



Cultural policy for what? Kiel's cultural policy between city development, social cohesion and intrinsic values

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Abstract: Kiel is a special case in terms of cultural policy: Unlike in most other medium-sized German cities, cultural policy has become highly relevant and is linked with the idea of positioning Kiel as an “creative city”. There seems to be an unanimity that the city of Kiel as a whole has a great deal of potential for creativity, which, however, has not yet been exhausted. The following text gives an overview and tries to find out where this unique position of Kiel comes from. It has identified the strategic decision to apply a creative city approach, while focusing on creative industries as a milestone, taking a wider approach to the creative city, increasingly fostering citizen driven initiative. Explanatory approaches are offered by the political integration into a multi-level system, the socio-cultural character of the city, as well as the influence of the institutes of higher education.

Keywords: Kiel; cultural policy; creative city; creative class; social cohesion.



1. Introduction

Kiel is the state capital of the German federal state Schleswig-Holstein and one of two major cities in the state. Unlike many other medium-sized German cities, cultural policy plays an important role in Kiel in the overall urban development strategy.

Like most cities, Kiel is also facing increasing social and environmental challenges, and there is a growing awareness that these challenges need to be approached in a systematic way and tackled in an integrated way. Sustainable changes are necessary in almost all areas of society. To achieve this, strategies must be developed and tested, and actors must be identified and encouraged to responsibly drive forward the initiation, support and implementation of social innovations (Beck & Kropp, 2012). A process in which Arts and Culture play a key role in enhancing the creativity and the ability of society to innovate.¹

In Kiel, there seems to be a political commitment to bring about a paradigm shift in the city's urban development. The realization of which still needs to be materialized, and will overtime be manifested in the interaction of cultural and

urban policies. There is the notion of integrating economic policy, cultural policy urban development, and ultimately also social policy. Whereby cultural policy, steps out of its marginal area, and manifests itself at the centre of urban development, that connects the various policy areas with each other i.e. being the glue in society.

Art and culture are not regarded by the state capital Kiel as a voluntary service, but rather as a self-evident duty of a democratic society and as part of the and as part of the provision of public services (1). This is expressed less in well-situated cultural institutions, long cultural traditions, or a high degree of cultural interest among the population but rather in the idea of combining cultural policy with creative city making in urban development policy. The concept of the Creative City (Landry, 2009) which aims to harness the collective intelligence, potential and resources of Kiel and create the conditions for people, organizations and the city as a whole to think, plan and act with imagination to promote opportunities and solve ordinary and extraordinary problems in new ways, plays hereby a key role. In 2018 (1) the City Council Assembly of Kiel instructed the City administration to prepare the further

development of Kiel's strategic orientation as a creative city. This top-down approach is flanked with an increasing number of active bottom-up initiatives where creativity and sustainability are interlinked, many of which radiate from the realms of the higher educational institutions in Kiel. In the following, we will take a closer look at the *strategic development of* cultural policy of the city of Kiel in the last ten years. We will give an overview on the assumptions behind the strategy emphasizing cultural policies and city development.

This paper is a description of the development of policy formation in Kiel. We have not directly applied a theoretical lens for the observation, however it suggests itself that a framework of multiple streams (MSF) could be applicable in the case of Kiel. It describes the process of policy formation as a collective choice that is based on "the combined result of structural forces and cognitive and affective processes" (2).

MSF distinguishes three conceptually distinct streams that influence policy formation: problems, policies and politics. Each of these streams has its own dynamics and rules. We believe that, in the present case, all three streams have worked towards policy change, creating a window of opportunities. Variables that can be assigned to the streams of the MSF are:

1. **Problems stream:** This is based on the socio-cultural character of Kiel and the implication thereof it has on the city such as the social problems, the creative class brain drain, lack of employment opportunities, unequal distribution of cultural "services" in the city area etc.
2. **Policies stream:** in 2010 the decision to declare Creative and Innovative City a strategic goal. In 2013 the realization by the City Council Assembly that the promotion of the creative industries must go hand in hand with the strengthening of culture.
3. **Politics stream:** In aftermath of the election in 2008 the City Council Assembly of Kiel had new majorities and also the political leadership changed.

