Chapter 1 | Introduction

When we talk about the social organization of arts, we are referring to two concepts that are closely linked, order and change. Social order is never static, and it is always complex. Social change is always dynamic, and it has different intensities and efficacies. Together, they are key to theorizing the social organization of arts. Theories do not explain the past, that is, they do not identify causes of historical developments, but they are able to make the present more intelligible and offer indications of what the future might hold. Such epistemic ambitions are bold and will undoubtedly be contested. For many critics, the belief that sociological theory should explain the causes and effects of social order borders on hubris (see Hallinan 1997; Hirschman and Reed 2014; Meyer 2017). As no single theory can do justice to the complexity of social affairs (such as the organization of arts), there is an argument to acknowledging the merits of theoretical pluralism. We prefer to see sociological theories as cognitive tools that provide conceptual support in our research.

How should we then approach the social organization of arts? What is the motivation to organize artistic activities, how and why does it happen, and what are the outcomes? Arts are a heterogeneous field of activities ranging from creation to consumption. They encompass artworks, specific services, material items and a variety of transient events. They are all-encompassing aesthetic symbols that generate aesthetic experience and signify meaning and status. The organization of arts ranges from very personal levels of creation, an isolated retreat of a sole author for example to the multiverse of global film and media corporations. Levels of distribution range from listening to intimate live music by a sole songwriter in a small subculture club, to a globally advertised and touring performance of a superstar pop singer. Levels of art consumption range from experiencing musicians in a trendy performing arts festival to the spontaneous lingering of a pedestrian to listen to busking. The many different levels and varieties of organizing arts are matched by the many different attempts to explain them. The sociology of arts provides many of these theories, and the purpose of this book is to present and compare a select few. An en-

suing discussion could open up dialogues across different perspectives, which, we hope, would yield a fertile synthesis of theories.

By presenting different theories and perspectives of the social organization of arts, we hope to offer a rich picture on how sociological eyes understand this topic. Admittedly, the metaphor of the sociological eye (Collins 1998, 3), a reference to C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination (Mills 1959), suggests abstract ways of seeing and thinking society. There are many different sociological eyes, each with their own perspective, as social scientists are made of flesh and blood, have different intellectual backgrounds, and have gone through very diverse learning processes. Sociology as we experience it has blurred boundaries. Unsurprisingly, studies of the social organization of arts absorb insights from social theory, historical research, other sociological subdisciplines (e.g., industrial, organizational, occupational and economic sociology), from policy analysis, legal studies, consumption studies, cultural anthropology, cultural economics, social and cultural psychology – and this list is by no means exhaustive.

The title of this book, *The Social Organization of Arts*, refers to a process of institutionalization and structuration of various clusters of activities in the realm of arts and culture to sociological analyses of how such activities are situated and to how they interrelate. Since this process includes intentional social action, we prefer to speak of the social organization of arts instead of the social ecology of arts. However, this process remains to some degree implicit and unreflected upon since most practitioners usually do their work of planning, creating, cooperating, discussing, negotiating, managing, calculating, delivering, billing and more without being often able to make explicit how they proceed and what exactly makes up their particular skills (see Polanyi 1958; Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986, 30f.). Furthermore, the social organization of arts includes hierarchical top-down action and bottom-up self-organizing. We are aware that arts – namely, artworks and people working in arts – are not destitute of agency. Sometimes arts resist certain organizational constraints, and occasionally they participate in shaping their own organizational environment.

The term arts has a generic meaning, one that acknowledges the volatility of the social inclusion or exclusion of artistic claims, the dynamic social life of artworks, the great variety of activities around arts accomplished by artists, delivered by non-artists and coordinated by networks and organizations. It includes the objectives, modes and outcomes of creative potential embedded in their reception and consumption, the power and diversity of organizational aspects, and the complex roles of background traditions. Arts are bound up in broader practical and institutional arrangements that provide the riverbed of all social, cultural and economic interaction connected to the social organization of arts. The (trans-)formation process of the social organization of arts varies

over time, geographies, art forms, technologies and infrastructures, local and global political and structural frameworks, established practices and creative challenges.

