2. Cultural Policy, Systematic Exclusion, Structural Racism

The study argues that the lack of diversity in German public theatres is explicitly connected to cultural policy and its funding structure. This suggests that a structural change in the way public theatres operate is intertwined with a shift in approach in cultural policy, and accordingly in its funding mechanism. In this book, policy is understood as a "cognitive-normative framework" (Burns & Carson, 2005), employed by public institutional bodies with legitimacy to make decisions on what actions should be taken, how they should be implemented, and whom they should address. The study postulates that power and knowledge (Foucault, 1978) in the field of cultural policy, guided by deep-rooted habits and values of cultural politics, support the perpetuation of an exclusionary theatre structure. Hence, exclusion and inequality in the German theatre realm cannot be disassociated from cultural policy. As Peter Hall argues, a policy paradigm "specifies not only the goals of policy and kind of instruments that can be used to attain them but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing" (1993, p. 279).

In the following sections of this chapter, by applying historical institutionalism as a theoretical perspective, the research first examines how and to what extent cultural policy and its agenda-setting have an impact on the systematic exclusion of people with a "migrant background" from the domain of public theatre. Two concepts by Pierre Bourdieu are implemented in this exploration, namely field and habitus, to unfold the internalised structure of the theatre field and the influence of cultural policy bodies and their support mechanism on the construction of outsiders.

2.1 The Role of Policymaking in Maintaining Systematic Exclusion

In this section, the study investigates the interrelation between historical institutionalism and the cultural diversity dispositive to shed light on the role of normative ideals, values, and habits of cultural policymakers that generate, maintain, and regulate unequal access conditions for theatre-makers with a

"migrant background" in the public theatre landscape. The discussion aims to bring the role and power of a specific cultural environment within a concrete institutional setting into focus, which "privileges some interests while demobilising others" (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 937).

The research argues that the embodied system of cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and reflexes are a product of a specific historical background (Béland, 2005) embedded in the cultural policy paradigm. Together, they shape the framework and funding scheme of cultural policy. From this perspective, it is essential to examine the agendas, frames, and policy paradigms for a more comprehensive understanding of the executive aspect of cultural policy (Béland, 2009) and its impact on the lack of cultural diversity in public theatres.

Cultural policy is "thought to describe the values and principles which regulate or guide any entity involved in cultural affairs" (Eräsaari, 2009, p. 56). Therefore, it reflects the preferences of governmental decision-making bodies that utilise specific instruments to implement the choices of political power. For a better grasp of how the ideas and interests of decision-making policy actors/institutions perpetuate a theatre system that produces outsiders, the following subsections are devoted to the impact of policymaking.

In this examination, the researcher exercises the applicability of a theoretical approach of political science – namely historical institutionalism – to cultural policy, to discuss the enduring role and function of policymaking and its funding institutions in safeguarding the absence of immigration-related diversity in the personnel, repertoire, and audience structures of (mainly) public theatres.

The research acknowledges cultural funding institutions as the public bodies of three levels of government dedicated to culture, and it demarcates the notion of institution in line with the definition of historical institutionalism, as "the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organisational structure of the polity" (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 6). For an analytical understanding of how cultural policy and funding institutions operate in a certain way, the research utilises Bourdieu's field theory as a conceptual tool. The study follows the suggestion of political sociologist Daniel Béland, who claims that "the field concept of Bourdieu is instrumental to historical institutionalism to describe the nature of social inequality and the origin of actors' preferences and strategies, taking into account the interaction between ideas, interests, and institutions" (2005, p. 30).

The study considers historical institutionalism contributory in explaining the underlying institutional configuration and logic behind the actions of cultural policy. This exploration aims to discuss the relevance of historical institutional theory, interlinking it with Foucaldian dispositive analysis (see Chapter 1) and Bourdieu's field theory, to pinpoint the involvement of cultural policymaking in the

(re)producution and regulation of unfair access conditions for immigrant theatre-makers.

2.2 Historical Institutionalism: Inertia in Institutional Structures

For historical institutionalists, "institutions are seen as relatively persistent features of the historical landscape and one of the central factors pushing historical development along a set of paths" (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 9). Historical institutionalism highlights the interconnection between the ideas, values, and beliefs of an institution and their historical background in action-taking (Béland 2005, 2009; Steinmo, 2008). The historical institutional theory enables us to understand the impact of the historical framework on the functioning of institutions. According to Béland, "historical institutionalism is grounded in the assumption that historically constructed institutions (i.e., public policies and formal political institutions) create major constraints and opportunities that affect the behaviour of the actors involved in the policymaking process" (2009, p. 702).

Historical institutionalists assume a world in which "institutions distribute power unevenly across social groups" (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 9). In this view, the role and power of ideas in policymaking is one of the central factors in understanding "why a certain choice was made and/or why a certain outcome occurred" (Steinmo, 2008, p. 126). By "ideas", Parsons refers to "claims about descriptions of the world, causal relationships, or the normative legitimacy of certain actions" (as cited in Béland, 2009, p. 702). The power of ideas is considered crucial here, as their influence tends to be long-lasting. Ideas can guide and shape the behaviour of an institution due to its historical backdrop. Although institutions undergo dynamic processes, historical institutionalists provide shreds of evidence that "ideas, once embedded, have framing effects and consequently become something like basic templates upon which other political decisions are made" (Steinmo, 2008, p. 130). Identifying these ideas is instrumental in revealing the framework of the policy agenda and determining the policy priorities and how they address the burning issues of a given field. For Béland, "this social and political construction of problems is related to policy legacies, as actors regularly assess the impact of existing programmes on such problems" (2009, p. 705). However, these problems are conceived and approached from a particular perspective that might underestimate or not necessarily manifest the importance of certain matters to society. Ideas and beliefs do not only rule the agenda-setting of public institutions entirely, but they are critical in making strategic choices concerning the support of policy objectives, such as "promoting diversity". This line of thought ultimately points out the element of institutional power in policymaking. Institutional power

may, in some cases, be disguised, but it can be traced and exposed in the effects of decisions.

One of the hypotheses put forward in this chapter is that German cultural policy introduces measures that respond to immigration-related diversity inefficiently, without aiming at a systemic change in the theatre landscape. Cultural policy decisions do not address the absence of equal opportunities. This reluctance is highly associated with the institutional structure, since "each paradigm is grounded in a particular set of fundamental beliefs and incorporates core principles, values, and normative ideas that are deeply embodied in concrete institutional and identity-giving practices will tend to be durable and resilient" (Burns & Carson, 2005, p. 288). Historical institutionalism suggests that "the fragmentation of political power and the presence of enduring policy legacies can become strong obstacles to reform, even when reformers succeed in putting together a coherent set of new policy ideas" (Pierson, 1994, as cited in Béland, 2009, p. 709).

Béland, however, argues that historical institutionalism requires a methodological perspective to better comprehend the role of the interaction between ideas, interests, and institutions and explain "the nature of social inequality and the origin of actors' preferences and strategies" (2005, p. 30). He suggests the incorporation of Bourdieu's field theory for a coherent insight into "symbolic violence, social inequality, and the relationship between micro-level individual behaviour and macro-level institutions" (2005, p. 45). The research interprets this proposition of the field concept as an adequate thinking tool for investigating and understanding the interplay between cultural policy, decision-making institutions, and the perceptions and preferences of their actors (who exercise power in these cultural institutions). They determine the internal rules of policymaking, which ultimately affect cultural policy outcomes and the creation and implementation of strategies, some of which include objectives related to immigration-generated diversity.

2.3 Bourdieu's Field Theory for Framing the Rules of the Game

Bourdieu's field theory draws from his key concepts, namely *field*, *habitus*, and *capital*. Comprehending the relationality between these concepts is crucial when explaining the role of historically situated positions and relations since for Bourdieu "habitus and capital are valid only in relation with a field" (as cited in Hilgers & Mangez, 2015, p. 260).

Further, the study endeavours to capture the relational process between field and habitus in order to enforce the theoretical framework of historical institutionalism and demonstrate "the agenda-setting and the construction of the

problems and issues policy actors seek to address" (Béland, 2009, p. 703). Moreover, it aims to uncover how policy habits and decisions determine the rigid operational system of public theatres in terms of systematically excluding theatre-makers with a "migrant background".[1] Thus, in this section, the research briefly introduces field and habitus as conceptual tools to understand (a) the dynamic between field and habitus concerning the logic of decisions and actions in policymaking that play a part in the systematic exclusion of people with a "migrant background" from the German public theatre scene, (b) the impact of internalised perceptions (firmly linked to European/Western theatre aesthetics) on the practices of public theatres, and (c) the nature of values and perspectives behind the legitimisation of the director-mandated organisational system of municipal and state theatres.

According to Bourdieu (1984), the world consists of various social fields, such as culture, education, power, religion, economy, politics, science, and each field is a (relatively) autonomous social structure governed by specific rules, knowledge, and related forms of capital. For Bourdieu, a field is "a meta-theoretical open concept that circumscribes the structure of a space within which agents operate" (Albright & Hartman, 2018, p. 4). These social actors – whether individuals, groups, or institutions – hold the dominant positions in a given field based on the scale and composition of their capital. A field is also, in this sense, "a system of forces which exists between these positions; a field is structured internally in terms of power relations" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 53). The interaction between the disposition of actors and the rules of the field creates symbolic power, which obtains its force from the habitus and the acquired capital in a given field (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). Habitus and capital, thus, primarily affect the formation of the field since "the ways fields are structured shape what we know and how we come to know it – the limits of knowledge produced and what can be recognised or goes misrecognised" (Albright & Hartman, 2018, p. 8). For Bourdieu, this knowledge production is realised through habitus, a notion that refers to the learned norms that guide the behaviours and habits of cultural agents within a field "to the extent that they become dispositions or tendencies that actors can enact in a wide variety of social situations" (Albright & Hartman, 2018, p. 12). Habitus, therefore, "provides a lens for understanding practice and knowledge within the social milieu in which they are contained and generated" (Costa & Murphy, 2018, p. 6).

