neuen wirtschaftlichen Mechanismen ist.

Ausgehend von quantitativen Daten sowie qualitativen Methoden wie Interviews und Politikanalyse nehmen wir in den Blick, wie die hegemoniale Politik des Orbán-Regimes versucht, eine Politik der Einbeziehung mit einer der Ausgrenzung zu verbinden. Tatsächlich besitzt die Kulturpolitik des Regimes ein Janusgesicht, weil sie einerseits die populärkulturelle Produktion (den heteronomen Pol der Kulturproduktion) nach Kriterien der Wirtschaftlichkeit steuert, andererseits im Bereich der Hochkultur (dem autonomen Pol der Kulturproduktion) auf direkte ideologische Kontrolle zurückgreift. Diese Praktiken haben im vergangenen Jahrzehnt zu einer Prekarisierung des Kulturschaffens geführt, sodass aktuelle künstlerische Karrieren in hohem Maße entweder vom Einkommen aus der Kreativwirtschaft abhängen oder auf soziale Reproduktion angewiesen sind. Die daraus resultierende, zunehmend unsichere soziale Lage der jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstler kann im Rahmen der COVID-19-Krise den Weg zu einer weiteren Vertiefung der autoritären Kulturpolitik öffnen.

1 An earlier version of this research was published in the 2020/2 issue of the Austrian journal *Kurswechsel* under the title "Moral und Prekarität: Strategien junger KulturarbeiterInnen im Post-2010-Ungarn". We are grateful for our doctoral supervisor Alexandra Kowalski (Central European University) for her unceasing support and for her advice on the formation of the manuscript.

This article analyses the career path of young cultural producers in Hungary. We show how they navigate in the everyday life of the Orbán regime. We define the social and political formation emerging after 2010 as a form of semi-peripheral hegemony that supports certain factors of international capital and strengthens its allied local bourgeoisie. We investigate culture not merely as an ideological underpinning of this regime but also as a commodity that is integrated into its new economic mechanisms.

By utilizing primary and secondary quantitative data as well as qualitative methods of interview and policy-analysis, we focus on how the hegemonic process of the Orbán regime mingles incorporation and exclusion. We outline Janus-faced cultural politics and a policy that rules the heteronomous pole of cultural production by an “economic rationality”, while more direct forms of “ideological control” are employed on the autonomous pole. By showing how the previous decade was characterized by a precarization of cultural work, we argue that current artistic careers are highly reliant either on incomes from the creative industry or on the sphere of social reproduction. As we conclude, this vulnerability can open a path for a certain authoritarian deepening under the COVID-19 crisis.

1. Introduction: Cultural Policy and the Orbán Regime in a *Longue Durée*

In 2011, when the Hungarian Academy of Arts (MMA) was elevated to the position of a public institution and its status was enshrined in the constitution, it became clear that the Hungarian post-socialist institutional system of cultural production would change significantly. Domestic and international commentators tend to approach these changes as problems with democratic institutions, claiming that the Orbán regime does not have a cultural policy but only builds up a clientelistic system. In the present analysis, we offer an alternative view based on an approach that embeds the changes in the cultural field in the socio-economic processes and the social policies implemented by the Orbán regime after 2010.

We consider the Orbán regime as a form of semi-peripheral hegemony that supports the capital accumulation of the domestic bourgeoisie² while fulfilling the need of international industrial capital.³ This means that, on the discursive level, the Hungarian government wages a fight for freedom against the EU and, furthermore, it competes with other actors in the region for foreign investments as becomes visible in legislations, like tax-exempts for the instalment of productive capacities of German and other foreign firms, and in the flexibilization of labour laws and the weakening of local unions.

2 M. Éber et al., 1989: Szempontok a rendszerváltás globális politikai gazdaságtanához [1989: The global political economy of the regime change], in: *Fordulat* 21 (2014), pp. 10–63; M. Éber et al., 2008–2018: Válság és hegemonia Magyarországon [2008–2018: Crisis and Hegemony in Hungary], in: *Fordulat* 26 (2019), pp. 28–75.

3 T. Gerőcs/A. Pinkasz, Relocation, Standardization and Vertical Specialization: Core-Periphery Relations in the European Automotive Value Chain, in: *Society and Economy* 41 (2019) 2, pp. 171–192; T. Gerőcs/A. Pinkasz, Debt-Ridden Development on Europe's Eastern Periphery, in: M. Boacă/A. Komlosy/H.-H. Nolte (eds.), *Global Inequalities in World-Systems Perspective: Theoretical Debates and Methodological Innovations*, New York 2018, pp. 131–153.

In the meantime, it favours its allies and tries to build up a strong stratum of domestic capitalists in less technology-intensive industries like construction. In terms of managing discontent, it targets its social policies at the local middle class with welfare programmes that are accessible only for people with a considerable amount of capital. At the same time, the poor can access workfare programmes that make them dependent on the local political elites and, instead of unconditional social benefits, municipalities employ jobseekers and long-term unemployed for a wage below the minimum wage.⁴ In that process, the deepening of authoritarian control in culture gains importance to manage the social contradictions the pro-capital policies produce. However, culture is not only important from the perspective of the ideological stabilization of the prevailing regime, but it constitutes also an integral part of the economic policies that favour foreign direct investment simultaneously with building up an allied domestic bourgeoisie.

In the field of culture this appears in two complementary but analytically distinguishable processes. Using the insights of Pierre Bourdieu we consider the community of professionals engaged with making cultural goods and discourses on them part of the field of cultural production. We define “field” as a conflict-based social space in which actors compete for resources through symbolic utterances that are also forms of position-taking. Bourdieu suggested that value in fields of cultural production is produced according to a double logic: one is the logic of the restricted public of specialists assessing the value of works; the other is the commercial or political logic of the broad public of non-specialists who appreciate cultural goods for their own, not necessarily specialist reasons. Bourdieu horizontally divides the field of cultural production into two poles. The first logic or set of criteria is called the “autonomous pole” because it seemingly denies the external political, economic, and social influences on cultural production. The second set of criteria is identified as the “heteronomous pole”, i.e., the one where the conversion of culture to economic and political forms of capital plays a more significant role.⁵

In Hungary one can observe a clear political agenda in support of intellectuals advocating for ethnonationalist aesthetics and contents in fields such as visual arts and literature, which are more important from the perspective of the production of ideology. In the more profit-oriented fields such as popular music, film, and design, ideological control is looser. This latter, “heteronomous pole”, which provides a livelihood for many artists, is ruled by a managerial, “economically rational” governance often combined with economic incentives for global cultural industries (such as the film industry) to produce in Hungary.⁶

While the takeover of institutions and a clearer, more aggressive ideological control was typical for the emerging regime, we see a turn after the second term of the Orbán gov-

4 A. Szőke, A “Road to Work”? The Reworking of Deservedness, Social Citizenship and Public Work Programmes in Rural Hungary, in: *Citizenship Studies* 19 (2015), pp. 1–17; N. Lendvai/P. Stubbs, Europeanization, Welfare and Variegated Austerity Capitalisms – Hungary and Croatia, in: *Social Policy and Administration* 49 (2015), pp. 445–465.

5 P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, Redwood City, CA, 1996, pp. 129–133.

6 K. Nagy/M. Szarvas, Die Transformation der kulturellen Produktion in Ungarn nach 2010, in: *ig kultur* 2017, pp. 29–31.

ernment, which is based more on the incorporation of non-aligned intellectuals into the loyal institutions. The conceptual framework of hegemony provides an opportunity to look at the processes occurring in the field of policy-making with regard to cultural production in a dialectical relation with the structural changes of the political economy of the Orbán regime. Florencia R. Mallon⁷ added, using Antonio Gramsci, that hegemony as a static social order is never realized. Thus, it should be understood as a historical process during which the interests of the main social actors can be identified but the actual realization of their intent is a result of temporary conflicts and negotiations. Following her interpretation, we use the term hegemonic process to refer to the situation that different factions struggle to determine the right form of cultural governance. To capture the ways the unequal distribution of power manifests and is renegotiated among state institutions managing cultural production, we take a processual approach.

The hegemonic process of the Orbán regime mingles incorporation and exclusion. In the negotiations about the right way of establishing cultural policy and new aesthetic forms, we can identify two understandings. One tries to establish new institutions and is focused on the formation of an alternative, distinctly conservative stratum of intellectuals and cultural producers with the intent to create a new canon. The other one tries to incorporate and pacify actors of the former liberal and non-aligned elite who are not openly oppositional. The former understanding argues for the distribution of resources in an ideologically more coherent way and urges conservative intellectuals to put more emphasis on the establishment of a pool of loyal intellectuals, excluding the non-aligned ones. In contrast the latter understanding advocates for embracing the pre-2010 liberal cultural producers. These two strategies do not contradict but rather complement each other. In the field of literature and, to a certain extent, in the fine arts the strategy of exclusion is more dominant, while in the film industry or in design the incorporation of those actors is more typical who embrace the managerial understanding of cultural governance.

Based on a survey conducted in the fields of literature and visual arts, we discuss how artists navigate in the post-2010 rules of cultural production by arguing that they are simultaneously situated in the autonomous and heteronomous poles of the field of cultural production. It is widely discussed in the literature on the precarisation of cultural workers in Western-European countries⁸ that austerity, flexibilization, privatization, and liberalization of institutions of cultural production restricted this already exclusive field further and elevated the cultural producers' dependence on the market. In countries such as Hungary, state practices of political incorporation and the exposed nature of the creative industries produce financial vulnerability and unstable employment opportunities. Because of the lack of a stable middle class or bourgeoisie that could sustain

7 F. E. Mallon, *Reflections on the Ruins: Everyday Forms of State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Mexico*, in: G. M. Joseph/D. Nugent (eds.), *Everyday Forms of State. Formation Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, Durham 1994, p. 70.

8 G. de Peuter, *Creative Economy and Labor Precarity: A Contested Convergence*, in: *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 35 (2011) 4, pp. 417–425.

cultural production in line with their taste preferences, historically, political factions have realized their aesthetic ambitions through state institutions⁹. Hungarian cultural policy is not more statist than in France or Great-Britain but it is more likely to be used by dominant social groups for the redistribution of symbolic and material resources than in core countries of the EU; hence the act of accepting funding from state institutions is more politicized.

Therefore, the acceptance of state-subsidies also affects the actors' recognition within the field, since the acceptance of subsidies, especially in the post-2010 period, would degrade their position at the autonomous pole of the field. At the same time, actors must also constantly adapt to the shifting norms in the autonomous sector. The drive to maintain autonomy from the state has pushed them towards the heteronomous pole of the field since 2010. But the heteronomous cultural industries are not independent of the politics of the Orbán regime either, since their relations of production are also the results of the government's policies embedded in the semi-peripheral dependent development. In this context people engaged with cultural production do precarious, semi-skilled intellectual work (e.g., selecting stock photographs, being employed as a dresser in shootings) besides their artistic career.

2. Methodology

This paper draws on an online survey carried out among cultural producers from the fields of literature and visual arts between 10 and 30 March 2020. This is supplemented by our previous research on the *longue durée* transformations and political-economical determinations of the Hungarian cultural policy,¹⁰ by the results of another survey with 300 respondents from the same months,¹¹ and by background interviews conducted in the autumn of 2020. The thirty-eight respondents of our survey are members of the three following associations of young cultural workers. The Studio of Young Artists' Association (FKSE) organizes visual artists since 1958; the József Attila Circle (JAK) and the Alliance of Young Writers (FISZ) have a similar function within the field of literature. The JAK was established in 1981 and disbanded in 2019 due to the year-by-year shrinking of state-subsidies; the FISZ was formed in 1998 and is still active. These associations serve as entry points for creative workers by providing social capital to access the field of cultural production with assistance in exhibiting, publishing, and organizing writing seminars and international residencies. These institutions try to equalize their members' social capital with open recruitments; through joining them young artists can work with people who are already established within the respective fields. We circulated the survey

9 A. C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825–1945*, Princeton, NJ, 1982.

10 E. Barna et al., *Dinamikus hatalom. Kulturális termelés és politika Magyarországon 2010 után* [Dynamic Power. Cultural Production and Policy in Hungary after 2010], in: *Fordulat* 26 (2019), pp. 225–251.

11 A. Bárdics/L. Bérczi/A. Olajos (eds.), *Kortárs helyzet – milyen ma képzőművésznek lenni?* [Contemporary Condition. How Does it Deel to be an Artist Today?], Budapest 2020.

among the members of these organizations because their status as important entries into the cultural fields and as connection to professional networks is known in the art professions. They tend to attract young professionals below thirty-five, a population that we found particularly interesting to focus on. The reason is that they started their career already under the Orbán regime; nevertheless, their socialization took place before 2010, i.e., in the institutional system that was mostly dominated by a liberal understanding of culture and art.

3. Precarisation: Creative Industries in Dependent Development

In Hungary today cultural work is precarious, but it would be a mistake to identify the transformations under the Orbán regime as a single cause of it. Even if the current vulnerability has been shaped by the post-2010 political-economic complex, historically, cultural work has been dependent on the market or on different patrons, like feudal lords or urban bourgeoisie.

In studies on the cultural governance of Western countries, it is widely discussed how the neoliberal transformation imagining the funding of cultural production¹² as the responsibility of the cultural industry brought flexibilization and precarisation of cultural labour.¹³ Some would argue that employment in the cultural industry served as a model for the general transformation of the labour market, in terms of utilizing short term contracts, project-based funding, and making the employees responsible for providing means for their social reproduction.¹⁴ However, from the 1970s onwards, a similar process was played out in socialist Eastern Europe through a moderate liberalization of cultural production and the commodification of artistic products.

3.1 Precarity Under State Socialism

Post-WWII welfare states offered the arts both generous funding and professional autonomy. Such a *belle époque* though only lasted for a few decades¹⁵ and produced an extensive cultural infrastructure in Western countries. The public funding system and its professionalizing effects were not fundamentally different in semi-peripheral, state-socialist countries. In Eastern Europe, following the Soviet model, cultural funds and artists' unions allowed predictable career paths for professional artists, therefore masses of cultural producers were not only incorporated into it through constraints but also through benefits.¹⁶

12 C.-T. Wu Chin-Tao, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s*, London 2002.

13 J. McGuigan, Neo-Liberalism, Culture and Policy, in: *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11 (2005) 3, pp. 229–241.

14 A. McRobbie, "Everyone is Creative". Artists as Pioneers of the New Economy?, in: *k3000* (2001), http://www.k3000.ch/becreative/texts/text_5.html (accessed 24 November 2020); G. Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London 2011.

15 G. Arrighi/B. Silver, Polanyi's "Double Movement": The Belle Époques of British and U.S. Hegemony Compared, in: *Politics & Society* 31(2003) 2, pp. 325–355.

16 M. Haraszti, *The Velvet Prison: Artists under State Socialism*, London 1988.

The literature on the post-socialist transition of the relation between movie distribution and cinemas argues¹⁷ that, as the sociologist Katja Praznik also elaborates in her work on cultural policy, state-socialist regimes undergo reforms of austerity and marketization that took place from the 1970s onwards.¹⁸ In Hungary, the liberalization had its own roots, since austerity following the more and more significant indebtedness of the country resulted in the decentralization of cultural governance, whereas we could see a more conscious flexibilization of cultural employment in the Yugoslavian case. The reintegration of the Hungarian cultural industry into the global value chains started in the 1970s. In this decade, the state-owned Hungarian film industry produced a significant proportion of its incomes by hosting Western runaway productions.¹⁹ With the provision of a cheap infrastructure and skilled labour for US film productions, such as for the Woody Allen comedy *Love and Death* in 1974, the Hungarian creative industries gradually reintegrated into the global capitalist economy.

The debates on the marketization of culture started around 1968, with the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism.²⁰ Profitability indicators were strengthened in measurements of the success of industrial production,²¹ lessened the burden on central planning, and made a shift from extensive development to an intensive one. In the field of culture, consumer goods, such as electronic musical instruments and popular music, started being taxed by a so-called “kitsch tax”. The relative liberalization of the cultural market launched debates on the commodification of culture²² that went on throughout the 1970s.²³ The focus of these debates was that culture can be perceived not only as a means to reproduce local communities, inequalities, and political orders but as a good, too, that can be sold and bought on a market. Many of the participants advocating marketization claimed that culture is not appreciated by the audience as it is not forced to make value-driven choices when visiting cultural institutions. According to them, the introduction of tickets and higher prices can lead the audience to become more conscious consumers of cultural products. Culture began to be perceived less as a tool that strengthens the regime ideologically and more as a part of national economic development.²⁴

17 J. Bodnár, *Fin de Millénaire Budapest: Metamorphoses of Urban Life*, Minneapolis 2000.

18 K. Praznik, *Autonomy or Disavowal of Socioeconomic Context: The Case of Law for Independent Cultural Workers in Slovenia*, in: *Historical Materialism* 26 (2018) 1, pp. 103–135.

19 B. Varga, *Filmrendszerváltások [Film Regime Changes]*, Budapest 2016.

20 J. Bockman, *Economists and Social Change: Science, Professional Power, and Politics in Hungary, 1945–1995*. University of California 2000, PhD Dissertation; Á. Gagyí, *A Moment of Political Critique by Reform Economists in Late Socialist Hungary: ‘Change and Reform’ and the Financial Research Institute in Context*, in: *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 1 (2015) 2, pp. 59–79.

21 M. Lampland, *The Object of Labor: Commodification in Socialist Hungary*, Chicago 1996.

22 M. Kalmár, *An Attempt at Optimization: The Reform Model in Culture, 1965–1973*, in: J. M. Rainer/Gy. Péteri (eds.), *Muddling Through in the Long 1960s: Ideas and Everyday Life in High Politics and the Lower Classes of Communist Hungary*, Trondheim 2005, pp. 53–82; M. Szarvas, *Orfeo’s Maoist Utopia*, Budapest 2016, MA thesis.

23 L. Ballai, *Reformmunk és a művelődés anyagi feltételei [The Material Conditions of our Reform and Culture]*, in: *Társadalmi Szemle* 22 (1967) 8–9, pp. 32–46; Gy. Radnai, *Áru-e a kultúra? [Is Culture a Commodity?]*, Budapest 1986.

24 G. Koncz, *A kultúra mai finanszírozási szisztémája Magyarországon [The Current System of Cultural Subsidy in Hungary]*, in: *Szín* 10 (2005) 6, pp. 38–45; D. Bell/K. Oakley, *Cultural Policy*, New York 2014.

3.2 Precarity in the Capitalist Transformation

The Hungarian state started welcoming private actors in the field of cultural production in the 1980s, for instance the Soros and Ludwig Foundations.²⁵ The political change of 1989 accelerated this trend. The socialist Artists' Unions and Art Funds had provided welfare services such as housing, holidays, purchases, raw materials to cultural producers; they weakened or went bankrupt at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s.²⁶ The National Cultural Fund replaced them in 1993 and state subsidies were allocated on a competitive basis. The artists' unions either lost their significance (such as the Association of Fine and Visual Artists) or split apart. Their residues became aligned either with right-wing or with liberal hegemonic blocs that competed in post-socialist times.

In the post-socialist context, cultural producers striving to live for their art are primarily dependent on the state that is a major patron and plays a central role in subsidizing culture. Although the Orbán regime's takeover of cultural institutions produced numerous symbolic boycotts, many cultural producers still depend on the state infrastructure due to the material pressures. The post-socialist state sources are rarely apparent as direct purchases and subsidies²⁷ but vary from PhD scholarships to positions in state-run institutions.

3.3 Precarity under the Orbán Regime

The Orbán regime does not demolish or improve, it rather restructures the state subsidy of culture by relocating it into the new institutions of the regime. As a result, a new artistic career path develops. Starting from the engagement of the MMA in educational issues, it continues with the Academy's lavishly funded three-years scholarship for artists between the age of 18 and 50 and ends with numerous new artistic awards and with a monthly allowance for recognized artists older than 65. While this new career path is boycotted by most of the cultural producers who answered our questionnaire, other cultural institutions of the same Hungarian state are less rejected. Another, much more coercive mode of state-dependency was the so-called *cultural public work scheme* that existed between 2012 and 2018 and provided poorly paid (ca. EUR 200 per month) work for white-collar workers in cultural institutions. In these years after the crisis of 2008, the cultural public work scheme played a role in managing the reserve army of young cultural producers with less cultural, social capital, by producing cheap labour for the state institutions under austerity.²⁸

25 K. Nagy, From Fringe Interest to Hegemony: The Emergence of the Soros Network in Eastern Europe, in: B. Hock/A. Allas (eds.), *Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present*, New York 2018.

26 O. Esanu, What was Contemporary Art?, in: *ArtMargins* 1 (2012) 1, pp. 5–28; Gy. Horváth, A művészek bevonulása. A képzőművészet politikai irányításának és igazgatásának története 1945–1992 [The March of Artists. The History of the Political Leadership and Administration of Visual Arts 1945–1992], Budapest 2015; C. Preda, Creating for the State. An Introduction, in: *Studia Politica* 17 (2017) 3, pp. 243–248.