These variables are discussed more individually in the subsequent chapters.

2. Local cultural policy within multilevel cultural governance

The multilevel cultural governance within Germany provides the framework for municipal cultural policy in Kiel. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss this in a first step. In Germany, governance is practiced through the federalist system in a variety of policy fields, including cultural policy. The aim is to involve not only the state but also private and civil society actors in the process of shaping policy. The German form of multi-level governance also provides for several federal levels to act at the same time in one policy field. And indeed, it should be noted that policy interdependence between the federal, state and local levels is increasing, especially in cultural policy (3).

In Germany's federal structure, governmental responsibilities are divided between the federal government and the Länder. According to this structure, the Länder bear the main responsibility for cultural matters (Kulturhoheit). Contrary to widespread opinion, however, the Basic Law grants the federal government a number of legislative, administrative and financial powers in the cultural sphere as well (4).

Kiel is part of the federal state Schleswig-Holstein. In accordance with the state constitution, the promotion of culture is understood here as a joint task of the state, municipalities and districts. The state's financial support focuses on projects and structures of statewide, at least "supra-regional" importance. As a rule, it is based on legal requirements and funding guidelines.

In addition to supporting artistically and culturally outstanding institutions and their projects, the state also funds individual activities such as artistic festivals and projects that permanently protect cultural heritage or promote cultural education, but also artist scholarships and socio-cultural initiatives. With the help of the state funds, a qualitatively appealing and spatially easily accessible cultural offer is to be ensured in the area. The cultural infrastructure in Schleswig-Holstein is characterized by the two large municipal theaters in Lübeck and Kiel as well as the state theater with its supporting structure of 19 cities, counties and municipalities. It is part of the state's profile that there are only a few large cultural institutions (with the exception of the Schleswig-Holstein State Museums at Gottorf Castle and the Lübeck museums). While there is a focus on larger events, the Service Agency for

Cultural Funding Schleswig-Holstein tries to align with the major cities and municipalities to also support smaller and voluntary cultural actors in particular in their search for and processing of suitable funding.

On a City level, the City council determines the objectives and principles for the administration of the city. In addition, it authorizes the administration to incur expenditure. There are currently nine standing technical committees that prepare the resolutions for the City Council, and which in certain questions take final decisions on matters not expressly reserved for the Council Assembly. The Cultural committee is responsible for general cultural related issues, taking into account the concerns of monument protection and preservation, adult education center, municipal library, museums, the Kiel Theatre as well as the cooperation with the universities in the field of art and culture.

Accordingly, most of the funding for the cultural infrastructure is provided at the municipal level. The state of Schleswig-Holstein funds culture only modestly compared to other federal states. In addition, there is hardly any cultural policy debate at the state level. These circumstances give the city of Kiel quite a lot of leeway, but also, responsibility in the policy field of culture (5).

3. Socio-cultural character of Kiel

Kiel is not well known in Germany as an outstanding location for culture and is not a typical cultural tourist destination (6). Instead, the City of Kiel has positioned itself as the "Sailing City". The city is internationally renowned as a location for shipbuilding, science and research, as a cruise and ferry port, as well as a Mecca for water sports enthusiasts (7). Events like the "Kieler Woche", a combined sailing and folk festival have manifested the maritime flair as the city's brand and cultural identity. However, since 2013 the Muddi Market, a non-profit association promoting awareness of sustainable development, has been organizing a less noisy and commercial alternative program at Kiel Week. This originates from bottom-up initiatives and volunteers to contribute to a more sustainable development in Kiel's cultural landscape. With the goal to encourage and inspire a more sustainable way of life with fun and many opportunities to join in.