According to Bourdieu, habitus "generates practices, beliefs, perceptions, and feelings" (1993b, p. 87). The structure of a field and the habitus of its actors affect one another. The learned behaviours and acquired knowledge of the actors are transferred into the practices of the respective field. Therefore, habitus is understood as the place where power relations are internalised.

1 Sharifi (2011a) discusses some other aspects, such as the role of cultural capital and social class in generating the exclusion of post-migrant theatre-makers in Germany.

The functioning of a field depends on the actors of the game equipped with the required habitus (knowledge and recognition of the inherited rules of the field; Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 72). Habitus, capital, and the configuration of the field shape the practices within it. In this context, the public theatre field is a field of forces and struggles (Bourdieu, 1993a), including the one to legitimise a specific capital that represents the aesthetics and practices of national culture.

Habitus, a system of dispositions acquired by implicit or explicit learning which functions as a system of generative schemes, generates strategies (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 76). One of the outcomes of these strategies, in the struggle for position, is that dominant actors consider themselves superior to others. From this standpoint, the concept of habitus offers valuable insight into the dynamics of the German theatre system by enabling us to understand the role and symbolic power of the dispositions of artistic directing in the field of public theatre. Moreover, habitus explains how the perspectives, values, and beliefs of actors and the structure of policymaking in the theatre field shape one another, and how this interdependence affects the production of outsiders, particularly in the domain of public theatre. Habitus is also useful for identifying the motives of the continuity in decision-making, institutional stability, and resistance to structural reform in the theatre system.

Within the context of field theory, in this work, cultural policymaking bodies are considered "institutionalised cultural authority" (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 39) endowed with the right to make theatre policy and allocate financial resources accordingly to promote public theatres. Likewise, public theatres are seen as the key actors of representing the rich historical German theatre landscape as the vehicle of the cultural identity of the nation. The research, with the help of historical institutionalism theory, interprets the notion of habitus as the institutional positions of the decision-making actors in cultural policy and the field of public theatre, although Bourdieu mainly uses habitus in terms of defining social class relations.

Accordingly, together with historical institutionalism, Bourdieu's field theory is the central framework for the investigation of cultural policy "as the product of the practices and representations of the agents involved in it, these practices and representations being determined by the social characteristics, interests and objective positions of the agents, and therefore the structure of the relationships among them" (Dubois, 2015, p. 204). In the following two subsections, based on a theoretical and methodological analysis, the research first examines cultural diversity in German theatre. Then, it traces the evidence of structural and institutional racism by investigating the construction of the othering category of "migrant background".

2.4 German Theatre and Diversity

The theatrical landscape of the Federal German Republic is rooted in a tradition over three-centuries old, characterised by different theatre genres and a mixture of varying formats. Public theatres are defined through various categories, such as multi-disciplinary (drama, music – musical and opera – and ballet/dance) theatre, repertoire theatre, permanent ensemble, puppet theatre, children and youth theatre.

In 2018, there were a total of 142 public theatres (municipal, state, and regional theatres – which can also be puppet, children, or youth theatres), 199 private theatres, 85 festivals, 128 symphony and theatre orchestras, around 150 theatre and performance venues without a permanent ensemble, and about 100 touring troupes without a fixed stage (Deutsche Bühnenverein, 2019). In addition, countless amateur theatres and *Bürgerbühnen* (citizen's stages) play an essential role in enhancing the active cultural participation of citizens, particularly in rural areas.

Compared to many other European countries, public subsidy for the theatrical sphere is extensive. Although half of the population has never been to a theatre, a high value is ascribed to it; "no other country in the world can afford such a broad, publicly funded theatre landscape with a permanent ensemble and repertoire" (Mandel, 2013, p. 137). In 2015, the public sector provided a total of 10.4 billion euros for culture, and 35.4% of the total federal, state, and municipal cultural expenditure was in the theatre landscape (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2018, p. 29). Since culture is a state task, and the *Länder* share this responsibility with local governments, they carry out most of the financing. In 2015, municipalities supplied 54.4%, the *Länder* 44.6%, and the federal government only 0.9% of the funding for public theatres (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2018, p. 32).

The *Länder* and municipal governments favour financing public theatres structurally and annually, whereas independent theatres are supported precariously, from project to project; thus, they suffer from chronic underfunding. Public funding institutions provide only 41% of their budget (Bundesverband Freier Theater, 2015, p. 14). While institutionalised theatres usually receive public subsidy for five years, the majority of the independent groups finance their work through individual project applications, mostly from municipal funding (Rakow, 2013).

The *Deutscher Bühnenverein* (German Theatre and Orchestra Association), founded in 1846, one of the oldest and largest theatre associations in the world, is responsible for the artistic, legal, organisational, and political concerns of theatres and orchestras. Although the organisation aims to preserve, promote, and develop the diversity of the German theatre and orchestra landscape, it disregards the role of independent theatres in the development of a diversified theatre scene (Weiler, 2015, p. 219).

The federal umbrella organisation *Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste* (*BFDK*; German Association of Independent Performing Arts) advocates a fairer funding structure and the improvement of the financial situation of independent theatres and theatre-makers. Founded in 1909, the *BFDK* represents the interests of around 1500 members across Germany, including individual artists, groups, dance and theatre venues, and production structures to raise awareness and recognition of the independent dance and theatre scene among the general public, as well as in the political, administrative, and economic sectors (BFDK, n.d.). The equally crucial organisation, which promotes the independent theatre scene at the federal level, is the Performing Arts Fund (*Fonds Darstellende Künste*). The *BFDK* and Performing Arts Fund work in close cooperation. Other federal funding institutions such as the German Federal Cultural Foundation, the Socio-Culture Fund, and *Hauptstadt Kulturfonds*[2] (Capital Cultural Fund) also support the contemporary independent theatre scene through project funding.

Audience development is the predominant subject of diversity discussions in the German performing arts field, followed by the need for contemporary artistic forms and aesthetics, particularly in municipal and state theatres. Furthermore, "parallel systems of the municipal and state and independent theatre scene" (Fülle, 2013) and the unequal distribution of financial resources between these two worlds stir the most criticism towards German cultural policy. However, the urban-rural discrepancy regarding theatre offers is often overlooked in cultural policy discourse.

Conversely, children and youth theatres, touring, and amateur[3] theatres significantly contribute to fostering cultural diversity and participation, particularly in provinces (Schneider et al., 2019). For instance, amateur theatres outnumber municipal and state theatres nation-wide; there have been 1.000 amateur theatres in Lower Saxony alone (Schneider, 2019b, p. 71). Together they are instrumental in bringing closer the fields of art, socio-culture, and cultural education. These theatre forms enable diminishing obsolete categories that determine what the arts and socially engaged art are; what professional and amateur theatre is; what diverse aesthetics and engaging in the arts means; who the artist is and who the spectator is, especially in a world marked by diversified forms of active participation that have tremendously changed the relationship between supply and reception in the performing arts.

2 The Capital Cultural Fund only promotes projects that take place in Berlin.

3 "Amateur theatre" refers to traditional and contemporary forms of non-professional theatre and is distinguished from professional theatre for two reasons: financial motivation does not play a role in amateur practice, and actors may not have professional training; they are driven by a desire to play and interact with other people (Renz & Götzky, 2014, p. 1).

The discovery of new artistic impulses and diversity of cultural forms of expression find space to be articulated not only in the independent scene but also in these disregarded theatre practices. However, the discourse about what is ultimately good theatre is exclusively urban, even though 70% of the population in Germany lives outside big cities (Stolz, 2019). What is good is also imposed by institutions without a collaborative process with artists or the public explicitly agreeing on the criteria; if this consensus could be reached, then maybe the goodness of art would be associated with education, neighbourhood, and participation (Terkessidis, 2016).

Nonetheless, amateur theatre plays a marginal role in German cultural policy discourse, although participation is the driving force of the practice. In theatre policy, amateur theatres are still not accorded a permanent – let alone equal – place alongside professional and independent theatres (Schneider, 2019b, p. 70).

This study, within its limited scope, cannot do justice to the contribution of amateur, children, and youth theatres to the expansion of the definition of performing arts in Germany. Given that the focal point of this research is immigration-related diversity in the performing arts realm and how the sphere of cultural policy addresses the structural exclusion of immigrant artists, particularly in the public theatre domain, this chapter provides a brief overview of public and independent theatre scenes only. There are two purposes to this synoptic outline; first, public theatres, with their rigid production and organisational structures and Eurocentric aesthetical conventions, are at the core of theatre reform discussions. In this context, theatre reform entails these institutions re-establishing themselves as centres of urban culture as well as reflecting the narratives, experiences, and artistic perceptions of contemporary German society. Through pointing out various issues in the current White-dominated public theatre system, the following subsection aims to demonstrate why theatre requires of cultural policy to not "save the institution" but "save the medium of theatre" so that it can regain its social function and legitimacy. Second, a snapshot of the independent scene is crucial, as it illustrates how independent theatre is a benchmark of experimentation and the artistic development of a multidisciplinary theatre landscape in Germany. It also serves as a reference point – in the condition it is currently in – for the risk of segregating immigrant artists in the post-migrant theatre as a niche fraction of independent theatre. To put it differently, by focusing on some of the aspects of the two worlds of public and independent theatre, the research underscores why vertical governance between three levels of cultural policy is crucial in supporting exploratory artistic processes that contribute to identifying and nourishing immigration-related diversity as the norm in the theatre landscape.