Studying the social organization of arts has a number of implications. It means that there is no such thing as art in itself. Art – as a general term for bundles of practices, discourses, materials, symbolic forms and objects – always emerges and changes in a given social and cultural situation. Therefore, whenever they occur, terms like arts, artwork, artist, artistic value are related to temporal, spatial, practical and normative arrangements that shape their situational meaning. An emphasis on the social organization of arts therefore goes against the idea of monadic being, of radical singularity, and it also leaves space for agency that is ascribed to individuals, groups, organizations, objects and discourses. Let us engage in an open, nonteleological understanding of social organization. And be sensitive to complex dynamics, protean developments, contingent findings and unpredictable outcomes. In order to evaluate the similarities and differences among the various sociological theories we discuss in this book, curiosity is needed above all.

1 Some general notes on sociological models and metaphors

Art is then a general term for bundles of practices and discourses, objects and symbolic forms. Sociologically and organizationally we can classify these bundles into generative metaphors (see Schön 1979) like art world, artistic field, art sector, art system and cultural industries – and combine them with sociological concepts like institution, network and figuration. The labels of these concepts are derived from and embedded in broader social theories, suggesting different images for the social organization of arts and different epistemic functions. These metaphors stimulate ways of *seeing as* (Wittgenstein 1999 [1953], 197) and structure our sociological imagination and our understanding of the subject matter in different ways; therefore, they are not interchangeable (Black 1981 [1962], 243; Hughes 2015, 775–780). As metaphors, they produce associations containing certain interpretations and valuations of the bundle being studied. They create semantic frameworks that foreground some aspects and obscure others. This interplay of revealing and concealing certain semantic aspects is part of the effects of sociological metaphors. *World* expresses the idea of a functioning whole, a cosmos. *Field* draws our attention to a territory, or a terrain demarcated by visible signs. *Sector* is a term derived from geometry and presupposes a whole and its parts. Finally, *system*, with its origins in ancient Greek, designates a quantity or an entity that is ordered by an intrinsic logic.

Each metaphorical term seeks then to communicate a particular way of looking at the social organization of arts. The coherence of a given metaphor is not solely due to its linguistic and empirical concurrence. It also reflects the level of recognition of the sociological works by the scholarly community (Fleck 1981 [1935] 104ff.).

Furthermore, the word *model* can denote a mold, a design or a pattern of something. Models are thus forms of portrayal, so that "to speak of 'models' in connection with a scientific theory already smacks of the metaphorical," as Max Black (1981 [1962], 219) puts it. This effect of metaphors stems from a fundamental attribute of human cognition (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 11). In contrast to some rigid epistemological conceptions of science in the first half of the 20th century, metaphors are not expendable components of scientific thinking (see Black 1981 [1962], Hesse 1970 [1963]). The metaphoric dimension of world, field, sector and system indicates a heuristic function. They contain presuppositions (Collingwood 1940, 31) and constitute complex yet succinct epistemic patterns. Yet it is worth noting that such metaphors are neither derived from empirical observation, nor from theoretical abstraction. Rather they are anticipated since they are making certain suggestive assumptions (Cassirer 1910, 13, 22).

Using the term model implies that we do not regard sociological theories as literally correct representations. Becker's interactionist theory of art worlds, Bourdieu's theory of artistic fields, Luhmann's analysis of arts as a social system as well as industrial, institutional, network and other approaches do not aim for empirical confirmation in the sense of a correspondence theory of truth, but display a creative function for rendering complex sociological topics intelligible. They are, in Nelson Goodman's (1979) words, different "ways of worldmaking." From this perspective, any evaluation criteria for such models are in principle disputable. People may take a theoretical (logically consistent, innovative) approach, or pursue an empirical (conforming to observations and empirically justified) line of argumentation, or they may take a pragmatic stance and come to different appraisals. We make this observation in order to ward off any illusion of scientific objectivity or other absolutist theories of truth. Models are, in essence, explanations that cannot be arrived at in a solely logical-deductive or empirical-inductive way. Sociology is about conceptual orientation, analytical method, logical inference and creative imagination (Black 1981 [1962], 243).

