

Preprint version of the paper. The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in Cultural Trends, 24/02/2024,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2024.2320658>

Model of Cultural Policy and The Governance and Management of Cultural Institutions: Comparative Analysis of Three European opera houses

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Abstract

Comparative research on cultural policies has advanced in recent decades in specifying the differences between cultural management models. However, less attention has been paid to how ways of managing large cultural institutions shape outcomes. Opera houses are a special case here. That is because they are large institutions with a long history and exhibit socio-institutional inertia, which partly explains the similarities between them regardless of their geographical and political context. However, there are also significant differences in governance modes, management and leadership styles, as well as how they respond to one of the great challenges facing opera houses in the 21st Century, namely social inclusion and gender inequality. This paper compares three great opera houses

(Royal Opera House, Opera National de Paris, Royal Swedish Opera) belonging to different European models to assess the significance of these differences in cultural management models.

Keywords: cultural policy model, cultural institutions, arts management, opera, Europe.

Introduction

Are opera houses in Europe different today, beyond their historical and geographical singularities, or do they show significant differences depending on the cultural policy model of the country concerned? More specifically, do institutional and political culture contexts — which we call models of cultural politics (Dubois 2016, Mulcahy 2017)— influence how the governance and management of opera houses develop? Here one should bear in mind opera houses: are among the oldest cultural institutions with a loyal audience (Martorella 1982, Benzecry 2012); have a well-established international network linking experts, managers and audiences (Towse 2001, Agid and Tarondeau 2010),; enjoy management autonomy; are burdened with very high fixed costs (Rius-Ulldemolins 2020). All this leads us to wonder whether it is really possible to govern opera houses in ways that meet criteria focusing on delivering public value. We ask whether there are major differences in the way they direct and manage their productions, meet public demand, deliver social impact or if, on the contrary, they exhibit very similar features in terms of cultural policy and priorities regardless of their home country.

To address this issue, we will start from two observations. The first is that cultural policy and institutions largely reflect the heritage of High Culture and, in opera's case, of Enlightened Absolutism (Martorella 1982). From the 18th Century to the present, opera has largely catered to the tastes of those in power and the economic and social elites

(DeNora 1995, DiMaggio 1991, Rubio Aróstegui and Rius-Ulldemolins 2021) — *longue durée* elements that continue to influence the way operas are conceived and managed today. The second is that a new cultural policy began in Western Europe after the Second World War, accompanying the roll-out of The Welfare State and post-war social pacts. The new policy aimed to democratise culture (Urfalino 1996, Vestheim 2012) . However, the path taken by cultural policy in each country and the priorities between the second half of the 20th Century and the present have varied among European countries. The differences have mainly been shaped by a combination of factors, including: historical-institutional legacies; the consolidation of High Culture; the level of public services and their developmental paths; elements of political culture such as the separation between State and culture; protection of religious and cultural diversity (Mangset 2017a, Dubois 2015).

The kinds of cultural facilities found in each country are affected by the cultural policy, which in turn is shaped by a nation's history. The national cultural policy model set the institutional framework for relationships between cultural institutions and public administrations during the second half of the 20th Century (Zimmer and Toepler 1999). This paper looks at how far cultural policy models in Europe shape the governance and management models of opera houses. To do so, we operationalise these management models in three dimensions: (1) The ownership and governance of opera houses with respect to cultural policy models and the greater or lesser autonomy these institutions enjoy from the State; (2) The organisation scheme and internal leadership, with greater or lesser weight placed on the role of the Manager or the Artistic Director and; (3) the institution's goals in terms of artistic excellence, cultural dissemination, and social impact and gender equality. We have drawn mainly on two sources for the case studies: (1) The reports of the institutions themselves and published on their web pages and; (2) The

institutions' budgets stated in the reports of the funding entities and/or in the opera houses' financial reports. The 2018-2019 season was chosen because it was the last one before the pandemic struck and is therefore the latest normal year for which figures are available.

First, we shall examine the models of cultural policy in Europe and their influence on management approaches. Second, we will examine the following three cases, each representing a given European model:

- (1) The Royal Opera House in London, exemplifying The Liberal Model [or 'Anglo-Saxon Model'];
- (2) The *Opera National de Paris*, exemplifying the Central-European Model;
- (3) The *Kungliga Operan* in Stockholm, exemplifying The Nordic Model.

Therefore, we will compare the main governance and management dimensions of the four institutions to see how far the cultural policy model shapes the management models, and whether there are common strands found in all European opera houses.

The three selected cases are national opera houses within the international operatic field due to their trajectory and prestige accumulated since the foundation. At the same time, all three are cultural institutions of state capitals and have a great organizational dimension and importance for national cultural policy, therefore, they can be reasonably compared. We do not claim that these opera theatres are representative of the entire model of cultural policy, nor of all the countries of the same model - which present important differences between them - but rather that in terms of the Weberian ideal type (1944), significant elective affinities can be found between the type of cultural policy model and the type of management model of the opera house.

The present paper is based on the results of the (Anonymous) project financed by (Anonymous). At a methodological level, the analysis is based on the comparison of three cases chosen for their relevance from two strategies: 1) Study of the general framework of the national cultural policy and of the supervision and control organisms of the great cultural institutions and especially of the operas, 2) Case study of the three operas chosen from: a) Reports from the guardianship and control bodies (Ministry of Culture, Arts Council, etc.) on the performances and budget execution, b) Reports and studies of the opera's own management, d) Focus on reports or studies on social impact or gender equality and e) Appearance of news in the press about debates or social claims about the management of the opera, its social diversity and ethnic and gender equality. Finally, the years chosen for budget comparison are those prior to the pandemic (2018-2019 season) since the two subsequent years have been exceptional due to the measures of total closure or reduction of capacity of the shows and cultural and educational activities of the opera houses.

Following, we will briefly examine the main models of cultural policy, relating them to the management and governance models of the great cultural institutions and especially of the opera houses, to finally examine first separately and then in a comparative way the three cases chosen (Royal Opera House, Opera National de Paris, Royal Swedish Opera) of great opera houses each related to a different model of European cultural policy. To finish, we will reflect on the extent to which affinities can be found between the models of cultural policy and the management and governance characteristics of opera houses, without intending to exhaust the diversity of European models of cultural policy or operas, otherwise, as a contribution to understand the determining factors exerted by cultural policy models on the management of opera houses and their relative differences.