2.4.1 Municipal and State Theaters

Theatre practice is almost synonymous with municipal and state theatres in Germany, which still mostly reflect the 18th century German Enlightenment aesthetics and are the vehicle of national culture. They retain permanent ensembles and are distinguished by a repertoire system, which is marked by a complex production structure. Each theatre produces approximately 25 to 30 new performances every year; this makes a total of more than 2500 new productions by around 142 public theatres per year (Schmidt, 2017). The rehearsal-oriented production process of the repertoire system is often identified as one of the main reasons obstructing innovation and exploration of new aesthetical impulses and narratives in these theatres. Under the pressure of making an excessive number of productions, institutionalised theatres have become "assembly lines in a sense" (Goebbels, 2013, p. 31). Thus, it does not come as a surprise that although 90% of the public funds allocated for performing arts is invested in the municipal and state theatre system, 90% of the innovation in theatre does not come from these institutions (von Hartz, 2011). Since the goal is to preserve the status quo, novelty or identifying the new demands of their cities and inhabitants still play almost no role in the functioning of many established theatres. An inward-looking nature is also one of the defining features of municipal and state theatres. These theatres produce theatre in a city for a city and occasionally for a region, but never for the world (Balme, 2013, p. 35).

Sabine Reich (2015), the chief dramaturge and deputy artistic director of *Theater Dortmund*, states that overproduction precludes municipal theatre from being a space open to experiment and failure, engaging in process and risk-taking, as well as perceiving art in a broader sense. She states that this generates a mentality that offers success-oriented, mass-produced goods for consumption and repeats traditions without questioning them (Reich, 2015).

The mandate-driven structure of municipal and state theatres is a highly influential factor in maintaining traditions and a lack of response to demographic changes in the country. The vision of the *Intendant*in* (artistic director) has a determining impact on the decision-making regarding programming, theatre aesthetics, and the recruitment policy of a given theatre. Municipal theatres often resemble "small principalities", whose directors are romanticised as the sole rulers while overlooking the dark side of power (Boldt, 2015). In this director-centred governance model, the dark side also manifests itself as an abuse of power (Schmidt, 2019).[4] Theatre scholar Christopher Balme stresses that in the

4 According to the study *Macht und Struktur im Theater* (Power and Structure in Theatre) conducted in 2018 with 2000 participants (71.5% were performers and artistic staff), 55% of the participants experienced abuse (verbal, physical, psychological, or sexual), 59% of which

German public theatre system, the function of the artistic director is decisive in the reciprocal relationship between aesthetics and institution since the director is endowed with exceptional power (2019, p. 53). Balme adds that artistic direction as a form of leadership should prompt theatre researchers to question institutional aesthetics, including production conditions, institutional frameworks, and the resulting aesthetical strategies and decisions (2019, p. 53). This study claims that the aspect of institutional aesthetics, regulated by White artistic directors or artistic directing teams, is one of the factors hindering access to public theatre work for immigrant artists.

Although some directors, particularly in the last decade, who have brought diversity-sensitive perspectives to municipal and state theatres, are interested in new artistic forms and aim to reach a broader section of society, the personnel profile of most public theatres is still predominantly White. Despite the lack of cultural statistics on employee structure, the homogenous staff composition of public theatres is evident from sheer observation. From only glancing at appointments to directorships and the staff of municipal theatres, it is apparent that they are almost exclusively White institutions (Weiler, 2015, p. 226). There have been a few immigrant artistic directors and artistic management team members in municipal theatres. Nevertheless, employees with a "migrant background" are by no means given influential positions such as dramaturgy (Michaels, 2011, p. 126).

A recent study by *Zukunftsakademie NRW* (*ZAK NRW*; Future Academy North Rhine-Westphalia) indicates that in terms of concrete implementation of diversity in publicly funded cultural institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia, creating more equal opportunities in personnel selection still plays a lesser role; it was one of the measures identified by the least number of respondents (2019, p. 16).[5]

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were women (Schmidt, 2019, pp. 103–104). The research does not provide any information about discrimination and racism against immigrant artists as a form of abuse of power. One can only speculate that this might be related to the fact that the low number of those artists in public theatres was not representative for the survey, or the study might have dismissed the categorisation of the identity of the artists as immigrants.

5 In 2019, cultural institutions funded by the state of NRW were surveyed on the relevance and implementation of diversity. Among 262 institutions, 64% participated in the survey, while performing arts institutions had the highest response rate of 56% (ZAK NRW, 2019, p. 5). Eight concrete measures were defined based on their responses: (a) cooperation and networking with institutions or individuals of the urban society, (b) use of diverse, target group-specific communication channels, (c) flexible working hours, (d) raising awareness of managers and staff on diversity, (e) anchoring the promotion of diversity in strategy or mission statement, (f) involvement of representatives of underrepresented groups in the development of the programme, (g) providing equal opportunities in personnel selection, and (h) creation of a department and/or person responsible for diversity (ZAK NRW, 2019, p. 14).

In comparison to the deficient number of immigrants in decision-making positions, the chance of working in public theatres for actors with a "migrant background" is relatively higher. However, for non-European/non-Western actors, a foreign-looking appearance and having an accent can be disadvantages in getting involved in an ensemble. Theatre researcher Azadeh Sharifi argues that state and municipal theatres fear their established audiences might criticise factors such as physical attributes and even a slight accent when speaking German, but theatres would never openly admit it (as cited in Uludag, 2011). Journalist Özgür Uludag (2011), who was formerly a theatre-maker working for more than nine years at the *Deutsches Schauspielhaus* in Hamburg, explains that these are the decisive aspects in why immigrant artists do not make it to the stage:

> However, some of the "foreigners" are third-generation immigrants, meaning that they are residents who received their education in Germany, and not only do they speak fluent German, but they are integrated to the highest degree. They deal with the classics of German literature and now want to bring their interpretation of, for example, *Faust* to the stage. Their pronunciation does not differ in any way from that of a "German German" [emphasis added]. (…) Immigrants may be given the roles typically held by immigrants; Turks may play Turks, Africans may play Africans, but not Faust, King Lear, or Ivanov. Since the plays most frequently staged by state and municipal theatres are those by Kleist, Chekhov, or Shakespeare, the chances for Arabs, Turks, or Black Africans are extremely poor.

Likewise, Zainab Al Sawah, an ensemble member of the *Oldenburgisches Staatstheater*, confirms in an interview that for immigrant artists not only is obtaining recognition in public theatre challenging, but they are commonly exposed to discrimination:

> I am lucky that I now have a German degree in acting. But generally speaking, it is very hard to get accepted and acknowledged as a professional if you are not from here. A lot of foreign actors and actresses suffer from discrimination in the field, and most of them get cast only to play roles with a "migration background" [emphasis added], mostly because they look different or maybe have an accent. (Goschy, 2020)

Achieving cultural diversity is perceived by municipal and state theatres mostly as reaching out to "culturally distant" immigrant audiences by adding certain productions to their primary programming. Opening the institutions to diversity is not understood as the core task of theatres; it is limited to special or mediation projects (Sharifi, 2011b, p. 43). Thus, lately, many municipal theatres have been focusing on audience development due to the decline of middle-class audiences and the constraints of having to justify their legitimacy. However, these attempts

to diversify audiences are bound to be unsuccessful. Dramaturge Björn Bicker aptly reveals where one of the main issues lies:

> Artistic directors sit in their theatres and say, "We need the Turkish audience to come to the theatre. I know a Turkish writer. Let's invite them to produce a play." And then, they are so disappointed when the Turkish audience does not come to the theatre after the premiere. Why should they suddenly want to go to the theatre? (…) Bringing in a Turkish dramaturge within an unaltered concept and understanding of art will not change anything. Just because a Turk writes the play does not mean that the Turkish community will come to the theatre. These people need to change the way they understand art and what art is supposed to be. (B. Bicker, personal communication, November 20, 2017)

Although an orientation towards participation has recently gained momentum in theatre, the diversification of the theatre staff is rarely considered. However, a few public theatres are well-known for their heterogeneous ensembles, the most famous one being the municipal theatre *Maxim Gorki Theater* in Berlin. The staff composition of the theatre reflects Berlin's de facto culturally diverse population. At *Gorki*, not only are most of the actors from multi-ethnic origins, but more importantly, 51% of the decision-making positions (e.g., artistic director, dramaturge, technical staff, press, and administration) are occupied by immigrant theatre-makers (Citizens for Europe & DeutschPlus, 2014).

Artistic Director Shermin Langhoff's perspective on diversity is a major determinant of the employee structure of *Gorki Theater*. Long before she became the artistic director of *Gorki* in 2013[6], she was known for having founded the platform *Akademie der Autodidakten* (Academy of Autodidacts) in 2004 for talented immigrants without academic training. In 2008, Langhoff reopened *Ballhaus Naunynstraße* in the immigrant district, Kreuzberg, where she introduced post-migrant theatre, which questions the meaning of identity, nation, belonging, and the narrow understanding of theatre aesthetics. *Akademie der Autodidakten*, which still operates under *Ballhaus Naunynstraße*, promoted young and talented immigrant artists. Internationally acclaimed film, theatre, and opera director Neco Çelik, award-winning theatre directors and authors Nurkan Erpulat and Hakan Savaş Mican, celebrated film and theatre director and actor Tamer Yigit are just a few of the artists who gained access to the German public theatre scene through the support of *Akademie der Autodidakten* and *Ballhaus Naunynstraße*.

Towards the end of 2016, *Gorki Theater* established *Exil Ensemble* to provide a space for professional artists living in exile so that they could continue pursuing their careers as theatre-makers in Germany. The project *Exil Ensemble* illustrates the

6 Shermin Langhoff's artistic director contract at *Maxim Gorki Theater* was extended until the summer of 2023.

vision of *Gorki Theater* in a country where talents with a "migrant background" are not promoted. In an interview, Langhoff explains *Gorki*'s perception of diversity, regarding setting up *Exil Ensemble*:

> Working with artists who have emigrated is in our own interest because the theatre has to react to the fact that this country is changing as a result of immigration; many of the refugees will become part of this society. That is why we deliberately do not speak of a "Refugee Ensemble" but an "Exil Ensemble". Exile also means that it is not just about the trauma of the ravage and the first months of arriving, but about a long process. Those who arrive here bring with them new biographies, new stories and narratives, new perspectives. (Laudenbach, 2016)

In a more recent interview, Langhoff stressed that diversity in post-migrant theatre includes various dimensions of identity and goes beyond them; hence, she defines *Gorki* as a theatre with contemporary stories about a pluralistic German society (Parbey, 2019). Through the transmission of multiple voices, *Maxim Gorki Theater* presents itself as the mirror image of society in constant transition, in which the concept of culture is continuously renegotiated. *Gorki* is often shown as the best model of how post-migrant perspectives can be the driving force of the change that is urgently needed in the public theatre realm. Its exemplary approach under the pioneering artistic direction of Shermin Langhoff has been portrayed in depth by theatre researchers (see Kömürcü, 2016; Sharifi, 2020). Nevertheless, examples that truly explore the role of theatre in a pluralistic society with such determination are rare in the public theatre landscape.