2 What organizes arts? Some cornerstones of this compendium

Contemporary sociologists generally accept that arts are socially constituted, but they disagree on how they are organized. Becker emphasizes the role of self-

organizing processes, collaborations and shared conventions embedded in collective actions. Bourdieu tracks activities with the social structures of the artistic field and relational positions determined by the possession of different forms of capital and by alliances. Luhmann observes how structural and functional aspects characterize the art system, which he sees as autonomous and self-referential. The Production of Culture Perspective identifies a number of factors that shape arts and rejects any universal explanation to this question. Sociological Neo-Institutionalism provides explanations and featuring structuring concepts like sets of rules, resources, environmental pressures and shared cognitive patterns. Cultural Institutions Studies analyzes artistic and organizing practices embedded in institutional arrangements, highlighting the social formation of skills and abilities in combination with normative understandings, including ideologies about good practice and commitment. Social Network Theory considers social networks as the engine of social order and change. Indeed, this seemingly inexhaustible question of how arts are socially organized intersects with the question of how arts change. Here again sociologists offer different answers with references to cumulative effects of microchanges, to endogenous and exogenous factors, to the structuring environment (including prevailing ideologies) and certainly to the concatenation of these and other aspects.

Consequently, this compendium highlights the following seven theorists and perspectives on the social organization of arts: (1) Howard Becker, who stands for the interactionist approach, (2) Pierre Bourdieu and his theory of artistic fields, (3) Niklas Luhmann, who developed a systems theory approach to arts, (4) the Production of Culture Perspective, focusing on Richard Peterson's works, 5) Neo-Institutionalism, focusing on Paul DiMaggio's and Walter Powell's works, (6) Cultural Institutions Studies, a theoretical concept that further develops Peterson's approach with the help of philosophical and political science ideas, and finally, (7) Social Network Theory, derived from Harrison White's works. These theories and perspectives have emerged out of distinct epistemic constellations, that is, they are embedded in very different theoretical grounds, address different problems[1] and use different terminologies. They have been disseminated across different institutional sites and academic networks. They are in large part meaningful sociological constructs, or models, but

1 The reference to certain theoretical problems and research questions is circular in the sense that a "theory not only formulates what we know but also tells us what we want to know, that is, the questions to which an answer is needed" (Parsons 1968a, 9). It is worth noting that questions and answers establish and justify the value of the particular theory.

they are also fueled with emotional directionality, since they plead for a better (i.e., richer, more comprehensive, more accurate, and more plausible) sociological view on this topic. Some of these theories founded schools, groups of enthusiastic academic scholars and stanch defenders of their respective doctrines and practices. The intellectual and institutional competition among these schools contributes to social dynamics, the formation of professional identities and boundaries, processes of valuation and devaluation, which in the long run may increase disciplinary reflexivity as well as interdisciplinary creativity.

These seven theoretical approaches to the social organization of arts do differ in important ways. Some refer to concrete historical situations, some focus on particular art forms, while others steer the reader's awareness to orders and regularities or to changes and disruptions. They are constructed in an inductive, deductive or abductive manner. And their terminology can be based on clear-cut sociological concepts or on metaphors and analogies (see Swedberg 2017). Comparing them is a challenge. The first three chapters of this book are about sociologists born between 1927 and 1930 – Howard S. Becker, Pierre Bourdieu and Niklas Luhmann – who claimed to have formulated comprehensive theories of the social organization of arts. Although their theoretical foundations are very different, their view of arts is rather sober, and often explicitly critical of mythical narratives – the artist as a singular genius, or visionary seer, the idea of autonomous artwork or of eternal artistic truths – and mechanistic views of the development of arts – such as the reflection theory of art or a purely formalist view on artistic developments. From this perspective, we decided to summarize their theories in a separate chapter. Yet our comparative discussion does not seek an evaluation, a judgment if you will, of which is the best theory.

Chapters 6 through 9 present sociological perspectives that were developed inductively (especially Peterson's Production of Culture Perspective) and claim to be middle-range theories (Neo-Institutionalism, Cultural Institutions Studies, and Network Theory). The generation of sociologists responsible for identifying these new research topics were born in the second half of the 20th century, with the exceptions of Harrison White, Richard Peterson and Diana Crane, who were born in the 1930s. Their observations focused on the entanglement of practices with institutions, the interrelation between social structuration and confusion, the dynamics of organizing, and the contingencies in the formation of meanings and values. For this reason, we put their perspectives in a second group and compare their sociological approaches in another chapter.

