A review of Claude Mollard's 'Cultural engineering'

Based on
L'ingénierie culturelle, 2ᵉ édition corrigée, Presses Universitaires de France,
1999 (1st edition in 1994) {128 p.}
and
*Profession ingénieur culturel, Manifeste pour une nouvelle manière de penser
l'action culturelle ou ABCD, deux ans après*, 2ᵉ edition augmentée, Editions
Charles Le Bouil, 1989 (1st edition in 1987) {176 p.}

Introduction: How to situate cultural engineering

As will be seen in details below, Mollard's cultural engineering is an authentic personal concept of its author, freely moving between arts administration and arts management, ambiguously combining notions of cultural policy, of artistic programming and of technical realisation... and continuously intertwining the arts and cultural industries in his analysis.

Mollard is very consistent in one thing across his books: the definition of cultural engineering. "Cultural engineering is the ability to bring optimal solutions, in terms of quality, costs and delays, to the demand from partners in cultural life: [demand] in terms of goal-setting, programming, fund-raising and technical realization of projects."
Cultural engineering is compatible with the concept of cultural management, if cultural management is not defined as 'gestion' (the administration of things, a mere technique), but as "the art of directing projects from the original concept to its final realization."
After having flown over the work of Mollard, we will come back to this issue of the relationship between cultural engineering and the traditional concept of arts management… in the conclusion of this review.

First, we will explore Mollard's view of the cultural field (and especially his praise of the cultural market), which draws the frame and determines the orientation of his cultural engineering. This will allow, in a second step, to gain a closer understanding of the discipline of cultural engineering. Finally, we will see how cultural engineering contributes to the cultural market.[1]

But before all that, *the birth of 'cultural engineering'* needs to be put back in its French context:
Between 1971 and 1973, Jacques Duhamel is Minister of Culture (coming from the ministry of Finance). Even before, in 1969 was created the FIC (Fonds d'intervention culturelle) _of which Mollard claims to have written the concept himself. He claims having been the first to use the words of 'cultural management' in a French official policy-document.

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[1] In the following lines, I will follow the views of the author, trying not to interfere too much with my own doubts about the validity of his sometimes bold proclamations. I felt a chance must be given for Mollard's perspective to be offered, unhampered by my own disagreements. But let the reader be warned: I personally do not support all that will be stated below…

The FIC and the Centre Pompidou[2] were original and autonomous laboratories for social and cultural experiments around the concepts of 'the transversal', 'the inter-disciplinary', "participation, transparency, innovation, local action, decentralisation", 'associative action' (NPOs, the 3rd sector/sphere), "technological innovation, democratisation, social-educative action, sensitization" of the public and 'integrated facilities'. This reform movement marked a clear contrast to the former institutional, sector-related and patrimonial cultural policy.

The main innovation of the FIC was to institutionalize systematic cross-financing. It also "expressed a new type of behavior [around] the spirit of project management". The employees of the FIC were recruited on the basis of de-partitioning (unlike regular civil servants). Some were historians, sociologists or economists.

In 1981, Mollard created the FRAC (fonds régionaux d'art contemporain), FRAM (fonds régionaux d'achats des musées) and FIACRE (fonds d'incitation a la création), new funds which according to him "allowed to attenuate the principle of rigid funding of determined purposes", with thus a more flexible management process, more compatible with the needs of the cultural sector and going across the vertical divisions of the ministry of culture.

The Jack Lang era had an enormous impact on the French cultural sector: *Investment effect*: Doubling the budget of the ministry of culture (in 10 years) pushed forward local levels of government to multiply their cultural budgets by 3 and brought about a need for more stringent budgetary control, goal-setting and control of results. *Bandwagon effect:* around the 'grands projets' and their regional equivalents, examples which fostered the creation of other cultural facilities. "More diversified, the cultural field becomes more entrepreneurial too". *Decentralization effect:* efforts to palliate the heavy concentration of cultural infrastructures in Paris (conventions between the State and regions/cities[3]). '*Médiatisation' effect:* The so-called Lang method consisted in engaging contracts primarily with motivated partners[4]. "The stress is put on initiative, communication and feast [with] cultural communication as a tool for the global development of a city or a region". The policy is oriented on offer rather than demand.

In 1986, Mollard leaves the ministry of Culture, creates the private cultural agency ABCD together with a private school of arts management (Institut Supérieur du Management Culturel) and creates the concept of cultural engineering.