The connection between theatres and the societal reality of their locality is also confronted with the prevailing method of designating artistic directorship. Artistic directors are appointed by city councils or ministers of culture of the federal state and hold the position for an average of five years (though there have been plenty of directors staying in the seat for many more) in the appointed institution. Political decision-making plays a decisive role in the appointment and revocation of artistic directors, as the process is not transparent and lacks objective criteria (Mast, 2004). Additionally, artistic directors face the challenge of working in different cities and federal states, while unaware of what strategies the local realities entail. Bicker stresses that this structure is one of the causes of the alienation of municipal and state theatres from society:

> Artistic directors come from Berlin to Munich, knowing nothing about the community or the city here. (…) They go from one theatre to another, from city to city, and they know nothing about the place they are going to, the social reality there, where they are working, for whom they are working. This is a big problem. For example, Shermin Langhoff from *Gorki Theater* knows the city, its issues – she knows the people. You need this kind of knowledge to create the kind of art that

> includes the people living in the community. (B. Bicker, personal communication, November 20, 2017)

An examination of the approaches to cultural diversity of the entire public theatre scene would be beyond the extent of this research. Instead, through particular cases, the study illustrates that even when there is a vision, attempts of diversifying the programming and staff structure are often discontinued with the arrival of a new artistic director. This is why the deeply rooted lack of immigration-related diversity in the municipal and state theatre system requires cultural policy measures and a structural framework, which would provide the impulses for these institutions to regain their social function and contemporary relevance.

2.4.1.1 The Artistic Director's Vision of Diversity

Münchner Kammerspiele is one of the distinguished German municipal theatres with a clear social-political focus. Primarily, under the management of Artistic Director Frank Baumbauer between 2001 and 2009, *Münchner Kammerspiele* was creating participation-oriented avant-garde theatre and narratives about immigration, and this became the central part of its programming, which was uncommon for municipal theatres at the time. In 2004, the *Bunnyhill* project examined the relationship between the city centre and the periphery and sought to bring together the residents of these two strictly separated worlds, which then inspired the establishment of the *Heimspiel* Fund in 2006 by the German Federal Cultural Foundation (see Section 5.1 for the analysis of the *Heimspiel* Fund). Another important project was the festival *Doing Identity – Bastard Munich* in 2008, which dealt with social reality and aimed to open *Münchner Kammerspiele* to the city and all its inhabitants. The successor of Baumbauer, Johan Simons, from 2010 to 2015, focused on creating an interdisciplinary, international theatre, bringing in artists from other European countries.

The following artistic director, Matthias Lilienthal adopted a hybridised approach, putting together internationality, collaboration with independent groups, project development (e.g., the *Open Border Ensemble*, *Queer and Now Festival*), and the repertoire system. Under his five-year artistic directorship, *Münchner Kammerspiele* concentrated on intercultural exchange. The theatre organised the *Open Border Congress* in 2015 with artists, scholars, activists, and the old and new inhabitants of Munich, to discuss how to open the doors of the theatre to artists seeking refuge in Germany (Canyürek, 2020). The Congress was followed by the *Open Border Ensemble Festival* towards the end of 2016. The festival presented theatre, music, and films of artists in exile and resulted in the creation of the project *Open Border Ensemble*, with actors from Syria within *Münchner Kammerspiele*.

In the long term, *Münchner Kammerspiele* aimed to establish the *Open Border Ensemble* as an integral part of the house ensemble (Canyürek, 2020). However,

when Barbara Mundel took over artistic directorship in the repertory season 2020/21, the *Open Border Ensemble* was dissolved since the new director embraced a different approach. Barbara Mundel, who headed *Theater Freiburg* for 11 years until 2017, is also known for her engagement with cultural diversity and interculturality in theatre. Mundel plans to continue questioning representation, with the motto of the new season being *die Wirklichkeit nicht in Ruhe lassen* (do not leave reality alone) and bring actors with "intellectual disabilities" to the house (Dössel, 2020).

Similarly, *Schauspiel Köln* in Cologne had a multi-ethnic cast when Karin Beier was the artistic director between 2007 and 2013. *Schauspiel Köln* mainly focused on immigration and participatory projects. Beier introduced a quota system; the theatre recruited nearly 30% of the ensemble from people of non-German descent in a city where one in three citizens has a "migrant background" (Canyürek, 2020). However, they were mostly actors rather than directors and dramaturges; the management of the theatre instead relied on international projects (Sharifi, 2011a, p. 102). Nonetheless, the multi-ethnic ensemble was almost dissolved after she left.

Around 2019, state theatres such as *Staatstheater Hannover* and *Staatstheater Nürnberg* appointed a position, called "diversity agent", funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation for four years as a part of the 360° – Fund for New City Cultures (*360° – Fonds für Kulturen der neuen Stadtgesellschaft*) to address cultural diversity in their programming, audience, and staff appointments (see Section 5.1.5 for more on the funding programme). However, this decision should be approached with caution, by questioning whether or to what extent hiring a diversity agent can address power inequality, structural exclusion, discrimination, and racism in a White public theatre structure without a precise cultural policy framework that aims to tackle these issues.

Individual attempts of artistic directors or mediation measures for diversity, as shown here, may prove to be unsustainable. As expressed by migration studies researcher Mark Terkessidis (2011a),

> It is not enough to simply hire people with a "migrant background" [emphasis added]; the entire atmosphere has to change in a way that actors are not internally confronted with certain clichés, are not assigned to certain roles or have the feeling that they are only functionalised in the service of external communication.

Similarly, appointing a few immigrant directors without an explicit diversity-led recruitment policy runs the risk of diverting the attention from the main problem of unbalanced power relations in the theatre system to pseudo-representation.

Up until now, cultural policy in Germany has not engaged itself either with inequalities in the performing arts scene or introduced diversity-based planning to – at least – encourage the public theatres that have been putting various diversity perspectives into practice. In the absence of a comprehensive policy framework, existing attempts to accommodate diversity remain contingent upon

the remarkable vision and ability of the artistic director as in the case of Shermin Langhoff.

2.4.2 *Freie Szene*[7] (Independent Theatre Scene)

The independent theatre scene, which started flourishing in the 1970s, developed as a structure of the system parallel to municipal and state theatres – institutions of high culture in Germany (Fülle, 2013, p. 275). It emerged as an alternative to the monopoly of bourgeois theatre, as a theatre for the audiences that had been excluded, such as workers, children and young people, educationally and culturally distant strata, "guest workers", and the rural population (Fülle, 2013, p. 276). Unquestionably, reaching out to new audiences is interrelated with various processes including the liberation of bourgeois theatre aesthetics, striving for the removal of the longstanding borders between high culture and socially oriented art, connecting artistic practice to socio-political reality, and overcoming the conventional barrier between theatre-makers and passive viewers.

For independent theatres to become the locomotive of change in the traditional way of theatre-making, it is imperative that they engage in discovery and innovation. The independent scene has not only been continuously developing new artistic formats and long transcending the boundaries between various artistic disciplines, which are still strictly separated from one another in municipal theatres, it has also developed flat, flexible, and faster production methods along the way (Schmidt, 2013, p. 191). From the onset, the organisation and production structures of independent theatres were fundamentally distinguished from municipal and state theatres; collectivity, self-determination, freedom from hierarchy (and somewhat later, self-realisation of the actors) were the central (value) standards for the development of their forms (Fülle, 2013, p. 276).

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7 In this work, *Freie Szene* is translated into English as "independent scene" and *Freie Theater* as "independent theatre". Although the funding is often project-based, independent theatres receive public subsidies to a certain extent. *Freie Theater* is unique to Germany and refers specifically to theatrical activity that takes place outside the system of state-funded municipal and state theatres (Fülle, 2017, p. 275). Theatre scholar and maker Annemarie Matzke (2012) claims that there is no such thing as "free theatre"; in addition to municipal and state theatres, there have been countless different theatre institutions and organisational forms, theatre groups, and directors' collectives that have been working beyond predetermined structures. Likewise, interdisciplinary urban scholar Friederike Landau states that "reference to independence describes a mode of artistic production instead of independence of or autonomy from the political system or (parts of) the art world" (2016, p. 30). In this book, the author uses the term "independent", signifying autonomy/self-determination in artistic production that is considered innovative, experimental, and in confrontation with politics.

Independent theatres are diverse in form. Venues such as *Kampnagel* in Hamburg, *Hebbel am Ufer* (*HAU*) and *Sophiensäle* in Berlin, *Mousonturm* in Frankfurt, and *Forum Freies Theater* (*FFT*) in Düsseldorf provide space for independent groups to showcase their productions. Independent theatres also present their works in theatre festivals, such as *Theatertreffen* and the *Performing Arts Festival* in Berlin, I mpulse in North Rhine-Westphalia, *Favoriten* in Dortmund, and *Politik im Freien Theater* (every three years in a different city). Further, performance collectives such as *Rimini Protokoll*, *She She Pop*, *LIGNA*, and *Showcase Beat Le Mot*, with their varying styles and motivations, contributed to the redefinition of theatre by blurring the boundaries between theatre and performance.

Particularly, *Rimini Protokoll* gained wide recognition internationally by involving "everyday experts" as actors, and fictional and documentary stories of daily life into their productions. *Rimini Protokoll* introduces "strangers" to the theatre, people who are different, foreign, or insufficiently known due to their occupational, class, and ethnic backgrounds, such as long-distance truck drivers, immigrant workers, diplomats, call centre employees, cross-cultural adoptees, third culture children, and members of forcibly resettled communities (Mumford, 2013, p. 154).