27 A. Kácsor, *Patronizing Contemporary Painting in State Socialist Hungary, 1957–1969*. Budapest 2013, MA thesis.

28 Barna et al., *Dinamikus hatalom*.

In addition to public jobs, the state exacerbated the precarious situation of cultural workers through other forms. The most important among them is the Small Taxpayers' Tax (KATA) that is used by cultural workers and has become a widespread form of their employment. It was introduced in 2013 imposing a 0 per cent tax rate on any income for a monthly EUR 150 flat rate. This widespread tax institutionalized the gig economy and fosters hidden, precarious forms of employment. 30 per cent of our respondents mentioned that they have this form of self-employment exempting them from certain tax duties but providing them very limited pension insurance. Given the position of young cultural producers in the global gig economy, KATA taxes their income from autonomous artistic production and, besides, their applied or extra-artistic labour. This is crucial since only 15 per cent of the emerging creative workers obtain at least half of their living from art practice, while another survey shows that only ten per cent of visual artists make their living solely from autonomous artistic production.²⁹

These employment policies do not exist for their own sake as they fit into the rising importance of creative industries that are fuelled by this form of flexibilization. Heteronomous cultural industries gained a central position in the Orbán regime policies by emphasizing their economic aspects at least as much as their cultural ones. In this new model, creative industries are approached primarily as engines of economic development.³⁰ This shows that creative industries are expected to be an alternative or at least a complement of the foreign direct investment (FDI)-led growth of the post-2010 Hungarian economy, by attempting to produce products with high added value. This hope highly matches the phenomena of the Developmentalist Illusion, defined by Giovanni Arrighi, and resembles the phenomena described by Andrew C. János as the politics of backwardness in Eastern Europe.³¹ These authors argue that catching up strategies almost always fails in an economic sense, and the countries of the global semi-periphery produce cultural consumption that mimes the taste preferences of the core's middle class. Cultural industries provide a living for numerous early-career artists who keep their art practice besides these jobs. This situation complicates the heteronomous-autonomous partition of the field of cultural production; therefore, it only partly stands as Bourdieu described it. Numerous cultural producers do not even sell their labour force in the more capitalized part of the cultural field (for example as copywriters and wedding photographers) but subsist on extra-cultural sources. Forty-seven per cent of our respondents' incomes are based on savings and family contributions, and 40 per cent of them on non-art-related wage labour. They avoid the marketization of their cultural products not for ideological reasons, but rather because it is simply not a viable path to make a living. According to a survey, in the case of Budapest based visual artists, only 27 per cent of their incomes were related to artistic production. This proportion amounted to only 24 per

29 Bárdics/Bérczi/Olajos (eds.), *Kortárs Helyzet*, p. 96.

30 HÉTFA Elemző Központ, *A kreatívipar mint erőforrás* [Cultural Industry as a Resource], Budapest 2014.

31 János, *Politics of Backwardness*.

cent in the case of those living in the countryside.³² As an artist in her thirties stated: “My husband is also a visual artist, 53 years old, and achieved everything that can be achieved in the Hungarian scene. But we cannot afford to buy either an apartment or a car.”

Therefore, the cheap, invisible resources of social reproduction are the material precondition of cultural production. As the same artist continued: “only those should choose this career who inherit an apartment, whose partner can support it, or whose family can support him/her.” Statistical data confirms her statement: there is no fundamental difference in the incomes related to artistic production between visual artists coming from more and less educated families but the former group reported a more stable financial situation.³³

The pressure on emerging artists arises from the heteronomous and autonomous poles of the cultural field at the same time. Thus, the choice for them is either to leave the field of cultural production completely or to figure out a way to cooperate with certain parts of a centralized but still multi-vocal state. In the next section, we will give an overview of the coping mechanisms of the latter choice.

4. Moral and Money: Strategizing about State Infrastructure

In the first years of the government takeover of cultural institutions, different mores and strategies emerged among cultural producers. How should they relate to the institutions ruled by loyal allies of the governing party? Between 2012 and 2014, several demonstrations were held against the MMA that were organized by the “Free Artists” group formed against the ratification of the MMA’s public status. The motto was: “MMA is exclusionary – Culture is free!” The group consisted of young artists and students who demanded that the authorities should ensure the autonomy of cultural institutions from political power. Sit-ins were also organized in the Ludwig Museum when a new director was appointed without publishing her application materials before the decision.

In this early phase, Tranzit.hu played a leading role, a cultural organization founded and funded by the *Erste Stiftung* (Erste Foundation). As part of an Eastern European network of institutions that propagate alternative institutional systems, the Erste Stiftung funded research, exhibitions, networking, and extra-curricular education. In Hungary, the Budapest based Tranzit was established in 2005 and had a significant role in connecting local cultural institutions to global or Eastern European initiatives. After 2010 their function became more and more politicized and while first and foremost they remained an association engaged with artistic research and publication, they became a hub of political thinking within the field. Tranzit organized the so-called “Action Days”, where cultural workers and intellectuals assembled to discuss and interpret the political situation of cultural institutions. The Tranzit event served as a place of politicization for many

32 Bárdics/Bérczi/Olajos (eds.), *Kortárs Helyzet*, p. 41.

33 Ibid., p. 58.

cultural workers and, in addition, provided young professionals a way of integration to the politicized pole of the field. Transit played a major role in establishing an alternative, political field within the fine arts and managed to sustain itself during its 15 years of operation, in terms of material integration through the small salaries paid to students and authors of its blog and in terms of discourses through inviting international actors. Their trajectory is representative of the internationally embedded and socially engaged part of the field, i.e., establishing alternative discourses and institutions of cultural production in the mid-2000s, which aims to connect Eastern European art histories with the global field of cultural production. They chose open political engagement after 2010, after the takeover of the institutional system by the governing party.³⁴

After 2014, many cultural workers turned away from political protest and focused on building more stable institutions. A group of curators, some of them leaving the Ludwig Museum in 2013, launched the OFF Biennial in 2015 to realize an independent cultural event and a platform for cultural workers. Instead of being closely involved in oppositional politics, they highlight their professionalism, the autonomy of art, and the integration of the “progressive” artists into the global circuits of contemporary art. In practice, this means that they do not accept state funding, do not realize projects in state venues, and seek alternative channels through international institutions and networks. They gather donations primarily from international foundations that are supplemented by local entrepreneurs, companies, and the unpaid and underpaid work of staff and participants. In the first years the realization of the Biennial relied on voluntary work and unpaid labour, backed by the motivation of the participants to enter the field. For the sake of sustainability, the proportion of paid work rose during the organization of the 2020 Biennial (postponed due to COVID-19); community building and a stronger selection of projects became a more dominant strategy. The previous projects under the OFF brand did not get funding but were promoted; this year, almost all the projects got funding complemented with pedagogical programmes and regular supervision of the works by the staff on the projects participating in the Biennial³⁵. A similar shift from direct politicization to professional self-organization took place within the FKSE. After issuing several statements against the government’s cultural policy and rejecting National Cultural Fund subsidies in 2016, the organization revised its strategy of political confrontation in favour of strengthening their community, securing autonomous income through fundraising campaigns, and reinforcing their relationships with commercial galleries and the civil sector.

Looking for international projects became a major escape route for many cultural producers after 2010. However, participation in international projects and shows does not significantly contribute to the cultural workers’ income. As a young photographer said: “My diploma work was well received by international magazines and exhibition spaces, but since then I have rarely been featured there.” Even if they are internationally inte-

34 D. Hegyi, Interview with Dóra Hegyi by the authors, 3 November 2020.

35 K. Székely, Interview with Katalin Székely by the authors, 3 November 2020.

grated, this does typically not contribute to the artists' livelihood. While 70 per cent of the young artists have been participating in international art projects, only six per cent of them derive a regular income from this market. In principle success in the international market is a decisive factor of national visibility and success; however, individuals considering themselves successful did not report a significantly higher percentage of income as a result. On the one hand, this suggests that galleries, publishers, and other art businesses utilize the employment of artists in creative industries: they skim off the marketable artists by representing only a small section of cultural producers. As research showed, only 22 per cent of Hungarian visual artists are represented by a local for-profit gallery.³⁶ The art industry gains from the situation that compels artists to provide the necessary means of social reproduction from outside the art market, such as maintaining a studio, which 72 per cent of visual artists do.³⁷ Consequently, the art market externalizes the costs of artistic production. On the other hand, international presence seems to remain a cognitive remnant of the strategies applied in the field before 2010. It is a form of "misrecognition": while it provides symbolic rewards within the oppositional/autonomous field, it does not convert into significant material stability. This makes the artists more dependent on funding coming from state institutions.

In the survey, we assessed the respondents' acceptance of various state institutions and independent organizations. Institutions that have been taken over or created by the government since 2010, such as the Petőfi Literary Museum and the MMA, are generally held in more contempt than those less affected by the political transition, especially if they were managed by recognized figures. For example, the head of the National Film Fund established post-2010 was Andy Vajna, a Hollywood film producer. Although the early history of demonstrations at the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art would imply that it should meet harsher rejection, several facts make it the most accepted institution among young artists: its embeddedness into the Ludwig network, its gatekeeper position as an exhibition space, and, moreover, the superintendent of the Hungarian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale, and its director who does not go against the doxas of the visual art scene (such as the recognition of the neo-avant-garde art of the 1960s and 1970s). Within the field of literature, the Carpathian-Basin Talent Support Program (KMTG) is the most rejected institution. 63,9 per cent of the respondents said that they would not accept its fellowship and 66,7 per cent rejected the possibility to exhibit or show their work in places associated with the institution. The KMTG was consciously established by the government in 2015 to "revitalize Hungarian literary life".³⁸ In practice this meant the building and the development of a literary field of conservative authors. The Balassi Institute (BI) was incorporated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and responsible for the cultural diplomacy of Hungary; it has a neutral status among our

36 Bárdics/Bérczi/Olajos (eds.), *Kortárs Helyzet*, p. 23.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

38 Governmental Decree 1569/2015. A Kárpát-medencei Tehetséggondozó Nonprofit Korlátolt Felelősségű Társaság megalapításáról [On the Foundation of the Carpathian-Basin Talent Support Programme], <http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/MKPDF/hiteles/mk15123.pdf> (accessed: 11 December 2020).

respondents. The Hungarian Creative Artists' Nonprofit Ltd. (MANK) manages governmental grants and signed a cooperation pact with the MMA in 2016 that does not meet harsh refusal either. The incorporation of these institutions was less exposed and their heads communicated less controversial opinions than in the cases of the MMA and the KMTG. The MMA is the most rejected institution, mainly because it is considered too ideological and thus non-professional. A respondent who applied for their fellowship speaks about it as a last choice, which even she frames as problematic: "I consider their dominance as unhealthy and unprofessional. But I need a stable income to move out of my parents' flat."

During the Orbán government's first term, between 2010 and 2014, the boycott of state institutions was a general strategy coupled with direct actions such as demonstrations and artistic "happenings". In the regime's consolidation phase, the new cultural governance fostered a variegated acceptance of state-funded cultural organizations. On the one hand, institutions with a stronger connection to ethnonationalist ideologies are overtly instrumental in building the government's new hegemony and are forcefully denigrated by practitioners. The ones that maintained a more inclusive or managerial strategy like the NFI or the Ludwig Museum, on the other hand, are more likely to be accepted. Because of the artists' dependence on creative industries and of the difficulty of making a living from producing art that is sold in galleries or auction houses, there is a limited number of activities in the field of cultural production that can provide a stable income. Therefore, symbolic utterances within the oppositional cultural field lose significance. Boycott as a general strategy is much more questioned, while the capability of the oppositional field to integrate young artists is also weakened because of the lack of resources and the lacking possibility to transform the capital gained into political participation.

5. The Hardships of Turning Symbolic Capital into Economic One

Classical cultural analysis often argues that only inheritors can acquire high social status.³⁹ Nevertheless, having analysed the early careers of Hungarian creative workers, we can conclude that even social inheritance is not enough to make a remunerative career. Even though 80 per cent of the young artists responding to our questionnaire have university graduate parents, they can rarely transform these social capitals into an artistic livelihood. Therefore, social inheritance in Hungary is rather the prerequisite of an artistic career and constant external financial support is needed to maintain it. This external support has three typical forms. The first is the employment in creative industries in the "illusion of independence" from the Orbán regime. Cultural industries, however, are not untouched by the regime. They are precarised by taxational reforms, their ownership is frequently concentrated in the hands of the national bourgeoisie, and the creative industries embedded into global value chains are pushed in a regional race

39 P. Bourdieu/J.-C. Passeron, *The Inheritors. French Students and their Relation to Culture*, Chicago 1980.

to the bottom,⁴⁰ fuelled by an “illusion of development”.⁴¹ The second is the non-artistic career path that leads further away from artistic production. The third is the endeavour to maintain autonomous artistic production, but this choice is especially dependent on state infrastructures and puts additional burdens on the sphere of social reproduction. In this constellation, emerging artists can still achieve symbolic successes but they cannot transform them into material stability.

The emerging artists' relations with the Orbán regime are in constant interactions with their own material positions. In the years after 2010 several confrontations took place between the forming conservative cultural hegemony and its opponents, for instance the OFF Biennial. However, they could provide only symbolic, international recognition for young cultural producers but no material resilience. As a result, a significant part of the Orbán regime's cultural establishment became accepted among young cultural producers, while those not willing to make such deals were oriented towards the highly precarious creative industries that provided a livelihood for many in the economic conjuncture of the 2010s.

Under these precarious conditions the COVID-19 crisis, emerging in the spring of 2020, hit the young cultural producers harshly. Consequently, the current crisis can produce a certain authoritarian deepening. In local cultural industries, state-subsidies fuelled the concentration of ownership in the hands of capital allied with the Orbán regime. At the same time, these factions of capital (music and film industry, which is reliant on the inflow of foreign capital) must manage their vulnerability to the global crisis. In this context, young cultural producers will probably be more dependent on state infrastructures that can contribute to the deepening of the hegemonic process of the Orbán regime.

40 Varga, *Filmrendszerváltások*.

41 G. Arrighi, *The Developmentalist Illusion*, in W. Martin (ed.), *Semiperipheral States in the World Economy*, Westport Ct. 1990, pp. 11–44.

FORUM

Intricacies of Globality: The P.E.N. Club's International Congresses 1923–1941

Jan Becker

ABSTRACTS

Der P.E.N. (Poets, Essayists, Novelists) Club wurde 1921 gegründet, um ein literarisches Netzwerk auf globaler Ebene zu etablieren. Die Zwischenkriegsjahre sind jedoch eine umstrittene Periode in Bezug auf seine globale Integration, und der P.E.N.-Club ist als hinter seinem Ideal der Globalität zurückbleibend dargestellt worden. Dieser Beitrag analysiert die jährlichen internationalen Kongresse des Vereins zwischen 1923 und 1941 und schlägt die Faktoren Veranstaltungsort und Repräsentation für die Analyse der Globalität internationaler Institutionen vor. Ich argumentiere, dass es dem P.E.N.-Club in den 1930er Jahren gelang, wirtschaftliche und ideologische Rückschläge gegen seine globalisierende Mission zu überwinden. Allein die Kriegszeiten erwiesen sich als unüberwindbare Hürden für die Vernetzung internationaler Kulturvereinigungen wie des P.E.N.-Clubs.

The P.E.N. (Poets, Essayists, Novelists) Club was founded in 1921 to establish a literary network on a global scale. The interwar years, however, have been a debated period in regard to their global integration, and the P.E.N. Club has been portrayed as falling short of its ideal of globality. In analysing the association's annual international congresses between 1923 and 1941, this paper proposes the factors of venue and representation to be most expedient in analyses of international institutions' globality. I argue that the P.E.N. Club succeeded in overcoming economic and ideological backlashes to its globalising mission in the 1930s. Solely times of war proved to pose insurmountable hurdles to the interconnectedness of international cultural associations like the P.E.N. Club.

*If we had an International Dinner Club, with Centres in every capital city in the world, membership of one meaning membership of all, we should have a common meeting ground in every country for all writers.*¹

In 1921, Catherine Amy Dawson Scott, founder of the P.E.N. Club, wrote a letter to her daughter. In it, she emphasised the global structure she imagined of her soon-to-be-founded cultural NGO. The English writer initiated the first centre, the London P.E.N. Simultaneously serving as the international umbrella association – International P.E.N.² – it would organise annual international congresses with shifting venues in the years from 1923 to 1941. These congregations only ceased to be hosted as war annihilated all means of personal travel. The seventeen international congresses took place in a period of time that has been portrayed as falling short of Dawson Scott's ideal of globality.

The P.E.N. Club has so far not been subject to research regarding globalisation. Existing scholarship can be differentiated into three major phases.³ The first academic accounts on the P.E.N. were written in the 1980s. They resulted from an emerging interest for exile-experiences, particularly in German literary and social historical academia. Primarily covered were the German, Austrian, Czech and Polish Centres of the club which struggled most with exile.⁴ Since the late 1990s, research focused primarily on the politicization of the association in the 1930s.⁵ Some P.E.N. members saw themselves confronted with the threats of emerging fascist regimes, others were prone to fascist and nationalist ideology. Hitherto, almost all accounts assess the association through a national branch.⁶ In the 2010s, the association was (with some constraints) for the first time approached through a global historic lens by Megan Doherty. Subject of her dissertation was the association's internationalism.⁷ Doherty, however, avoided linking the association's in-

1 Catherine Amy Dawson Scott to Marjorie Watts (ca. August/September 1921), after: Marjorie Watts, P.E.N. The Early Years, London 1971, pp. 12–13.

2 Even though the International P.E.N. was separately organised with an own executive committee, it was composed of officials of the English P.E.N. until well into the 1970s. Megan Doherty, 'A guardian to Literature and its cousins': The early politics of the PEN Club, in: *Nederlandse Letterkunde* 16 (2011)3, p. 142.

3 For an elaborate list of works on the P.E.N. even beyond the here regarded period see Megan Doherty, *PEN International and its Republic of Letters 1921–1970*, PhD thesis, Columbia University, New York 2011, pp. 13–15.

4 See, for instance: Werner Berthold/Brita Eckert (eds.), *Der deutsche PEN-Club im Exil 1933–1948. Eine Ausstellung der Deutschen Bibliothek*, Frankfurt am Main 1980; Klaus Amann, *P.E.N.: Politik, Emigration, Nationalsozialismus. Ein österreichischer Schriftstellerclub*, Vienna et al. 1984; William Abbey, 'Die Illusion genannt Deutscher PEN-Club: The PEN-German Group and the English Centre, 1933–1945', in: William Abbey (ed.), *Between Two Languages. German-speaking Exiles in Great Britain 1933–1945*, Stuttgart 1995, pp. 135–153.

5 Helmut Peitsch, 'No Politics'? Die Geschichte des deutschen PEN-Zentrums in London 1933–2002 (= *Schriften des Erich Maria Remarque-Archivs* 20), Göttingen 2006; Doherty, *A guardian to Literature*; Mateus Américo Gaiotto, *O XIV Congresso Internacional dos P.E.N. Clubes (1936): intelectuais, cultura e política no entre guerras*, in: *Aedos* 10 (2018) 23, pp. 238–257. Due to the politicisation, the P.E.N.'s globality could also be analysed from a political perspective. However, as the association stayed mostly apolitical until circa 1932, this paper does not put primary emphasis on its political connections and quarrels.

6 For instance: Predrag Palavestra, *History of the Serbian PEN*, Belgrade 2006; Mateus Américo Gaiotto, *O P.E.N. Clube do Brasil (1936–1954): a ero Cláudio de Souza*, unpublished diss., Universidade Estadual Paulista, São Paulo 2018; Andrea Orzoff, *Prague PEN and Central European Cultural Nationalism, 1924–1935*, in: *Nationalities Papers* 29 (2001) 2, pp. 243–265.

7 Doherty, *PEN International*. For other accounts on the P.E.N.'s internationality, see: Dorothée Bores, *Der Interna-*

ternationality to theories of globalisation. In addition, Doherty follows the standard periodisation of globalisation in analysing its effects on the P.E.N. in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.⁸ In doing so, the P.E.N. is portrayed as affected by globalisation, rather than as a potential participant, and a phase of globalisation is implied to start in circa 1950:

By 1970 PEN had become global, transforming from a British club into an organization devoted to protecting freedom of expression and facilitating communication worldwide.⁹

In analysing the attendance of the early international congresses, this article contrastingly shows that the P.E.N. Club was far more global in its early years than previously assumed.

1. Gradual Establishment of Interconnectedness

1.1 Aversions Against Interconnecting Europe: London 1923

Founded in London, the association at the very beginning was exclusively European. On 1 May 1923, the P.E.N. Club's very first international congress took place in London. At the time, there were ten centres in existence, situated in England (London), the U.S.A. (New York), Belgium (Brussels), Catalonia (Barcelona), France (Paris), Italy (Rome), Holland, Norway (Oslo), Romania, and Sweden.¹⁰ New York was the first and at this juncture only branch outside Europe. However, there were more nations represented by the P.E.N. than its centres imply. In order to initiate the foundation of centres outside of England, John Galsworthy had invited several international writers as honourable members of the English P.E.N. Galsworthy, first president of the English and International P.E.N. and future Nobel laureate, could draw on the wide international network he had established before 1914. In 1921 and 1922 inter alia Georg Brandes (Denmark), Anatole France (France), Maxim Gorki (Russia), Knut Hamsun (Norway), Gerhart Hauptmann (Germany), Romain Rolland (France), Arthur Schnitzler (Austria), and Hermann Sudermann (Germany) received invitations – some of the most distinguished writers of their time.¹¹

The assembly brought together writers from twelve countries. The Holland Centre did not send delegates but writers from Czechoslovakia and Denmark were present.¹² The total attendance amounted to 164 persons.¹³ Despite the domination of English del-

tionale PEN. Gründungsgeschichte und Struktur einer Schriftstellervereinigung, in: Dorothee Bores/Sven Hanuschek (eds.), *Handbuch PEN. Geschichte und Gegenwart der deutschsprachigen Zentren*, Berlin/Boston 2014, pp. 19–33.

8 Doherty, *PEN International*, pp. 305, 306, 362.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

10 All efforts are made to state the exact location of centres. However, the newly founded centres often did not possess premises and were loosely organised nationally or on a linguistic basis.

11 Watts, *P.E.N.*, pp. 18–19.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 22–25.

13 For a copy of the seating chart and thus a list of all attending writers, see: Doherty, *PEN International*, p. 88.

legates, the very first international meeting connected representatives of most central European countries. In addition, some Eastern European writers and even few from North America attended.

Strikingly, no German representatives were present. At the time, a German branch had not yet been established, but there were two German authors associated with the organisation: the honorary members of the English P.E.N., Gerhart Hauptmann and Hermann Sudermann. In the run-up to the conference, Belgian writers protested against inviting Hauptmann, threatening the organisers with non-attendance.¹⁴ Nine years after the destruction of Leuven on 25 August 1914, the so-called “Rape of Belgium” was still vivid in their minds. Reservations were particularly strong as both Hauptmann and Sudermann had signed the infamous appeal “An die Kulturwelt” which was published on 4 October 1914. Having invited both Hauptmann and Sudermann as honourable members in 1922, Galsworthy himself chose to promote a reconciliatory stance. Nevertheless, the Belgians succeeded in making Galsworthy defer to their demand. In a letter to Stefan Zweig, the attending Romain Rolland emphasised his incomprehension:

*In his [Galsworthy’s; JB] place, I would have said to the Belgians: “The principle of P.E.N. is international without any restriction; you have accepted it, you must submit to it, or we will regretfully waive your presence”.*¹⁵

Romain Rolland’s very own presence triggered the absence of Anatole France. Unwilling to reconcile with Rolland’s pacifist and supposedly unpatriotic publications during war, he further refrained from offering Rolland membership of the French Centre.¹⁶ The ideological remnants of the war showed clearly – not only across borders but even within. Globality was still inconceivable. Nonetheless, the P.E.N. managed to unite a lot of Europe’s writers.