At this point we would like to note the epistemological elusiveness of the term theory (see Abend 2008). In a narrow sense, a theory should be capable

of predicting and explaining the emergence, formation and disappearance of social phenomena. However, assuming that every theoretical explanation contains an interpretation, which can change over time, then there is no reason to think there is only one explanation, and so the meaning of theory becomes elusive. In a broader sense, theory refers to sociological approaches that are deductively constructed and claim, at least to some degree, generality and universality. Inductive approaches in sociology may be better called perspectives since they accept that the social world is an ongoing dynamic process and demand greater account to be taken of social diversity and particularity.

Sociological theories and perspectives are generative since they "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972, 49). However, this book is not a history of ideas or a discourse analysis. The task of presenting certain theories and perspectives on a particular topic implies the idea of comparison. We approached this by making use of a threefold structure, that is, each chapter contains sections on the foundations, the key theoretical concepts and selected critical objections. Textual comparison is somewhat challenging due to significant stylistic differences. For instance, some texts are more descriptive, while others are quite abstract. Style of writing is not a decorative attribute of scientific texts; style itself makes various claims. It displays an attitude to what matters, it mediates communication, and it establishes a specific relationship to readers.

A critic of our selection of theories and perspectives might argue that we have not considered this or that author or theory – for example, Adorno's critique of the cultural industry and other neo-Marxist streams, Actor-Network-Theory, Critical Studies related to gender, race and other intersectional categories.[2] Certainly, such a criticism is justified. However, from the very beginning we were acutely aware that we had to make a selection and that there were some approaches that we did not want to include and other that we could not discuss in-depth. A book of this size does not pretend to be an encyclopedia. However, we hope that we will be able to justify our selection by showing the links between the sociology of the organization of arts with social theory.[3]

2 It is important to note that these categories have different significance in different sociohistorical and geographic contexts when one thinks of the positionality and embeddedness of people who care about, and are affected by such categories (see Young 2012).

3 LGBTIQ+ and postcolonial approaches have doubtlessly made important contributions in analyzing social inequalities, economic domination and cultural hegemony. They are highly relevant and should be taken up by theories of the social organization of arts. However, we regard them as specific topics to be addressed in a broader social theory (for an in-depth discussion, see Go 2017).

Another critique we anticipate will question our focus on North American and European discourses and empirical examples. This is not due to an unconscious epistemic devaluation of theories and cultures from the Global South, with its reference to the coloniality of power and issues of cultural hegemony. The reasons are instead to be found in the regrettable limits of our own intellectual biographies, our theoretical and empirical knowledge of other traditions and their practical embedding in other social worlds. We have chosen (well aware of the potential fallacy of self-interpretation) these theorists for another reason: to satisfy our (socialized) intellectual curiosity and desire to contribute to an understanding of the social complexity in the area of arts and culture. We hope that others who are familiar with theories developed in the Global South will join in the discussion of social theory and our understanding of the social organization of arts.

We both have interdisciplinary backgrounds in sociology and management studies, one being more empirically and the other more philosophically oriented. This influences the contents of this book, but our interests also imply a general appreciation of theoretical work in sociology. At this point, we would like to remark on the dangers of theorizing. What is dangerous is the tendency to define and control the research object to a degree that it deforms the subject of analysis, by systematically ignoring existing contingencies, ambiguities, exceptions, disorder, irregularities and vagueness. This tendency may lead to intellectual and analytical rigidity, and to a kind of monodisciplinary (and overdisciplined) thinking. Sociology is, after all, only one instrument in the toolbox of scholarly disciplines that study the interrelations between people, cultures, societies and environments. We are therefore pleading for a particular *undisciplined* way of thinking of the social organization of arts, one that integrates perspectives from neighboring disciplines.

Taking the diversity of sociological perspectives seriously (we are avoiding the term paradigm for certain epistemological reasons) means acknowledging their genuine value and contribution to the development of scholarly thinking. Presenting any particular sociological theory also involves a critical reflection of one's own process of reading, understanding and interpreting. We are not sure whether this process can always be explicit, as we feel that there is a tacit dimension in understanding that renders it opaque to some degree. We are aware that we favor certain theories, and we have tried to be critical but fair. To rephrase it slightly, valuing is unavoidable, but while it makes understanding a theory more challenging, it can also make it more insightful.