2.4.3 Post-Migrant Theatre

Second and third-generation Turkish German and other immigrant artists and theatre-makers have found the opportunities to showcase their work outside the fringes of Berlin to a wider audience, and their contribution to theatre has been acknowledged and validated through the discourse of post-migrant theatre. The post-migrant theatre flourished parallel to the developments in the independent scene. The exploration of new aesthetics and thematic perspectives in the realm of independent theatre was enriched by the knowledge, experiences, and visions of immigrant artists. Cultural researcher Dorothea Kolland describes post-migrant theatre "as an engine of innovation, as a disruptive factor, as a break with the concept of White German 'high culture' expected to renew German theatre" (2016, p. 403).

Shermin Langhoff and *Ballhaus Naunynstraße* have played a significant role in the emergence and recognition of post-migrant theatre. The first *Beyond Belonging Festival* in 2006, curated by Langhoff at *HAU*, could be recognised as a cornerstone in the history of German theatre. It marked the beginning of the post-migrant movement in theatre by putting migrant experiences at the centre of programming for the first time. With the establishment of *Ballhaus Naunynstraße* in 2008, the first German independent post-migrant theatre, cultural diversity was associated with the works of artists emerging from this theatre, and it gave impetus to a new path of change in the national theatre landscape (Kömürcü, 2016, p. 27). Gradually,

Ballhaus Naunynstraße has become a hub for the excluded and marginalised artists and today, it is securely established as a multidisciplinary space for post-migrant theatre.

Post-migrant theatre initiated an artistic process of creating collective memory in a culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse contemporary German society where cultural politics has confined cultural diversity discourse to a one-sided inclusion/integration framework for decades. In this context, the emergence of post-migrant theatre is remarkable since it challenged this integration discourse and reminded that migratory processes affect the entire German society (Sharifi, 2020, p. 497).

Kolland states that post-migrant theatre creates a new German theatre in which the "new Germans" of the 21st century have taken over the responsibility to act (2016, p. 403). Sharifi also interprets this action-taking as a way of rejecting the homogenising idea of identity attributed to post-migrants through the medium of theatre:

> It is much more about dealing with the culture and tradition of the origin and the experience of migration and finding one's way in a new society. Post-migrant theatre could be understood as a balancing of assumed identities imposed by German society or by parents and family, which must be aesthetically redefined by the post-migrant artists and cultural workers. It is a matter of post-migrant artists and cultural practitioners creating an identity of their own in German society and the theatrical cosmos in which they operate. (2011b, p. 43)

Similarly, dramaturge Necati Öziri (2017), following post-modernist philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, stresses that the prefix "post" can either refer "to" or "against", and in this regard, he defines the concept of post-migrant as narratives that come after immigration (i.e., labour migration) as well as those of second and third generations who are no longer immigrants. In a sense, post-migrant theatre in Germany represents the voices of artists marked as marginalised and the perspectives of "the other". Öziri (2017) claims that political theatre should be post-migrant theatre, articulating the expressions of excluded people to reflect contemporary society. For Öziri (2017), it is not just "the others" who rely on such spaces, but more importantly, society needs these perspectives.

Despite the major contribution of post-migrant theatre to a discourse change towards pluralisation, it operates under the independent theatre scene as if it represents a separate discipline that has a diversity approach different from the rest of the independent scene. In the field of independent theatre, diversity discourse is hitherto mostly characterised by internationalisation, flexibility in production methods, heterogeneity of aesthetics, artistic expressions and formats; it is less often associated with the inclusion of stories of the post-migrant society. From

this point of view, it is questionable whether or to what extent the independent scene has succeeded in internalising the discourse of post-migrant theatre.

In addition to the independent scene, cultural policies also overlook the fact that the current diversity paradigms such as interculturality and transculturality cannot be disassociated from post-migrant theatre. Fülle expresses that cultural policy fails to deal with the separation of parallel universes in the German theatrical landscape (2013, p. 294). Moreover, all three levels of cultural policy disregard the fact that through special incentives, they confine second and third-generation theatre-makers and the narratives of the German immigrant society to "diversity" or "intercultural" funding schemes. Instead of confronting such labels, this reductive approach contributes to deepening the marginalisation of immigrant artists. One of the steps towards the question of "where do you come from" losing its meaning is creating a support structure for the independent scene and promoting diversity-led collaboration between independent and public theatre, so that they can become a catalyst of post-migrant theatre, stimulating the developments in the German theatre system in this direction.

2.5 Structural and Institutional Racism

Almost 15 years after the paradigm shift at all levels of German cultural policy towards advocating the promotion of cultural diversity and strengthening the access to cultural institutions and participation in culture for all, public – municipal and state – theatres, still mostly remain White institutions.

Being conscious of the "intersectionality"[8] (Crenshaw, 1989) of the markers of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith/religion, able-bodiedness, and class, in this research, the exploration of structural and institutional racism concentrates on people, recognised as having a "migrant background". This category refers to not only first-generation immigrants but also people who were born in Germany and had no personal migration experience, and yet are referred to as citizens with a "migrant background" (see Chapter 1 for the analysis of the terms that have been linked to conditional inclusion in politics, policy, and practice). This precise focus of the research is related to the long-lasting denial of the immigrant nature of German society and the web of racism and discrimination that immigrant artists and theatre professionals encounter,

8 The concept of intersectionality, coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, indicates that overlapping identities affect how oppression, discrimination, and racism are experienced. The concept rejects that identity is singular and fixed; it recognises it as dynamic and multiple, an entity which cannot be reduced to only one component. Hence, the concept suggests that modes of racism frequently intersect.

especially in the domain of public theatre. Camouflaged forms of racism remain as hidden barriers for those who are denied access to the theatre realm.

Racism is a complex phenomenon that incorporates interrelated historical, political, economic, social, global, and institutional structures. By no means does this research deal with the more profound historical traces of racism, anti-Semitism, and racial othering as an ideological phenomenon in the nation-building or colonial legacy of Germany. It adopts the approach of *Rassismuskritik* (racism critique), which, through the code of race, focuses on power structures that often remain invisible (Mecheril, 2004). Hence, the scope is limited to the interplay between institutional racism and systematic exclusion of people with a "migrant background" from theatre. Accordingly, the study first explores the dynamics of the production and positioning of the "*Migrationsanderen*" (migrant others; Mecheril, 2003) as a contemporary racial category within the national narrative; then, it pursues the reflections of this hierarchical coding of negating difference that operates as a form of racism in certain spaces. The aspect of spatiality is twofold in this examination: national space, and theatre as a cultural space. The mechanism of excluding "the other" in national space has a profound impact on the exclusionary structure of cultural spaces. The inquiry thus aims to display how the construction of "migrant others" in national discourse corresponds to the canon of theatre in Germany.

First and foremost, to understand the construction of those "particular" immigrants as "migrant others" through complex power dynamics, the processes of racialisation require some clarification. Over the past decades, the racialisation of "the other" has been brought to the fore. The concept of race gained a new contemporary meaning in the West. It is not only limited to a simplistic dichotomy between Black and White anymore. In the post-war Western world, culture has become a category used to distinguish differences (Balibar, 1991a; Hall, 1992b). Through alternative conceptual tools based on culturalist interpretations, such as ethnicity or, more recently, identity, difference is imposed by Europeans on others as a means of coping both with the recent history of the West and the diversification of its societies (Lentin, 2005, pp. 382–394).

Brah et al. argue that in the emergence of the new politics of difference, the harmonisation of national policies within the European Union, especially regarding legislation on immigration and political asylum, and the construction of "Fortress Europe", is a significant factor that contributes to the convergence in theorisations of racism (1999, p. 8). In this conceptualisation, skin colour is no longer the dominant signifier of race. As Lentin (2005, 2008) stresses, in the culturalist approach of post-colonial European societies, racial categorisation is replaced by cultural distinctions since culture does not convey the negative connotation of race; instead, it postulates and celebrates difference as a positive quality, at least in theory. The history and structure of racism differ from one

society to another in Europe, and racism has different dynamics and effects. However, when we think of the system and culture in terms of "the system and culture of white supremacy producing the phenomenon racism" (Cress Welsing, 1991, p. 2), it is possible to suggest some established commonalities in European societies which indicate the local character of everyday and institutional racism in Germany.

In the post-9/11 era, in European immigrant societies, (cultural) identity appeared in disguised forms of racialisation, such as ethnicity, religion, and nationality (Hall, 1992a, 1997; Lentin, 2005), and the construction of the racialised other as a "challenge", "issue", or "problem" for the nation is employed in diversity discourses of varying policies to justify inclusion and integration strategies. In Germany, immigrants who are ethnically and religiously distant from "German" and "European" culture have become the target groups of such policies.

Since the early 2000s in Germany, the lack of people with a "migrant background" in public institutions has been a subject of discussion within the new liberal inclusion plans of cultural policies. However, the discourse on race has been reduced to the discussions on exclusionary practices. This research claims that rather than focusing on the hegemonic power relations that (re)produce structural and institutional racism, the debates are governed on false grounds, perpetuating exclusionary frameworks for those "migrant others", and neglecting the normalisation of the representation of Whiteness in public cultural institutions.

Moreover, the discourse of diversity politics, which determinedly emphasises the appropriation of cultural differences and underlines those differences as an enrichment to society, develops, however, a narrative of a "culture in the universal sense" that contributes to individual and social development. Within the existing power relations, "the dominant culture represents itself as 'the Culture' [emphasis added]; it tries to define and contain all other cultures within its inclusive range and its views of the world, unless challenged, stands as the most natural, all-embracing, universal culture" (Clarke et al., 2003, p. 12).

Undeniably, there are diverse forms of difference, and they may be situated at the core of individual and community identities. The subject of analysis in this study is the racial ascription of difference in cultural politics and policy. In other words, the research deals with the perspective on difference that constitutes a form of arbitrary racial hierarchy.

