

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. Weizen, *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. Weizen, *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 Systemumbruch*, 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 Weizen, *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 Schlingensiefel, 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.