For the following year both the French and the New York Centres issued invitations. The French Centre was deemed to be not sufficiently organised, and it was decided to accept the New York invitation and console the French by conceding the third congress to them.¹⁷ The International P.E.N.’s top priority in the early state of the association’s existence was acting practically.

1.2 Alleged Globality and the Factor Representation: New York 1924

Compared to the first congress, the second international congress of the P.E.N. Club witnessed a soaring rise in professionalism and attendance. Taking place on 13–15 May

14 Thomas von Vegesack, *Sur l’histoire du P.E.N.-Club*, in: Gerd E. Hoffmann (ed.), *P.E.N. International*, Munich 1986, p. 359. “An die Kulturwelt” was an appeal by German writers and academics. It was intended to legitimise German warfare and relativize the destruction of Leuven and its library.

15 Romain Rolland to Stefan Zweig, s.d., in: Romain Rolland/Stefan Zweig, *Briefwechsel 1910–1940*, Berlin 1987, Vol. I, pp. 745–746 (translated from German).

16 Vegesack, *Sur l’histoire du P.E.N.-Club*, p. 360. Anatole France had previously been elected first president of the French P.E.N. See the seating chart in Doherty, *PEN International*, p. 88.

17 Watts, *Mrs Sappho*, p. 116.

1924, the congregation had extended its duration by two days. The number of nations represented increased by six, thus representatives of eighteen countries attended.¹⁸ Attendance in total almost doubled. The Annual Report of the English P.E.N. accounts that there were 300 people present at the formal dinner.¹⁹

Since 1923, further centres had been founded in Austria (Vienna) and Spain (Madrid), and new connections had been established to writers from Canada, Central America, and Asia. Already in the second year of holding congresses, the venue lay outside Europe. England (London), France (Paris), Spain (Madrid), Mexico, Canada, Romania, Russia, Norway (Oslo), Germany (Berlin), Denmark, Austria (Vienna), Sweden, Japan, Hungary, India, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia were represented at the assembly.²⁰ Regarding Europe, the absence of last year's participants Catalonia and Italy was compensated by the presence of Austrian and German writers. Mexican, Canadian, Japanese, and Indian writers provided for the attendance of literati from four continents.

Prima facie, this congregation seemed to be of almost fulfilled globality with minor restrictions. However, nations with no respective national centre were usually represented by merely one writer at the congresses. Without any institutional backing, these writers attended as individuals, not as proper delegates. In New York that applied to Canada, Russia, Japan and India – except for Mexico all present non-European countries.

Representation was a contentious issue for the P.E.N., particularly in the 1920s. Newly founded centres had to assert themselves in their countries' literary sphere in order to attract the respective literary prominence. The younger generation of writers were usually excluded from the prestigious association and tried to challenge the club's representativeness.²¹ Representation, therefore, is questionable in a twofold manner. Firstly, did attendees represent an institution? Secondly, even if so, was that institution representative for the respective national or linguistic literature? Furthermore, the question arises, how much emphasis is to be put upon the nation-state. Most centres were primarily national and leading officials like John Galsworthy repeatedly spoke out for a non-militant nationalism.²² Attendance of writers without a respective national centre occurred only exceptionally and depended on two factors: they either were honourable members of the London or hosting centre, or they were residents of the venue.

Indian and Japanese writers' presence, implying connections to the Global East, should therefore not be overvalued. Another four years would pass before the P.E.N. succeeded in reaching out to parts of Asia, namely China. The shift of venue across the Atlantic

18 Watts, P.E.N., pp. 27–28.

19 Report of the Activities of the P.E.N. Club For the Year 1923–1924, p. 4, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin (hereafter HRHRC).

20 Report of the Activities of the P.E.N. Club For the Year 1923–1924, p. 4, HRHRC; Writers of World to Convene here, in: *New York Times*, 11 May 1924, p. 61.

21 For instance, in Germany in 1926: Ernst Fischer, *Das Zentrum in der Weimarer Republik. Von der Gründung bis zur Auflösung unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft (1923–1933)*, in: Bores/Hanuschek (eds.), *Handbuch PEN*, pp. 83–84.

22 John Galsworthy, *Address to the P.E.N. Club (Brussels 1927), Kansas City 1939*. British Library CUP 501, d16.

meanwhile falsely suggested there might be congresses across the globe in the upcoming years. Out of 17 congresses, 15 would be held in Europe.

1.3 The Importance of Venue: Paris 1925

As agreed upon in London in 1923, the third international congress was held in Paris on 21–23 May 1925. With an attendance of 100 persons, the congress registered a significant decline. Writers from 22 nations attended, the traceable of which being England (London), France (Paris), Germany (Berlin), Austria (Vienna), Russia, Italy, Norway (Oslo), Spain (Madrid), Ireland, the U.S.A. (New York), and Mexico.²³

At the main dinner, the tables were arranged in the following manner: eight large tables respectively stood “under the sign of a great poet of the main countries”.²⁴ Those were England (John Galsworthy), Germany (Heinrich Mann), Ireland (James Joyce), Spain (Miguel de Unamuno), Italy (Luigi Pirandello), Russia (Aleksandr Kuprin), Mexico (Alfonso Reyes), and Norway (Johan Bojer).

Except for Mexico and Russia, all honoured authors and thus all “main countries” were central European. The lack of an actual Russian centre was no obstacle to paying tribute to Aleksandr Kuprin, who had lived in French exile in Paris since 1920. Similarly, Alfonso Reyes lived in Paris as diplomat between 1924 and 1927. Although a Mexican centre already existed, it did not send delegates from Mexico but was represented by a local resident of Paris.

The attendance of these two writers from outside Europe, therefore, was dependent on the venue. The P.E.N., at that time, did not yet tempt writers from across the world to make a journey. It rather succeeded in choosing the most eligible venues for its purpose. In bonding with foreign writers from, for instance, India, Japan, and Russia in the West, the International P.E.N. tried to attain global publicity.

To what extent, then, did the P.E.N. play an active role in globalising the writers’ sphere and in how far did it solely made use of existing global structures? In the early years, particularly in New York in 1924 and in Paris in 1925, the alleged globality of the congresses were due to the venues’ internationality and must therefore not be ascribed to the P.E.N.’s efforts. On a global level, some connections were established. By no means, however, can the first congresses be rated as globalising the literary sphere.

1.4 International Reintegration of Germany: Berlin 1926²⁵

In Paris, for the first time since 1914, an institutionally backed German delegation had been present at a cultural international congress.²⁶ German had been accepted as third official language for the congresses alongside English and French. In the course of two

23 PEN Clubs’ Congress. International Meeting in Paris, in: *The Times*, London, 23 May 1925.

24 Iwan Goll, *Der Kongreß der Pen-Clubs*, in: *Generalanzeiger Frankfurt*, 23 May 1925 (translated from German).

25 In comparison to other centres, the German speaking P.E.N.s have been disproportionately well studied. See for instance: Bores/Hanuschek (eds.), *Handbuch PEN*.

26 German writers Ludwig Stein and Alfred Kerr had attended the 1924 congress in New York. Yet, as the German

years the association's attitude towards Germany had changed remarkably and the P.E.N. agreed upon reassembling in Berlin.

Founder Catherine Amy Dawson Scott was aware of the pioneering connections the P.E.N. established:

*Our coming, the coming of the representatives of 15 [actually 19²⁷; JB] nations, was important to Germany. She had suffered from the inability of the League of Nations to include her. Also, this was the first time since the war that there has been an international gathering of any sort in Berlin. Again, this was the first visit of the French as honoured guests.*²⁸

As a compensating concession, the resentful Belgian Centre was granted the right to host the next congress. The P.E.N. Club had succeeded in reconciling major parts of the European writers' sphere. The broken ties between German and European (particularly Belgian and French) writers were to a degree recovered.

In Berlin, North America was represented by four and South America by three centres. Asian writers, however, had ceased to attend, which is further indication for the venue's importance. The P.E.N. had not yet reached the Global East and Berlin did not offer the same international infrastructure as New York and Paris. The European countries, in contrast, were almost completely represented by approximately 200 writers.²⁹ Although the association was still mainly European, it showed its ability to expand. In 1926, the P.E.N. Club enabled major border-crossing connections between writers of Europe. Beyond that, the association indicated a westward orientation that exceeded a narrow focus on the U.S.A. Moreover, the P.E.N. Club kept growing.

1.5 Determining a Global Purpose: Brussels 1927

The fifth international congress took place on 20–23 June 1927 in Brussels. This congress attained fame for a resolution which would serve as a blueprint for the 1948 charter of the association. Brought forward by the Norwegian, Belgian, German, and French delegations, the resolution was written to ensure that,

*in the event of future wars, the P.E.N. Club would not cease its activities during hostilities, but would, on the contrary, do all in its power to maintain the interchange of ideas through art of all kinds.*³⁰

The first paragraph went as follows: "Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers, and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political

branch was only founded in late 1924, the appearance of eight German delegates in Paris in 1925 indicated the official outwards orientation of the German literary sphere: Fischer, *Das Zentrum*, p. 79.

27 Marjorie Scott to Tring, Society of Authors, 5 October 1926, after: Doherty, *PEN International*, p. 87.

28 Catherine Amy Dawson Scott, s.d., after: Watts, *Mrs Sappho*, p. 145 (emphasis in original).

29 Annual Report of the Activities of the P.E.N. Club, October 1935–July 1926, p. 3, HRHRC.

30 Watts, *P.E.N.*, p. 34.

or international upheavals.”³¹ In the German press, the *Vossische Zeitung*, it was translated into an even more drastic version, which translates back to: “The literati recognise nations but not borders.”³² Differentiating in the subject, either writers or their product, both versions account for a profound literary globalism. The P.E.N.’s global purpose was undisputed.

The second paragraph reads: “In all circumstances then and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.”³³ Periods of integration could eventually end, so the delegates feared. The P.E.N. was certain about the imminent end of globalisation through a second war. By passing the resolution, the P.E.N. not only articulated a global purpose for its activities. The awareness with which potential future events, namely war, were to be dealt with gives account of a systematic and sustainable concept of initiating interconnectedness. Of the 21 nations represented at the 1927 congress, only two were from outside Europe: Canada and the U.S.A. Central American, Southern American, and Asian countries were not represented.³⁴ After having covered large parts of Europe, the P.E.N.’s expansion continued in North America. Apart from several centres in Eastern Europe, two centres emerged in Canada (Montreal and Toronto).

1.6 British Stride Outside Europe: Oslo 1928

On 17–20 June 1928, the P.E.N. gathered in Oslo. The attendance amounted to 23 centres, each from a separate country. With the exception of Switzerland and the Spanish Madrid Centre, the European presence of the preceding year remained unchanged. The assembly’s composition shifted, however, due to delegations from the newly founded centres in Australia, Scotland, and South Africa.³⁵ These delegations, now backed by a centre, were able to properly represent their respective literature. For the first time, the P.E.N. welcomed amidst its members several actual delegations from across the globe. Attendees came from Africa, Australia, Europe, and North America. In total, 48 officials assembled.³⁶ Arne Kirdal, President of the hosting Oslo Centre, in his speech of welcome once more expressed the aim of the P.E.N. to be “that a contact is established between the writers of all nations.”³⁷

Yet, the extension to Australia, Scotland, South Africa, and absent Canada raised suspicion. Werner Marholz, official delegate of the German branch, brought in a resolution that aimed to reserve voting right during the congress exclusively for centres that had

31 P.E.N. News 6 (November 1927), p. 2.

32 F. L. Kunst, Wissenschaft, Literatur. Der Pen-Club in Brüssel, in: *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin, 23 June 1927 (translated from German). In the original: “Die Literaten anerkennen Nationen, aber keine Grenzen.”

33 P.E.N. News 6 (November 1927), p. 2. The resolution was refreshed twice – in 1933 and 1934: Watts, Mrs Sappho, pp. 141, 146, 183, 193.

34 Writers Meet for Conference of P.E.N. Club, in: *Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, 18 June 1927; *Le Congrès des Pen-Club [sic]*, in: *Le Soir*, Brussels, 18 June 1927; *Le Congrès des Pen-Clubs*, in: *Le Soir*, Brussels, 21 June 1927.

35 P.E.N. News 13 (September 1928), p. 2.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., pp. 2–3.

been present the year before. He feared inequality of representation for each distinct literature. In his eyes, these young centres were “merely derivatives of England.”³⁸ The congress was not able to find a pandering solution and thus left the issue to the International Executive Committee.

Marholz gave evidence of reappearing counter-globalising forces within the association. Nationalistic envy against British hegemony led him to deny the young centres’ representativeness. Marholz viewed literature as linguistically rather than nationally defined. Hence, he was able to speak out in favour of a Eurocentric association without getting in clear discordance with the P.E.N.’s global purpose. Nonetheless, England’s far reaching imperial bonds enabled further expansion of the association.

1.7 Globalising Efforts Bear Fruit: Vienna 1929

Taking place on 24–28 June 1929, the Vienna congress was the last congress unaffected by the Great Depression. Vienna hosted the by far most global congress to date. The P.E.N. News accounted for official delegates from 26 centres.³⁹ Furthermore, several honourable members of the English P.E.N. attended. Roman Roček, in his extensive work of more than 600 pages on the Austrian P.E.N.’s history, even accounts for 160 writers from 50 nations.⁴⁰ New centres had emerged in Eastern Europe and in China. The latter, however, did not send an official delegation.

Russian writers, on the contrary, were present at an international congress of the P.E.N. again for the first time since 1925. Since the German P.E.N. had ideologically moved right and National Socialism had found entrance into the P.E.N., the Austrian Centre laid particular emphasis on setting up a counterweight. A considerable Russian attendance should equilibrate the right-wing writers from Germany. In addition to the Russian honourable members of the English P.E.N., the Austrian Centre invited further Russian writers.⁴¹

Again, the right to vote proved subject of heated debate. As more and more centres were founded on a cultural-linguistic rather than a geographical basis, the national branches grew worried.⁴² Should these small outposts be allowed to possess a bigger influence than the European core? Nationalist tendencies had arisen in several centres, but particularly in the German P.E.N., which had started the debate about the right to vote in view of English hegemony. Yet again, the delicate issue was postponed.⁴³

38 Ibid, p. 3.

39 P.E.N. News 23 (September 1929), 4.

40 Roman Roček, *Glanz und Elend des P.E.N. Biographie eines literarischen Clubs*, Vienna et al. 2000, p. 78. Unfortunately, he does not state his sources. Amann rightfully criticizes Roček’s egocentric and sometimes unscientific writing style that derives from his thirty years of holding offices in the Austrian P.E.N.’s executive committee: Klaus Amann, *Der österreichische PEN-Club in den Jahren 1923–1955*, in: Bores/Hanuschek (eds.), *Handbuch PEN*, p. 481.

41 The P.E.N. Club, Report to the English PEN, 15 December 1928, HRHRC, after: Roček, *Glanz und Elend*, p. 77.

42 From 1927 onwards the P.E.N. changed its statutes to allow centres to form around cultural-linguistic particularities. Doherty, *Politics*, pp. 142–145.

43 P.E.N. News 23 (September 1929), p. 5.

By November of the same year, the International Executive Committee finally tried to arrange a compromise. All centres numbering at least 20 members should be allowed to send delegates and to vote.⁴⁴ As this number was readily manageable, the decision was essentially in favour of the smaller centres. The International Executive Committee had no choice but to push the German P.E.N. further away. The untenable alternative would have been stagnation of the association's expansion, as virtually no centre would have wanted to join in a subordinate role. Structurally, the prerequisites for further globalisation were fulfilled.

2. Economic and Ideological Backlashes

Doherty views 1931 as a distinct turning point in the P.E.N.'s history. She argues that the Holland conference was the last congress before the tremors of fascism and nationalism began to make the P.E.N. quiver.⁴⁵ However, the Stock Crash in 1929 had already shaken the association's globality in its core. The cultural sphere was, of course, strongly affected by economic ruptures.

2.1 Sharp Decrease of Attendance: Warsaw 1930

P.E.N.'s writers reassembled in Warsaw on 20–22 June 1930. For the first time, a Chinese delegate, Tse Hsiung Kuo, was present at one of P.E.N.'s international congresses. He was received "amid cheers".⁴⁶

Even though the Stock Crash had begun to take its toll, "lunches, dinners and other kinds of entertainment were provided with the lavishness typical of the whole congress".⁴⁷ Covering a significant part of the expenditures, the Polish P.E.N. succeeded in maintaining the luxurious standard the Brussels, Oslo, and Vienna congresses had set. Nevertheless, the precarious economic conditions of multiple centres clearly showed. The number of represented nations decreased almost by half. Only 26 countries were represented in Warsaw of which only three were from outside Europe: Canada, Palestine, and Argentina.⁴⁸ In comparison to 1929, the congress's difference in internationality was immense. For the first time, the P.E.N. gathered in an authoritarian country and thus revealed the P.E.N.'s strongest antagonist to nationalism, authoritarianism, and fascism: German writer and alleged communist Ernst Toller.⁴⁹ In the following years, he delivered speeches against Nazism during the 1932, 1933, and 1934 congresses. For starters, he, "in an im-

44 P.E.N. News 25 (November 1929), p. 3.

45 Doherty, *PEN International*, pp. 115, 117. Roček favoured the 1932 congress as encompassing milestone: Roček, *Glanz und Elend*, pp. 99–100.

46 P.E.N. News 33 (September 1930), p. 2.

47 Ibid.

48 P.E.N. News 33 (September 1930), pp. 3, 5.

49 Toller criticised Jozef Pilsudski in his account of the congress: Ernst Toller, *PEN-Kongreß in Polen*, in: *Die Weltbühne* 26 (1930) 2, p. 49; *New Act of Nazi Persecution. Eminent Authors Proscribed*, in: *The Times*, London, 26 August 1933, p. 7.

passioned speech, deplored the fact that Russia was not represented in the international P.E.N.”⁵⁰ However, there had been failed efforts to initiate a Russian centre and there would be more of such, particularly in 1934.⁵¹ Toller went on to write a deeply unfavourable account of the congress in *Die Weltbühne*. He particularly made a charge against Polish authoritarianism and the attendees’ apolitical speeches. Almost buried in all his criticism, Toller nevertheless admitted some achievements of the assembly in its effort to globalise the literary sphere:

*During these eight days, people from all over the world got to know each other, shook hands with comrades, talked to each other and learned about each other, visited a foreign country, sharpened their view, enriched their knowledge, deepened their negative or approving feelings.*⁵²

2.2 Economic Discordances: The Hague and Amsterdam 1931

The following congress was the numerically best attended to date: 350 writers got together in The Hague in 1931, of which fifty were German, forty-three English, Scottish and Irish, twelve French, and one Chinese.⁵³ The Chairman’s Annual Report of the Activities of the P.E.N. accounted for gradual success in the association’s effort to extend its scope beyond Europe and America. India and Japan would show “many hopeful signs of their conquest” and South Africa, Palestine, and China’s centres would flourish.⁵⁴ However, the founding of centres, in reality, had decelerated markedly and the progressing economic decline in 1931 started affecting the P.E.N. Superficially, the Holland Centre succeeded in depicting the country in overflowing prosperity.⁵⁵ Overwhelmed by a reception in the specially illuminated Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, boat tours and the like, accounts only marginally touched upon the business sessions. Nevertheless, the Bulgarian Centre forwarded a resolution asking the P.E.N. to initiate a fund for the smaller centres. As “the centres of small nations, deprived of resources, are prevented from enjoying the main advantages offered by the P.E.N. Club”, the fund should enable them to host foreign writers.⁵⁶ Furthermore, financial aid would allow them to attend dinners and congresses outside their home country. As with most delicate issues, it was passed on to the International Executive Committee that never initiated the fund. Unwilling to give monetary assistance, the greater centres retreated into the congresses’ opulence. The number of represented nations, in consequence, levelled off.

50 Hermon Ould, P.E.N. Congress in Poland, in: The Manchester Guardian, s.d., reprinted in: P.E.N. News 33 (September 1930), p. 3.

51 International Secretary Hermon Ould held a personal conversation with Josef Stalin. Watts, Mrs Sappho, pp. 117–118.

52 Toller, PEN-Kongreß, p. 51 (translated from German).

53 P.E.N. News 40 (September 1931), p. 3.

54 The Chairman’s Annual Report of the Activities of the P.E.N. 1931, HRHRC.

55 Doherty, PEN International, pp. 113–115.

56 P.E.N. News 40 (September 1931), p. 5 (translated from French).

2.3 Personal Dissensions Arise: Budapest 1932

*In view of the serious economic situation in Hungary, the Secretary was asked to write privately to the Budapest Centre suggesting, tactfully, that the Congress, if it takes place at all, should be of an unostentatious character, and to convey the impression that if it were thought better to abandon the Congress until the financial situation improves, the reasons for the decision would be fully appreciated.*⁵⁷

The economic situation continuously worsened and affected particularly the smaller centres. Yet, as in the preceding years the hosting centre was funded by the state. The new Secretary of the Budapest Centre, Jenő Mohácsi, declared his intention to proceed as planned and to hold the congress.⁵⁸ By March, the difficulties had seemingly smoothed out.⁵⁹ The Budapest Centre was even able to provide free travel throughout Hungary during the time the congress was held.⁶⁰ Admiral Miklós Horthy, Regent of Hungary, had expressed his support for the congress. Receiving the guests in the Royal Fortress, he provided the glamorous exuberance the attendees were accustomed to.

The entertainment was lavish but “delegates were well aware of the poverty and suppression that was all around them behind the festive front”.⁶¹ Similar to the Bulgarian Centre’s resolution from 1931, the Polish P.E.N. brought in a motion dealing with the small centres’ financial status. The Polish delegation proposed to hold regional assemblies between two or more centres in addition to the international congresses.⁶² These congresses on a smaller scale would have facilitated economically struggling centres to establish border-crossing literary connections. The resolution was unanimously passed and enthusiastically received. Regional assemblies were deemed particularly necessary, as “The annual international Congress gathers so many heterogeneous elements together that very little intimacy of understanding is possible [...]”.⁶³ An account that describes globalising activities and simultaneously takes them ad absurdum. However, as the troublesome upcoming years in Europe prevented smaller centres to organise regional assemblies, such were never held.