While being branded as the "sailing city" Kiel is also perceived as a harbor city with

limited access to the waterfront. Due to the military harbor, the shipyards and the major ferry terminals, there has been little access for the citizens of Kiel to the waterfront. In recent years, however, access to the waterfront has been steadily improved. This is also linked to the fact that Kiel has undergone a major structural change, because the mainstays of the economy, especially industry, administration and the military, were foreseeably losing their importance. At the same time, sectors such as the creative industries and services are experiencing strong growth. Hence the brand "sailing city", although with a high value of recognition for the City, is by some perceived restraining, as it is not really an inclusive brand for many citizens, and also that the city has much more to offer than water and sailing. However, this needs to be communicated more strongly to the outside world, by presenting itself as part of the metropolitan region between Hamburg and Copenhagen.

The city with its approx. 250,000 inhabitants is also facing major challenges. The Kiel Social Report, which is published every year, shows very transparently the social challenges of the city (8). These include long-term unemployment, the lack of sufficient and affordable housing and child poverty. In 2019, 28.2% in Kiel, or nearly one in three children under the age of 15, was living on social benefits. The districts of Gaarden and Mettenhof in particular are struggling with socioeconomic challenges: there is significantly higher unemployment here than in the rest of Kiel. This geographically unbalanced social structure poses the risk of social division. This makes it all the more important to strive for equal living conditions so as not to endanger social cohesion. One measure to achieve this is the equal distribution of public services. In the context of cultural policy, this explicitly includes cultural services such as libraries, theaters, music schools, etc.

The financial situation of the Kiel municipality although still tight in 2013/2014. The first major decisions on budget increases for culture were in 2013 - for the 2014 budget. Although there was a considerable opposition because a large deficit was still expected, the decision was taken based on the argument that increased funding in the cultural sector will have a positive effect on the prosperity of the city. Since then, the situation has improved: tax revenues per inhabitant have risen and the burden of debt has steadily declined.

4 The role of the institutions of higher education

Kiel is home to three institutions of higher education, which have a differing influence on the city. The Kiel University (CAU) is the biggest and only comprehensive university in Schleswig-Holstein. As one of the oldest and most relevant universities in northern Germany (the only comprehensive university), it functions as a regional cultural hub (9). Further, with its excellence clusters and around 27,000 students it plays an important role in the city. With its many international co-operations, the university offers different starting points for innovative networks, one of which is the European University of the Seas Network. It is complemented by the Kiel University of Applied Sciences with about 7,000 students and the Muthesius Academy of Fine Arts (MKH) with about 600 students.

Almost by default, the creative study programs hold a high innovation potential for the city of Kiel and play a crucial role regarding the local cultural policy: One of the main concerns of Kiel's cultural policy is to directly address the creative class and with it, in particular, the graduates of the creative courses of study. With the Muthesius University of Fine Arts and Design (MKH), Kiel has a renowned educational institution in the fields of communication design, industrial design, scenography/interior design, fine /contemporary arts. Until around 2013, graduates of the creative courses hardly ever stayed in Kiel, but moved to the big cities, especially Hamburg and Berlin, after completing their studies. The city recognized this wasted potential and has since developed new strategies to keep creative minds in Kiel. This has had a significant impact on the development of cultural policy. Today the formal and informal collaborations from creative centers, (art-)students, entrepreneurs, university professors, and other civil society groups has developed the creative and sustainability scene in Kiel and given rise to numerous projects that are now shaping urban society. In a study exploring the creativity in Kiel, the universities were considered very creative by 9.4% of respondents and mostly creative by 42.7% (10). On the nationwide innovation radar, the Kiel region is listed as one of the most innovative regions in Germany. The study underscored the importance of the universities in Kiel with their creative potentials, now numbering close to 40,000 students (16% of the population). However, it also clearly described the task of increasing the proportion of those who stay in the city after their studies or return later.