I   The cultural field in Mollard's view

A   The cultural system

The author quotes the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur: "Society as a network of institutions is primarily a large goods-distribution system." In the system of arts and culture, the artist is at the heart. But what are his role and his power? To understand this context, Mollard explores the properties of the "cultural system"…

- *A game of 4 families*:
A power-game is played between the artist and his/her partners: publics, decision-makers, mediators (the State being present among both decision-makers and mediators). [see

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[2] The Centre Pompidou [which Mollard headed in the 1970's] expressed a move toward de-partitioning of the cultural sector, as it mixed art productions and art education, modern art, design, urbanism, reading, theatre and music. It also included shared spaces, forums for these different activities. Unfortunately, it became more partitioned as the years passed by.
[3] e.g. 1981= 5 contemporary art museums in 'regions' (outside the Paris area) → 1993= more than 20, in completed by 25 FRACs.
[4] Which did not foster an even distribution of investments on the French territory…

figure 2 from Mollard 1999[5]] This game is structured by two axes: artists and publics play together; decision-makers and mediators come into play upon that first axis…

- Artistic system and cultural system:
The artistic system: There is no artist without an audience, and there would not be much cultural activities without artistic production. Yet in the context of large modern societies, this axis is integrated into a market.

The cultural system: It intervenes upon the previous one, in the context of modern market societies. Mediators are a kind of privileged public passing judgment on artists and shaping legitimate taste and interpretations for art. Decision-makers hold political and financial power and give a social dimension to artistic creation. It is on this axis that cultural policy and 'cultural development'[6] are based.

Through these inter-relations, the cultural field expands and involves new professions, such as cultural engineering.

- The rules of the cultural system: [see figure 3 from Molard 1999]
The cultural hyperbole: The growth in sheer numbers of the publics of culture pushes towards the commoditization and hyper-communication of artistic creations: the public is both *client* (this fosters reproduction and profitability), *voter* (for whom the cultural policy organizes both seduction and education and tries to create unanimity), and *target for communication* (to foster adhesion to values and mere fashions).

The sanction of demand on offer: The public can refuse an artistic production and drive it into financial, political and image deficit.

From artistic creation to cultural production: the process is more and more collective, involving many different actors. Creation becomes an act of enterprise. The share of the creator is reduced to an author's right (this loss is compensated by the exaggerate 'médiatisation[7]' of the artist).

Dialectic creation: There are 2 radical reactions to this market, exaggerated mass-production or entrenched elite-practices. To escape from commoditization, the artist creates new, ever more esoteric art, striving for distinction (a la Bourdieu) in a dialectic process that both fosters artistic renewal and the acculturation of the public.

The accumulation of heritage: The cultural system transforms creation into memory. It gives heritage a central place (through devoting budgets and referencing constantly to it) and vests established values through it.

The most successful players are often those who establish themselves in more than one of the four families. Those who remain isolated from the 3 other families and ignore or mistake the rules governing the relationships between the 4 families, are doomed to marginality.

The publics are structured in a diamond shape [see figure 7 from Mollard 1999]: About 10% of the population has regular and diversified cultural practices, while at the other end about 50% of the population have no cultural practices apart from some consumption of mass-products of the cultural industries (mainly television, and to a lesser extent music and cinema).

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[5] All the figures mentionned here will be photocopied (I will place them in your Postvakje).
[6] In the French tradition, cultural 'development' is broader than cultural policy (it encompasses all creative industries in the largest sense, and culture in its ethnological definition).
[7] 'Médiatisation' is the turning of something or someone into a media event.

B   The cultural market

- The cultural system is characterized by a mixed economy:

It is *a tempered market* (public operators keep non-profitable cultural productions running; Mollard mentions the Baumol cost-disease; besides, public policy compensates for the effects of the concentration of cultural industries) [see figure 9 from Mollard 1999: a pyramid of public spending per art-form, including some cultural industries].

It is *an expanding market* (positive perspectives with the development of higher education, improvement of life-standards and increasing proportion of household spending on cultural consumptions, increased leisure-time), yet mostly absorbed by audiovisual cultural industries and still marked by strong inequalities in cultural practices and generation-phenomena of path dependence. Nevertheless, the increased home-consumption of culture does not lead to a decline of outdoor cultural activities.