3 Limits and pitfalls of studying the social organization of arts

Sociology of arts or sociology of the organization of arts?

When we started to design this compendium, we were aware of some excellent introductory books on the sociology of arts (e.g., Zolberg 1990; Alexander 2021 [2003]; Inglis and Hughson 2005; Rothenberg 2014; see Rodríques Morató 2023, 1–43). The merits of these books lie in their comprehensive discussion of various aspects concerning the sociality of arts, their reference to a number of contemporary theoretical approaches and to the overlaps between sociology of arts and other disciplines like art and social history, semiotics, cultural studies, cultural economics, arts management studies, cultural policy studies and various methodologies. However, our endeavor takes a different direction.

Special consideration and praise have to be given to Hans van Maanen's (2009) book *How to Study Art Worlds: On the Societal Functioning of Aesthetic Values*. Like our book, this volume looks at the social organization of arts from production to consumption, but with a focus on aesthetic values. In the first part of the book, he explores sociological approaches such as Becker's Art Worlds, Bourdieu's Field Theory, Luhmann's Systems Theory, Heinich's pragmatic approach to valuation and DiMaggio's Neo-Institutionalism. In the second part, he discusses philosophical ideas (e.g., from Immanuel Kant, Hans-Georg Gadamer, John Dewey, George Dickie, Noël Carroll and Richard Shusterman) on the aesthetic function of artworks, the role of aesthetic experience and the intrinsic and extrinsic value of arts. In the third part, van Maanen analyzes how various ways of organizing arts via, for example, markets or public subsidies and in centralized or decentralized forms are related to different functions and values, with the aim of sensitizing readers to the importance of context analysis. However, there are several differences between his book and ours. First, a thematic one, since van Maanen is interested in how artistic values, and not arts in general, are organized. Second, he looks at general theories on a more abstract level, including philosophical aesthetics. We, however, with our interplay of grand theories and middle-range approaches prefer a concrete and empirically based discussion of the social organization of arts. In contrast to van Maanen, we see the question of the social organization of arts as a part of a more general sociology of arts.

In light of this, it follows that a sociology of the organization of arts is not synonymous with a sociology of arts. Although seemingly trivial, we need to differentiate between two research agendas. To this end, we will now review three programmatic articles published over the last few years by renowned scholars of the field. Vera Zolberg (2014) is one of the founders of the contemporary so-

ciology of arts (see Zolberg 1990). She revived a sociological engagement with arts by calling for a renewed disciplinary acceptance of a sociology of arts (see Rodríguez Morató 2023). Her justification was based on an understanding of the instrumental nature of arts, especially from the outcome of the art production. Sociology considers arts a research subject since it regards arts as no different from any other social phenomenon. Unlike arts studies and art history, the social autonomy of the artistic sphere has been generally (if not by all sociologists) rejected. Studying the influence of, for example, capitalist entrepreneurialism or of cultural politics distinguishes the sociology of arts clearly from other humanistic disciplines. For this reason, Zolberg (2014, 898) wishes to clarify the terminology "from 'art' to 'the arts,' from 'sociology of culture' to 'sociology of art' along with even more subtle variations, such as 'a cultural sociology.'" The introduction of social institutions as major factors in the "sacred world of high art" (2014, 899) is the pivotal point in the rise of a sociology of arts. Zolberg does not explicitly distinguish between a sociology of arts and a sociology of the organization of arts. However, there are sufficient suggestions in her text that would legitimate this distinction. She argues that a sociology of arts looks at arts and "the role they play in validating high social standing in modern, liberal democracies," (2014, 900) whereas a sociology of organizing arts has four more specific functions: first, "the roles of institutions and processes that give rise to or constrain the emergence of art," second, "the artistic practice of creators and patterns of appreciation," third, "opportunities of access of diverse publics to the arts," and fourth, "the societal context … of how and under what conditions" art is organized (2014, 901).