5. Kiel's cultural policy²

In 2008 in the aftermath of the election there was a change City Council Assembly, with a new majority coalition, and in 2010 the City Council took the decision to formulate the "Creative and Innovative City" as a strategic goal, which in the subsequent years had strong implications on the developments of Kiel's urban development and its cultural policy.

However, until 2013, cultural policy in Kiel could be classified as classically conservative: The focus was on the city's major cultural institutions: the Kiel Theater, the Kiel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Kunsthalle, and the Stadtgalerie. Communal cultural policy here was mainly focused on central institutions, all located in the center of the city. The main goal was to administer the existing and support the cultural beacons of the city. One reason for this policy was the tight budget situation, which also affected the culture department.

As of 2013, there was a fundamental change in Kiel's cultural policy. In 2013 after elections, the majority coalition there was the notion that the promotion of the creative industries should go hand in hand with the strengthening of culture. Increase and expansion of cultural funding despite the difficult budget situation, was justified by the fact that this would over time lead to positive (also financial) effects for the City³. The Guidelines for the Municipal Promotion of Culture in the State Capital Kiel were adopted by the Council Assembly in 2013 and, reiterated in 2018, which outlined that the City's cultural policy should particularly emphasize three goals: the maintenance of cultural memory, the revitalization of public space as well as a diversification of cultural education and integration (11). This realignment led to a cultural policy that was intended to combine the promotion of culture with a strengthening of urban development and social cohesion. This cultural policy had three focal points, which are described below:

First, it was stated that cultural policy must no longer address only the center of Kiel and the important cultural institutions. The aim was to promote the diversity of cultural institutions throughout the city. An analysis of cultural institutions identified five cultural areas (Kultur Areale) in different districts in Kiel, each of which is home to several different cultural institutions. Efforts focused on expanding institutional

funding for small cultural initiatives (from €600 thousand to about €1.5 million) in conjunction with the designation of five cultural areas to strengthen cooperation between the cultural institutions in the cultural areas of Dietrichsdorf/Wellingdorf, Gaarden, Mettenhof, Marinequartier-Wik/Holtenuau, Friedrichsort/Schilksee. In this context, the socially deprived districts were also recognized as cultural areas. The Cultural office is coordinating the work of the Kultur Areal. They initiate and support the joint activities of the cultural institutions, promote the cooperation of the cultural institutions with schools, accompany district-related projects on art in public space and support the project office of the cultural administration in district-related additional tasks.

In addition to the increase of institutional funding, project funding for cultural projects has been significantly expanded and several larger funds for projects in the city's neighborhoods have been created, as a result of which several hundred projects could now be realized in the urban space in the last years.

Secondly, attempts were made to implement the concept of the Creative City in Kiel, which were aimed at making the city more attractive as a location for “the creative class” (12). One of the main concerns of this policy was to create spaces and perspectives that would make Kiel an attractive location for cultural and creative industries.

The idea of the Creative City became a pillar of Kiel's cultural policy. Even today, the city has its own department for Education, Youth, Culture and Creative City. In no other city in Germany does a department bear the Creative City in its name. The aim is to shape a cultural policy that is not only focusing on strengthening the cultural sector but combines this with structural change in the economy and, above all, the expansion of the creative industries. A comprehensive study (13) of the innovation potential and the prerequisites for expanding the cultural and creative industries in Kiel was published in 2015. This was a result of a participatory process conducted with stakeholders from universities and the relevant sectors of the cultural and creative industries. One of the specific needs identified was the creation of spaces as a central momentum for strengthening the cultural-creative industries.

In addition, it became clear that the structures in the cultural sector needed to be strengthened in order to better bundle resources. Hence, access to space and alignment of actors were seen as key

requirements, which since then serve as orientation for Kiel's Creative City strategy and its cultural policies (14).