The Liberal, Central European and Nordic Models of Cultural Policy and ideal types of cultural institutions

In his comparative studies on the cultural policy systems found in various European countries at the end of XX and beginnings of XXI, Dubois (2015) found that three basic models of cultural policies in Europe had traditionally been identified by Zimmer and Topeler (1996). This authors, following the analysis of three Welfare State models by Esping-Andersen (1993), establish three models, namely: Liberal; Central European; Nordic. The Central European Model has Absolutist roots and thus not only tends to weave a network of artistic institutions stressing excellence but also enshrines strong public intervention (which in the past was used to project the sovereign's power and symbolic domain) (Wollen 2001). Under this model, central government plays the key role both politically and symbolically in relation to other tiers of public administration (Dubois 2016). The role of the private sector in this case is subsidiary and in spite of several French Government attempts of promotion of private financing of culture there are few cases of public-private co-operation (Rubio Arostegui, Rius-Ulldemollins, and Martinez 2014). In addition, the center of this cultural policy revolves around the professional artist, with citizens being seen as passive recipients of their creative output (Menger 2017). France is situated within this model, although it constitutes a unique case due to the centrality of the central State and the level of expenditure developed that generates a great normative and economic dependence on the political capital (Rius-Ulldemollins, Pizzi, and Rubio Arostegui 2019, Friedberg and Urfalino 1999).

By contrast, in The Liberal Model (here, the European variant differs from that

found in North America), the Absolutist tradition is spurned in favour of a more plural and limited conception of The State (Quinn 1997). Under this model, private institutions are given a bigger role in supporting cultural institutions than are government ones (O'Brien 2014). In addition, the market in these countries is a powerful mechanism for regulating cultural life, with State intervention being articulated through the arm's length model and from eighties under New Public Managerialism influence (Mangset 2017a, Ashton). Use of that model greatly limits governmental interference in culture, leaving funding decisions largely in the hands of independent bodies and of non-Treasury sources — for instance, The National Lottery (Moulin 1992, Gray 2008a, Hetherington 2017). Likewise, in recent decades, social goals have been given priority in The Liberal Model, thus limiting the autonomy of cultural policy and its institutions (Gray 2008b, Kleppe 2018) .

Finally, The Nordic Model is one in which strong State support is given in a decentralised way for community-based culture (specially focalised in community centres and public libraries), which is seen as a participatory, socially inclusive activity (Mangset 2017a, Duelund 2008). In Nordic nations, the management of culture has prioritised a community-based approach that is in keeping with a social-democratic egalitarian ideology fostering cultural diversity (Kangas and Vestheim 2010, Harding 2021).

Thus, these models of cultural policy shape the democratising scope of cultural policy, The State's participation, and social and gender inclusion in cultural institutions. The correlation between the model of cultural policy and the model of cultural facilities is an imperfect one. Nevertheless, drawing on the aforementioned models of cultural policy (Zimmer and Toepler 1996), lets us sketch an idealised picture of cultural facilities in The Anglo-Saxon Model [or Liberal Model], and in The Continental European Model (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Models of cultural policy and the type of management in the opera house

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	Liberal Model	Continental European Model	Nordic Model
<i>Case</i>	Royal Opera House	Opéra National de Paris	Royal Swedish Opera
<i>Building ownership</i>	Third Sector	Public Sector	Public Sector
<i>Management ownership</i>	Non-Profit entity	Direct management or autonomous entity	Direct management or autonomous entity
<i>Orientation</i>	Artistic excellence & public value	Artistic excellence	Social Impact

Source: Author, based on Zimmer and Toepler (1996) and Lord and Lord (1998)

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As can be seen in Table 1, the main model of cultural facilities in the context of Continental European cultural policies is one of public ownership with direct management or, at the very least, of bodies answering to public administrations. Heavily subsidised, their management is controlled directly by public representatives who, wield, among other powers, that of appointing the Director. While financial oversight is exercised by the Economics Ministry, the cultural activities are run by the Artistic Director. As a result, there is usually no setting of management and social impact goals. This is usually the model of cultural institutions found in Continental European countries (Rius-Ulldemolins and Rubio 2013), especially in France (Coppinger et al. 2007),

although it a model that is also found in some Mediterranean nations such as Italy (Fedeli and Santoni 2006) or Spain (Rubio Aróstegui and Rius-Ulldemolins 2021)

By contrast, The Anglo-Saxon Model is based on privately-owned cultural facilities (mostly in the non-profit sector), with management bodies that are independent from public administrations. Here, the management team, supported by a trained and independent board of trustees, gets more of its income from box office sales, patronage and sponsorship. Therefore, the ownership and management of this type of facility is private non-profit, even though many institutions in Great Britain receive funds from the government or its autonomous agencies such as The Arts Councils (Quinn 1997, Rius-Ulldemolins and Pizzi 2022).

Since the 1980s, there has been a tendency for the gaps between these two models to narrow, with rising State intervention in countries following The Liberal Model, and a greater role for the private sector and ‘The Third Sector’ in countries following The Continental European Model (Bianchini 1993). This convergence is explained by several factors, including: shrinking public subsidies (Dewey 2004); the influence of the New Public Management and its regulating reforms (Belfiore 2004); cultural globalisation; the growing importance of cultural and creative industries (Menger 2010, DEPS 2011).

Cultural policy and opera houses: new governance and management roles

Since the second half of the 20th Century, the governance and management of national cultural institutions in Europe have been shaped by the involvement of public administrations and forms of political–institutional governance. Developed countries have taken different paths in these respects (Mangset 2017b). In Continental Europe, the

institutional configuration in place since the post-war period established the key role played by The State in cultural policy management (Dubois 2016). Thus, there was something of a paradox in national cultural institutions in the second half of the 20th Century: they were financially dependent on public administrations yet they also enjoyed considerable independence in managing their activities (Rius-Ulldemolins and Rubio 2013). This approach had been legitimised by the discourse generated in the artistic world (Becker 1984, Moulin 1983) and by the tradition of artistic excellence that became internationally established in the mid-19th Century among elite cultural institutions. It was a discourse that held sway until the end of the 20th Century (Martorella 1982, Vestheim 2009).

Therefore, great cultural institutions such as opera houses are rooted in a given period and the economic and social elites that drove their creation. In addition, each historical stage was characterised by its own governance schemes (Agid and Tarondeau 2007). In the *Ancien Régime*, the director of the cultural institution pandered to the Court's whims. During the 19th Century, the director became an employee answerable to private or institutional patrons (Agid and Tarondeau 2006). It was not until the end of the 19th Century that greater plurality among the elite and an extension of the Art market gave managers greater scope for manoeuvre and to become important figures in their own right (DiMaggio 1987). However, artistic autonomy also grew from the second half of the 19th Century, opposing both the artistic and management direction of cultural institutions (Vestheim 2009, Chiapello 1998).