Following Zolberg, we can say that a sociology of arts is typically engaged with questions of the demarcation of art, the social construction of art genres, the waxing and waning difference between high and popular arts, mechanisms of valuation, prestige and status assignments, the social uses of artworks, the sociality of aesthetic experience and many others. By contrast, a sociology of organizing arts investigates the structuration of various activities and interrelations between institutional actors, the prefiguration of artistic, organizational and consummatory practices, the role of collective cognitive patterns in meaning-giving, issues of power and domination, and other similar topics.

The semantic complexity increases when we observe how the academic community develops different definitions of art sociology. For instance, Eduardo de la Fuente (2007, 416f.) argues that art sociology deals with "art as art" instead of focusing on the conditions of art production, distribution and consumption. Consequently, for de la Fuente, arts sociology does not treat artworks as objects and as social products but ascribes art agency, that is, the arts are able to affect us. He concludes that the relation between arts and the social

should not be regarded as one-way but as a coproduction (2007, 418, with explicit reference to DeNora 2003, 37–39; see Rodríguez Morató 2023, 12ff.). One may agree or disagree with de la Fuente's interpretation of arts sociology in contrast to sociology of arts. From a linguistic point of view, the term *sociology of* gives primacy to the discipline of sociology, connoting one of its specific subdisciplines. The term arts sociology, similar to arts theory or art history, gives primacy to the subject of study and so connotes a specific sociological approach. Both terms therefore have a similar meaning, but a different connotation. In line with this linguistic distinction, we use the term sociology of arts when referring to sociological theories and the term arts sociology when referring to scholarly studies focusing on relations in arts and exclusively on artistic realms. De la Fuente (2007) criticizes the focus of sociology of arts on social frameworks as "a preference for studying the concrete networks of artistic production and consumption" (2007, 412) and an inclination toward socially organizational research in the sense of Howard Becker's (1982) art worlds. This is indeed at the core of our focus on the social organization of arts. And this is how this book differs from a book about art sociology.

Finally, we see similarities to our approach in Victoria D. Alexander and Ann Bowler's (2014) editorial article on "Art at the Crossroads: The Arts in Society and the Sociology of Art." They caution against ignoring the challenges of "the increasing dominance of neoliberal models of institutional and organizational success" in arts (2014, 1). Of the challenges they discuss, we will address at least half of them as topics for a sociology of the social organization of arts. First, the marginalization of arts comes with the ongoing public consecration of the fine arts since "fine arts venues are still frequently seen as forbidding and intimidating to the uninitiated" (2014, 2). Although institutions of high culture are trying to shed this image, the historical distinction between fine and popular arts is still prevalent. Second, the markets of arts (here with explicit reference to the visual arts) are powerful organizational frames for the production, distribution, consumption and valorization of artworks. The price of an artwork becomes an accepted indicator of its artistic value, as studies of auction house sales prove. Furthermore, the digitalization of music markets by global streaming platforms acting as providers, has revolutionized the distribution and valorization of music works (2014, 5ff.). Third, state institutions through public authorities funding arts, are likewise important players in supporting, shaping and hindering art production. In some national markets, especially in continental Europe, the state context of public funding has a similarly strong heteronomous effect on artistic creation as market investments (2014, 8). Fourth, and finally, Alexander and Bowler (2014, 8ff.) propose a comprehensive study of arts institutions and organizations, which is also one of the core themes of this book.

All of these programmatic articles about the sociology of arts point out differences between the sociological study of arts and the study of the social organization of arts. We consider this as encouragement to establish a theoretical foundation for the social organization of arts.

Challenges of an organizational sociology for explaining the social organization of arts