In order to strengthen the cultural and creative industries, the city introduced for creative centers distributed throughout the urban area, from which four centers are currently being funded for their operating costs and for necessary investments.. This creates favorable spaces for initiatives and creative starters. Overall, the creative centers have about 10,000 m² of space and about 50 employees. In the meantime, a diverse landscape of co-working spaces has formed in the city. The creative centers, but also through formal and informal collaborations from (art-) students, entrepreneurs, and other civil society groups have in recent years developed the creative and sustainability scene and given rise to numerous projects that are now shaping urban society. These include the annual start-up festival “Waterkant”, the project “Tiny Rathaus”, the innovation festival, the artistic lead Futur3-Festival, the project Cultural Planning/Centre for Artistic Urban Development, etc.

The strategic idea by the City is to attract (more) (creative) talent to Kiel and/or keep them in Kiel, as there has been a lack of job opportunities for these target groups in the state capital. Starting with a strong focus on establishing creative centers, over time there has been an increasing interest to involve civil society organizations, higher education institutions, but also local initiatives and citizens in city making. The “creativity” in Kiel was in 2021 explored in a scientific study (15). Creativity was here relating to four major areas:

- As means being open (to results) and not being subject to spatial or factual limitations.
- Creativity is the ability to find new solutions for current and future challenges/problems.
- By deviating from routines and questioning processes, new impulses could beset and innovations created.
- Creativity is interaction and exchange with each other. Networks and cooperation are important components of a creative process.

Creativity is not only the generation of ideas, but also includes implementation. The success of the implementation initially plays a subordinate role; it is primarily about thinking “out of the box” and trying out new things.

Third, the notion to move beyond the “creative class” to also engaging citizens more strongly in city making is being pursued. This is manifested in the council decision from 2018 to pursue the idea of the Creative City, but due to the pandemic, the process was slowed down considerably, and is currently in the process of adaptation. For the process design of the further development of a strategic orientation, a working relationship was established with Charles Landry, who invented the concept of the Creative City in the late 1980's. Its focus is how cities can create the enabling conditions for people and organizations to think, plan and act with imagination to solve problems and develop opportunities. Starting point for developing the specific strategy, is the creative index assessed for a city, which is a method for assessing cities holistically (Landry and Hyams, 2012). The index aims at measuring their creative abilities and potential, a precondition for downstream innovations and economic and cultural vigor. This strategic tool is thought of as a framework for thinking and should help generate a narrative for a city by highlighting what it needs to achieve. In Kiel, this process is being aligned with the visioning strategy proposed by Kiel for the 800th anniversary “Kiel 2042” (16).

The underlying concept of Creative City argues that cities need a “creative ecology” to address their complex challenges, where all the interconnected systems that make a city work well are open to being reassessed as needed. Being creative does not mean that everything has to be reinvented. However, there is a willingness to look at things in a new way, whereupon some things are deemed in need of change and others are not. It also implies that creativity and city making cannot be reduced to a “creative class”. Although being key in such processes it needs citizen involvement as well as a susceptible administration, not limited to the cultural institutions.

A core element of the strategy for the development of the creative city is the further development of the administration in the sense of an enabling culture. For this purpose, a unit “Creative and Innovative City” was created and a unit with two employees was set up. Together with the economic unit in the Lord Mayor's department and the city's own economic development agency, the task of implementing the strategy development for a creative and innovative city is carried out.

For the further development of the city administration, the Creative City unit works together with the urban developer Charles Landry and carries out a process to determine

the Creative Index. The Council Assembly instructed the administration to prepare the further development of Kiel's strategic orientation as a creative city and to involve proven expertise such as advice. In an Urban Lab carried out in the context of the urban cultural planning project, the concept of the creative index for Kiel was jointly with Charles Landry explored in a mock exercise (17).