Three kinds of change took place in the management of large cultural institutions from the end of the 20th Century. First, public administrations and institutional patrons (foundations and large corporations) encouraged entities to boost their public reach as an indicator of success, driving them to the market and to marketing (Paquette and Redaelli

2015). Second, there was the trend towards making cultural institution accountable — or at least, forcing them to measure their results against the yardstick of the New Public Management reforms (Belfiore 2004). In practice, this new management role boiled down to fundraising, reporting projects with detailed financial and public data, and creating administrative structures to meet the demand for more strategic planning (Daigle and Rouleau 2010). These reforms also forged a new kind of expertise that became increasingly seen as part and parcel of creative projects (Kuesters 2010, Bilton and Leary 2002).

Thus, major changes were made the 1980s onwards, especially at the beginning of the 21st Century. Directors of public agencies were no longer seen as mere public service administrators but rather as managers who could act in a more independent way in striving to deliver public value (Blomgren 2012, RØyseng 2008). These managers carved out a new role for themselves by taking a four-pronged approach to:

- (1) Re-orient cultural institutions towards creating public value and new services through strategic leadership reformulating the traditional mission (Cray, Inglis, and Freeman 2007);
- (2) Adopt relational management styles (Mendoza and Vernis 2007) within international networks fostering local culture and territorial branding (Dewey 2004, Evans 2003);
- (3) Communicate and attend to requests made by local cultural and social stakeholders (Stone and Sandfort 2009);
- (4) Adopt new sensitivities in cultural management such as fostering: inclusion of cultural and ethnic diversity (Belfiore 2022) gender equality both

in the content of the shows (Barrios and Villarroya 2022); diversity in the artistic and management team; measures against sexual harassment/discrimination (Vincent, Coles, and Vincent 2021).

Yet, as we will see below, all these dimensions have been applied in different ways depending on the model of cultural policy found in each opera house. Subsequent we will analyse the cases of the Royal Opera House, followed by the Opera National de Paris to finish with the case of the Royal Swedish Opera.

Comparison of cultural policy models and management models in four European opera houses

The case of the Royal Opera House (ROH): an entrepreneurial opera within the liberal framework of cultural policy

The Royal Opera House is a charitable company funded by The Arts Council England and Lottery Funding (Arts Council England 2019). Also known as Covent Garden, this world-famous institution is home to the Royal Opera and Dance Company. Its current headquarters was built in 1809 and it was remodelled several times. In its modern form as a cultural institution, it dates back to the immediate post-war period, in 1946 (Saint 1982).

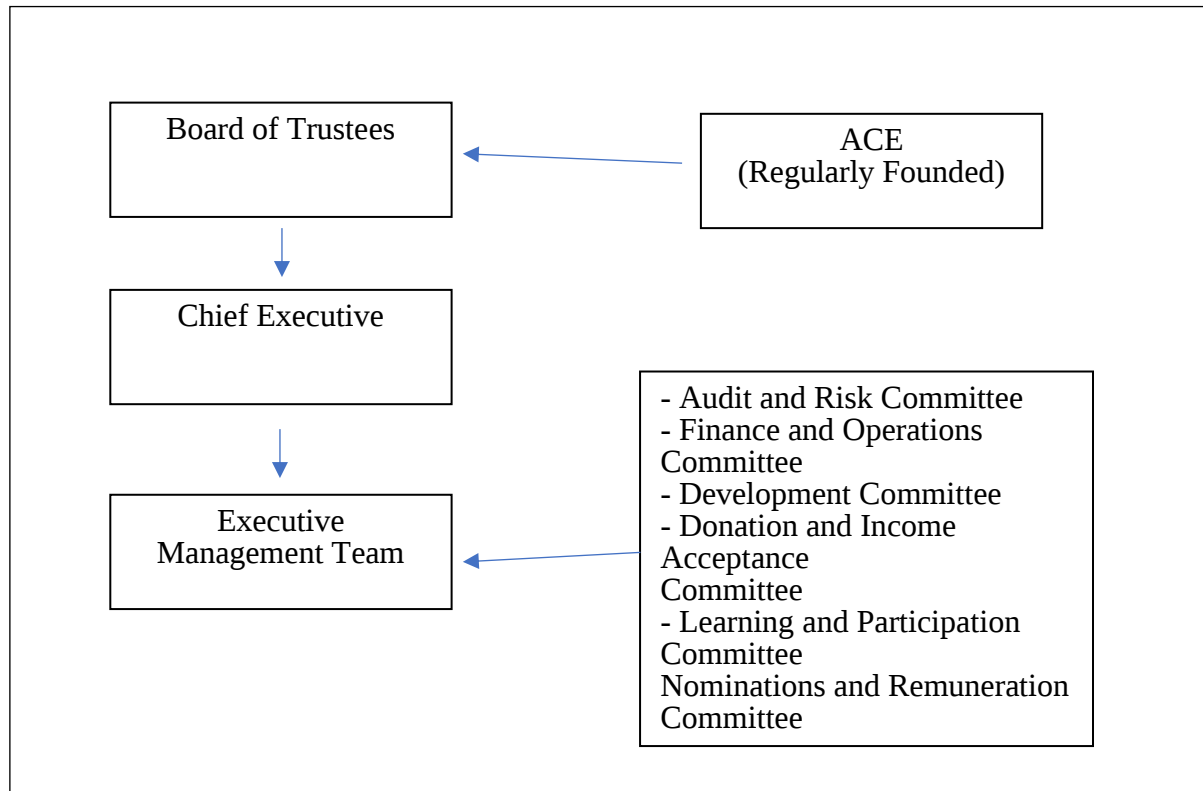
As a National Portfolio Organisation (previously Regularly Funded Organisation), The Royal Opera House (ROH) has signed a funding contract that includes the three

strategic goals set by The Arts Council England for the period 2018-2022. These aims are all based on the Opera House's traditional goal (namely, to foster artistic excellence). The three goals are: (1) programming, artist diversity, broadening opportunities at the national level to satisfy audiences (ROH 2020); (2) furthering the 'Open Up' initiative, whose aim is to promote London's urban space, expand digital participation, take part in national events, expand provincial audiences, socially diversify audiences; (3) Boost box-office takings, pare ROH daily expenses, boost sponsorship and patronage, cut costs, optimise the use of technology (ROH 2020: 12). Thus, the ROH follows the Liberal cultural policy model, which takes income and outgoings into account with a view to lessening dependence on public funding (which is seen as a useful 'extra', not as the opera house's 'lifeblood').