Organizational sociology is one of the most widely acknowledged and well-established subdisciplines of sociology. For more than seventy years, it has provided sociological knowledge to the larger field of organization studies, but at times it has also been seen as an indistinguishable addendum to a broader field of organizational studies that is otherwise dominated by business and management studies (Scott 2004). Indeed, many sociological organization studies deal with business-related issues of entrepreneurship and profitability (see Grothe-Hammer and Kohl 2020), although there are also narrower areas of research in the nonprofit and public sectors, mostly concerned with health, education and law. If at all, arts and culture are of very peripheral interest in this field. Nonetheless, two theories that dominate organizational sociology today, Neo-Institutionalism and Network Theory (2020, 432), have found their way into our reflections on the social organization of arts. Arts as a subject of sociological organizational research have been largely associated with two names, Paul DiMaggio and Harrison White. The former used the fundamental sociological concept of the institution already in his early work in the mid-1970s, as White did with the concept of network in the mid-1960s, though in both cases full theoretical development happened later. Time and again, they are cited in the literature, DiMaggio (1991a) mainly for his neo-institutionalist text on the construction of the organizational field of art museums in the United States and Harrison and Cynthia White (1965) for their network analysis of the careers of French painters in the 19th century.[4] Outside these studies, organizational sociology has had little to say in research on the organization of arts. There are now some promising approaches that link aesthetics with entrepreneurship (e.g., Holm and Beyes 2022) or with everyday life in organizations (Ratiu 2017), but almost no research or publications explore the social organization

4 According to Google Scholar, DiMaggio (1991a) has been cited about 2,000 times. [https://nyuscholars.nyu.edu/en/publications/constructing-an-organizational-field-as-a-professional-project-th, access July 25, 2023] White and White (1965) has been cited about 1,000 times. [https://scholar.google.de/scholar?cites=5445217075418657900&as_sdt=2005&sciodt=0,5&hl=de, access July 25, 2023].

of arts (the few exceptions will be discussed in chapters 7 and 10). The general dominance of the business-based orientation of organizational studies has also been criticized in the arts management literature (see DeVereaux 2019a). Julian Stahl and Martin Tröndle (2019), for instance, call for more and better innovative management concepts for the arts and not just the general management models having been taught since the 1950s. Instead they want "a management perspective that is empirically grounded in artistic practice … [and the integration of] more perspectives than just business administration" (2019, 251). The field of organizational studies may now be shifting its attention away from concerns with rational efficiency and business logic. However, Michael Grothe-Hammer and Sebastian Kohl (2020) are doubtful that this will be of any use for the study of the social organization of arts, since the great majority of organizational scholars remain focused on firms as their major research subject.

4 Overview

Chapter 2, Art Worlds as Collectives, draws on the work of Howard S. Becker, who argued that the social organization of arts is the result of collective action. Behind every artist there are various interacting collectives that participate in the creation, distribution, reception/consumption and (e)valuation of artistic processes and their outcomes. Collective action presupposes some shared conventions and knowing the most relevant conventions and rituals in particular art worlds is a precondition for participation. Becker's approach to the topic integrates the sociology of occupations, the sociology of knowledge and organizational sociology into the sociology of arts. Becker, in his later years, extended his focus to include a sociological perspective on artworks and creative processes into his interactionist account. By doing so, he offers an illuminating understanding of the social life of artworks.

Chapter 3, Fields of Cultural Production, presents Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of how contemporary Western societies organize artistic practices. His view is expressed by the metaphor of a *field of forces*, the relational arrangements of social positions, resources and dispositions that are associated with concepts of social power and domination. Bourdieu investigates the historical formation of the artistic field, its internal differentiation and intersection with other social fields. The picture he draws is one of constant conflicts and battles between antagonistic positions. Individuals acting in this field of practice are neither free actors nor passive elements. They rely on their habitual beliefs and take certain risks according to their practical sense and their alliances in a given situation.

Social order and change are not seen as contradictions, but rather as the two sides of the same coin.

Chapter 4, Art as a Social System, deals with Niklas Luhmann, whose works were read in the 1980s in many European countries, but remain largely unknown to sociologists outside Europe. Rooted in systems theory, Luhmann investigates the formation of art and argues that the main difference between premodern and modern times is the self-determination and self-reference of art. This development goes hand in hand with the emergence of an art system that operates in an autopoietic, that is, self-referential way. The underlying idea is that modern societies allow social orders to emerge from established boundaries between different social systems based on a functional differentiation. Binary logics like belonging/not-belonging, fitting/not-fitting indicate the answer to the question, What is art? Contingency, or the unpredictability of artistic developments, is a characteristic feature of the social organization of arts.