Another ongoing project is the pop-up pavilion in the middle of the city center where creative initiatives can present themselves to the public. The “Tiny Town Hall” and “Popup Pavilion” initiatives have contributed significantly to the state capital Kiel being awarded the Cooperation Prize of German Cities 2021. Kiel also received the German Sustainability Award in the category of larger cities, outcompeting Munich and Stuttgart, in 2021. The award is given to municipalities that face up to change with comprehensive, sustainable urban development.

In recent years, the tasks of the cultural administration have grown considerably due to the increasing importance of cultural work for district development and civil society and the accompanying increase in financial support and city-owned activities. For cultural policy, the so-called cultural quota was agreed politically in 2020, by which is meant that the share of cultural spending in the overall city budget must not shrink.

6. Conclusion

In this article, we wanted to find out why Kiel's cultural policy has a different focus than many comparable cities and where the emphasis on cultural policy comes from. Based on the content described above, our conclusions point at a combination of top-down strategic decisions, as well as bottom-up initiatives many of which adhere in the realms of the institutions of higher education in the city.

One factor seems to be the political decision in 2010 to manifest the idea of a Creative and Innovative City as one of the four strategic long-term goals for the city. While the political decision to increase cultural funding, in 2013, seems to have been a major trigger for change.

The will to use cultural policy for the benefit of the city developed in city politics was strengthened. On one hand there was the strategic notion of integrating economic policy, cultural policy urban development, and ultimately also social

policy. Therefore, it was not a matter of l'art pour l'art, but rather of recognizing the wasted potential in the cultural sector, and the potential this would adhere if manifested at the locus of urban development, connecting various policy areas with each other.

The realignment of Kiel's cultural policy was shaped by three circumstances. For one thing, the previously untapped potential of the creative class was recognized. The institutions of higher education played a decisive role in this. Their alumni became one of the main target groups for the new cultural policy strategy, as well as the overall wish to retain student, not only from the so called "creative sector" in the city. Kiel was to become more attractive as a location for creative ideas and their implementations, thus benefit from the innovative potential. New bottom-up creative and sustainability initiatives were often adhered to the realms of the university.

Moreover, it was recognized that a centrally focused cultural policy did not reflect the situation of the city. Therefore, the cultural areas were introduced to promote the diverse cultural landscape in the individual districts, and to tap into neighborhoods as a central place for collaborative "city making". This equalization of cultural services across the city also aimed to strengthen social cohesion in Kiel.

Lastly, Kiel wants to position itself as a Creative City, where there is more citizen participation in the development of the city. The goal is to fostering creativity among its citizens. This not only serves sustainable urban development and place making but also strengthens the identification with one's own neighborhood and place of living.

Although we did not directly apply a theoretical lens for the observation, we sensed that the framework of multiple streams (MSF) could be applicable. It describes the process of policy formation as a collective choice that is based on "the combined result of structural forces and cognitive and affective processes". In the MSF process a key role is adhered to the "Policy entrepreneur", who takes an active role in the policy stream. He or she is - or if collaborative they are- the most important actors in understanding agenda-setting in the MSF. They develop policy alternatives and couple them to problems. However, to verify the applicability of the MSF framework, as well as the identification of more robust variables and the policy entrepreneur in this case, a more in depth study would be

needed. This could provide more detailed information about the actor constellation and decision-making process.

Notes

1. Arts and culture is in this paper not seen as a "service provide" but we refer to it, as in the understanding of Henning Mohr, Director of the Institute for Cultural Policy, that "*There are more and more artists who themselves speak of a functionalized understanding of art, actively intervene in social contexts and work in a community-based way, so that this is also reflected in the social sphere and brings sustainable innovations into the living environment, and to stimulate a debate about the reactualisation of socio-culture and its artistic potential for shaping society, and in this context - and this is a very cultural-political question - take a closer look at the interaction of art and society*".

2. This chapter is largely based on semi-structured interviews conducted with local experts in cultural policy.

3. Statement from Dirk Sheelje, Chairman of the Cultural Committee in Kiel since 2013.

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