As shown in figure 1 the governance of the entity (a registered charity) is through a Board of Trustees on which eighteen members sit (ten men and eight women) who are neither political representatives nor Department of Culture Civil Servants. They must meet at least six times a year and are barred from receiving any remuneration for their duties. They are drawn from diverse backgrounds, ranging from entrepreneurs to philanthropists and artists. What they all have in common is that they are not representatives of The State and do not have a direct interest in the operatic world — something that would run counter to the ROH's governance policy. In 1993, suggestions were made for involving the Secretary for Culture in proposing appointments to the Board but he does not play a direct role on this score (House of Commons). Thus, the Board has free rein in: setting the strategic lines, including artistic criteria; appointing the Executive Director and senior managers, with the latter having the final say over day-to-day management (ROH 2020: 34). Yet this governance scheme is far removed from the full freedom exercised by Artistic Directors in The Continental European Model. Under the

ROH model, these directors have to meet goals of a more institutional/instrumental nature set by The Board of Trustees.

Figure 1 - Governance Organization Chart of Royal Opera House (2018-2019)



Source: the authors from ROH (2020).

Since 2018 the ROH has been directed by Oliver Mears. He has instituted a management model whose goal is to democratise opera and diversify its creators (ROH 2020). This mild restriction on artistic freedom also means managers must grapple with the challenges posed by making a social and community impact (Kleppe 2018). This is why the ROH uses self-assessments to strengthen links with audiences (Bailey and Richardson 2010). With regard to gender inequality, a study revealed significant differences between the number of male and female works and performers. This is something that the ROH has

decided to change through its membership of the Key Change programme to eliminate gender inequality in The Arts (Vincent, Coles, and Vincent 2021). A recent ROH management initiative in this field is the *Engender* programme, whose goal is to correct gender inequalities in opera and music, and to work for greater equality. Its goal is to further the professional careers of women and ‘non-binary people’ (sic) and to foster mutual support for them in all areas of artistic and operatic management. To this end, it has set up standing committees and has organised a permanent festival since 2021 in which debates are held and the work of women and non-binary people is shown (ROH 2020).

The case of the *Opéra National de Paris* (ONP): fragmentation of the managerial role, predominance of the artistic field, and production orientation

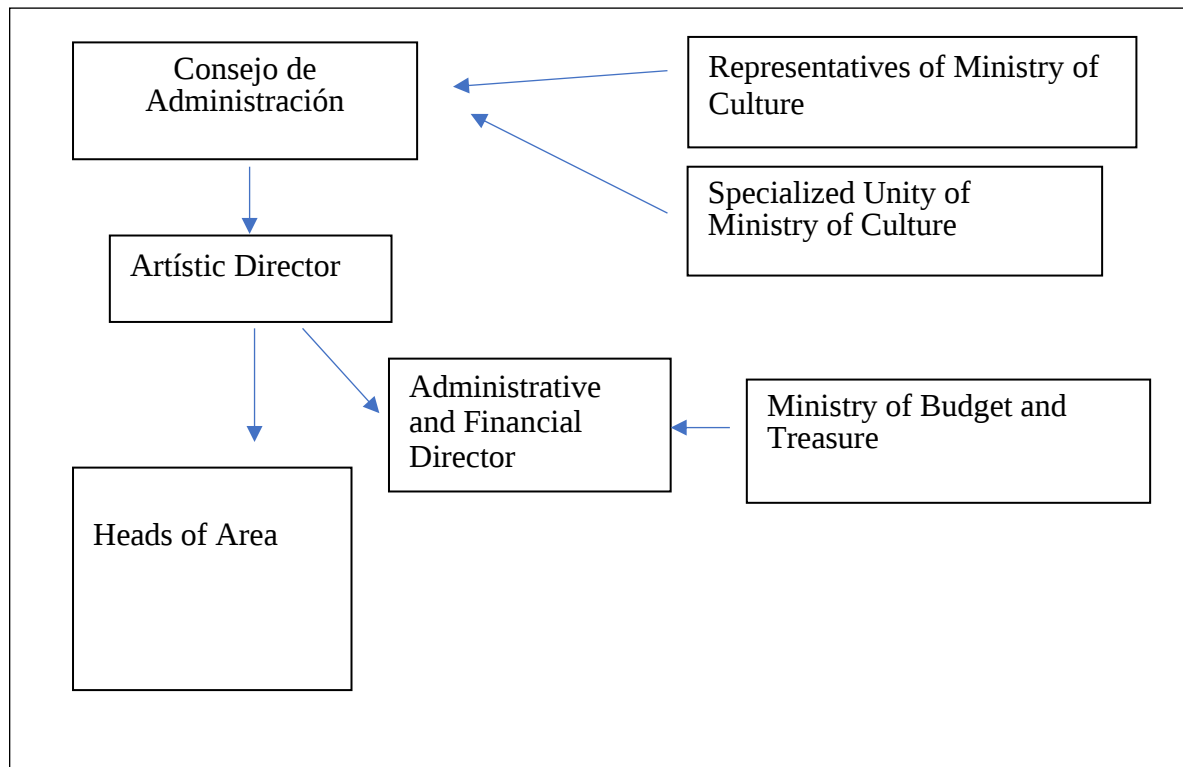
The *Opéra National de Paris*’ (ONP) origins stem from the Central European Absolutist tradition of cultural patronage oriented to cultural excellence (Rius-Ulldemolins and Pizzi 2022, Agid and Tarondeau 2007). It was founded in 1669 as the *Académie d’Opéra* and shortly thereafter became the *Académie Royale de Musique*. Since then, it has had various legal statutes and undergone several changes of name. In the 20th Century, it became part of the Union of National Lyrical Theatres [*Réunion des théâtres lyriques nationaux* — RTLN], founded in 1939. It was not until 1978 that it became a public body of an industrial and commercial nature — a designation that gave it some financial autonomy as it begins to manage the incomings and can receive donations (Fosseyeux and Pattyn 2004). It currently has two facilities, the historic *Palais Garnier*, built in 1875 and home

to the Ballet, and the *Opera Bastille*, opened in 1989 — the year marking the 200th anniversary of The French Revolution.

While the ONP's autonomy let it manage its own budget (which was separate from that of The Department of Culture), it was far from a free agent. That is because The Board of Directors (overseeing public funding and financial control) was stuffed with members who were senior Civil Servants from The Department of Culture and The Economy. The result was a dynamic organisation that was strongly controlled by the public administration.¹ Furthermore, key aspects of budgetary management (such as setting ticket prices) were decided by The Board rather than the ONP's managers.