Interpersonally, the atmosphere proved difficult. The delegates’ affection for each other was on a low. There was a

general malaise among the various delegations. The French were detested because it was said they took it for granted that they alone were capable of providing leaders in discussion and in settling details of procedure. [...] The atmosphere of Nazi intrigue and politi-

57 Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 14 January 1932, p. 3, HRHRC.

58 Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 10 February 1932, p. 2, HRHRC.

59 Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 31 March 1932, p. 2, HRHRC.

60 Jenő Mohácsi to London P.E.N., 5 April 1932, after: P.E.N. News 47 (April 1932), p. 4.

61 Watts, Mrs Sappho, p. 178.

62 P.E.N. News 48 (June 1932), pp. 3–4; Edwin Muir, PEN Club Congress. Persecution of Authors, in: The Scotsman, Edinburgh, 30 May 1932, p. 8.

63 Ibid.

*cal conspiracy between Austrians and Germans was so thick that no one could miss it, and the smaller countries' delegations were resentful and apprehensive.*⁶⁴

Economic aggravations reached their zenith and ideological discordances emerged. Yet, it would take another year for them to convulse the P.E.N.

2.4 Cleansing of Anti-Globalising Forces: Dubrovnik 1933

Yugoslavia hosted the eleventh international congress in Dubrovnik on 25–28 May 1933. Out of all congresses, this one is the by far most intensely researched.⁶⁵ It might well be the most discussed event in all of P.E.N.'s history. Scholars paid particular attention to the association's politicisation which was mostly traced back to the Dubrovnik gathering. Examining the congress with regard to globalisation likewise suggests a break in the association's history.

Similarly to the congresses of 1930 and 1931, the number of attending countries stagnated at 26, represented by 28 centres.⁶⁶ The personal attendance, however, rose to a new high of almost 400 people.⁶⁷ England, as per usual, sent the greatest delegation, consisting of 40 writers.⁶⁸ Since 1931, centres had only been founded in Bolivia and Switzerland (Zurich and Basel). The P.E.N.'s expansion of the 1920s almost ground to a halt. While there were centres present from outside Europe, for instance from South Africa and the U.S.A., the congress evolved exclusively around the rise of National Socialism in the middle of Europe and particularly around the Nazi Book Burnings in German university towns. The German P.E.N. only sent four delegates. Its membership had greatly changed due to enforced and voluntary conformity.⁶⁹

In the course of the congress, the German delegation was confronted with their conduct regarding the Book Burnings and the exclusion of communist, Jewish and other non-confirmative members, including the now exiled Ernst Toller.⁷⁰ Instead of answering to the accusations, the Germans left the chamber. Austrian, Dutch, and Swiss delegates joined them.⁷¹ The eleventh international congress initiated the dissolution of the German Centre. After Hitler had announced the withdrawal from the League of Nations on 14 October 1933, the German P.E.N. dissolved on 18 November.⁷²

64 Willar Muir, *Belonging. A Memoir*, London 1968, after: Watts, Mrs Sappho, p. 178.

65 See, for instance, Fischer, *Das Zentrum*, pp. 111–117; Helmut Peitsch, *Versuchte Gleichschaltung durch das NS-Regime, die Auflösung und Flucht ins Exil (1933–1945)*, in: Bores/Hanuschek (eds.), *Handbuch PEN*, pp. 137–139; Amann, *Der österreichische PEN*, pp. 487–492; Roček, *Glanz und Elend*, pp. 121–133; Watts, Mrs Sappho, pp. 183–186.

66 German protest at P.E.N. Congress, in: *The Times*, London, 29 May 1933, p. 13; Amann, *P.E.N.*, p. 29.

67 World P.E.N. Conference, in: *The Manchester Guardian*, s.d., reprinted in: *P.E.N. News* 56 (June 1933), p. 6.

68 *P.E.N. News* 55 (May 1933), p. 3.

69 Peitsch, *Gleichschaltung*, pp. 133–136.

70 The Hebrew P.E.N. Club was not present at the congress but sent a letter condemning Germany's politics against her Jewish citizens. The Hebrew P.E.N. Club to 11th International Congress of P.E.N. Clubs, 18 May 1933, HRHRC.

71 Fischer, *Das Zentrum*, p. 116.

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 120–121.

Roček, regarding the aftermath of the congress, speaks of a “refreshing thunderstorm”⁷³ that cleansed the association of its National Socialistic members. By ridding itself of its autarkic elements, the P.E.N. enabled the upcoming congresses to break through the global low of the early 1930s. The association suffered a backlash, but it did not crack in face of the annihilation of free international literature in Germany.

3. Globality Against the Odds

3.1 Reaching Out Across the Globe: Edinburgh and Glasgow 1934

The “refreshing thunderstorm” left behind a field of buds. By 17–22 June 1934, centres had emerged in New Zealand and Egypt, both of which sent delegates to the congress. While the attendance of 400 writers was equal to the preceding year, the national representation took a leap. Numbers slowly approached the tremendously well attended congress in Vienna in 1929 again. Present centres from outside Europe were *inter alia* New Zealand and Egypt, Canada, South Africa, the U.S.A., Argentina, China, and India.⁷⁴ For the first time, all continents were represented. Progressing alleviation of economic troubles enabled numerous centres to send delegations again. Romania, for instance, had been absent for several years and even the Austrian P.E.N. managed to send a delegation, despite facing a time of great political insecurity.

In face of Nazism, the International P.E.N. became particularly keen to ensure a broad international representation of the association. The London Centre tried to resuscitate the inactive Irish Centre before the congress took place, in order to enable their attendance. International President Herbert George Wells offered to provide 20 pounds of travelling expenses for a representative German writer.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Wells, in his presidential address, announced that he would visit Russia in order to gauge the possible founding of a centre: “There has been a considerable change in Russia; Russia is looking West again.”⁷⁶ Finally, a new centre was formed in London, setting an example for years to come. In lieu of the vanished German P.E.N., the London Centre had not only endorsed but most actively contrived the formation of a centre for German émigrés – the “German P.E.N. in Exile”.⁷⁷

Scotland hosted a markedly global congress which profited from the venue, as the British Isles were very well connected and most of Europe was still passable. Furthermore, the London Centre had made enormous efforts to extend the P.E.N.’s outreach. Yet, the

73 Roček, *Glanz und Elend*, p. 139.

74 Noted Writers Meet in Edinburgh, in: *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 18 June 1934, p. 7; P.E.N. News 65 (September 1934), pp. 3–4.

75 Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 29 May 1934, pp. 3, 5, HRHRC.

76 Mr. H. G. Wells on Europe Today, in: *Gloucester Citizen*, 18 June 1934, p. 6. Wells’ endeavours finally failed but he even presented his plan of expanding the P.E.N. to Josef Stalin: Stalin spricht mit H. G. Wells. Niederschrift d. Unterredung vom Juli 1934 in Moskau, 32–33, after: Berthold/Eckert (eds.), *Der deutsche PEN-Club*, p. 114.

77 P.E.N. News 65 (September 1934), p. 3.

period of exiles had begun. The next congress, the delegates agreed upon, would take place in Barcelona.

3.2 Globality Inhibited by Venue: Barcelona 1935

In contrast to Scotland, Barcelona turned out to be a distinctively bad choice of venue. The congress took place on 20–25 May 1935, therefore only seven months after the Revolution of October 1934 had shaken Catalonia.

[...] *the Baelona* [sic!] *Congress might well have been abandoned. Some of its* [the Catalanian P.E.N.'s; JB] *leading members were not long out of prison. Police of one description or another were everywhere and at the opening session of the Congress a Government agent in plain clothes graced the platform.*⁷⁸

Numerically, the congress's attendance decreased vastly in comparison to the preceding year. Delegates from 28 centres made the journey to Barcelona. Some of the present centres were Italy (Rome), the German P.E.N. in Exile (London), England (London), Scotland, France (Paris), Belgium (Flemish, Brussels), U.S.A. (New York), Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Yiddish Centre, Argentina, Sweden, Holland, India, and China (Shanghai).⁷⁹ While the Hebrew, Austrian, and Polish Centres were absent, the Indian, Chinese, and Argentine branches began to stand out due to frequent presence.

A defeatist speech of International President Wells including the announcement of his retreat depressed the spirits.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the exiles' situation deteriorated continuously, and their number gradually rose.⁸¹ The P.E.N. was portrayed to be in a crisis.⁸² This evaluation, however, did not do justice to the association's structural development. New centres had emerged in Chile (Santiago) and Japan. The general potential to hold global gatherings had increased. The Barcelona congress in cause of multiple national upheavals, for instance, in Austria, Poland, and Spain itself, only partly succeeded in putting this potential into effect.

3.3 Integrating South America: Buenos Aires 1936

Regarding the venue of the 1936 congress in Buenos Aires, the English Executive Committee was in particular sorrow. The main concern was that "matters of vital importance" would be disposed of as "in the nature of things a small attendance was to be expected".⁸³ Buenos Aires should become the biggest and most global congress to date.

78 Future of P.E.N. The Congress at Barcelona, in: The Scotsman, Edinburgh, 29 May 1935, p. 15.

79 Gunnar Leistikow, Am Krankenlager des Pen-Clubs, in: Die neue Weltbühne, Prague/Zurich/Paris, 31 (30 May 1935) 22, pp. 698–699; after: Berthold/Eckert (eds.), Der deutsche PEN-Club, pp. 137–138.

80 H. G. Wells, Speech at the XIV International Congress of the P.E.N., in: P.E.N. News 72 (June 1935), p. 5.

81 Heinrich Mann, for instance, was afraid not to be let back into France if he would leave for Spain. As Ernst Toller, Lion Feuchtwanger, and other German exiles were unable to attend, only Klaus Mann was present. Future of P.E.N. The Congress at Barcelona, in: The Scotsman, Edinburgh, 29 May 1935, p. 15.

82 Leistikow, Am Krankenlager, pp. 698–699.

83 Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 1 May 1935, p. 4, HRHRC.

Since the delegates' travelling expenses were borne by the Argentine Government, the centres were completely relieved from the economic burden of sending delegations.⁸⁴ Except for the Vienna congress in 1929, Buenos Aires hosted the globally most representative congress until after the Second World War.⁸⁵ Multiple centres from South and Central America (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay), North America (Canada, USA), Asia (India, Iraq, Japan, Palestine), Australia (Australia and New Zealand), and Europe were present. The sole missing centres were South Africa and China. In total, 86 official delegates attended.⁸⁶

For the first time since the 1924 congress had been held in New York, the P.E.N. hosted its annual gathering outside Europe. By hosting the congress in Argentina, the association succeeded to plant its seeds in South America: Brazilian, Colombian, and Uruguayan Centres emerged the same year. Brazilian scholar Mateus Américo Gaiotto recently examined the Buenos Aires congress in regard to the traditional question of the politicisation of the P.E.N. Gaiotto briefly touches upon globalisation and Eurocentrism:

*By taking, as an example, some of the reports that circulated in the Brazilian press at that time, one can see the prominence given only to European figures in the midst of an event of international proportions, signalling the Eurocentric imaginary.*⁸⁷

Europe, as at every single congress the P.E.N. had held, was by far best represented. Buenos Aires, however, hosted one of only three congresses that succeeded in overcoming a general Eurocentrism – the other two being Scotland in 1934 and Paris in 1937. Brazilian journals reported on a global congress in Argentina with attention to European writers, for instance Austrian Stefan Zweig and Italian Filippo Tommaso Marinetti.⁸⁸ If one considers this Eurocentric, it is a profoundly globalised Eurocentrism.

3.4 Globality Supported by Venue: Paris 1937

The 1937 congress was originally supposed to take place in Rome but changed venue. In response to the initiation of the Rome-Berlin Axis on 25 October 1936, the International Executive Committee on 3 November decided to relocate the congress to Paris.⁸⁹ Temporarily, Stockholm was considered an option. Paris, however, provided a far more eligible infrastructure for hosting a congress rather spontaneously.⁹⁰ Delegates from 47 centres representing 40 countries were present at a time during which

84 Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 23 October 1935, p. 3, HRHRC; Peitsch, Politics, pp. 63–64.

85 P.E.N. News 82 (October 1936), p. 2.

86 Gaiotto, Congresso, pp. 244–246.

87 Ibid. Translated from Portuguese.

88 Correio de Manhã, Rio de Janeiro, 21 September 1926, p. 3, after: Gaiotto, Congresso, p. 248.

89 PEN News 86 (February 1937), p. 2; Rudolf Olden to Herwarth Walden, 23 April 1937, after: Robert Hodonyi, Rudolf Olden – Herwarth Walden. Briefwechsel 1937–1939, in: Sylvia Asmus/Brita Eckert (eds.), Rudolf Olden. Journalist gegen Hitler – Anwalt der Republik. Eine Ausstellung des Deutschen Exilarchivs 1933–1945 der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, 26. März–28. Juli 2010, Leipzig et al. 2010, p. 139; Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 3 November 1936, pp. 3–4, HRHRC.

90 Nevertheless, the P.E.N. was brought in a predicament. English and International P.E.N.'s Secretary Hermon Ould

the P.E.N. had centres in 42 countries.⁹¹ Paris was inhabited by thousands of foreigners. Alongside Francophiles voluntarily living in Paris, a great many exiled from Germany, Spain, and Russia resided in the French capital. Contrary to 1925, the P.E.N. did not benefit from the local residents only. Most centres were now able to send delegates anywhere in the world. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, Iceland, India, Japan, Mexico, Palestine, and the U.S.A. represented the non-European literary world. In addition, South Africa made its comeback on the international stage and Greece, for the first time, was represented. Members of the Barcelona and Madrid Centres attended as well, although both cities had suffered immensely from the Spanish Civil War.⁹² In addition to the French delegation, more than 350 foreign guests assembled.⁹³ The P.E.N. witnessed its last global congress before the end of war. Franco had already initiated the era of armed clashes on European soil. This congress, however, still remained mainly unaffected by the upheavals in Spain.⁹⁴

4. Globalisation's Abrupt Disintegration

Within only a single year, political quarrels and armed conflicts had emerged and escalated all over the world: Spain remained in the midst of a civil war, Germany had annexed Austria in March, Japan had attacked China without declaring war on 7 July. Consequentially, the Vienna Centre was resolved by Nazi officials, the Madrid Centre ceased to exist, and the Chinese Centre, in face of Japanese invasion, was moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong.⁹⁵ The 1938 congress in Prague was an exclusively European congress that evolved solely around the German threat to Czechoslovakia. The congresses of 1939 and 1940 could not take place. In 1941, writers from 32 countries assembled in London. Yet, the 1941 congress did not assemble writers from across the globe but from across London. Only two writers from the U.S.A. were not residents of the city.⁹⁶ War annihilated the association's ability to further globalise the writers' sphere.

Conclusion

After its first congress in 1923, the P.E.N. Club established an astonishingly wide outreach in merely a couple of years. The club began to connect the European writers'

personally went to Paris in April to help prepare the congress: Minutes of the English P.E.N. Executive Committee, 28 April 1937, p. 4, HRHRC.

91 Fédération internationale des P.E.N. Clubs, XV^e congrès international de la Fédération P.E.N. Paris, 20–27 Juin 1937, pp. 14, 20.

92 Madrid regularly suffered air raids and Barcelona had been ravaged by fights during the May Days. The Civil War already went on for a year. Nevertheless, the Madrid and Barcelona centres had so far been able to persist.

93 Berthold/Eckert (eds.), *Der deutsche PEN-Club*, p. 162.

94 At any rate its globality. Resolutions were passed in solidarity for the Spanish people – indifferent of their political stance. P.E.N. News 90 (July 1937), p. 4.

95 R. A. Wilford, *The PEN Club, 1930–50*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 14 (1979) 1, pp. 103–104.

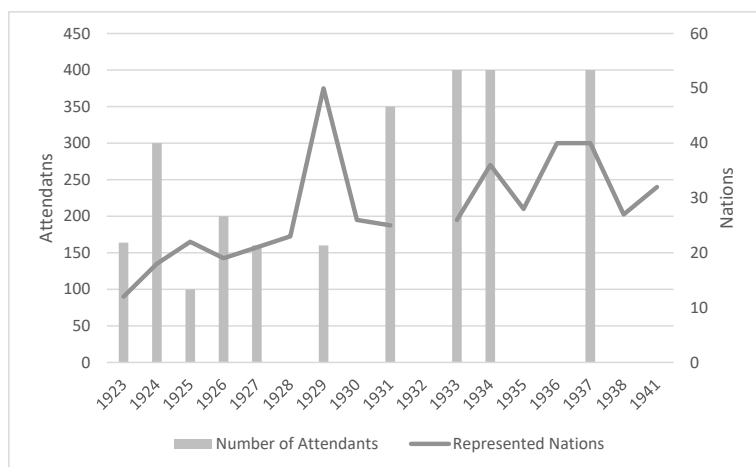
96 Storm Jameson, *The Stranger*, in: Storm Jameson, *The Writer's Situation and Other Essays*, London 1950, p. 118.

sphere, but its influence quickly spilled over the Atlantic. The U.S.A. and Canada became persistent members of the association. Until 1929, the P.E.N. continually grew and set up outposts across the world. The Great Depression, however, decelerated the International P.E.N.'s globalising activities. Strikingly, the P.E.N. overcame the 1930s' obstacles to globalisation and organised its most global congresses in 1934, 1936, and 1937. With the outbreak of war, its globalising efforts completely ceased.

Intriguingly, the P.E.N., succeeded in transforming its Eurocentric internationality into globality in Europe as well as outside. The question remains; did the P.E.N. globalise the writers' sphere? Arguably, not. The association was too exclusive to be viewed as a general representative board of the world's literati. However, did the P.E.N. provide a global space for writers? Arguably, yes. Furthermore, the association enjoyed a vast amount of publicity. Its globalising achievements reached a broader audience than its members. The P.E.N., from 1934 to 1937, built an illustrious circle of established writers from across the globe and shone bright into the political sphere.

Simultaneously, the association underwent its very own politicisation. Fascism as well as anti-fascism arose among the ranks of the P.E.N.'s members. Yet, an alleged correlation would be misleading. The association was not an anti-fascist political organisation and its interim globality did not ground upon a common enemy.⁹⁷ From the very beginning onward, Catherine Amy Dawson Scott had announced the association's purpose to establish connections by operating on a global level. Independent of its political alignment, the P.E.N. did so in both the 1920s and the 1930s. Solely times of war proved to be devastating to the global interconnectedness of writers.

Table I: Statistics of Personal and National Attendance



97 Fascist currents were present during the entire 1930s. The Italian delegation, for instance, used the 1936 congress exclusively to promote fascism: Celia de Aldama Ordóñez, 1936. *La pluma y la espada*. Marinetti, Puccini y Ungaretti en el PEN Club argentino, in: *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 76 (2019) 1, pp. 329–356.

FORUM

Mainland Chinese Historiography in Search of New National and Global Narratives: Analyzing Recent Historiography on the Tributary System of Interstate Relations under the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1912 CE)

Sebestyén Hompot / Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik

ABSTRACTS

Der vorliegende Artikel ist eine Diskursanalyse der neueren festlandchinesischen Geschichtsschreibung (seit 2000) über das sinozentrische Tributsystem der ostasiatischen zwischenstaatlichen Beziehungen während Chinas Ming- (1368–1644 n. Chr.) und Qing-Dynastie (1644–1912 n. Chr.). Der Artikel konzentriert sich auf verschiedene Stränge des chinesischen Nationalismus im Diskurs, die als „starr“/exklusionistisch, „weich“/kulturell und liberal klassifiziert werden. Der Artikel diskutiert die unterschiedliche Rolle, die diese Stränge des Nationalismus im Diskurs spielen, und die möglichen zukünftigen Einflüsse der Historiographie des Tributsystems auf Chinas sich entwickelnde Selbstwahrnehmung als Nationalstaat sowie als regionaler und globaler Akteur. Der Artikel argumentiert, dass der „weiche“/kulturelle Nationalismus den Diskurs dominiert, wobei viele Autoren Chinas vermeintlich vormoderne Kultur der pazifistischen Großmachtpolitik betonen und implizit oder explizit für den Referenzwert des Themas für Chinas gegenwärtige und zukünftige internationale Beziehungen plädieren.

The present article is a discourse analysis of recent (since 2000) mainland Chinese historiography on the Sinocentric tributary system of East Asian interstate relations during China's Ming (1368–1644 CE) and Qing (1644–1912 CE) dynasties. The article focuses on various strands of

Chinese nationalism in the discourse, classified as “rigid”/exclusionist, “soft”/cultural, and liberal. The article discusses the various roles played by these strands of nationalism in the discourse, and the possible future influences of tributary system historiography on China’s evolving self-perception as a nation-state, as well as a regional and global actor. The article argues that “soft”/cultural nationalism dominates the discourse with many authors emphasizing China’s supposed pre-modern culture of pacifist great power politics, implicitly or explicitly advocating the reference value of the topic for China’s present and future international relations.

1. Introduction

Pre-modern China’s so-called “tributary system” of interstate relations is a term originally coined by U.S. American Sinologist and historian John King Fairbank (1907–1991).¹ The term generally refers to the ritual exchange of tributes and pledges of allegiance presented by non-Chinese rulers in exchange for return gifts and symbolic titles granted by the emperor of the respective dynasty ruling over China’s territory. Tributary exchanges, as already noted by Fairbank, also served as occasions to conduct trade and reach trade agreements. During China’s last two dynasties, the Ming (1368–1644) and the Qing (1644–1912), the regular tributaries of China were located in East, Southeast and Inner/Central Asia, with Korea being the most frequent among them. Occasional tributaries included polities as far as the Middle East, East Africa, and Europe.²

The tributary system was initially framed as a culturally-based Sinocentric “world order” of pre-modern Asia, an extension of China’s domestic social norms based on the significance attached to hierarchy, reciprocity, and rites in Confucianism.³ Since the 1990s, its relevance for regional economic history, namely its interconnection with regional flows of silver, has been emphasized as well.⁴ More recently it has received attention especially as a regional political order of East Asia⁵, based on a shared set of norms of interstate relations with cultural roots in Confucianism. It has been argued by a number of authors that the tributary system facilitated a hierarchical and stable interstate order for most of the Ming and Qing dynasties. According to these authors, this interstate order was

1 J. K. Fairbank/S. Y. Têng, On The Ch’ing Tributary System, in: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6 (1941) 2, pp. 135–246; J. K. Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, MA 1968.

2 The number and frequency of Ming-Qing-era tributary missions, based on Chinese official records, is summarized in Fairbank/Têng, *On The Ch’ing Tributary System*, pp. 151–154, 193–197.