2.5.1 Eurocentrism and Stigmatising Cultural Differences as a Form of Racism

Modern racism, as described by Étienne Balibar (1991a), is based on culture instead of biology; hence, it signifies a shift towards a mode of racial difference determined

through culture. To understand the function of cultural difference in new racism, it is crucial to explore it "in a wider political-historical context: namely, the culturalisation of politics that marks the post-war period in the West and the inextricable relationship this has with racism in the history of modernity" (Lentin, 2005, p. 380).

Thus, the process of othering is the critical factor in comprehending how differentiation is translated into racism through modes of classification. "Racialised modernity" (Hesse, 2007), through the claim of "universal Western culture", produces a mechanism of differentiation between "self" and "the other". In this understanding, with its old and new markers, as Lentin states:

> Race, though always imposed upon and experienced most forcefully as *racism* by non-whites and non-Europeans, is always constitutive of both self and other; of Europeans in their hegemony and of non-Europeans in their subjugation; a concept, deeply embedded in the conception of the idea of Europe itself" (2008, p. 492).

In a similar vein, Homi Bhabha recognises cultural difference as a product of the emergence of Western modernity, which functions as a mediator or metaphor for otherness that contains the effects of difference (1994, p. 31). According to Bhabha, "the colonial signifier is an act of ambivalent signification; splitting the difference between the binary oppositions or polarities through which we think cultural difference" (1994, p. 128). As a result, forms of race are articulated as a historically fundamental demarcation between European and racialised non-European. David Theo Goldberg powerfully frames the racial outlines of the contemporary European self-conception and its historical exclusiveness, describing it as "regional racial Europeanization":

> The 'Europeanization of Europe' presumes Europeans to be white and Christian. The taboo of racial characterisation and at least the official avoidance of racial expression or categorisation, reinforce the long historical presumption of Europe as the home of, and so to, whiteness and Christianity. It follows that any person of colour or non-Christian (at least genealogically) in Europe presumptively is not of Europe, not European, does not (properly or fully) ever belong. Just as, historically, anyone whose ancestry was considered to emanate from elsewhere was deemed non-European. (2006, p. 352)

Within the current framework of diversity politics, this European/non-European antagonism becomes the means of appreciating and valuing otherness, but it fails to deal with the normalisation of the dominant position of the European. Through various diversity concepts (i.e., multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism), such policy approaches in different fields advocate the valorisation of differences of "the other" (difference seen not as a deficit but

enrichment). However, albeit in different forms, these approaches overlook the aspect of political and historical sovereignty of Whiteness in the process of forming the non-European as an object. The language of diversity politics accrues value to difference (Ahmed, 2012) and in doing so, it makes the sign of exclusion disappear (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004). Hence, "thinking culturally about difference is the default position for not talking about 'race' and avoiding the charge of racism" (Lentin, 2005, p. 394).

Barnor Hesse argues that, in his view:

> What race/modernity studies have so far neglected, conceptually if not historically, is the formative signifier of Europeanness, as a defining logic of race in the process of colonially constituting itself and its designations of non-Europeanness, materially, discursively and extra-corporeally. (2007, p. 646)

Hesse describes modernity as a colonial process and highlights the blurred relationship between the political formation of race through modernity and the constitutive colonial difference between European and non-European:

> European coloniality can be read as symptomatic of modern hegemonic formations, processes, knowledges and identities (e.g., capitalism, secularism, civilisation, rationality), which congealed from the social transformation of particular cultural differences into 'non-Europeanness' (e.g., histories, religions, bodies, cultures, territories). It is between these modern regulatory vectors of structural administration within the colonies and discursive authorisations from the metropoles that the category of race becomes instituted and naturalised around the boundaries between colour coded European sameness and non-European otherness. (2007, p. 652)

The reinforcement of a distinct difference between "self" (European/Western) and "the other" (non-European/non-Western) already signifies a form of racism in which the "self" defines "the other" dialectically. According to Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, the self/other dialectic is found at the core of all racisms:

> (…) the way in which racism identifies an Other as a 'race' and attributes negatively evaluated characteristics to that population. But (…) the imagination of the Other is simultaneously an imagination of the Self, each reflecting and refracting a kaleidoscope of contrasting attributes. We might, therefore, conclude that the moment of racism as an ideology is one in which Self and Other simultaneously embrace and repel by reference to a set of imagined attributes that carry a duality of evaluations, negative and positive. (2003, p. 86)

Stigmatising difference through culture and creating a clear-cut dichotomy between European and non-European ensures the otherness of racialised groups and people. The negative representation of "the other" is maintained in

contemporary European immigrant societies, although "the other" is found in various racialised communities. However, the objectification of the non-European supports the rhetoric of Europeanness. As pointed out by Maureen Eggers, the racialisation of "the other" poses a dilemma:

> The underlying ambivalence, arising from the fact that post-modern societies are constructed as enlightened and humanistic, is that they perceive themselves as rationally committed to the fundamental value of equality of all human beings, and yet reproduce and reinforce stratified realities, (…) which act as an engine for the ambivalent shaping of post-modern racialised forms of articulation. (2005, p. 221)

In addition to the forces of modernity, colonialism, and imperialism, the production of an "essentially different other" as a racialised category is also interconnected with other historical and political processes, e.g., nationalism and the global capitalist economy (Brah, 1991; Braidotti, 2016; Hill, 2004; Miles & Brown, 2003). Especially, nationalism plays a decisive role in the racialisation of certain groups in Europe, including Germany. The spread of xenophobia and racism, the rise of right-wing extremism, and the growing support for far-right parties in present-day European societies are clear indicators of the connection between nationalism and racism; as articulated by Balibar (1991b), they are dependent on each other to survive. Nationalism and racism are the product of a specific historical development; "both ideologies are not independent and autonomous forces but are generated and reproduced within a complex interplay of historically constituted economic and political relations" (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 148). For Miles and Brown, "racism and nationalism arose together, are often articulated together, and have an influence on each other" (2003, p. 9).

In the case of Germany, racism belongs to the culture of the past, therefore today, it is almost a taboo word in political and cultural policy contexts; "racism is largely out of the question, especially because of the connotation it obtained after the Nazi regime" (Regus, 2009, p. 130). Concerning the national socialist past and its violent history, the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) obscures the present-time racism, and it operates as a sort of defence mechanism to avoid talking about racism. Nevertheless, racism surfaces in concealed forms; "it is always considered an exception in social functioning, a break in the otherwise peaceful 'normality'" as expressed by Terkessidis (2004, p. 8). The rejection of the reality of racism is also associated with the democratisation processes of modernity. In the modern state, "nazism, genocide, and annihilatory racism are interpreted as anomalies, as regressive aberrations, resulting from the temporary social breakdown (Linke, 1999, p. 214).

Since 2008, on the contrary, there have been researches revealing how the increased xenophobic and racist attitudes are located at the very centre of German

society (Decker et al., 2008, 2010, 2012).[9] In fact, the *Institut für Kulturpolitik* (*IfK*; Institute for Cultural Policy) confirms the results of the research:

> The positive assessment of the "power of diversity" apparently no longer meets the approval of some parts of society. On the contrary: "The fomenting of hatred against immigrants, minorities, and various people defined as 'others' has found its way into the mainstream – and that in Germany of all countries, whose politics and culture were founded after the end of National Socialism with the demand 'never again!'." (see Mishra in this book and Mishra 2017). (Blumenreich et al., 2018, pp. 13–14)

However, in context of immigration, contemporary racism is discussed mainly in terms of xenophobia and right-wing extremism. In these discussions, the less extreme expressions for hostility are used, such as *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* and *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* (xenophobia)[10], instead of racism, shifting the focus towards the hostile attitudes, feelings, or actions of a "native" population against a "foreign" population (Terkessidis, 2004, p. 8). This "foreign" population is an integral part of the racially, ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse German society and yet their identity is politically constructed, and they are recognised as citizens with a "particular migrant background". This marking of difference is strongly connected with the construction of national identity in post-war Western Germany. Eggers states that "the essentialist ideas about the German origin, nation, and racial belonging, and the great blood and violence play a central role in cultural representations of German identity and citizenship" (2005, p. 109). Similarly, Uli Linke affirms that German national identity is the product of specific historical processes:

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9 All of these studies reveal that elements of right-wing extremist attitudes are accepted in large parts of the population in Germany, and it is not as much of a marginal problem that only exists in Eastern Germany as it is often claimed by politicians and the media.

10 Although both *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* and *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* denote xenophobia in English, there is a subtle difference in meaning in the German language. This difference is related to the historical and political factors attached to the usage of words *Ausländer* and *Fremde* (foreigners) in the positioning of the "migrant others". *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* and *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* literally mean hostility towards foreigners. Immigrant citizens are still seen as foreigners. Maria Alexopoulou argues that "*Ausländer* and all of its substitutes are racialised concepts: they construct a distinct group with particular characteristics which are cast as other to 'the Germans'" (2019, p. 51) and "discourses and practices around this binary in the context of immigration reproduce racist knowledge that has been transferred historically, albeit it was also transformed or even questioned" (2019, p. 50). Alexopoulou adds that "*Ausländerfeindlichkeit* is the substitute or cover term in order to avoid naming racism as 'racism'" (2019, p. 59).

> The German nation/state was envisioned as a homogenous ethno-national community, a vision materialised in 1945 through the effects of genocide, and the perpetual closure of political boundaries to immigrants, especially after World War II. The white space of German politics is thus not built on cross-racial symbiosis but a self-referential imaginary of whiteness. (1999, p. 220)

Regarding national identity, in the absence of explicit recognition of racism, racist discourses are sometimes regarded not as racist but nationalist views. Such discourses may have attained some legitimacy due to the fact that extreme right-wing parties have made a habit (since the 1950s) of referring to themselves as nationalist, not racist (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 4). Likewise, *Alternative für Deutschland* (*AfD*; Alternative for Germany) claims to be a right nationalist party but not a racist one; it aims to protect the national territory and its Europeanness from the ethnically and religiously different other.