The 1978 Decree established two new posts: a General Administrator, and a General-Director. The General Administrator's role was: (a) to ensure that management of the institution was in keeping with the *cahier de charges* [basically, the terms of reference] and Ministry of Culture rules, and (b) to execute the Board of Directors' decisions. He also had the power to hire and fire artistic staff (including Artistic Directors) and his approval was required for the appointment of the General Manager (who played a very limited role, which basically covered budget execution, obtaining resources, and managing staff. The General Manager was thus the key figure in the organisation chart established by the 1978 Decree. The General Manager's role was downgraded in 1994 after negotiations between the new Director, Hugues Gall, and the Minister of Culture, Jacques Toubon, leaving both the artistic and managerial areas in the former's hands. From then on, the ONP had greater room for manoeuvre, with scrapping of *ex ante* control and the signing a multi-year agreement setting out the main lines of the annual budgets, artistic production goals, and the number of choreographic and lyrical shows.

Figure 2 – Governance Organization Chart of Opera National de Paris (2018-2019)



Source: the authors from Opéra National de Paris (2020).

However, as show in Figure 2 the model of The Board of Directors was left largely unchanged: 4 MCC members (including the Director of Performing Arts, and the Administrative Director), the Ministry of Economy Budget Director, 4 workers’ representatives, and 2 qualified MCC appointees. It is, therefore, a model dominated by Senior Civil Servants. Under the French model, the theoretical functioning of the organisation is based on a heavily top-down scheme in which the mission defined by the 1978 Decree (which is still in force) stems from the terms of reference (*cahier de charges*) drawn up in 1993. One of the strengths of this system is its strong financial control by Budget Ministry (Gaillard 2007) and its main weakness lies in its strategic planning (Coppinger et al. 2007).

The key idea behind the ONP's institutional architecture is to ensure the Director enjoys artistic freedom. That is why the 1994 reorganisation decree stipulates that the Artistic Director's contract is limited to a three-year term, and that the timing of the future director's appointment should facilitate a smooth handover (Ministère de la Culture 1994). Thus, this notion of the Director as a plenipotentiary at an artistic level reached its zenith during the Mortier years (from 2004 to 2009). Mortier's spell as ONP Director was highly controversial and he became the focus of both attention and criticism in both the operatic world and the media (Fauchet 2009). In this context, the managerial role and the scope for initiative were cramped by a narrowing of the institution's legal framework, excessive control by public administrations, and a rigid definition of personnel management. Although ONP is excellence-oriented, the institution has come up with programmes to promote social and gender diversity over recent years (and for which it has obtained AFNOR certifications). This change has been motivated by the growing mobilization of the staff demanding greater diversity and was manifested in the report prepared by Pap Ndiaye and Constance Rivière (Ndiaye and Rivière 2021). One can therefore see a certain discursive turn and interest in fostering audience diversity. That said, the initiatives taken in this field are underwhelming, being confined to: school programmes (*Dix Mois d'École et Opéra*); professional training workshops (*OpérApprentis*); special offers to expand audiences (*Avant-premières* and *Ma première fois à l'Opéra*). Yet these programmes only cater to very small audiences and have tiny budgets (Opéra National de Paris 2022).

There is also a debate in France on gender equality in opera houses. In March 2020, the world of French opera echoed the *Me Too* movement for the first time, in relation to sexual violence against female artists — something that had been making a splash in the worldwide media since 2017 in other fields of artistic endeavour.² In

response, the Minister of Culture, Roselyne Bachelot, made a report to the Public Prosecutor to "demonstrate her firm intent to take all measures against sexist and sexual violence in the music industry" (Borde 2020). The Ministry of Culture announced in 2020 that it would work to warn of and prevent such violence and to this end would support training, production and dissemination structures. The work was to be carried out jointly with the *Centre National de la Musique* (CNM) and would take the form of a protocol under which the CNM will provide compulsory training on preventing sexist and sexual violence (Gault 2020). Although the ONP launched the programmes to narrow the wage gap, men still occupy most of the management jobs. At present, there is no protocol to prevent gender violence (Opéra National de Paris 2022). Men's dominance of managerial posts is still evident in the artistic, technical and financial fields (General Management, Musical Management, Deputy General-Director, Production Management, Stage Management, Administrative and Financial Management, Human Resources, Patronage Directorate, Accounting Agency, Head of Architecture). Women's preserves in Opera House are confined to 'lesser' areas — Chorus Directorate, Dance Directorate, Academy, Casting, Dance Directorate, Communication, Costume Management, Marketing Management) (Opéra National de Paris 2019).

Royal Swedish Opera (RSO): a model of cultural and social integration

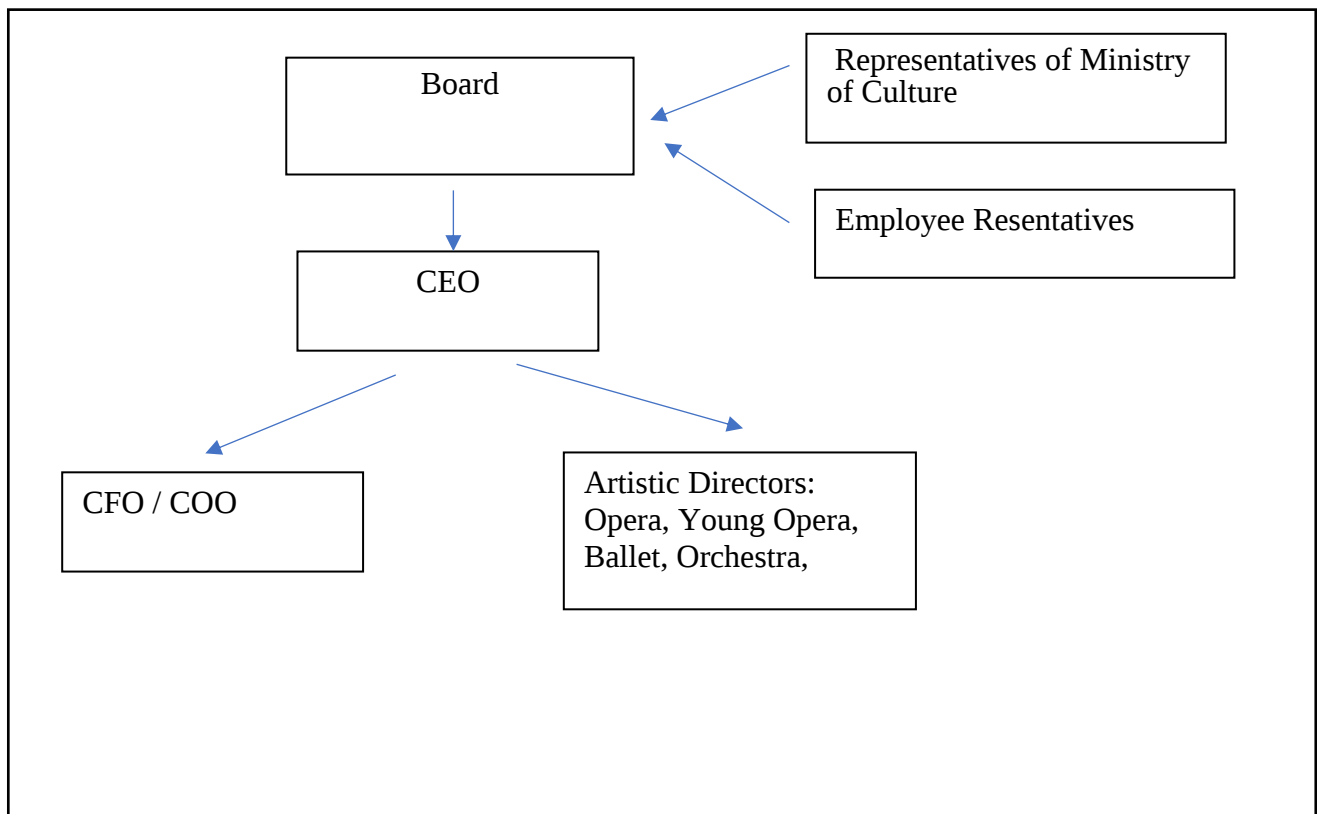
The Royal Swedish Opera [*Kungliga Operan*], like many other great opera houses, owes its origins to the rise of Absolute Monarchies in the 18th Century, when sovereigns used