3 See Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order*.

4 T. Hamashita, *Kindai Chūgoku no kokusai-teki keiki – Chōkō bōeki shisutemu to kindai Ajia* [The international moment of early modern China – the tribute-trade system and early modern Asia], Tokyo 1990; T. Hamashita, *China, East Asia and the Global Economy*, Abingdon, UK 2008.

5 ‘East Asia’ in the paper will refer to the five Confucian states existing for most of China’s Ming and Qing periods (1368–1912): China, Japan, Korea, Ryukyu (modern Okinawa Prefecture of Japan), and Vietnam, and their successor states today. ‘Eastern Asia’ will be used to refer to the broader geographical space encompassing Southeast and Inner Asia as well.

disrupted by the introduction of Western-originated nationalism and colonialism in the middle of the nineteenth century.⁶

Nevertheless, the conceptualization of a tributary *system* or tributary *order* has also been criticized by certain authors. They argue that tributary exchanges did not constitute the defining element of pre-modern China's foreign relations, which was a mixture of tribute, trade, power politics, and warfare.⁷ US American historian Peter Perdue denies the existence of a tributary system and argues that the recent interest in this concept is simply a tool for propagating the Chinese leadership's "peaceful rise" (officially "peaceful development") narrative. According to Perdue, scholars advocating the idea of a tributary system as a form of peaceful interstate relations turn a blind eye to China's past and present expansionism, especially in the context of the Chinese government's current promotion of its global development strategy known as the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). Other authors argue that the term reproduces a one-sided framing of the regional order shared only among Han Chinese elites, ignoring the perspective of other actors.⁸

Despite doubts and criticism, interest in the topic has been growing worldwide, with the academic discussion of the tributary system clearly becoming a significant part of broader discourses on China's past, present, and future role in the East/Eastern Asian regional order, as well as the global order. As publication data from China's largest scientific database, the CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure, *Zhōngguó Zhīwǎng* 中国知网⁹) shows (see figure 1), the Chinese translations of the term „tributary system“ entered the academic discourse in the late 1980s. The number of academic publications discussing the topic went through a significant increase during the 2000s and reached its peak in 2014, in the aftermath of the 2013 inauguration of the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).

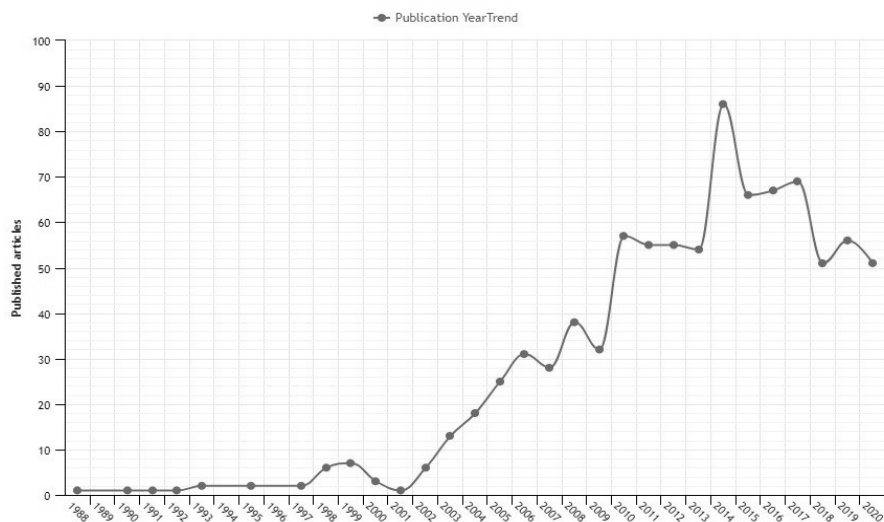
6 See, e.g., D. C. Kang, *East Asia Before the West—Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute*, New York 2012; Li Baojun/Liu Bo, "Chaogong – cefeng" zhixu lunxi [Analysis of the "tributary-feudal" order], in: *Waijiao Pinglun* (2011) 2, pp. 109–121; Yu Changsen, *Shilun chaogong zhidu de yanbian* [On the evolution of the tributary system], in: *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu* (2000) 1, pp. 55–65e.

7 P. C. Perdue, *The Tenacious Tributary System*, in: *Journal of Contemporary China* 24 (2015) 96, pp. 1002–1014; Zhang Feng, *Rethinking the 'Tribute System': Broadening the Conceptual Horizon of Historical East Asian Politics*, in: *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2 (2009) 4, pp. 597–626.

8 Mi Cui, *Gudai Dongnanya guojia dui Zhongguo chaogong yuanyin tansuo* [On the reasons of pre-modern Southeast Asian states' tributary missions to China], in: *Dongnanya Nanya Yanjiu* (2014) 1, pp. 73–78; Zhuang Guotu, *Luelun chaogong zhidu de xuhuan: Yi gudai Zhongguo yu Dongnanya de chaogong guanxi wei li* [On the illusiveness of the tributary system: The case of tributary relations between pre-modern China and Southeast Asia], in: *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu* 3 (2005), 1–9.

9 <https://www.cnki.net/> (accessed 11 November 2020).

Figure 1: Number of academic works on the tributary system by year (altogether 835 items)¹⁰



2. Theoretical and Methodological Approach

2.1 Neo-Tianxiaism

The theoretical approach of the paper is based on on-going deliberations of the so-called Neo-Tianxiaism (*Xīn Tiānxiàzhǔyì* 新天下主义), incorporating various authors and strands with a focus on the relation between present-day China's development as a global actor, and pre-modern China's dominant Tianxia worldview.¹¹ In the historical context, the "Tianxia worldview" (天下观) mostly refers to the Sinocentric Confucian world-making ideology of pre-modern ruling elites, revolving around the centrality of the emperors ruling the territory we call China today. Meanwhile, present-day authors describing themselves as Neo-Tianxiaists emphasize the universalistic aspects of pre-modern Chinese thought and hence criticize the current state-promoted form of nationalism based on the dichotomy of "we" vs. "they" (i.e., of China vs. other nation-states).¹²

While Ban Wang, Zhao Tingyang, and other authors all have normative approaches to Neo-Tianxiaism, the Neo-Tianxiaism of Shanghai-based historian Xu Jilin 许纪霖 (sin-

10 The search was conducted on journal articles, conference papers, and M.A./Ph.D. theses, with the search term "tributary system" (朝贡体系 OR 朝贡制度) in the "topic" field (title, abstract, keywords). Source: <http://new.oversea.cnki.net/index/>, generated on 20 March 2020.

11 The Classical Chinese term *Tiānxià* 天下 literally means "(all) under Heaven", hence refers to "the entire world".

12 For a collection of English-language works on the subject see Ban Wang (ed.), *Chinese Visions of World Order: Tianxia, Culture, and World Politics*, Durham 2017.

ce 1957) can also be used as an analytical framework. Xu Jilin can be characterized as a liberal public intellectual whose theory of Neo-Tianxiaism openly criticizes the current state-promoted nationalist propaganda on China's rise. Instead, Xu develops a universalist approach to define China's position in the global order.¹³ Xu Jilin's works are unique in Chinese scholarship for his effort to develop a typology of the multiple forms of nationalism which can be observed in China today, for which reason his theory was chosen as the basis of the present paper.

While the authors are well aware of the on-going discussions of Chinese nationalisms among observers from outside China, we explicitly refrain from including these valuable contributions into our typology, as this article is aimed at positioning the discourse on the tributary system within the larger discourse on China's position in the world as to be observed among academics from mainland China.

2.2 Xu Jilin's categorization of Chinese nationalisms

Xu Jilin distinguishes between three major strands of nationalism in present-day China. He identifies one of them as "rigid" (*gāngxìng* 刚性) or exclusionist/anti-foreign (*páiwài* 排外) nationalism. This strand of nationalism is based on genetically-bound framings of Chinese nationhood and a general suspicion of or hostility towards "they" groups. The second form of nationalism is "soft" (*róuxìng* 柔性) or cultural nationalism, based on culturally-bound framings of nationhood and a relative openness towards interaction with the outside world. As a third variety of nationalism, Xu Jilin advocates the idea of Neo-Tianxiaism as an ideal way to define a national and global identity for China in the twenty-first century. Xu refers to the Tianxia-worldview which was advocated by traditional elites in China and which, according to his understanding, needs to be adapted and refined under present-day conditions. He argues that by adopting a Neo-Tianxiaist national identity, China's "civilizational rise" (*wénmíng de juéqǐ* 文明的崛起) can match its ongoing economic rise (*jīngjì de juéqǐ* 经济的崛起), and a future global order based on shared human progress instead.¹⁴

According to Xu Jilin, the "soft" and "rigid" strands of nationalism share an important feature: they both juxtapose of "we" vs. "they" groups (of China vis-à-vis other countries, most frequently the West) and stress the particularity of the historical development instead of prioritizing the idea of a shared global progress of human civilization. As Xu Jilin argues, this sort of nation-based particularism has in fact no tradition in pre-modern Chinese thought. The idea of nation and nationalism was only introduced through Japanese translations of Western works in the second half of the nineteenth century. While he does not debate that China's pre-modern Tianxia-worldview was Sinocentric and

13 See his recent English-language work: Xu Jilin, *Rethinking China's Rise: A Liberal Critique*, Cambridge 2018.

14 Xu Jilin, *Xin-Tianxiazhuyi: Weilai shijie zhong de Zhongguo*, 7 December 2014, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/81012.html> (accessed 21 January 2021); Xu Jilin, *Shenme shi Xin-Tianxiazhuyi?*, 27 April 2015, <https://cul.qq.com/a/20150427/020813.htm> (accessed 21 January 2021).

included the so-called “Sino-‘barbarian’ distinction”¹⁵ he, nevertheless, argues that the universalism of the *Tianxia*-worldview was never constrained by conceptual boundaries of nationality and ethnicity. As evidence to this, he points to the considerable degree of flexibility in ethnic boundaries throughout China’s pre-modern history which did not allow for a strict juxtaposition of “we” vs. “they”. Xu Jilin’s Neo-Tianxiaism can be summarized as a liberal strand of national thought challenging the “we” vs. “they” framings of the global order, as well as stressing the importance of shared human progress to which China should continue contributing and from which China should benefit in the future.¹⁶

2.3 Discourse analytical perspectives and methodology

The methodology of discourse analysis is aimed at understanding the struggle for narrative dominance within a given community of discourse participants.¹⁷ Historiography on the tributary system is regarded here as a case in point, the analysis of which reveals a discursive struggle for dominance over the process of inventing an adequate narrative for China’s new and self-acclaimed role in the global order. By deconstructing the analyzed texts and pointing out their key arguments, discursive strategies, and lines of argumentation, the authors of the paper intend to investigate to which extent the various forms of Chinese nationalism manifest themselves in the discourse. It is expected to see the authors of the analyzed works directly or indirectly struggling amongst themselves and with the prevalent state-promoted form of nationalism. Their contributions are expected to fall into the categories developed by Xu Jilin, however, the authors of the present paper are fully aware of the fact that – as Xu Jilin also notes¹⁸ – categories of nationalism need to be seen as “ideal types” intended to facilitate research while in practice hybrid cases frequently occur.

2.4 Formation of the corpus

The present paper is based on the qualitative discourse analysis of 30 Chinese-language journal articles published in mainland China between 2000 and 2019 on the Ming-Qing-era (1368–1912) tributary system, available in CNKI. The selection of the articles is based on the bibliometric analysis of download and citation frequencies as provided

15 The term Sino-‘barbarian’ distinction (*huá-yí zhī biàn* 华夷之辩) is frequently used in modern Chinese historiography to refer to the persistence of notions of Chinese cultural superiority towards outsiders attested in pre-modern Chinese literary culture, on this see e.g. Li Baojun/Liu Bo, “Chaogong - cefeng”; H. Wang, *China from Empire to Nation-State*, M. G. Hill (trans.), Cambridge, MA 2014, pp. 101–145; Yu Changsen, *Shilun chaogong zhidu*.

16 Xu Jilin, *Shenme shi Xin Tianxia-zhuyi?*

17 S. Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse: Eine Einführung*, 6th edn, Münster 2015; R. Keller, *Diskursforschung: Eine Einführung für SozialwissenschaftlerInnen*, 4th edn, Münster 2011; M. Reisigl and R. Wodak, *The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)*, in: R. Wodak/M. Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*, 3rd ed., Los Angeles 2016, pp. 23–61.

18 Xu Jilin, “Shenme shi Xin Tianxia-zhuyi?”

by the CNKI database.¹⁹ In addition, the selection involved several other criteria, one of which was the temporal and spatial diversity of the topics discussed in the articles (Ming vs. Qing dynasties, reference to Korea, Japan, other East Asian states, as well as certain Southeast Asian polities).²⁰ The criterion of temporal diversity with relation to the publication year within the 2000 to 2020 period was included as well. Furthermore, the formation of the corpus was also based on the criterion of disciplinary diversity, for the reason that the discourse brings together experts both from the field of history, as well as political science/international relations theory (including authors with an academic background in both).

Historians focus on analyzing primary sources in order to assess the nature of the Ming and Qing dynasties' tributary interactions. Their contributions to the discourse often include implicit or explicit judgements on the referential value of the tributary system for today's international relations. In contrast, political scientists openly discuss the idea of a Chinese theory of international relations mentioning the tributary system only in passing and reducing it to a historical reference to China's past as a peaceful hegemon in the region. In short, by looking at both discourse communities, the historians' and the political scientists', we can understand implicit arguments in the historiography more clearly and refer to the political implications of the historiography on the tributary system with less speculation about implicit meanings.

3. Nationalisms in Recent Historiography on the Ming-Qing Tributary System

3.1 "Rigid" or exclusionist nationalism

"Rigid" or exclusionist nationalism as a form of argumentation is only marginally represented in the discourse on the tributary system. It can be found mainly in those contributions which discuss present-day political conflicts in the region, such as the South China Sea issue and China's relations with Japan. While there are no instances of explicitly ethnically-based exclusionist lines of argumentation, there are certain arguments which involve one-sided Sinocentric interpretations lacking possible non-Chinese perspectives, and at times implicitly advocating unilateral political or military action. The argumen-

19 As of 18 May 2020, among the 30 articles consulted for the paper, the following seven are among the ten most cited articles in CNKI (search term '朝贡体系OR 朝贡制度'; target: "subject" [title, abstract, keywords] of journal articles, M.A./Ph.D. theses, conference papers; publication period: 2000-01-01 to 2020-05-18): Li Xiao – Li Junjiu (2006) [#1, 354 citations], Qin Yaqing (2006) [#2, 123], Yu Changsen (2000) [#3, 122], Jung Yong-hwa (2006) [#4, 116], Zhuang Guotu (2005a) [#5, 98], Li Yunquan (2006) [#7, 73], Jian Junbo (2009) [#8, 70].

20 The paper discusses the tributary system as an interstate order, primarily focusing on East Asia, and to a lesser extent on the Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic sedentary polities of Southeast Asia. The definition of 'state' in the present paper is primarily based on the characteristics of Ming-Qing-era East Asian/Confucian sedentary polities, most notably characterized by their centralized bureaucracies, see also see Kang, *East Asia Before the West*; D. Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories And Approaches In A Connected World*, Reissue edition, Cambridge, UK 2011. The Chinese discourse on tributary exchanges with Inner Asia (Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang) will not be included, due to the controversy on whether or not state structures existed in these regions populated by primarily nomadic and semi-nomadic ethnicities at the time.

tation developed by authors related to exclusionist nationalism stresses the legitimacy of China's domination of the area once covered by the tributary system.

In her article on the early Ming dynasty's maritime strategy, historian and expert of ideological education Ren Nianwen discusses the early Ming tributary system as an interstate security system dominated by the Ming dynasty, aimed at upholding regional stability and prosperity.²¹ Ren defends the Ming occupation of Vietnam (1407–1427) as a responsible step to maintain regional stability following the violent dethronement of the former Trần dynasty by the Hồ dynasty. The military actions taken during the Zheng He missions (1405–1433) are presented in a similar manner, being described as defensive moves tackling foreign aggression.²² Implicitly referring to the ongoing South China Sea territorial dispute, Ren argues that

*the Ming dynasty accomplished its strategic aims in the South China Sea and even in the Indian Ocean, and as a pre-modern feudal empire played an active and leading role in maintaining international order around the South China Sea, setting an example for present-day Chinese maritime strategy.*²³

Japan is in fact rarely discussed in detail in the articles on the tributary system. This is due to Japan's ambiguous historical attitudes towards the Sinocentric tributary system of the Ming and Qing eras. Academic research shows that Japan was an occasional tributary of Ming China until the Imjin War (1592–1598), with economic gain likely to be the main motivation of Japanese elites to participate in tributary exchanges. During the Meiji period (1868–1912), as Japan's regional influence rose, Japan pressurized Ryukyu (1877) and Korea (1894) to terminate their tributary relations with the Qing court, leading to the dissolution of the East Asian tributary order by the end of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895).²⁴

The discussions of Japan's role in the tributary system revolve around the long-standing Sino-Japanese rivalry for regional dominance and are usually aimed at connecting the subversive attitudes of pre-modern Japanese elites to the country's modern-era imperialism, as well as to recent supposedly expansionist tendencies. These articles use the “we” vs. “they” dichotomy and memories of the struggles against Japan's expansionism to claim legitimacy for China's rise to dominance in the region. Among articles available in CNKI which deal exclusively with Japan's role in the tributary system, political scientist

21 Ren Nianwen, Mingchu Nanhai chaogong zhidu yu fengjian guojia haiyang zhanlue shulun, in: Taipingyang Xuebao 22 (2014) 8, pp. 94–105.

22 Three military confrontations involving foreign leaders refusing to present tribute to the Ming (on Sumatra and Sri Lanka) are recorded in the main Chinese sources, most notably the *Ming Shilu* 明实录 court chronicles.

23 Ren Nianwen, Mingchu Nanhai chaogong zhidu, p. 94. All translations from Chinese-language sources were made by the authors.

24 Fairbank and Têng, On The Ch'ing Tributary System, pp. 151–154, 193–197; Fu Baichen, Lüelun Riben zai Dongya chaogong tixi zhong de jueye yu zuoyong, in: Shehui Kexue Zhanxian (2007) 6, pp. 150–55; Kang, East Asia Before the West, pp. 55–81; S. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Zentrum und Peripherie in China und Ostasien, in: S. Linhart/S. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (eds.), Ostasien 1600–1900, Vienna 2004, pp. 81–98; S. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Ist Ostasien eine europäische Erfindung? Anmerkungen zu einem Artikel von Wang Hui, in: S. Linhart/S. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Ostasien im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Vienna 2007, pp. 9–21.

Wu Xinbo's work has the highest number of citations and downloads (43 citations, 2119 downloads, CNKI, 19 Octobe 2020).²⁵ Wu's work revolves around demonstrating that throughout history, Japan's elites continuously held expansionist and subversive attitudes towards China under different "garbs" or "disguises" (*wàiyī* 外衣): under the tributary system, under nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperialism, or more recently as part of the U.S.-led regional alliance. The bottom line of Wu's argumentation is that Japan did not learn anything from history and its leadership has not adjusted its attitudes as of the early twenty-first century. In a similar vein, political scientist Zheng Hailin compares Japanese prime minister Abe Shinzō's (since 2012) foreign policy to that of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (the shogun leading the Imjin War against Korea and China between 1592 and 1598).²⁶

In summary, the authors writing on Japan's role in the tributary system juxtapose China's role of preserving peace and stability with Japan's aggressive expansionism, neglecting the fact that their arguments relate to different historical periods. They use analogy as the tool by which to make their arguments plausible, a method frequently employed in traditional Chinese historiography. This approach, often related to the Chinese-language phrase *gǔ wéi jīn yòng* 古为今用 ("using the past to serve the present"), intentionally makes the writing of history an instrument of current politics. In this sense, the tributary system is only a reference to make China's claim to be a peaceful great power plausible to the reader. The complexity of Japan's dealing with the tributary system is rarely mentioned and never taken into consideration. As we see from Ren Nianwen's contribution, the conflict-ridden issue of China's claims in the South China Sea also leads historians to implicit political statements. However, in this and similar articles, the past is the focus of attention, the political implications are only mentioned in passing. This is a sign of the professionalization of the different disciplines which has been going on since the late nineteen seventies with history and political science developing divergent modes of analysis, interpretation, and argumentation. Our analysis shows that there is rigid nationalism in the discussion of the tributary system. But it is clearer and more prevalent in political science than in history.

3.2 "Soft" or cultural nationalism

The majority of articles analyzed for this paper can primarily be connected to the strand of nationalism described by Xu Jilin as "soft" or cultural nationalism. Most of these articles are contributions of historians and tend to avoid relating to contemporary issues directly. They typically tend to emphasize the dichotomy between the "we"-group (China, Chinese culture, and the tributary system based on it) and the "they"-group(s) (primarily the West and its colonial order). China under the Ming-Qing tributary order is generally depicted as self-centred, inward-looking, non-expansionist, emphasizing symbolic

25 Wu Xinbo, Riben yu Dongya "chaogong tixi", Guoji Guancha (2003) 6, pp. 60–66.

26 Zheng Hailin, Jiangou "haishang sichou zhi lu" de lishi jingyan yu zhanlue sikao, Taipingyang Xuebao 22 (2014) 1, pp. 1–6.

hierarchy instead of political and economic coercion and exploitation. In contrast, the West under the colonial order is described as outward-looking, expansionist, advocating nominal equality but pursuing political control and economic exploitation. As a result, polarization and self-victimization are frequent discursive strategies in these works. The supposedly inherent pacifism of the tributary system and its role as a facilitator of interstate stability in East and Southeast Asia is frequently mentioned in this context. Compared to the number of concurrent armed conflicts in Europe, it is indeed arguable that interstate stability characterized most of the Ming and Qing eras in East Asia.²⁷ China's armed conflicts with its continental Southeast Asian neighbours were limited to the Qing-Burmese border wars (1765–1769).²⁸ It is also widely acknowledged by scholars inside and outside China that during the large-scale Zheng He maritime missions (1405–1433) which reached as far as East Africa, China achieved maritime military hegemony all over Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, but unlike European colonizing powers in the subsequent centuries, refrained from the armed conquest and economic exploitation of subordinate polities. While the myth of the missions as entirely peaceful and void of political intervention needs to be deconstructed, the Ming dynasty's maritime ambitions apparently did not go beyond the supervision of key trade nodes and networks throughout the Indo-Pacific maritime space, especially of the strategically important Strait of Malacca.²⁹ During the missions, tributary exchanges served as ritualized acts of securing the allegiance of foreign rulers, as well as of declaring the Chinese court's recognition of their legitimacy (for primary sources see esp. the *Ming Shilù* 明实录 court records).