To better understand how the marking of people with a "migrant background" as "the other" operates as a mechanism of racism, Avtar Brah provides a useful approach for differentiating varying constructions of difference:

> The concept of difference (…) refers to the variety of ways in which specific discourses of difference are constituted, contested, reproduced, or resignified. Some constructions of difference, such as racism, posit fixed and immutable boundaries between groups signified as inherently different. Other constructions may present difference as relational, contingent and variable. In other words, difference is not always a marker of hierarchy and oppression. Therefore, it is a contextually contingent question whether difference pans out as inequity, exploitation and oppression or as egalitarianism, diversity and democratic forms of political agency. (1996, p. 125)

In the case of Germany, the position of the immigrant is established politically and culturally, and in this construction, the relationship between "self" and "migrant other" is characterised by inequality. Further, in this hierarchically-ordered perception, the population with a "migrant background" does not include every person who falls under this category. There is also an unambiguous distinction between European/Western and non-European/non-Western immigrants. Although both groups, according to *Destatis*, have a "migrant background", inclusion, integration, education, and diversity policies only address the latter. This suggests that even among immigrants there is an unequal division: "There are the devalued foreigners and the revalued foreigners; the revalued foreigners are not exposed to racism" (Fernandes Sequeira, 2015, p. 36). Dileta Fernandes Sequeira points out that people referred to with terms produced by the majority society such as "Black people", "POC", and "people with a migrant background" are considered devalued on the basis of a certain origin, religion,

culture, or certain appearance and are exposed to racism and discrimination (2015, p. 37). This research argues that the notion of "migrant background" is the overarching intersecting label for the "devalued".

In terms of injustice, political theorist Iris Young identifies oppression as a structural concept and classifies "five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence which function as criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed" (1990, p. 64). In Germany, immigrants with varying intersecting labels such as Black people, POC, non-European, non-Western, non-Christian, and recently refugees are the "devalued" ones who have been systematically experiencing injustice. They are stereotyped, oppressed, excluded, discriminated, and exposed to racism.

However, "the racialisation of the stranger is not immediately apparent; it is disguised" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 3). Terkessidis adds that the obscured hierarchy between "self" and "foreigner" is overlooked in Germany:

> No one would be hesitant to admit that there are classes or social strata in Germany today. Likewise, no one would deny that women and men do not have the same opportunities in this society. However, when it comes to "Germans" and "foreigners", it is assumed that there is no question about a relationship of inequality – the difference is considered natural. (2004, p. 9)

The normalisation of inequality through cultural difference is furthered by the misconceived diversity discourse of German cultural policy. Promoting cultural diversity has been one of the main tasks of federal cultural policy since the early 2000s. Nevertheless, "promoting diversity" is understood as searching for strategies to include the "particular" immigrants that are culturally different to "Germans" (see Chapter 3 for the discussion on these strategies). The policy and practice on the inclusion of non-European/non-Western people into German society rest on the assumption of an "essentialist concept of difference" (Brah, 1996), which not only postulates ethnic and religious difference as the primary marker and an inherited group identity, but also assumes the group perceived as culturally different to be internally homogeneous (Brah, 1996, p. 99).

In cultural policy, diversity plans go hand in hand with inclusion and integration schemes (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). These plans conceptualise the figure of non-European/non-Western immigrants as a homogeneous community, and their entitlement to (partial) belonging is conditional on the success of their cultural integration. In this understanding, the cultural marking of difference for the non-European/non-Western operates by restraining the boundary of "the other" – the "devalued" immigrants. Here, difference does not carry a positive connotation, but is rather understood as a signifier of a challenging "new diversity", referring to the diversity of non-European/non-Western immigrants living in Germany. For the policymakers, there are two distinct diversities: internal diversity

(unification of the former East and West Germany) and external diversity (labour migration and refugee "influx"; for the discussion, see Section 4.3).

The link between the negative evaluation of the cultural differences of "devalued" immigrants and the objective of their cultural integration already indicates their exclusion from the nation. Ghassan Hage claims that "nationalist domestication is not necessarily about excluding/destroying otherness, but primarily about the power to position 'the other' as an object within a space that one considers one's own, within limits one feels legitimately capable of setting" (2000, p. 90). According to Hage:

> Nationalist practices seem to be necessarily grounded in an image in which the nationalists construct themselves as spatially dominant, as masters of a territory in which they have managerial rights over racialised/ethnicised groups or persons which are consequently constructed as manageable objects. Their specificity does not lie in their inferiorisation or essentialisation of the other but in the construction of the other as an object of spatial exclusion. This will to exclude is not explained primarily either by race or ethnicity, but by the specific image of the racialised nation that the nationalist is aiming to construct. (2000, p. 48)

This perspective is not limited to cultural politics and policy; it also finds resonance in cultural spaces and practices. Particularly, German state and municipal theatres are exclusionist, elitist artistic spaces. Theatre played an instrumental part in the building of national identity over the centuries in the Federal Republic of Germany, and is still seen as the vehicle of the intellectual heritage of the *Kulturnation* (von Beyme, 2012; Bloomfield, 2003a; Deutscher Bundestag, 2007; Klein, 2018; Schulte, 2000; van der Will & Burns, 2015; Wesner, 2010).[11] Preserving the historically rich German high culture is one of the main objectives of national cultural policy. The public funding structure also continues to heavily support the public performing arts scene, which is not common in other European countries, especially since the economic crisis of 2008.

Nevertheless, this unique and vibrant performing arts scene does not reflect the reality of immigrant Germany. The lack of immigrant artists and cultural professionals, especially in public theatres, is justified with various arguments, although their exclusion from the theatre sphere is nowadays often a topic of debate. However, exclusion is hardly ever called into question when it comes to institutional racism. In the following subsection, the study discusses whether the White German theatre realm can be free of the debate on structural and institutional racism while racism is situated at the centre of society, manifesting itself in everyday life and social practices (Friese et al., 2019). This work highlights

11 See Section 4.2, "Value-Based Cultural Policy and the Construction of Hierarchised Diversity", for the detailed analysis of the concept of *Kulturnation* and culture as a federal task.

the necessity for racism critique since "racist forms influence, lead, direct and govern all members of society, albeit in very different ways" (Kooroshy & Mecheril, 2019, p. 27). The concept of racism critique tackles the power regime and the reflection of power dynamics on actions, institutions, discourses, and structures (Kooroshy & Mecheril, 2019). For this reason, an analysis of the spatial dimension of systematic exclusion and institutional racism is fundamental since systems and structures are involved in the production, reinforcement, and regulation of forms of racism towards the racialised other.

2.5.2 Spatiality, Othering, and Reproduction of Racism

In this section, the research addresses the reproduction of racism in the field of German theatre. The aim is to point out the impediments to equal access conditions for those perceived as "migrant others" and unveil the dynamics of structural and institutional racism. Especially within the last 10 years, theatre and cultural policy scholars and theatre-makers have drawn the attention to the lack of diversity in German public theatres in terms of repertoire, staff, and audience structure, and questioned the role of theatre in a culturally diverse society (Mundel & Mackert, 2010; Regnus, 2009; Schneider, 2011; Sharifi, 2011a, 2017; Terkessidis, 2010). Although lately, fierce debates about the pluralistic transformation of the theatre scene have been taking place, issues concerning the inclusion of immigrant artists into German public theatre usually revolve around the term "exclusion" rather than structural and institutional racism. Nonetheless, some theatre scholars, researchers, and practitioners explicitly mention structural racism in German public theatre and refer to the Whiteness of municipal and state theatres (Daude, 2014; Heinicke, 2019; Kalu, 2012; Nising & Mörch, 2018; Sharifi, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2017; Terkessidis, 2010; Weiler, 2015; Wissert, 2014; Yigit, 2011).

However, structural and institutional racism remains unexplored in terms of cultural policy due to "the systemic fantasy of imagined inclusiveness" (Puwar, 2004, p. 137), via which the misinterpreted old (multiculturalism) and new (interculturalism) frameworks of the task of "promoting diversity" distance themselves from structural and institutional racism (see Chapter 3 for the rhetoric and policies containing these concepts). These diversity approaches make it difficult to pinpoint how forms of institutional racism operate; instead, they attribute racism to the bigoted attitudes of individuals.

Moreover, as pointed out by Sara Ahmed, institutional racism is concealed as a result of the interconnection between different forms of power:

> The struggle to recognise institutional racism can be understood as part of a wider struggle to recognise that all forms of power, inequality, and domination are systematic rather than individual. In other words, racism should not be seen

> as about individuals with bad attitudes (the 'bad apple model'), not because such individuals do not exist (they do) but because such a way of thinking underestimates the scope and scale of racism, thus leaving us without an account of how racism gets reproduced. (2012, p. 44)

The researcher thus sees it vital to discuss what exclusion denotes considering institutional racism in the German public theatre landscape. Hence, the objective here is to understand how racism permeates the theatre scene. To unmask how othering operates as a racist categorisation, the study argues that we need to not only focus on racist discourses and practices, but also demonstrate the power relations behind them, which reproduce, stimulate, and regulate an exclusionary mechanism in the theatre practice.

Spatial exclusion and institutional racism are intertwined since power relations are located in spatial forms. Space is not only a means of production but also a means of control, and hence of domination and power (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26). Accordingly, the reciprocal relationship between space and race (Goldberg, 1993; Massey, 1994; Soja, 1996) is integral for understanding how the racialisation of "migrant others" takes place in spaces, and that inequality should also be understood in terms of spatial injustice since inequality becomes visible in space (Soja, 2010). As expressed by theatre scholar Christine Regus, "racism has always occurred in spatial dimensions – for example, separate spaces for people with light and dark skin – but also through the exclusivity of certain spaces, social practices, and discourses" (2009, p. 154).