High Culture to show off their magnificence and stress their ‘Divine Right’ to wield power.

The Swedish Opera was founded by King Gustav III in 1773 although the current building dates from the 19th Century (Beauvert 1995). The definition of cultural policy in Sweden largely follows The Nordic Model, which stresses participation and multicultural integration — a mission charged by The Ministry of Culture. Although the official documents define the *Kungliga Operan* as a cultural institution for creating opera of the highest artistic quality, its mission covers other things too, stressing that the institution: “(...) will initiate collaboration and promote intercultural exchange” [and] “in collaboration with other actors, will work to ensure that culture benefits more people throughout the country” (Government Offices of Sweden 2019).

The opera is defined as a wholly State enterprise and is directly funded by the Ministry of Culture and not by the *Kulturradet* (Swedish Arts Council) or the *Konstnärsnämnden* (The Swedish Arts Committee). However, the arm's length principle applies to relations between the Government and The Royal Swedish Opera so that while The State funds the operation of the cultural institution and appoints its Board, it does not intervene in its management or dictate its actions (Harding 2016: 37). We can thus say that The Royal Swedish Opera is ‘a halfway house’ between the Liberal and the Central European approaches to cultural policy. This is because while it depends on direct State funding, there is no direct government supervision of its management. This makes for a very simple form of governance in which the Ministry appoints the Board, which in turn has a completely free hand in appointing the CEO, as we can observe in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Governance Organization Chart of Royal Swedish Opera (2018-2019)



Source: own elaboration from Royal Swedish Opera (Kungliga Operan 2021a)

In relation to management, we can see how the key figure is the CEO and not the Artistic Director (the latter being the case in the Central European model). In fact, artistic management is split into three regular fields (opera, ballet, orchestra) and one specifically aimed at fostering young, new talent. Thus, since 2010 *Kungliga Operan* has been directed by the opera singer Birgitta Svendén, who clearly appears in the governance scheme as being answerable to The Board. The Swedish Board, unlike in The Continental European Model, comprises a team of independent people, namely: Lena Olving (Director of the Board, executive of large automobile companies); Örjan Wikforss (Vice-Director, architect and professor) and Andreas Carlgren (former Minister of Environment); Chrissie Faniadis (Cultural Manager); Eva Halvarsson

(Business Manager); Kasper Holten (Manager of the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen). As can be seen, the Board is wholly independent from both the government (only one Board Member is a former politician) and from the cultural sector (with the presence of an independent Cultural Manager and the director of a foreign institution). On the other hand, it is worth noting women's strong showing in managerial positions. Women account for three out of the five Board Members, and a woman is its Chairman. Furthermore, all four of the staff representatives are women (Kungliga Operan 2021a). Although The Swedish Opera mainly focuses on producing and disseminating opera and thus in fostering the 'High Culture' scene, it shares the Nordic orientation for social inclusion and cultural participation. This broader orientation is shown in the 54,000 schoolchildren who visit the institution every year and who make up no less than 14% of its audience. Furthermore, it has an internal review process that follows the #metoo and #visjungerut statements in 2017, through which it has drawn up a plan to stamp out sexual harassment and discrimination in the opera world's power structures. The strategic plan pursues greater equality in productions and among employees, with a ratio of 40/60, although currently men are still in the majority: 63% overall and 52% of the 530 people making up the global team in 2018 (Government Offices of Sweden 2019: 55).

In keeping with The Nordic Model's quest for public diversity and social integration, The Swedish Opera has a fairly generous policy towards young people. For example, the price for schoolchildren is 120 SEK [under €12]. There is a 50% discount on tickets for young people under 26 and for students of all ages. Finally, the TSO also stands out for its commitment to sustainability in its broadest sense (not only environmental sustainability but also social and cultural). The Opera House publishes an annual sustainability report on its activities. In its annual report, it defines this strategy