Referring to historical evidence on the limited number of armed conflicts with East and Southeast Asian polities, authors who argue in favour of the inherent pacifism and stability of the tributary system include historian Chen Zhiping, according to whom the “Ming-era tributary system was established with the principal aim of maintaining peaceful co-existence”.³⁰ Political scientists Li Baojun and Liu Bo argue that China's tributary system and the Western colonial order represent two essentially different models of “centre-periphery” power structures, the tributary system being “based on stability and friendship among countries”, while the Western model was aimed at expansion by military force.³¹ Historian He Aiguo describes a clash between the tributary and colonial

27 The Ming Chinese conquest of Vietnam (1407–1428) and the Imjin War (1592–1598, fought between Japan and an alliance of Korea and China) are generally seen as the only examples of East Asian interstate armed conflicts between the foundation of China's Ming dynasty (1368) and the First Opium War of 1839–1842, see Kang, *East Asia Before the West*, pp. 1–16.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

29 More on this in A. Schottenhammer, *China's Rise and Retreat as a Maritime Power*, in: R. J. Antony/A. Schottenhammer, *Beyond the Silk Roads: New Discourses on China's Role in East Asian Maritime History*, Wiesbaden 2018, pp. 189–212; T. Sen, *The Impact of Zheng He's Expeditions on Indian Ocean Interactions*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 79 (2016) 3, pp. 609–636.

30 Chen Zhiping, *Mingdai “Haishang Sichou zhi Lu” fazhan moshi de lishi fansi*, *Zhongguo Shijianjiu* (2019) 1, p. 192; for a similar line of argument regarding the Qing-era tributary system see Shen Chunying, *Lüelun Qingchao chaogong tixi*, *Qiqiha'er Shifan Gaodeng Zhuanke Xuexiao Xuexiao* (2006) 3, pp. 76–77.

31 Li Baojun and Liu Bo, *Chaogong – cefeng*, p. 110.

orders in Southeast Asia, whereby the “friendly neighbourly relations” among Ming China and its tributaries were disrupted by Western encroachment. He Aiguo is also among the few authors openly referring to Marxist historical theory when he juxtaposes China’s foreign policy model based on feudal socio-economic relations with that of the West, belonging to the primitive accumulation phase of capitalism.³² Historian Song Xiaoqin is especially assertive about the supposed pacifism of Confucianism, Chinese culture, and the Chinese nation as a whole, which she sees as the sources of the pacifism and stability of the tributary order. According to Song,

*The Chinese nation is a peace-loving nation which has always advocated the maintenance of good relations with neighbours and the harmonization of relations among all peoples. Chinese rulers developed their relations with neighbouring countries and ethnicities through the tributary system, whose purpose was clearly not conquest and expansion.*³³

Many authors cite passages from pre-modern sources supporting the pacifism narrative. The most frequently quoted pre-modern source is the *Huáng Míng zǔxùn* 皇明祖训 [Ancestral Injunctions of the August Ming] attributed to the founder of the Ming dynasty, Taizu (r. 1368–1398).³⁴ In certain passages of this text, as well as in certain edicts recorded in the *Míng Tàizǔ Shílu* 明太祖实录 [Veritable Records of Ming Taizu]³⁵, Taizu warns against invading foreign countries without clear reasons. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of “enjoying the shared fortune of peace and tranquillity” (“共享太平之福”).

Regarding the evaluation of the Ming-Qing tributary system from an economic perspective, many authors argue that it was detrimental to China economically, as excessive return gifts were bestowed in exchange for the tribute of foreign rulers (in Chinese usually described with the phrase *hòu wǎng báo lái* 厚往薄来 [giving generously, receiving little]). The restrictions on foreign trade, including the major “maritime bans” (*bǎijìn* 海禁) of the early to middle Ming and early Qing, are usually discussed together with the tributary system as a proof of the ineffective economic policy of the Ming and Qing dynasties. This is usually embedded into the overall contrasting of the pacifist/symbolic/ineffective tributary system vs. the expansionist/exploitative Western colonial system.³⁶ However, this line of argumentation overlooks a number of research results in the field of economic history questioning the centrality of *hòu wǎng báo lái* to the tributary system.

32 He Aiguo, *Lüelun shiliu-shiqi shiji Zhongguo yu Ouzhou lieqiang guanyu Dongnanya shi wu de chongtu*, Kunming Ligong Daxue Xuebao (She Ke Ban) 1 (2001) 4, pp. 41–42; see also Chen Zhiping, Mingdai “Haishang Sichou zhi Lu”, pp. 192–95; Xu Bo, *Dui gudai Dongya chaogong tixi de zaisikao*, Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu (2017) 3, p. 102.

33 Song Xiaoqin, *Shilun Zhongguo zai Dongya chaogong tixi zhong de diwei he zuoyong*, Dalian Daxue Xuebao 38 (2017) 4, p. 10.

34 Chen Zhiping, Mingdai “Haishang Sichou zhi Lu”, p. 192; Jian Junbo, *Zhonghua chaogong tixi: guannian jiegou yu gongneng*, Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu 30 (2009) 1, p. 140; Ren Nianwen, *Mingchu Nanhai chaogong zhidu*, p. 99; Zheng Hailin, *Jiangou “haishang sichou zhi lu”*, p. 2.

35 Chen Zhiping, Mingdai “Haishang Sichou zhi Lu”, p. 202.

36 *Ibid.*; He Aiguo, *Lüelun shiliu-shiqi shiji Zhongguo yu Ouzhou*; Ren Nianwen, *Mingchu Nanhai chaogong zhidu*; Song Xiaoqin, *Shilun Zhongguo zai Dongya*; Yu Changsen, *Shilun chaogong zhidu*. demonstrative for today?

Articles criticizing the deficit policy behind the tributary system point to the importance of the so-called 'tribute trade' (*cháogòng mào yì* 朝贡贸易).³⁷ They also discuss the role of tributary exchanges as facilitators of reaching agreements on "frontier trade" (*hùshì* 互市) in port cities, in times when no "maritime ban" was in effect.³⁸

Emphasizing the detrimental effect of the tributary system on economic exchange can have two different meanings. On the one hand, authors implicitly argue that one of the reasons Ming China lagged behind when entering the competition with European colonialism was its negligence of economic factors and its overemphasis of symbolic meanings and ritual. They criticize China's insistence on traditional values which depowered the empire over time. On the other hand, the discussion of the economic implications of the tributary system stresses that China benefitted less than the secondary states and creates an image of pure altruism of the Ming and Qing dynasties. It underlines the difference between China and European colonialism in a way which makes China look positive and altruistic since it was not focused on its own benefits. Both argumentations contribute to creating the image of Chinese pacifism deeply rooted in Chinese culture, implying that as this attitude had persisted over many centuries, it could still be valid today.

The majority of articles which can be related to the "soft" or cultural strand of nationalism thus builds on "we" vs. "they" groupings but remains descriptive, without challenging the established narratives on how the "we" and the "they" is defined. These articles are based on mainstream Eurocentric conceptual frameworks and teleologies, in the sense that their main aim is to show how China and the tributary system differed from the West and its colonial/treaty system. They rarely go beyond self-victimization and the insistence on supposed pacifist characteristics of China's traditional culture of foreign relations. Thus they implicitly refer to the country's present-day foreign policy. Meanwhile, a smaller number of authors, while remaining focused on the "we" vs. "they" view of world history and international relations, also intends to use the historical experience of the tributary system in order to create new, Sinocentric conceptual frameworks for the explanation of China's past, present, and future role in the global order.

With 391 citations and 49,882 downloads recorded in CNKI as of 19 October 2020, the article of economists Li Xiao and Li Junjiu was by far more cited and downloaded than any other article returned for the "tributary system" search term in the "topic" field

37 The so-called "tribute-trade" (i.e. commercial exchanges conducted as part of the tributary exchanges) usually involved a more significant amount of goods than the rather symbolically important exchange of tributes for gifts. They were furthermore usually taxed by the Chinese authorities. Under the early to middle Ming and early Qing "maritime bans", "tribute-trade" was the main avenue of legal trade between China and the outside world, see He Hongyong, *Ming qianqi Zhongguo yu Dongnanya guojia de chaogong maoyi*, Yunnan Shehui Kexue (2003) 1, pp. 86–90; Kang, *East Asia Before the West*, 107–138; Li Jinming, *Lun Mingchu de haijin yu chaogong maoyi*, Fujian Luntan (Renwen Shehui Kexue Ban) (2006) 7, pp. 73–77.

38 For more on the institution of 'frontier trade' in port cities, see Qi Meiqin, *Dui Qingdai chaogong tizhi diwei de zairenshi*, *Zhongguo Bianjiang Shidi Yanjiu*, (2006) 1, pp. 47–55+147; Li Yunquan, *Zailun Qingdai chaogong tizhi*, *Shandong Shifan Daxue Xuebao* (Renwen Shehui Kexue Ban) 56 (2011) 5, pp. 93–100.

(see also footnote in 2.4) during the formation of the corpus.³⁹ The article in fact discusses the tributary system only to a minor extent, primarily focusing on the economic, political, and military aspects of the Belt & Road Initiative, including the importance of China's establishment as a twenty-first-century maritime power. In their article Li & Li intend to explain the maritime tributary system as part of a larger narrative of Chinese history based on the strategic thinking of ruling elites, in their presentation a constant conflict between *sàifáng* 塞防 ("fortification defence", ref. to the defence of continental borders) and *hǎifáng* 海防 ("maritime defence"). Li & Li argue that throughout China's pre-modern history, continental defence was at the core of the ruling elites' strategic thinking, since the threat to their authority posed by northern and western nomads and semi-nomads by far outweighed the threats from the sea. Li & Li present the maritime tributary system as a mostly ceremonial and economically detrimental (*hòu wǎng báo lái*) institution to boost the domestic legitimacy of the ruling elites by gathering symbolic recognitions from foreign rulers of the maritime world. The bottom line of their argumentation is that up until the modern era the construction of maritime power was not at the centre of Chinese strategic thinking, for which reason the country faces a novel challenge in the construction of the "twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Roads" as part of the Belt & Road Initiative. Their article is based on historical analysis and seems to use history as the often-cited "mirror" for political decision-makers to take into account when it comes to defining current policies.

Some political scientists use the example of the Sinocentric pre-modern order in their attempt to define a theory of international relations with "Chinese characteristics" as juxtaposed to the Western system which they regard as self-centred and hegemonistic. In his highly-cited article (126 citations, CNKI, 19 October 2020), political scientist Qin Yaqing 秦亚青 argues that China has experienced an identity crisis throughout the last 150 years, and needs to establish its own theory of international relations drawing inspiration from its own historical experiences.⁴⁰ According to Qin, pre-modern China had no concept of an "international order" in the way it developed through the continuous competition and conflicts among European nation-states. Instead, it had a self-centred and hierarchical understanding of the world order (the Tianxia-order and the tributary system) in which its ideal was to maintain harmony and stability. In his view, the key to promote the emergence of China's identity as a responsible global actor is to combine the positive aspects of the modern Western-originated international order based on equality and sovereignty with the Tianxia-order and its appreciation of harmony, stability, as well as avoidance of hegemonistic foreign policy as practised by the US. Qin advocates the establishment of a "Chinese School" of international relations theory based on China's particular historical experiences (incl. the tributary system), as a counterpart to the We-

39 Li Xiao/Li Junjiu, *Yidai yilu yu Zhongguo diyuan zhengzhi jingji zhanlüe de chonggou*, *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* (2015) 10, pp. 30–59, 156–157.

40 Qin Yaqing, *Guoji guanxi lilun Zhongguo xuepai shengcheng de keneng he biran*, *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* (2006) 3, pp. 7–13, at 4.

stern schools of international relations theory rooted in Western historical experiences (e.g. the so-called “English School” of Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, et al.). Qin develops his visions of the future by seeing the Western and Chinese traditions complementing each other and avoid their respective deficiencies by way of bringing their strengths together. In this regard, Qin relies on the “we” vs. “they” dichotomy in order to eventually overcome it.⁴¹

Political scientist and historian Shang Huipeng 尚会鹏 also relates the tributary system to Chinese particularity, but he does not see the possibility of making the two different traditions merge.⁴² Shang explains the tributary system with the help of the anthropological theory of “roles” instead of applying modern Western theories of international relations, based on the notions of national sovereignty non-existent in pre-modern China. He relies primarily on the *chāxù* 差序 [“order based on difference”] theory of Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong 费孝通 (1910–2005) dividing traditional Chinese social relations into the categories of *qīnrén* 亲人 [relatives, close acquaintances], *shúrén* 熟人 [acquaintances], *shēngrén* 生人 [strangers]. According to Shang, the tributary system was based on the self-perception of the ruling dynasties as the centre of a hierarchical world order, and hence as guarantors of stability and financial well-being for “relatives” (i.e. close tributaries like Korea and Vietnam) and to a lesser extent for “acquaintances” (other regular tributaries), as well as on keeping a respectful distance to “strangers” (polities only marginally involved in the tributary system, or not at all). Shang argues that China’s self-perception under the tributary order differed fundamentally from the exploitative nature of Western colonialism. In contrast to the *chāxù* understanding of inter-state-relations, the self-perception of Western powers was formed through constant interstate conflicts which eventually generated the idea of diplomatic equality and national sovereignty. Political scientist Su Changhe 苏长和 argues that the term “tributary system” and the focus on hierarchy misrepresents the real nature of pre-modern China’s approach to interstate relations.⁴³ According to his understanding, the tributary system was, indeed, primarily based on the symbiosis (*gòngshēng* 共生) of actors with different capabilities. In contrast, the hegemonic foreign policy of the U.S., the universalistic claims of U.S.-promoted “liberalism” including its “Western ‘barbarian’ distinction” (*Xī-yí zhī biàn* 西夷之辨)⁴⁴ do not guarantee a stable future international order. For this reason, Su opines that China should rediscover and promote the “symbiosis” element of its pre-modern culture of foreign relations. Su’s article resembles the rigid nationalist argument in so far as it is based on an antagonistic “we” vs. “they” dichotomy. However, his argument is different

41 For more on the topic incl. on Qin Yaqing’s works see N. Noesselt, *Alternative Weltordnungsmodelle? IB-Diskurse in China*, Wiesbaden 2010.

42 Shang Huipeng, *Lunren yu Tianxia – Jiedu yi chaogong tixi wei hexin de gudai Dongya guoji zhixu*, *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* 30 (2009) 2, pp. 29–43, 191–192.

43 Su Changhe, *Cong guanxi dao gongsheng – Zhongguo daguo waijiao lilun de wenhua he zhidu chanshi*, *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* (2016) 1, pp. 5–25, 156.

44 A reference to pre-modern China’s “Sino-‘barbarian’ distinction”, see footnote in 2.2.

from the advocates of China's claim for dominance in the region as he underlines the shared benefit for all nation-states.

Political scientist and historian Zheng Hailin's 郑海麟 article starts by praising the Belt & Road Initiative (2013) and quoting from its inaugurating speech by President Xi Jinping.⁴⁵ The article is structured by a tripartite comparison looking at China's tributary system under the Yongle-era (1403–1424, incl. six of the seven Zheng He missions), Japanese imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and US. foreign policy of the post-WWII period. Zheng contrasts Japan's nineteenth- to twentieth-century foreign policy solely relying on military force with that of Ming China during the Yongle-era and the post-WW II US., both of whose foreign policy strategies, according to Zheng, were based on the attractiveness of their value systems. In the case of Yongle-era China, Zheng points to the Confucian concepts of *rénzhèng* 仁政 [benevolent governance] and *wángdào* 王道 ['kingly way'/rule by righteousness] as basic governance principles guiding both the internal and foreign politics of the time. These are compared to the current U.S. values of democracy, equality, and human rights. The bottom line of the article is that China should establish and promote an attractive and consistent "system of core values" in international relations based on its positive historical experiences, incl. the early Ming-era tributary system.

While articles belonging to the category of "rigid" nationalism openly use the past to propel the legitimacy of China's present-day territorial claims, the contributions from the category of soft nationalism refrain from propagandistically "using the past to serve the present". Instead, they applaud the pacifism and altruism of the past as if to indirectly criticize belligerent tendencies. By their style, their choice of arguments and their suggestions for the future, be they implicit or explicit, they keep a distance to those who openly legitimize China's strive for regional hegemony. Nevertheless, as in the case of the articles belonging to the rigid nationalism strand, they rely on dichotomizing China vis-à-vis the "other". This "other", in most cases, is the West, in contrast with "rigid" nationalist articles which prefer to focus on China's tributary system vis-à-vis Japan's expansionist traditions of foreign policy.

3.3 Liberal nationalism

The main difference between articles belonging to the categories of either "rigid" or "soft" nationalisms and those which can be classified as liberal nationalist or Neo-Tianxiaist consists of the absence of dichotomization. Neo-Tianxiaist articles refrain from essentialising the difference between China and the "other", be it China vis-à-vis Japan or China vis-à-vis the West. They focus on the nation-state as the principal unit of world history, but at the same time, their primary concern is a shared progress of all nation-states by drawing on the experiences of various past and present political orders. They often intend to "demythologize" the tributary system, by problematizing the one-sided

45 Zheng Hailin, Jiangou „haishang sichou zhi lu“.

worldview of the primary sources, as well as the selective and biased use of historical sources by present-day authors.

Several authors argue that modern scholarship on the tributary system mostly reproduces a one-sided worldview only existing in the minds of pre-modern Han Chinese elites.⁴⁶ They emphasize that many authors neglect that other states participated in tributary exchanges mostly for economic gains and at times in order to seek political support in their conflicts among each other. The secondary states in the tributary systems are not seen as believers in a Sinocentric world order, but as pragmatically joining and using the system for their respective benefits. Xu Bo and Wang Qing criticize the re-/de-contextualization of primary sources on the tributary system by modern authors who interpret them with the aim to propel the narrative on China's traditions of pacifist foreign policy.⁴⁷ Xu Bo furthermore argues that despite the negative experiences of Western colonialism in China, the referential value of the tributary system "permeated with [the hierarchical worldview of] Confucianism" should not be exaggerated in a world order based on equality among nation-states and national sovereignty.⁴⁸ Li Yunquan and Wang Hui criticize the framing of world history based on the binaries of China vs. the West and the tributary system vs. the colonial/treaty system. As they point out, pre-modern China had an advanced system of treaties parallel to the tributary system which regulated "frontier trade" with its neighbours, including its maritime exchanges with Southeast Asia and the European colonial powers active in the region.⁴⁹

Authors writing within the framework of liberal nationalism are limited in their numbers in comparison to those that can be linked to "soft" or cultural nationalism. They go against the mainstream in so far as they clearly deconstruct the "greatness" of the tributary system. They implicitly reject the narrative on China's glorious past and its allegedly positive impact on peace and stability in Asia, by explicitly pointing at shortcomings, lack of sources, and the tendency of oversimplification in the discourse on the tributary system. This way, they undermine the argumentative strategies of the "rigid" and "soft" nationalists.

4. Conclusion

The mainstream of historical writing belongs to the strain of nationalism which was labelled as "soft" or cultural nationalism and uses the tributary system primarily to construct the cultural "self" and "other". This strain juxtaposes either the altruist China

46 Lü Zhengang, Mantuoluo tixi: Gudai Dongnanya de diqu zhixu yanjiu, Taipingyang Xuebao 25 (2017) 8, pp. 27–39; Mi Cui, Gudai Dongnanya guojia; Zhuang Guotu, Lüelun chaogong zhidu de xuhuan; Zhuang Guotu, Lun Zheng He xia Xiyang dui Zhongguo haiwai kaituo shiye de pouhui - jian lun chaogong zhidu de xujiaxing, Xiamen Daxue Xuebao (Zhaxue Shehui Kexue Ban) (2005) 3, pp. 70–77.

47 Xu Bo, Dui gudai Dongya chaogong tixi; Wang Qing, Zhongguo chuantong duiwai guanxi de liang zhong moshi - Liyi renzhi yu tixi jiegou fenxi, Ph.D. dissertation, Tsinghua University, 2007, pp. 2–24, 96–100.

48 Ibid., p. 102.

49 Li Yunquan, Zailun Qingdai chaogong tizhi; Wang, China from Empire to Nation-State, p. 129.

with the colonialist West or the pacifism of China with the aggression and subversiveness of Japan. The limited number of texts belonging to the strain of nationalism which was labelled as “rigid” or exclusionist seems to be more explicit about using the past to claim the creation of a new Sinocentric hegemonic order in the present. A similarly small group of articles belongs to the liberal form of nationalism which seems to be the most interested in deconstructing the glorification of the tributary system for its alleged pacifism and altruism. Either explicitly or implicitly, these articles also criticize the state-promoted “peaceful rise” or “peaceful development” narrative based on “we” vs. “they” dichotomies of world history and the present-day global order.

The state narrative of China’s “peaceful rise” constitutes the folio against which all of the above-analysed articles are written. Authors either want to show their support for, alternative ideas about, or criticism of the state narrative and therefore refrain from debating openly with each other. The state narrative which has given momentum to this outpour of articles on the tributary system are the “peaceful rise” and “Belt and Road” narratives in which China suggests a new world order, supposedly not for its own benefit, but for the good of all nations around the world. For the readers in China to be convinced that China’s stretching out to the world at large can be designed in a way that Mao Zedong’s policy of “not seeking hegemony” (*bù chēngbà* 不称霸) will not be forgotten, the tributary system is used as an example of how to develop peaceful relations with other countries. This is also well attested by the publication numbers (see figure 1): prior to publicly announcing China’s “peaceful rise” (2003), the tributary system was hardly mentioned, and it has never received as much scholarly attention as in the follow-up of the inauguration of the Belt & Road Initiative (2013).

The characteristic “soft” or cultural nationalism of the discourse in most works is not only in line with the state-promoted grand narratives but also has an either implicit or explicit didactic function. It is closely connected to China’s self-perception as a (re) emerging regional and global power and to the question of how based on historical experiences China should act as a “responsible great power” in the present and the future. The tributary system is seen by many authors as a Chinese-made and China-centred model for regional stability and hence as having referential value for current policies. The historical experiences of Western colonialism, on the other hand, are juxtaposed to the Chinese experience and sometimes serve as the warning against engaging in hegemonic and economically exploitative foreign policy.