The research claims that there is an unwritten, invisible code-of-conduct in public theatres that historically, structurally, aesthetically, and culturally excludes "migrant others". Colonial continuities, particular cultural values, and aesthetical conceptions and norms play a decisive role in maintaining structural exclusion. Both the field of cultural policymaking and the field of theatre are governed by specific rules, knowledge, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993a). The way these two fields are internally structured is closely linked with the habitus and capital of their actors (Bourdieu, 1989). The concepts of habitus and capital are effective in characterising "the hegemonic dominance of western norms in knowledge production" (Mudimbe, 1988). Following Bourdieu, power relations gain their force through habitus and capital in the policymaking and theatre fields, and theatrical knowledge is generated and disseminated by the cultural actors and institutions of these fields. In this sense, not only is public theatre White, but decision-making bodies (cultural politics and cultural policy) are White institutional structures. Therefore, both policymaking and public theatres (with a few exceptions) as White institutions determine and maintain the rules of the theatre field and impose specific Eurocentric artistic perspectives and aesthetics that are recognised as inherently universal art forms and practices.

Goldberg argues that "racisms become institutionally normalised in and through spatial configuration" (1993, p. 185). The White German/European "nationally-ethnically-culturally encoded we" (Kooroshy & Mecheril, 2019) maintain the hegemony over the theatre scene through established systems and structures. Exclusion does not materialise in a void; the racialisation of spaces is inseparable from the system of power (Massey, 1994). The systematic exclusion of the racialised other described by Hage precisely reflects the logic behind the internal formation of the exclusionary structure of the German theatre scene and the privileged cultural actors' perception of the nation-state as the territory of the "us":

> A nationalist practice of exclusion is a practice emanating from agents imagining themselves to occupy a privileged position within national space such as they perceive themselves to be the enactors of the national will within the nation. (…) In this process, the nationalists perceive themselves as spatial managers, and that which is standing between them and their imaginary nation is constructed as an undesirable national object to be removed from national space. (2000, p. 47)

The distorted image of "the other" continues to be an object of knowledge and power of the West, as claimed by Edward Said (1978) in his most famous book, *Orientalism*. Concerning the imaginative geography and history, colonial subjugation maintains its hegemonic position by dramatising the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away (Said, 1978, p. 55).

Distancing the "migrant other" from national space is deeply rooted in the construction of a homogenous European identity through a linear history. As described aptly by Fatima El-Tayeb, persistent attempts of institutionalising a collective past refuse the national belonging of racialised immigrants to Europe and, by fabricating a cultural distance, locate those immigrants into a pseudo time and space projection in which their presence in the history of "Europeanness" is conceived impermanent:

> In Europe, migrants and their descendants are routinely denied access to the common history. The internalist story can neither acknowledge the profound interconnectedness of cultures at the heart of the rise of Europe and of the very idea of Europe itself, nor how colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade shaped not only the new but also the 'old world'. Instead, such a narrative requires a clear separation between what is European and what is not – an impossible task that invariably produces tensions that threaten its coherence. Historically, these tensions have centred on race and religion as markers of non-Europeanness. Therefore, Europeans who are not white and Christian exist not only in a strange place but in a strange temporality: they tend to be eternally read as having just arrived or even as still being elsewhere – if not physically, then at least culturally. (2015, p. 287)

Diversity-oriented cultural policy measures for the inclusion of "migrant others" into the enclosed milieu of public theatre do not aim to address the origin of structural exclusion.[12] Racism and inequalities are overlooked by diversity practices in institutions (Ahmed, 2012). Conversely, as pointed out by Shermin Langhoff in an interview, theatre is not immune to reproducing racism:

> Racism can be reproduced in the theatre if the questions of who performs, what is performed, for whom and how it is performed, i.e., the questions of authorship, directing, and cast, are not thought out. These questions per se are essential in theatre, and they must be thoroughly dealt with, both internally and externally. (Parbey, 2019)

In the absence of a clear identification of the background of structural racism in theatre, discussions on racism remain limited to racist practices such as blackface. This is also related to the fact that in 2011, White actors were cast to play Black people in productions such as *Unschuld* (Innocence) at *Deutsches Theater*, and, shortly after, *Ich bin nicht Rappaport* (I am not Rappaport) at *Schlosspark Theater Berlin*, which prompted a heated debate on racism in public theatre. Theatre researchers and scholars analysed these instances of blackface from various perspectives, detecting: racist ascription of otherness through historically loaded processes of appropriation and degrading difference (Kalu, 2012), representation and construction of non-Europeans (corresponding to helplessness, illegality, victimhood, and foreignness) as the opposite of White (Otoo, 2014), colonial power and the racist projection of practices, images, and words (Micossé-Aikins, 2013), Western-colonial theatre tradition in which White, male, heterosexual directors are the sole ruler of artistic direction (Heinicke, 2019), absence of critical self-reflection in public theatres (Milagro, 2012), the domination of the White perspective and a representational imbalance in theatres (Sharifi, 2013), etc. While theatre scholars and practitioners address the arbitrary attributions to racialised others through the reproduction of stereotypes, clichés, and images, some White theatre-makers of municipal and state theatres justify the repetition of racist practices by claiming that there is not a sufficient number of Black and POC actors or that casting choices are part of their artistic freedom. However, racist content in German theatre is not limited to the practice of blackface. There is also the practice of casting actors of colour in ethnic roles and characters, and contracting artists of colour only for "immigrant" theatre productions (Sharifi, 2017, p. 326).

12 Some federal funding programmes with the objective of fostering cultural diversity in the German performing arts scene are analysed in Chapter 5 to give insights into how the notion of diversity is perceived and implemented through funding programmes, and to explore their impact on the pluralistic transformation of the theatre scene.

In a similar vein, Daniele Daude (2014) discusses three levels of racialisation that take place in the opera scene; namely racialised dramaturgy (construction of characters and situations based on race), racialised stage (reconstruction of characters linked to colonial imagery through, i.e., costumes and settings, the repertoire of gestures, sexualisation, exotic bodies), and racialised embodiment (racialisation of stage elements – from stage direction to casting policy).

More recently, in April 2018, actress Maya Alban-Zapata was exposed to racist insults at *Theater an der Parkaue* (Berlin State Theatre for Children and Youth). The actress left the production of *Around the World in 80 Days* during rehearsals after Volker Metzler, then employed as theatre director and interim artistic director of the theatre, had addressed her several times in a racist manner using the "N-word" (Schmidt, 2019). The incident happened almost around the same time when two diversity programmes started within the same institution. One of the programmes was *Projektbüros Diversity Arts Culture*[13] (*DAC*; Diversity Arts Culture Project Office), funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe, and the other was part of the 360° – Fund for New City Cultures (*360° – Fonds für Kulturen der neuen Stadtgesellschaft*; see Section 5.1.5 for more information about the fund) of the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Treblin & Wagener, 2019). After the racist incident became public in 2019, the artistic management team was replaced. As part of the two diversity funding programmes, the position of cultural agent was created, the theatre management completed a two-day diversity training course, and the staff participated in workshops raising awareness of everyday racism (Schmidt, 2019).

In addition to discriminatory and racist practices in theatre, recently, debates on racism sparked once more with the anti-racism clause dispute, which contributed to exposing power structures in public theatres. To combat structural racism and obtain equal opportunities in the German theatre scene, in 2018, an anti-racism clause was formulated by theatre director Julia Wissert and lawyer and dramaturge Sonja Laaser.[14] The anti-racism clause aims to provide a legislative framework for the protection of freelance Black and POC artists against racist statements by employees of the contracted theatre houses. A statement is recognised as racist based on the definition enshrined in a clause of the United

13 The Project Office was founded in April 2017, recently renamed to Diversity Arts Culture. Its goal is to encourage and support diversity-focused structural change within Berlin's cultural sector.

14 Julia Wissert was appointed artistic director of *Schauspiel Dortmund* in 2020. She is the youngest and first Black artistic director in a public theatre and author of the book *Schwarz. Macht. Weiß* (Black. Power. White; 2014), in which she analysed structural racism and the working conditions of Black theatre-makers on German-speaking stages.

Nations Convention (Kanzlei Laaser, 2019).[15] In case of a racist act, the contracting theatre is responsible for offering educational workshops to its staff and raise their awareness of racist structures and racist vocabulary (Heppekausen, 2019).

The same year, the performance collective *Technocandy* demanded to include an anti-racism clause in their contract negotiations with the municipal theatre, *Theater Oberhausen*, for their play, *Shaffen* (Creation). According to a member of the collective, Golschan Ahmad Haschemi (2019), they continued their rehearsals without a written contract due to the unwillingness of the administration staff of the contracted municipal theatre. After a month-long review, the administration declined to include the anti-racism clause in the contract, and *Technocandy* was forced to sign the regular contract a few days before the premiere took place for legal protection.[16] Paradoxically, *Theater Oberhausen* is known for its cultural diversity work, mainly in its programming, and is supported by the 360° – Fund for New City Cultures.

The dispute about the anti-racism clause intensified the awareness of the need for a more extensive and transparent discussion on structural racism in German theatre. For instance, a group of theatre-makers, theatre scholars, and cultural activists initiated a solidarity statement on the anti-racism clause to support the demand for equal opportunities in the performing arts scene (Offener Brief Anti-Rassismus-Klausel, n.d.). Following these developments, two theatres, namely *Schauspielhaus Bochum* and *Staatstheater Hannover*, have taken the responsibility to deal with any prospective racist incidents within their houses and included the clause in their contract negotiations. Nevertheless, without structural plans concerning the development of an equality-based diversity discourse in the theatrical field, measures – albeit introduced with good intentions – remain insufficient for addressing institutional racism.

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15 The definition of racism in the clause is based on Article 1 of the United Nations convention against racial discrimination. Article 1/1 states that the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life (for more information, see International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that entered into force on January 4, 1969).

16 Ahmad Haschemi (2019) explains that a week before the premiere in February 2019, the collective, in consultation with the artistic director of *Theater Oberhausen*, gave an interview for a local newspaper. The interview was published on the day of the premiere, causing a fierce debate and criticism towards the municipal theatre. After the interview was published, the artistic management team of *Theater Oberhausen* withdrew their support of the anti-racism clause as they felt designated as racist.