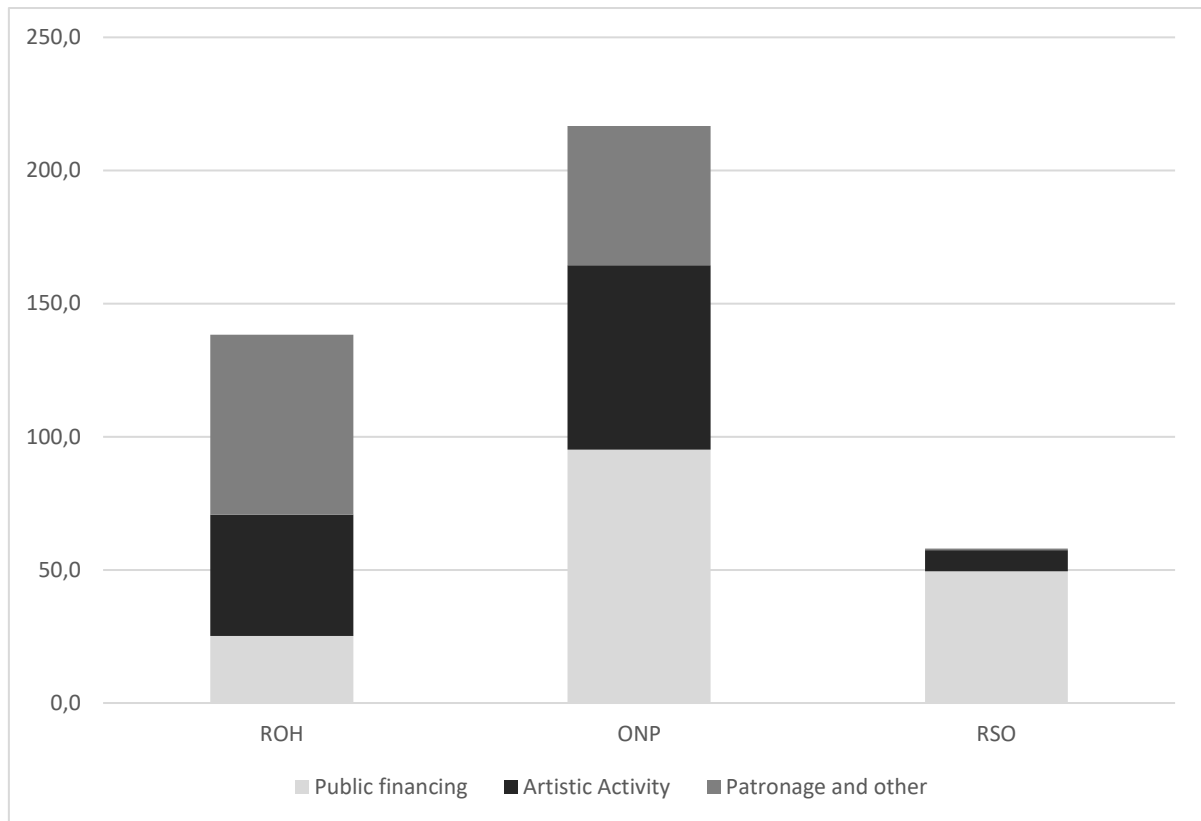
as: supporting the expression of Man's creativity; using resources in an ethical, transparent manner; being open to all members of society; offering equal opportunities to all; reflecting the surrounding community and social change. Specifically, the Sustainability Plan sets out goals in the fields of: Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Partnerships (Kungliga Operan 2021: 16-19).

Comparison of opera houses' cultural policy and management models

Next, we shall compare in Figure 4 key aspects of opera houses' management to see the extent to which they match the cultural policy models set out earlier and in relation to: (1) Level of total income; (2) Level of income by type (tickets, sponsorship and subsidies); (3) Cost per viewer and public cost per viewer.

Figure 4 – Absolute total income of Opera Theater by type (Season 2018-2019).

Millions of euros.



* Legend: ROH (Royal Opera House, ONP (Opéra National de Paris), RSO (Royal Swedish Opera)

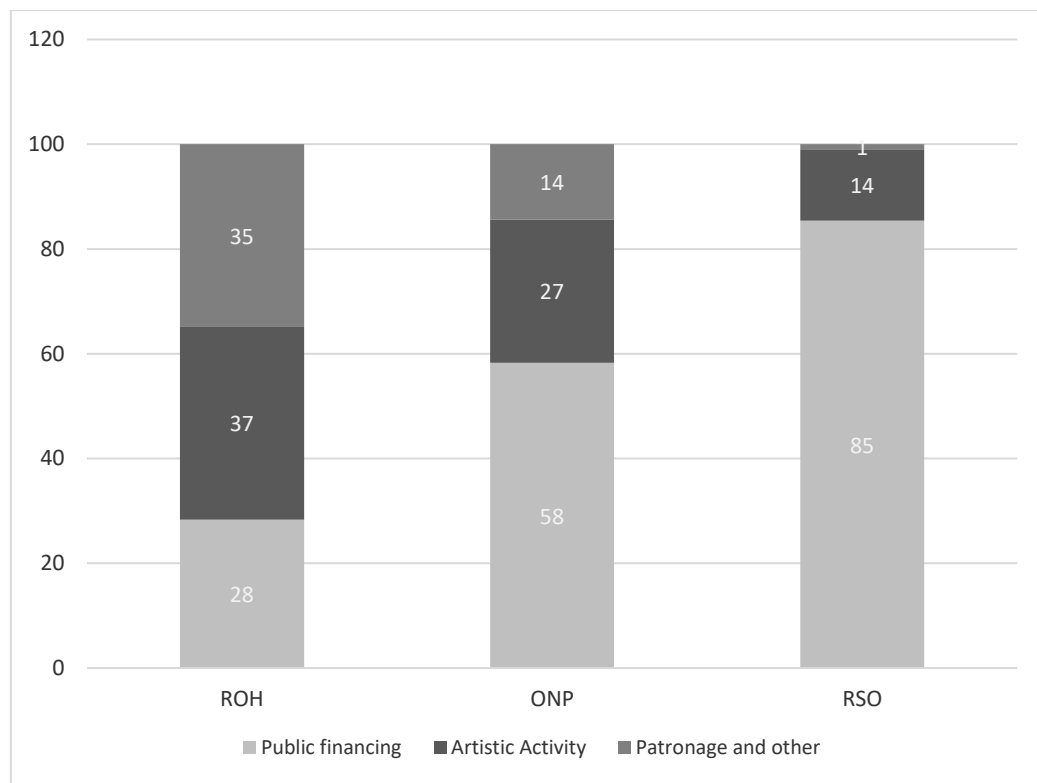
Source : Arts Council England (2019), Ministère de la Culture (2017), Kungliga Operan (Kungliga Operan 2019). Budget of the 2018 by ticket sales of 2018.

Opera Houses are large buildings and have big budgets to meet a host of major costs: building and machinery maintenance, artistic and musical equipment. Yet the size of the budget varies depending on the opera house's cultural policy model. As can be seen from Figure 5, the ONP (exemplifying The Continental Model) had by far the biggest budget at €180 million in the 2018-2019 Season. This is followed by an Opera House — the ROH — that represents The Liberal Model, with a budget of just under €100 million. Here, one should note that 'High Culture' initiatives are not lacking under The Liberal

Model but rather are pursued in a different way (in this case, through Third Sector entities enjoying some public support). The *Kungliga Operan* rank third in terms of budget size.

Figure 5 – Percentage of total income of Opera Theatre by type (Season 2018-2019).

Millions of euros.