“Rigid” or exclusionist nationalism in the sense of outright xenophobia or militarism is not detectable, which is likely to be related to the normative influence of the Chinese party-state, interested both in generating nationalism to uphold its legitimacy and in keeping nationalist sentiments under control for the sake of securing its economic interests.⁵⁰ The exclusionist form of nationalism, however, is noticeable in cases where territorial disputes enter the discourse, and especially in discussions of Japan’s role in

50 Lü Zhengang, Mantuoluo tixi: Gudai Dongnanya de diqu zhixu yanjiu, Taipingyang Xuebao 25 (2017) 8, pp. 27–39; Mi Cui, Gudai Dongnanya guojia; Zhuang Guotu, Lüelun chaogong zhidu de xuhuan; Zhuang Guotu,

the region. The exclusionist form of nationalism does not criticize or repudiate the state narrative but is more outspoken when it comes to addressing possible conflicts as well as the legitimacy of China's claim for dominance in the region.

The role of liberal nationalism vis-a-vis state-promoted grand narratives and the other strands of nationalism can be characterized as twofold. It is hardly surprising that the Chinese leadership is moving beyond the constraints of nationalism while envisioning China as a future world power. It is in this context that the concept *rénlèi mìngyùn gòngtóngtǐ* 人类命运共同体 [“community of (shared) destiny of humankind”] was first propagated during the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012. Thus the state promoted narrative on China's future has created an overlap with liberal nationalism and its belief in a shared progress of all nation-states. For this reason, it can be said that even the liberal nationalist articles are not totally out of line with official state-promoted narratives. While their motivations for this shared vision might be different from those of the state, this similarity is striking.

On the other hand, the present paper also demonstrates that most of the collected articles reveal a certain fixation on thinking in “we” vs. “they” terms and the glorification of China's pacifist traditions in comparison to exploitative or belligerent outsiders also mentioned in state-promoted narratives. It is thus the intention to deconstruct “we” vs. “they” dichotomies and to demythologize the “glorious past” which makes liberal nationalist authors stand out from the mainstream of the discourse. Nevertheless, the articles belonging to the category of liberal nationalism do not differ from those belonging to the other varieties of nationalisms as, from an epistemological point of view, they do not challenge the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis and in this sense do not show any difference from the mainstream articles. Finally, the critical reflection on the constructedness of national identities, borders, etc. prevalent in today's Western academia is apparently non-existent in the analyzed discourse.⁵¹

The analyzed articles indicate that the majority of mainland Chinese historians is increasingly keen on rediscovering the country's past imperial traditions for their present and future relevance. The past is increasingly seen as a resource which can and should be used in order to provide current political strategies with a special blessing. Implicitly, most authors argue on the basis that the present is not altogether different from the past and that continuity of past and present is of positive value. The uncertainty of the future is thus contained by knowing about the past. Much in contrast to Maoist times when the past had to be overcome to build a formidable future, now the bright future is said to be the continuation of a glorious past.

Lun Zheng He xia Xiyang dui Zhongguo haiwai kaituo shiye de pohuai - jian lun chaogong zhidu de xujiaxing, Xiamen Daxue Xuebao (Zhaxue Shehui Kexue Ban) (2005) 3, pp. 70–77; no. 8 (2017)

51 Xu Bo, Dui gudai Dongya chaogong tixi; Wang Qing, Zhongguo chuantong duiwai guanxi de liang zhong moshi – Liyi renzhi yu tixi jiegou fenxi, Ph.D. dissertation, Tsinghua University, 2007, pp. 2–24, 96–100.

LITERATURBERICHT | REVIEW ARTICLE

State Capture in South Africa

Ulf Engel

The concept of *state capture* is not new.¹ Already in 2007, the Stockholm-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) observed that the “majority of African governing political parties are still heavily dependent on the direct or indirect (the embezzlement of public funds to finance elections) use or abuse of government resources”. In many cases, ruling parties “rely on the state resources to exact patronage in order to maintain the party organization and management”. Thus, “politics itself becomes a means to an end, devoid of any idea of protecting public interests vis-à-vis private gain”.²

- 1 Review of the following titles: Pieter-Louis Myburgh: *The Republic of Gupta. A Story of State Capture*. Cape Town: Penguin Random House 2017, 444 pp.; Jacques Pauw: *The President's Keepers: Those Keeping Zuma in Power and Out of Prison*. Cape Town: Tafelberg 2017, 423 pp.; Stephan Hofstatter: *Licence to Loot. How the plunder of Eskom and other parastatals almost sank South Africa*. Cape Town: Penguin Random House 2018, xii + 270 pp.; Ivor Chipkin/Mark Swilling et al.: *Shadow State. The Politics of State Capture*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press 2018, xxvi + 159 pp.; Robin Renwick: *How to Steal a Country. State Capture and Hopes for the Future in South Africa*. London: Biteback Publishing 2018, xxii + 298 pp.; Pieter-Louis Myburgh: *Gangster State. Unravelling Ace Magashule's Web of Capture*. Cape Town: Penguin Random House 2019, 390 pp.
- 2 All quotes International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: *Political Parties in Africa: Challenges for Sustained Multiparty Democracy*, Stockholm 2007, p. 21. A different take on state capture was developed a few years earlier within the World Bank by people who observed how companies in post-Cold War transition countries exerted influence on states. See J. S. Hellman/G. Jones/D. Kaufmann, “Seize the State, Seize the Day”. *State Capture, Corruption, and Influence in Transition*. Washington DC, World Bank etc. 2000 (= Policy Research Working Paper; 2444).

South Africa is no stranger to this dynamic. Under Apartheid, corruption was rife, both in the European settler dominated polity, but also in the so-called “Black Homelands”. With the transition to a post-apartheid political order during 1989 to 1994, many people were hoping in vain for the creation of a less corrupt society. Since April 1994 the African National Congress (ANC) is in power now, confirmed in six consecutive general elections. The former liberation movement still enjoys an absolute majority of votes, although in recent years the number of eligible voters who have given up participating in elections has outgrown support for the ANC. The country has become a dominant-party state with rapidly declining levels of popular support.³

In particular under President Jacob G. Zuma, who was at the helm of both government and party from 2009 to 2018, South Africa has seen unprecedented levels of corruption – Zuma, his ANC faction and networks of businessmen have perfected the art of state capture. At the heart of this state looting conspiracy were three brothers of Indian descent who had migrated to the county in 1993: Ajay, Atul, and Rajesh “Tony” Gupta. Operating from their fancy compound in 1 Saxonwold Drive, Johannesburg, they became the string-pullers of much of the state capture under Zuma – they bank-rolled the president and his family, they effectively decided on cabinet appointments (such as the minister of finance), and they were allowed to massively enrich themselves through state tenders issued by an array of parastatals, or state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Part of this happened in broad daylight under the watchful eyes of constitutional Chapter 9 institutions (“State institutions supporting constitutional democracy”).⁴

The current government of M. Cyril Ramaphosa – he took over as state president in February 2018 (and already had succeeded Zuma as chief of the ANC in December 2017) – is trying hard to drain the swamp of corruption. But at the same time, it is heavily relying on political support from corrupt ANC cadres and factions around former president Zuma and ANC secretary-general Elias Sekgobelo “Ace” Magashule. To investigate the extent of state capture, in August 2018 Ramaphosa appointed a *Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud*, led by deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo. The commission has called on many witnesses and suspects to look into the looting of parastatals in transport (Prasa, Transnet, and the national carrier SAA),

3 See Roger Southall, The South African elections of 1994: The remaking of a dominant-party state, in: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 32 (1994) 4, pp. 629–655; and, by the same author, The “dominant party debate” in South Africa, in: *Africa Spectrum* 40 (2005) 1, pp. 61–82.

4 Rampant corruption has been detailed by Public Protector Thuli Madonsela who was head of the ombudsmen-like investigation authority from 2009 to 2016, before she had to give way to a successor, Busisiwe Mkhwebane, who has become an instrument of Zuma’s to fight his enemies and favour his allies. See Madonsela’s two devastating reports, Public Protector: *Secure in Comfort: Report on an Investigation into Allegations of Impropropriety and Unethical Conduct Relating to the Installation and Implementation of Security Measures by the Department of Public Works at and in Respect of the Private Residence of President Jacob Zuma at Nkandla in the KwaZulu-Natal Province*. Pretoria 2014 (= Report No. 25 of 2013/2014); and Public Protector: *Capture of the State. Report on an investigation into alleged improper and unethical conduct by the President and other state functionaries relating to alleged improper relationships and involvement of the Gupta family in the removal and appointment of Ministers and Directors of State-Owned Enterprises resulting in improper and possibly corrupt award of state contracts and benefits to the Gupta family’s businesses*. Pretoria 2017 (= Report No. 6 of 2016/2017).

electricity (Eskom), and the prison system (Bosasa). Since 2020 evidence produced before the commission is directly admissible in a court of justice.

Some four years ago, a handful of investigative journalists started shedding light on the details of the ANC's state capture. Their work has been instrumental in exposing widespread corrupt practices. They laid the groundwork for today's coverage by the country's quality press on evolving court cases and the evasive acts of the main culprits. With two exceptions (written by a non-South African observer and South African academics, respectively), the books reviewed here stand testament to a great tradition in South Africa's liberal press which precedes the end of Apartheid. Presently, this tradition is continued, among others, by the *amaBhungane* Centre for Investigative Journalism.⁵ Partly, the books under review here tend to overemphasize the "positive" role Ramaphosa has played or can play – given the fact that he has been part of the ANC machinery right from the beginning (he was secretary-general under Nelson Mandela, 1991–1997, and has served as deputy president under Zuma since 2014).

Pieter-Louis Myburgh, *The Republic of Gupta. A Story of State Capture* (2017)

The author is a University of Stellenbosch graduate and award-winning investigative journalist who started his career at the Afrikaans *Beeld* newspaper in Johannesburg. Later he worked with the weekly newspaper *Rapport*, before moving on to *News24*, an online news publication. Myburgh is well-known for exposing in 2015 a corrupt multibillion-rand contract for new locomotives at the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa). Published in April 2017, the book is one of the first detailed accounts of the extend of state capture in South Africa. The role of the notorious Gupta family has played in the Zuma shadow state takes centre stage in this book. Although already operating in the country for quite some time, the Gupta family's activities only made it to the headlines at the beginning of 2016 when Mcebisi Jonas, a former deputy minister of finance (2014–2016), disclosed how the Guptas offered him a substantial amount of money and the job of minister of finance in October if only he followed their own agenda (for many years the portfolio had been under Pravin Gordhan who strongly opposed state capture practices within the ANC but had to leave in May 2014, only to step in again in December 2015 after Zuma had appointed one of his cronies to head the ministry who then only lasted in office for four days – meanwhile international trust in to the country's economy and its management plummeted).

But Myburgh's story starts far earlier, sometime in 1995, when the first contacts between the Gupta and the Zuma families developed. The strength of his account is the detailed analysis of how the Guptas managed to weave a web which ensnared Zuma and his sons, in particular Edward and Duduzane. Allegedly Atul Gupta started paying the school fees for some of Zuma's sons – at a time when Zuma was not yet the big man he was to become (i.e., before he was elected deputy president of the ANC in December 1997). Myburgh suggests that the Guptas were already making inroads into South African politics

5 <https://amabhungane.org> (accessed: 24 March 2021).

in 1996 under President Thabo M. Mbeki when Ajay became a member of an advisory council to the president. Of course, all the dodgy deals of the Guptas are part of this book: From Transnet, Oakbay Investments and coal mining, to Eskom. And also their role as owners of *The New Age* newspaper and the Indian wedding which turned into “Waterkloofgate” are not missing. Part of the debate on state capture in South Africa always was about who actually called the shots in this family-to-family relationship, the Guptas or the Zumas. Whatever the case may be, within a few years the Guptas became one of the richest families in South Africa.

Jacques Pauw, *The President's Keepers: Those Keeping Zuma in Power and Out of Prison* (2017)

Pauw is an award-winning South African journalist and author. He was a founding member of the anti-apartheid Afrikaans newspaper *Vrye Weekblad* in 1988, and later became head of investigation at *Media24*. One of his early scoops was the exposure of the Vlakplaas police death squads under the infamous Eugene de Kock and the counterinsurgency unit C10 he led outside of Pretoria to either recruit spies or murder anti-apartheid activists.

The President's Keepers (released in October 2017) could be mistaken for a suspense thriller, only that it deals with the real-life clandestine policy networks Zuma nurtured to protect himself. Blow-by-blow, Pauw describes how the State Security Agency (SSA) under the direction of Arthur Fraser, the South African Revenue Service run by Tom Moyane and many government ministries became part of a “shadow Mafia state” controlled by Zuma and his accessories. Zuma even managed to turn custodians of South Africa's democracy, such as the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) under Shaun Abrahams, into henchmen which were haunting the president's many enemies. During Zuma's reign, state agencies started working against each other. In this context, it is important to recall that Zuma – a member of the armed wing of the ANC, *Umkhonto weSizwe* since 1963 (at the age of 21) – became head of ANC intelligence in 1986, still during the period that is mythologized as “the struggle”. He was a master of this particular trade. And, by the way, a cease-and-desist order issued by the SSA to prevent the book from being sold failed. Pauw also reveals how the Gupta brothers exerted influence on the appointment of strategic positions in law enforcement agencies. Though their investment, the author holds, was not about politics, but purely about money. Here Pauw developed a theme which was picked-up in the following years by fellow investigate journalists.

Stephan Hofstatter, *Licence to Loot. How the plunder of Eskom and other parastatals almost sank South Africa* (2018)

Hofstatter is another award-winning investigative journalist who has worked with, among others, *Business Day*, the *Financial Mail*, the *Sunday Times*, and the *Mail & Guardian*. His book is a detailed account of how Zuma cronies managed to squeeze out billions of Rand from the national Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom) which was established in 1922. In anticipation of future coal supplies under CEO Brian Molefe, Eskom has given the Gupta family \$40 million upfront to buy the Optimum coal mine. Shortly be-

fore this transaction, Zuma's son Duduzane had become a shareholder in Gupta's mining company Tegeta. Hofstadter also shows how before the looting of Eskom, Transnet – the parastatal that runs the country's ports, railways, and pipelines – had been used as a blueprint to fine-tune the art of diverting huge amounts of money to offshore accounts, using consulting companies for advising on how best to organise state capture. Among others, Transnet bought heavily overpriced locomotives, with suspected kickbacks going into Gupta offshore accounts. The Transnet CEO from 2011 to 2016 was – Brian Molefe; the chief financial officer was Anoj Singh, who later played a similar dubious role at Eskom. Not only according to Hofstadter, a key broker and associate of Zuma in organising state capture was Malusi Gigaba – first in his role as minister of public enterprises (2010–2014; he appointed Molefe as Transnet CEO) and later as minister of finance (2017–2018, when he replaced Gordhan). Gigaba systematically developed opportunities for procurement procedures to benefit the Gupta network. SOE tenders became the main means for redistributing the country's wealth; locally the new class of businessmen which capitalised on their links to the Guptas and Zumas is known as “tenderpreneurs”. Hofstadter's investigation into this saga is another very readable contribution to the genre of South African non-fiction polit-thriller.

The case of Eskom in the state capture saga is highly symbolic as it stands for the rotten state of the economy, and the incapability of the ANC to deliver public goods for the majority of impoverished citizens. As many other state-owned enterprises, for instance South African Airways, Eskom is highly indebted: in late 2019, its debt amounted to \$26 billion. And at the same time Eskom is highly dysfunctional and constantly fails its purpose. In 2007, it had to introduce what in South African idiom is called “load-shedding”: failure to generate enough power resulted in daily power rationing. Still in 2020, Eskom was not able to guarantee stable energy production: “In 2020, load shedding occurred for 859 hours of the year (9.8%)”.⁶

Ivor Chipkin and Mark Swilling et al., *Shadow State. The Politics of State Capture* (2018) This academic contribution to the debate recaps a series of three important breakthroughs in exposing state capture. First, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) on 18 May 2017 released a report of an “Unburdening Panel” comprising evidence of whistle-blowers who told church leaders about their experiences of state capture.⁷ Second, only a few days later, the State Capacity Research Project released its report *Betrayal of the Promise: How South Africa Is being Stolen*.⁸ And, third, the so-called #GuptaLeaks files of e-mails incriminating the three brothers were broken to the media, allowing for detailed insights into the state capture project.⁹ This publication recalls the events behind this series of revelations and highlights the main findings known by July 2018.

6 BusinessTech [Johannesburg], 16 March 2021 (quoting a report published by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR).

7 See <http://tcn.org.za/whites-to-whites-w2w/unburdening-panel-process/> (accessed 24 March 2021).

8 H. Bhorat et al., *Betrayal of the Promise. How South Africa Is Being Stolen*. Stellenbosch 2017.

9 <https://www.gupta-leaks.com>. This website is run by the *Daily Maverick*, *amaBhungane* and *News 24*.

Chipkin is the founding director of the Public Affairs Research Institute linked to the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town. He was an associate professor at the University of the Witwatersrand. Swilling is a Professor of Sustainable Development in the School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University. He is also co-director of the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (CST) and a member of the Board of the Development Bank of Southern Africa. In 2019, he was appointed by the government to the Reference Group of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy of South Africa. The book is a collective effort which also includes the work of Haroon Borat, Mbongiseni Buthelezi, Sikhulekile Duma, Nicky Prins, Lumkile Mondli, Camaren Peter, Mzukisi Qobo, and Hannah Friedenstein. The foreword to this rather short publication is written by Mcebisi Jonas, the deputy minister of finance who helped exposing the Guptas (see above). The research project was coordinated between the four universities of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Stellenbosch.

Being the academics they are, Chipkin and Swilling develop a systematic “model of a patronage network that extracts and administers rents” (p. 20). It brings together the “controller” (or strongmen) with the brokers, mobility controllers and dealers which made possible state capture. In the following many of the above-mentioned schemes are summarised, from Transnet’s locomotive deal, to Eskom, to the South African Social Security Scheme (Sassa). This volume neatly summarises the evidence brought to light by the above discussed investigative accounts. Embedding their analysis in an account of macro-economic policies since the mid-1990s, the authors discuss how “state capture by shadowy elites has profound implications for state institutions” (p. 133): destroying trust in the state, weakening the economy and eroding confidence in the economy. In the end, they are calling for a new, broad-based economic consensus and a “trust compact” (p. 138) that would allow to address the many inequalities in the country.

Robin Renwick, *How to Steal a Country. State Capture and Hopes for the Future in South Africa* (2018)

This is the only author discussed in this review who is not a South African investigative journalist or academic. Renwick (born 1937), or Baron Renwick of Clifton for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (1997–2018), was political advisor to the Governor of Rhodesia in 1980 and later the United Kingdom’s High Commissioner to South Africa (1987–1991) and subsequently Ambassador to the United States (1991–1995). He has authored books on the South African liberal icon Helen Suzman, the end of apartheid, US Secretary of State and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, as well as British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. *How to Steal a Country* is illustrated with a number of great cartoons by Jonathan Shapiro *aka* Zapiro (actually, a collection of his cartoons – mainly published in the *Mail & Guardian* and, since December 2016, in the *Daily Maverick* – has been released in 2018 as an illustrated history of state capture).¹⁰

10 See Zapiro (with Mike Wells), *wtf ... Capturing Zuma – A Cartoonist’s Tale*. Johannesburg 2018.

In his book Renwick describes “the rapid descent of political leadership in South Africa” (p. ix) from Nelson R. Mandela to Jacob G. Zuma. His account is not a piece of investigative journalism, but still building on the work of Pauw and others, as well as a careful reading of the South African press. The author provides a well-written and succinct narrative of state capture seen through the eyes of someone who is closely familiar with the country, but an outside observer. At the same time, Renwick is looking for the silver lining on the horizon and perspectives beyond state capture – reminding the reader that it was Cyril Ramaphosa who, on behalf of the ANC, helped negotiating the 1996 democratic constitution of the country. But Renwick also acknowledges that from a historic point of view Zuma played a positive and constructive role in the transition to a post-apartheid society and the handling of political conflicts in KwaZulu-Natal. Yet he also describes him as a “gregarious, polygamous teetotaler” (p. 43).

Renwick manages to sketch the bigger context of South Africa’s post-apartheid political economy with an elegant pen by closely following the various characters and their very personal interests which, in the end, created what he calls the “predator state” (p. 193). He also reminds the interested reader that “corruption had become endemic before [the Guptas] appeared on the scene [...] they were merely exploiting an opportunity” (p. 280). In his account Renwick profited, among others, from having key actors, such as Pravin Gordhan, commenting on draft chapters. (From an academic point of view, one would have preferred a more systematic referencing, though.)

Pieter-Louis Myburgh, *Gangster State. Unravelling Ace Magashule’s Web of Capture* (2019) This is a follow-up to Myburgh’s first book on state capture and the Gupta family. His latest book focuses on one of the most important political allies of Jacob Zuma, the former Free State Premier (2009–2018) and current secretary-general of the ruling party, “Ace” Magashule. *Gangster State* is a detailed reconstruction of how Magashule step-by-step built his local power base, from ANC branch to branch, from ANC region to region, to finally become Premier. The book is a tale of crony capitalism and widespread corruption, often involving family members and friends, which earned Magashule the nickname “Mr Ten Percent”. Among many others, Myburgh highlights the dodgy involvement of the then prime minister in an R255 million “asbestos audit” contract awarded by the province’s Department of Human Settlement.

The political and moral weakness of the ANC was fully brought to the open at the ANC’s 54th national conference held in December 2017. Ramaphosa was running for the position of ANC president against Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma, ex-wife of Jacob Zuma (who previously was a fairly well-reputed government minister and also the chairperson of the African Union Commission, 2012–2017). Ramaphosa beat her by a very small margin of 179 out of 4,701 valid votes. Exactly one half of the ANC’s Top Six leadership comprised of Zuma allies and compromised party members like Magashule (who won in a controversial election with just 24 votes over his competitor), deputy president David Mabuza and deputy secretary-general Jessie Duarte (apart from Ramaphosa, national chairperson Gwede Mantashe and treasurer general Paul Mashatile are considered to

be rather integer politicians). Years of systematic state looting through capturing state office have turned the ANC into a very weak organisation with little capacity to enforce any code of conduct on its own leadership. Magashule's ascent to the centre of political power, Mybergh argues, "reaffirms the organisation's reckless nonchalance with regards to its image and reputation" (p. 14).