Chapter 5 compares the sociological models offered by Howard S. Becker (art worlds), Pierre Bourdieu (art fields), and Niklas Luhmann (art system). Though most sociologists emphasize the differences between the three theories, there are also important commonalities. All are contextualists, presuppose social differentiation, consider distinctions and boundaries between belonging and not-belonging, inner and outer spaces as pivotal, but pay little attention to artistic materials and technologies. Yet it is correct to underline the significant differences that emerge from their general social-theoretical understandings – and more specifically – of social relations in organizational arrangements in arts. Consequently, they have developed very different ideas about artistic autonomy and domination, about social structure and contingency, evaluative regimes and artistic change.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to the Production of Culture Perspective, including works of its prime initiator, Richard Peterson, as well as those of other to him connected sociologists. They understand arts as the outcome of various interrelated activities in which intermediaries play a significant part. Their mediations between the microlevel (artistic work) and the mesolevel (organizations, markets) impose a significant mark on cultural production and consumption. Yet all activities and mediations are framed by further conditions at the macrolevel, such as policies, economic and industrial structures, technology and occupational roles. The empirical character of its research makes the Production of Culture Perspective a middle-range theory. These sociological works have introduced new topics into the discussion of social order and change.

Chapter 7 presents Sociological Neo-Institutionalism. The key term institution refers to explicit norms and implicit rules, taken-for-granted beliefs and widespread cognitive patterns, which together make social situations and be-

havior intelligible. The emphasis on the cultural explanation of social order goes against universal concepts like rationality, functionality or social structure. Neo-Institutionalists pay close attention to organizations, small and large, for-profit and not-for-profit, public and private. In their research, three key concepts have emerged, isomorphism, or the tendency of organizational adaptation; legitimacy, or the pursuit of social acceptance; and institutional decoupling, that is, organizations tend to officially obey formal rules, but in fact pursue informal conduct to allow for greater operational flexibility. These concepts have become key to the sociology of organizations.

Chapter 8 introduces the Cultural Institutions Studies, an interdisciplinary approach mainly known in German-speaking countries. Scholars associated with this approach are not only sociologists, some are economists or scholars studying business, others are pragmatist philosophers. They combine sociological perspectives with cultural economics, institutionalism and practice theory. Practices as observable units of analysis are combined with the concept of institutions to explore the social organization of arts. The integration of research from economics and business studies plays a pivotal role, for example, in the investigation of the transformation of cultural goods into commodities, the analysis of the role of public funding arts or the development of music industries. Additionally, Cultural Institutions Studies gives attention to the role of arts managers and arts organizations in establishing regimes of competence and steering (e)valuation processes.

Chapter 9 offers a comparative discussion of the Production of Culture Perspective, the Sociological Neo-Institutionalism, and the Cultural Institutions Studies. These approaches are represented by many scholars, a selection of which appear in our discussion. All three approaches seek interdisciplinary dialogue to increase the complexity of sociological analysis. They are middle-range in scope and generally reject methodological individualism. They focus explicitly on arts organizations while emphasizing the role of their environments. The comparison highlights two particular topics: their specific understanding of contextual relations and their discussion of mediation. For the last topic, we chose the Cultural Diamond (Griswold 2004 [1994]) as an analytical tool. Finally, our comparison shows that these three middle-range approaches are compatible and can build theoretical alliances.

Chapter 10, the last chapter in this compendium, refers to Social Network Theory and semantic network analysis, since we believe that the sociological concept of network can be a bridging concept for advancing theoretical work on the social organization of arts. Social networks are temporary and fragile products of social connectivity and embeddedness as well as sites of communication, coordination and flexible adjustments to social environments. Social network

theories aim at explaining organizational hybridity and the contingence of social events. Semantic network analysis complements this goal by interpreting meaning-giving as a relational process incorporated into networks. The final part of this chapter then formulates a conclusion about the theoretical scaffolding of the social organization of arts and offers the reader with some general reflections about future advancements on the key topics of this book.

All the theories and perspectives discussed in this book are inherently critical in questioning the formation of existing orders and normative categories in organizing arts. However, some of them do not explicitly criticize the negative effects of social orders and disorders. All in all, the idea formulated by scholars of the Frankfurt School that culture is used as a system of control, has not been integrated into the majority of the post-1970 theories discussed here. Some might interpret this as an omission., but we believe that most of the theories we discuss in this book regard the relation between arts and society as too complex, contextual, ambivalent and heterogeneous to hold them to a possibly justified, but also normative directive.