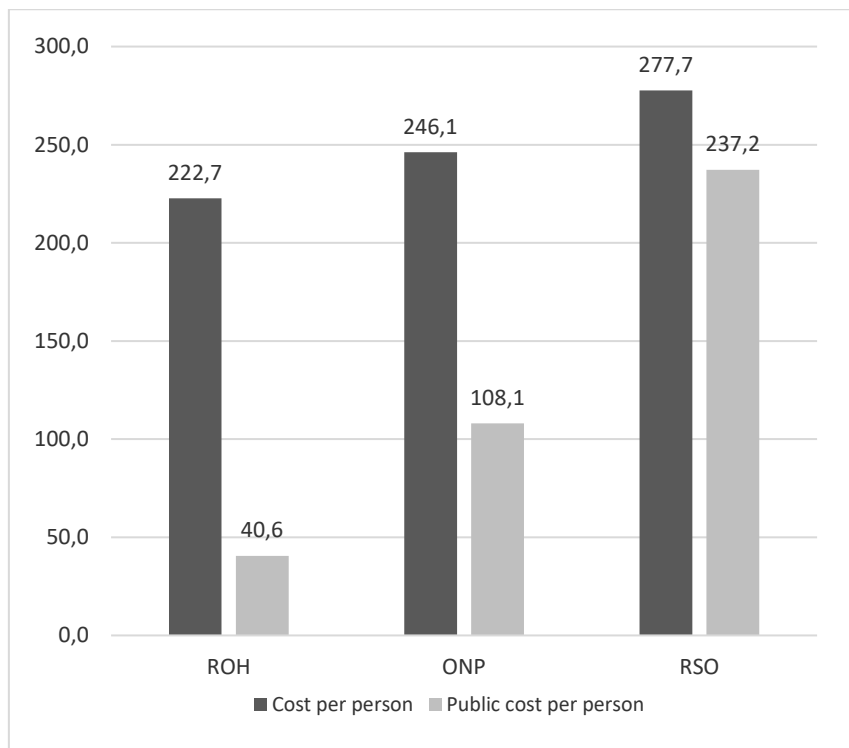


* Legend: ROH (Royal Opera House, ONP (Opéra National de Paris), RSO (Royal Swedish Opera)

Source : Arts Council England (2019), Ministère de la Culture (2017), Kungliga Operan (Kungliga Operan 2019). Budget of the 2018 by ticket sales of 2018.

The biggest difference between the opera houses — as can be seen in Figure 7 — is cost per person (total costs divided by the number of viewers) and the public cost per person (the total public contribution divided by the number of viewers)

Figure 6 - Cost per person and public cost per person of Opera Theatres (Season 2018-2019). Millions of euros.*



* Legend: ROH (Royal Opera House, ONP (Opéra National de Paris), RSO (Royal Swedish Opera)

Source : Arts Council England (2019), Ministère de la Culture (2017), Kungliga Operan (Kungliga Operan 2019). Budget of the 2018 by ticket sales of 2018.

As Figure 6 shows the model only marginally affects production efficiency because the costs incurred are similar in all cases (over €200 per spectator). Such a price would put the art form out of the general public's reach. Public subsidies help defray these costs to bring ticket prices down to more affordable levels. The cost per person is lower in the cases of the ROH and the ONP, and highest in the case of the Royal Swedish Opera or

Kungliga Opera. On the other hand, the most relevant difference is the public cost per person — a figure that measures the amount of public money spent per member of the audience. Here, the differences are marked, with the cost being much lower in the ROH's case, revealing a lesser drain on the public purse under The Liberal Model. By comparison, the figure for the ONP is twice as high and is in keeping with the more Statist Central European Model. The ONP is a little cheaper in this regard given that the former is more generously funded by large companies. Finally, in terms of public cost per spectator, the *Kungliga Operan* exemplifies The Nordic Model, which costs the Treasury much more than the other opera houses studied — something that is due to four factors: (i) lack of sponsorship and patronage revenues; (ii) greater State interventionism and support; (iii) greater labour protection; (iv) greater stress on promoting social access and integration (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Cultural policy models and the kind of management and focus on diversity in the opera house

Model	Liberal Model	Continental European Model	Nordic Model
<i>Case</i>	Royal Opera House	Opéra National de Paris	Royal Swedish Opera
<i>Governance and composition of The Board of Trustees</i>	Independent Trustees	Institutional representatives	Institutional and social representatives
<i>Type of management and leadership</i>	Shared leadership between the management team and artistic directors	Artistic Director or someone acting at his behest	Leadership by the Manager
<i>Inclusion and gender inequality</i>	Support for Third Sector programmes	Limited discourse and deeds	Inclusion a core institutional value

Source: Author.

We are aware that the cases studied in this paper neither cover the whole range of cultural policy found in Europe, nor all Opera House models. Some countries that play a key role in the opera tradition — Germany, Austria, and Italy are absent. Yet this paper's goal is not to cover all models of cultural policy and opera house management, but rather to ascertain whether policy shapes management. What we can say is that despite internationalisation of the operatic model from the 18th Century onward, there are still marked differences in three key respects:

- (i) *Patronage*: While the patrons are institutional representatives in The Central European model, as is the case of ONP, on the contrary, they are jealously independent in The Anglo-Saxon Model illustrated by ROH. In the Nordic case, as the RSO case, the staff exerts a powerful influence in following the Social-Democratic model of The Welfare State.
- (ii) *Type of Leadership*: This takes diverse forms. In ONP, belonging to Central European opera houses, the Artistic Director holds sway. In the remaining models, his influence is moderated by other considerations. In ROH, illustrative of Anglo-Saxon Model, managers play a greater role. In The Nordic Model, as we can observe in the RSO case, leadership is broader-based and shared.
- (iii) *Social and ethnic diversity, social inclusion, gender equality*. The differences are fairly marked in these respects. ROH, characteristic of The Anglo-Saxon Model is more sensitive to these new management dimensions but largely takes its cue from external associations. The ONP case, significant case of Central European Model, follows a universalist discourse on artistic

excellence. Its puts in a token performance in the new dimensions, with programmes that are designed to ‘look good’ rather than to achieve much. The Nordic Models illustrate by RSO case represent the extremes, the former doing very little whereas the latter tends to go overboard. The Nordic Model, exemplify by RSO, adopts measures at all levels of governance and its HR management is based on inclusion and gender equality. In short, the cultural policy model shapes governance, leadership and inclusivity dimensions and is an important variable in grasping the diverse management models found in European opera houses.

Notes

¹ Apart from the President and the three independent Board Members, the rest of the Board are drawn from the Ministry of Culture (four representatives) and the Ministry for the Economy (three representatives), staff representative, the Controller-General, and the Honorary Presidents (Opéra National de Paris 2019).

² The soprano Chloé Briot filed a case for sexual harassment. The events occurred between October 2019 and February 2020 during performances of “L’inondation” by Joël Pommerat, and took place at l’Opéra-Comique de Paris, and at the Rennes and Nantes opera houses.

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