Factions of the party remain in a serious state of denial and defiance. In April 2019, a book launch of *Gangster State* in Johannesburg was forced to shut down because ANC Youth League members supportive of former president Zuma and "ANC secretary-gangster" Magashule (p. 341) stormed the venue ripping apart books and disrupting proceedings; in other places, Youth League members threatened to burn the book.

According to President Ramaphosa, the looting of the state under Zuma's reign has cost South Africa an estimated \$34 billion.¹¹ Pressed by the president in August 2020, the ANC decided that party officials formally charged with corruption and other serious crimes must immediately step aside from all leadership in the party and in government. In December 2020, the Integrity Commission of the ANC called on its own secretary-general to immediately step down from all positions.¹²

Meanwhile, the Guptas fled South Africa in February 2018 after arrest warrants were issued. They are now residing in Dubai, UAE. Briefly serving as minister of home affairs under President Ramaphosa, Gigaba resigned from all offices in November 2018. Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane herself has now become subject of a parliamentary inquiry into the possible removal from office.¹³ While Magashule was preparing his campaign to run for the ANC presidency ("branch by branch...") and finish the Zuma project of unhindered state capture by the ruling party, on 5 May 2021 he finally got suspended as ANC secretary-general, at least temporarily until the charges against him have been settled. Zuma is still refusing to appear before the Zondo Commission of Inquiry. And new levels of corruption have been registered around inflated tenders which were meant to help the country dealing with the SARS-CoV2/Covid-19 pandemic. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

Yet on a more positive note, Pravin Gordhan – who over the years was kept busy by fending off attacks coming from an alliance which included the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the so-called "Hawks"), KPMG (sic!), and the Public Protector over an investigation unit and alleged fraud at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) – was appointed Minister of Public Enterprises to clean up some of the mess. The struggle for the heart of the ANC continues. At this stage (16 May 2021) it remains an open question whether a Ramaphosa-led government and ruling party are able to steer the country on a development path beyond primitive accumulation and state capture.

11 BusinessTech [Johannesburg], 14 October 2019.

12 Daily Maverick [Johannesburg], 15 December 2020.

13 See Daily Maverick [Johannesburg], 17 March 2021.

REZENSIONEN | REVIEWS

Corinna R. Unger: *International Development. A Postwar History*, London: Bloomsbury Academic 2018, 239 pp.

Reviewed by
Uwe Müller, Leipzig

Corinna Unger's book entitled *International Development* deals with "development" in and of itself only in passing. It is neither about the analysis of socioeconomic developments, nor about the identification of global development trends, nor about the measurement of inequalities of economic structures or of trends of divergence or convergence between individual regions of the world. The focus of the book, however, is on strategies to initiate and promote "development".

Unger criticizes that social scientists sometimes prematurely characterize these strategies as "successful" or "failed". Historians, on the other hand, would reject normative evaluations. However, since historians usually look at each case separately, they make learning from history more difficult. Unger is also very cautious in evaluating the development strategies she examines.

But she does elaborate some more general insights that should be of interest to contemporary development policy experts.

Already in the introduction of the book, important tensions between approaches to development strategies are presented: local grassroots initiatives vs. planning of large-scale projects, investment in the economy vs. improvement of living conditions, industrialisation vs. rural development, and paternalistic development aid vs. help for self-help. This correlates with quite different motives of a wide range of institutions and actors on the donor side as well as among the "underdeveloped". The author frequently emphasizes the great diversity of development concepts, which, on the one hand, were shaped by discourses on the goals of development and, on the other hand, were also themselves subjects of a permanent modification due to changing historical conditions.

After a short second chapter on the concept of development, the debate on global inequality, and the (im)possibilities of overcoming it through economic growth in general and industrialisation in particular, five further chapters (3 to 5 as well as 7 and 8) follow in chronological order, describing various conceptions of development and implementation as well as the actors involved and sometimes also the assessment by the respective contemporaries

or their successors. The focus is often on the effects of crises and wars, geostrategic interests, and political striving for stabilisation of social conditions on development concepts and policies. Only in chapter 6 does the perspective shift, by starting from the development approaches themselves (community development, agricultural development, public health, and birth control). Of course, the author does not want to and cannot offer an encyclopaedic completeness in a 200-page book. It is also impossible to consider the perspectives of all participants equally. Both the author's special expertise in rural development issues and the regional focus of existing research (India and Tanzania) affect the narrative. However, overall, there is no major omission, which is a great achievement in itself.

The advantages of Unger's historical approach should be explained by giving two examples: the author repeatedly points out the complexity of the concept of development and the diversity of approaches to promoting development. Especially the attempts to reduce development gaps between different parts of Europe or even within European nation-states (here, especially Italy) played a major role in the development on other continents. Unger pleads "to include both Europe as an image and European actors in the history of international development efforts" (p. 86). Economic historical research shows that the European dynamics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were based on very specific conditions. This finding argues rather against a transfer of European strategies and methods. In fact, many attempts to copy European industrialisation strategies have failed. However, "in practice the

industrialisation paradigm was never replaced, what changed over time were the policies on how to achieve industrialization and what to expect from it" (p. 22). However, adherence to this paradigm was not solely a consequence of the Euro- and US-centric modernization theory's dominance. The thought patterns surrounding dependency theory also ultimately led to import substitution through industrialisation as the only way out of underdevelopment and exploitation. The majority of national political elites in Latin America, Asia, and Africa opted for industrialisation for very diverse reasons. In the end, the crisis experiences of the European states, which are supposedly in a more developed post-industrial phase, as well as the successes of East Asian models, could also speak in favour of building up or maintaining a country's own industrial base.

In the book, connections are repeatedly made between the history of knowledge and political history. The same applies to the interaction of national and international actors, states, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In this way, the author succeeds in constructing a periodisation of international development policy. Incidentally, the subtitle, *A Postwar History*, only makes sense if one relates it to the First World War. Both world wars, the Cold War, and the process of decolonisation brought about changes in the status of development policy approaches. However, it is also clear that the different approaches always existed in parallel. In the Cold War period, for example, not every development policy project was primarily shaped by the logic of the confrontation between the systems. Unger characterizes the 1970s as "a highly dynamic but also

somewhat confusing period in the history of development” (p. 127). New actors came into play. The (capitalist) world economic order was no longer fundamentally questioned only by the states of the Eastern Bloc, but also by numerous actors in important international organisations and the Non-Alignment Movement; ultimately, it did not change – at least not in favour of the Global South. Rural development came back into focus. In this case, Unger sees “a notably similarity” to “development approaches of the first half of the twentieth century” (p. 140). Since the 1980s, things have become even more confusing. The rise of approaches that rely on market mechanisms is unmistakable. The collapse of the socialist world system further discredited the planning of economic development. The West tried to transfer its models through the Washington Consensus, as well as with the demand for “good governance”. At the same time, NGOs were intensifying their activities. This applies all the more to China and other former recipients of aid, which had turned into providers of aid. Finally, a debate was emerging not only about the meaning of development policy, but also about the limits of development itself, especially taking into account the global ecological crises. Unger mentions these problems without analysing them more deeply. She herself states that “comparative historical studies” on development policy of the last four decades “are scarce” (p. 151). The book’s strength therefore lies primarily in its balanced analysis of development policy from the 1920s to the 1970s. Due to its broad range of topics, it contains some information and makes connections visible that are new and interesting even

for specialists. Above all, however, the book is very suitable as an introduction for students of global studies or similar courses, where it can be a good supplement and sometimes also an important correction to economic and social science literature.

Binhong Shao (ed.): Political Economy of Globalization and China's Options, Leiden/Boston: Brill 2018, 241 pp.

Reviewed by
Matthias Middell, Leipzig

This volume is both a research treatise and a contemporary document. Published at the end of the first year of Donald Trump’s presidency in the USA as well as half a year after President Xi Jinping’s unlimited mandate in office made it into the constitution and after the China Dream as a programme of future development for the country had been formulated, the contributors – all prominent scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the leading research universities with leadership responsibilities in China’s strategic knowledge production – take the occasion to assess current developments and to look ahead. The tone of the volume is set by the Academy’s vice president Cai Fang, who, with great optimism about globalization, sees the developed industrialized countries in a political crisis. He pinpoints that this crisis is the result of insufficient management of the enormous global dynamics

during the past two decades, which China has successfully harnessed for its further development.

China is therefore expected to become the pole of globalization winners, while the West is increasingly dragged down by the resistance of globalization losers. Between the reforms beginning in 1978 and continuing up to 2014, China reduced the proportion of its population living from agriculture from 70 to 19 per cent and created jobs in the manufacturing sector through a labour-intensive export industry and, at the same time, systematically increased its technological level through its own and foreign investments and thus reduced its dependence on relatively simple export products. Its position in the global economic cycle has therefore changed tremendously, which is why one should not be deceived by the continuously high export rates. China's strategic position would therefore be best strengthened by a straightforward continuation of its globalization policy, which would now have to be flanked by a greater political embeddedness, say in the shaping of international relations and organizations. In such an undertaking, China would increasingly act as a mouthpiece for developing countries seeking to free themselves from the captivity of entanglements with the West.

The following essays offer further facets of the same discourse. Throughout their texts, the authors address the question of how China can profit from the current situation and what strategic options seem appropriate in this regard: Long Guoqiang argues for technological upgrading and securing a peaceful environment in which this transformation can proceed without the additional cost of military adventures;

Ye He argues for a new understanding of globalization in which financial capital should play a lesser role and labour a greater role in the future, which certainly resonates with those parts of the world where labour feels exploited by external actors. Li Xiangyang argues strongly against China simply filling the vacancy left by the USA in global governance but also sees the need for a reformulation of a globalization project that is distinctly different from that of the USA. Yao Zhizhong follows this up and identifies as challenges that the (on average since 1945 very) high investments in research no longer translate into corresponding growth rates and that profits from global economies of scale in production and transregional division of labour must be used more to reduce a rapidly growing domestic and international inequality. In contrast, Huang Qunhui focuses on the entirely new nature of China's industrialization through its intertwining with processes of informatization, and therefore the use of this potentially different quality of the Chinese economy should be reconsidered for the future.

Further essays then follow by offering proposals for China's upgrading in global value chains, while another series of contributions comment on the uncertainty of how the world would likely evolve under Trump's aegis and whether this would change the strategic environment for all the planning that the volume reflects. As is well known, in the meantime that has happened to the point of a trade war, and the US president has identified China as the central challenge to the hegemony of the US economy and policy, which has earned him accusations of underestimating Russia and treating it too kindly. However, one

can question whether Trumps policy was actually sufficiently profound and long-term to be perceived in Beijing as a change in what the authors of this volume would address as a strategic environment.

The volume offers an interesting insight into how China's top scholars view "the globalization" and propose to align their country's policies with it. Interestingly, while there is a contribution on nuclear safety in the volume (Fu Xiaoquiang), there is effectively not a word on the challenges of climate change or global resource justice. China's most prominent institutions in the social sciences still seem quite caught up in observing the US as the current hegemon whose replacement is in the offing and which one wants to support with the tools of nationally underpinned analysis. The question of what problems the new world order is supposed to solve, apart from a bit of criticism of the West's cyclical crisis-ridden capitalism, still remains pretty much in the dark.

Mark Thurner (ed.): *The First Wave of Decolonization*, New York: Routledge 2019, 162 pp.

Reviewed by
Matthew Brown, Bristol

The First Wave of Decolonization is an important book in many ways. It brings together a stellar collection of historians – Mark Thurner, Francisco Ortega, Lina

del Castillo, Marixa Lasso, James Sanders, Barbara Weinstein, and Federica Morelli. Their chapters are all well-written engagements with the central questions: what does decolonization look like if its history begins in the nineteenth century rather than the twentieth century and if it is decentred from the British and French empires and their historiographies?

First of all, this was a great idea for a book. It will chime with any historian of Latin America who has ever grumbled their way through a book or conference on decolonization, chuntering that the experiences of the Iberian empires and the people who resisted and dismantled them were constantly ignored or marginalized by dominant understandings of decolonization. It is the first book in a new series, Routledge Studies in Global Latin America. It is to be hoped that many future publications will be stimulated and that they can keep up the high standard set here.

In his introduction, Thurner proves a splendid, informed guide through the semantics of decolonization, identifying the early use of the term *colonialje* – the colonial system – in 1820s Peru and showing how this usage and the experiences it emerged from have been routinely neglected by subsequent global historians. Francisco Ortega picks apart the understandings of "colonia" amongst Spanish speakers in the Americas, revealing how it developed meanings of internal division and guardianship that implied future "emancipation" (p. 18).

Lina del Castillo's fabulous chapter on "Inventing Columbia/Colombia" has gone straight into the key reading section of the course I teach: "Colombian History and Culture since Independence". The chapter

reveals the entangled imperial and intellectual histories that shaped the naming of that republic, via Joel Barlow, Francisco de Miranda, Simon Bolivar, and the “Amphictyonic” Congress of Panama in 1826. “Columbia” was (pp. 71–72) “a redemptive, anglicized play on Columbus’ name” that transformed “French Enlightenment imaginaries”, making “this Franco-Anglo Colomb/Columbus [...] the founding father of a free and modern Western Hemisphere”. “Colombia”, in contrast, “was not only a hemispheric dream” but also a republic that “moved to radicalize the rest of the hemisphere”. Every historian of nineteenth-century Latin America should read it. It should be standard reading for everyone anglophone historian who mixes up Columbia and Colombia.

Marixa Lasso has a great chapter on equality in the Age of Revolution, reflecting on histories of race in Colombia, Haiti, and the United States. It is fascinating the ways that black, mulatto, and pardo people participated in the democracy of the time, pressing for independence and shaping decisions made at local and national levels. Lasso’s conclusions on how “the divergent associations between patriotism and race developed during the wars of independence exercised an enormous influence on national identities” (p. 90) are required reading for anyone hoping to understand twentieth- and twentieth-first-century racial politics around the world. In Colombia, Lasso shows that “racial equality could become a core element of the national ideology”, whereas in the United States it was “constantly subject to challenge”. Yet “Colombia’s contributions to the history of decolonization were likewise erased. Its vanguard role in decolonizing race and

forging political modernity would be overshadowed by narratives that assigned those roles to Europe and the United States” (p. 91).

James Sanders’s chapter “Decolonising Europe” makes a straightforward attempt to incorporate the lessons of these early histories of decolonisation into universal understandings of historical change. To my mind, in extrapolating from the chapter’s case studies, the word “many” is made to do a lot of work in this chapter. It feels like more research will be needed to substantiate the argument being developed. It certainly demonstrates the need for more research and discussion.

Overall, the book shows that the findings and standpoints of subaltern studies and the decolonial projects in anglophone academies can often be ahistorical, either in ignoring or marginalizing the Latin American experience or in assuming a lack of agency for popular sectors who are reflexively categorized as victims of empire or neo-colonialism. *The First Wave of Decolonization* neither has all the answers, nor does it pretend to. Yet it sets up a very compelling set of questions. The scholars who read this book and take up its gauntlet will face a series of challenges. First, methodological challenges: historians can only do so much, and they will need to work in interdisciplinary ways with the researchers working in politics, sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, and beyond, who are framing the critical discussions around contemporary decolonial practice. Second, comparative challenges: the chapter on Brazil by Barbara Weinstein here is welcome but much shorter than the others, and it serves primarily to highlight the work that needs to be done. The chap-

ters by Lasso, Sanders, and Ortega would all have benefited from engaging explicitly with it. Thirdly, the precision of terms: often the authors seem to be working in cognate but separate fields. Lasso's and Sanders's chapters, in particular, would have been richer as a mutually informed conversation rather than standing alongside one another in isolation.

Overall, it was a pleasure to receive this book, which was a very stimulating read. I hope that it will be widely read and discussed, both by undergraduates and the published scholars with whose work it engages and by the postgraduates who are already working through these fields in innovative ways.

ANNOTATIONEN | ANNOTATIONS

Julia Pröll/Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink/
Henning Madry (eds.): *Médecins-
écrivains français et francophones. Imagi-
naires – poétiques – perspectives intercul-
turelles et transdisciplinaires*, Würzburg:
Königshausen & Neumann 2018, 386 pp.

This volume brings together the contributions to a Saarbrücken colloquium on comparative literature from 2016 that was devoted to the dual experience of the literarily ambitious doctor and the writer who draws on medical practice, and in doing so focused on the entire Francophonie. Methodologically, the concept of the volume focuses on interstices, hybrid transitional forms, and post-structuralist third spaces as well as the role of mediators between different worlds, without spelling out the theoretical differences of these concepts in the introduction. Accordingly, the individual contributions are left a considerable amount of room for different ways of dealing with this rather metaphorical than stringent specification. Instead, the introductory contribution, by Julia Pröll, provides an excellent overview of the various directions in which the relationship between medicine and literature has generated interest in recent decades. The harvest is plentiful in the name of the most diverse variants of inter- and transdisciplinarity and attests to the many paths along which literary studies and narratology struggle for innovation and anchorage in

quite diverse orders of knowledge. The fact that the *écrivains-médecins* first organized themselves as a group (in 1949) and later even as a Union Mondiale (in 1968) shows the geographical and social spread of the phenomenon and the ambition to make their own specificity visible (not only in several bio-bibliographical encyclopaedias, but also in prominent book series, such as the *romans médicaux* published by Editions Marabout). Pröll transfers the concept of cultural transfer – co-developed by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, among others, which was initially formulated for geographically defined cultural areas – to the relationship between fields of activity, such as medicine and literature. Entirely analogous to the work of Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, she raises questions in a programmatic outline about the selection of aspects to be transferred, the role of mediators, and the ways of appropriating and incorporating the foreign, whereby this very foreign is not defined by its spatial origin and location but refers to a different form of activity and a different horizon of experience. This transfer of a method to hitherto unknown terrain is made possible by playing with the concept of culture – in the original context, cultures had been defined geographically, but in this work, it is translated into the two cultures of the life and human sciences.

Beyond the introduction, the volume's 24 essays, which are primarily devoted to

individual authors and their works, provide excellent evidence of how well-suited juxtaposition is to generating productive interpretations. What makes the volume particularly interesting for a global-historical perspective, however, are the reflections on the confrontation between Western and non-European medicine in the vast (spanning from Hanoi to Dakar) space of Francophonie and the use of medical discourse to indict the “disease” and “anomaly” of colonialism in the tradition of Frantz Fanon, who was perhaps one of the most famous physician-writers.

Matthias Middell

Thomas Adam: Approaches to the Study of Intercultural Transfer, London: Anthem Press 2019, 196 S.

Dieses Buch bildet den Auftakt der neuen Reihe „Intercultural Transfer Studies“, die Thomas Adam (University of Arkansas, USA) bei Anthem Press herausgibt. Deren vorrangiges Ziel ist die Erforschung der vielfachen Verbindungen und Verflechtungen der modernen Welt. Der Fokus liegt im ersten Band auf Westeuropa und den Vereinigten Staaten, gelegentlich werden Perspektiven darüber hinaus aufgeworfen. Die hier versammelten Texte geben eine Einführung in den Ansatz des Kulturtransfers, der seit den 1980er Jahren im deutsch-französischen Kontext entwickelt wurde, und dokumentieren zugleich dessen transatlantischen Transfer in die amerikanische Forschungslandschaft. Das Buch enthält größtenteils bereits veröffentlichte Aufsätze Adams, die verschiedene Aspekte von Transferprozessen darlegen und auf seine langjährige Forschungstätigkeit zur

Geschichte von Sozialreformen, Zivilgesellschaft und Philanthropie zurückgehen. Die ersten beiden Studien verfolgen nach, wie in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts europäische Modelle des sozialen Wohnungsbaus und öffentlich zugänglicher Kunstmuseen von Europa nach Amerika gebracht und an dortige Verhältnisse angepasst wurden. Ein weiterer Beitrag widmet sich der Verbreitung des modernen Sports am Beispiel des Fußballs. Nicht dessen Rolle in der Erfindung von Nationen steht hier im Mittelpunkt, sondern sein weltweiter Transfer als Teil einer pädagogischen Reformbewegung, die neue Formen der Einübung von Disziplin erprobte.

Ein weiteres Kapitel argumentiert, dass es große Ähnlichkeiten in den Praktiken und Institutionen der Philanthropie im Christentum, Islam und Judentum gibt, und führt diese auf interkulturelle Kontakte und Transfers zurück. Der nächste Beitrag untersucht die Verbreitung und Übernahme von Gandhis Strategie des gewaltfreien Widerstandes, besonders deren Erfolg in Europa und Nordamerika, bis hin zu den friedlichen Revolutionen von 1989/90. Zuletzt geht es um den Transfer von Weihnachtsbräuchen als Element bürgerlicher Festkultur und Mittel nationaler Identitätsstiftung von Deutschland in die USA.

Das Buch eignet sich für die universitäre Lehre ebenso wie als ausgesprochen anregender Überblick über den Beitrag, den die Kulturtransferforschung zum besseren Verständnis transatlantischer Verflechtungen und zu einer transnationalen Geschichte der USA leisten kann.

Antje Dietze

Charlotte A. Lerg/Susanne Lachenicht/
Michael Kimmage (eds.): *The TransAtlantic Reconsidered: The Atlantic World in Crisis*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018, 185 pp.

The edited volume, *The TransAtlantic Reconsidered*, situates itself in the current political moment of rising nationalism and populism in Europe and the US, and asks, where do transatlantic studies and Atlantic history go from here? What might we learn by bringing these two fields into conversation with one another? How did these fields develop, including in relation to past political moments, and what state are they in now?

The volume includes a mixture of chapters, some shorter than others, and an interview. The contributors are mainly German and American authors. It appears in a book series, "Key Studies in Diplomacy".

The other titles in this series are focused on diplomacy. This title, in contrast, sets foreign relations and politics as a stage or even arena in which historians and other scholars are inspired by new ideas and challenges, but diplomacy is the focus of only one chapter. Just as the Cold War set the stage for an emerging Atlantic History that narrated common traditions for transatlantic partnerships, new challenges and crisis have spurred new reflections.

Atlantic historians and transatlantic scholars in the fields of international relations and political science will find here a useful and compact volume that answers some questions about how we got to the current state of historiography and research and poses paths forward in what appears to be a moment of transition in transatlantic affairs, or what the volume's editors have called "the Atlantic world in crisis".

Megan Maruschke

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