It is *a fragile market:* On one side, mass-production of cultural products fostered by an acceleration of reproducibility and the development of new technologies. On the other side, unique artistic products radically different from the first, with very elastic prices and vivid speculation. Besides, some cultural services will never be profitable and thus could not be abandoned by the State, being unable to survive their commoditization.

It hosts *new markets*: First, with new audiovisual technologies [Mollard includes digital technologies in here!] which widen cultural offer, make it more accessible and foster new practices (virtual museums, music downloading). "The screen culture provokes a profound modification of the relationship between the individual and the work of art." Secondly, design and industrial aesthetics contribute to the making of taste and illustrate the renewed importance of aesthetics in everyday life. "The mass-development of industrial design encourages a real democratization of cultural practices." A third market lies in the development of scenography for various events (animation of monuments, organization of multimedia performances, etc.).

It is *an original market* where offer of cultural products and services is both uncertain (subjected to unpredictable innovations and to the twists and turns of fashion) and directional (creating demand rather than responding to it), while demand is increasing (yet less than expected) and mobile (being highly subjective and affective).

- The cultural system is served by the cultural market:

If the cultural market can fail, especially in terms of cultural services, it does function quite well in terms of cultural goods (art-works, goods of the cultural industries). Mollard believes that the development of an engineering of cultural services will improve the market for cultural service provision. More basically, the market should not be conceived as the margin of public intervention (as is often the case in France), but as *the primary natural domain of cultural action*. Public intervention must effectively be restrained in order to only correct market-failures and maintain non-profitable activities only when clearly in the defence of 'general interest'.

The cultural market in France (and continental Europe) is *under-developed*, because of the excessive presence of the State, of a lack of transparency (opacity, partitioning, heterogeneity of the sector, and lack of knowledge of the market apart from the studies of a few public research institutes) and of a lack of professionalism (decision-makers relying on their own amateur tastes, and a lack of arts managers). "The small size of cultural enterprises is partly explained by amateurism." All-State provision of arts and culture is not a golden path to freedom of creation. The problem is not one of 'too-much State'[8], but rather one of the

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[8] In Mollard 1989, the author claims that the French State only represents 20% of the financing of culture, while financing 90% of education, 71% of healthcare and 63% of sports. The problem therefore does not lie in the financial mass of State intervention, in Mollard's eyes.

perverting procedures of the State: Its intervention is unilateral (administrative rules do rule out flexible contracts and therefore isolates cultural actors, reinforcing their individualism), monolithic (the ministry of culture sets the tone, and is overwhelmed by demands) and formalist (its subsidy-criteria are pretexts for the new fashions of those in power). Bureaucracy has perverted cultural administration. The worst for the cultural market is that public administration ignores the cost of time (e.g. it pays its suppliers and gives subsidies with months of delay). The lack of organization of the market is fostered by a strong individualism and a desire for veiled transactions[9] (because the market of cultural services is not recognized as a market, and because cultural goods are still considered as luxury goods, driving for example art-collectors to hide their activities). This is the case for the visual art, design, private theatre and orchestras and patronage of the arts ('mécénat'), but not for cinema, publishing and music industries where the market is well-organized.

Offer and demand do not meet easily, which brings about a group of '*culturally frustrated*' on the demand-side (including the low level of 'mécénat' _art-sponsorship). Mollard believes we have entered an "era of cultural commoditization" to which the cultural market must adapt. Offer is lagging behind a vivid demand, in his vision. Cultural institutions lack the entrepreneurship and the necessary will to "sell their know-how". For Mollard, cultural engineering needs to "make more room for the consumer".

The home market (for French culture) is too small, international markets must be conquered and *the windows of the market must be opened*. The cultural market is increasingly international. Cultural policy should not stop at national borders, nor should cultural protectionism be too obstructive. Nor should cultural producers be hampered by the "complex of the prototype", preventing them from making series and shaping long-term strategies. The mission of a cultural facility should integrate the goal of reproducing itself, in France or abroad. International expansion strategies should be developed by small innovative companies supported by the State and focusing on selected artists and targeted markets in specific countries. These efforts would benefit from the support of cultural industries, which have access to international markets. They would also benefit from more diversity and more competition among local/regional public authorities in their international cultural actions. An efficient cultural market is an international cultural market. Therefore, cultural engineering should also be international and at the service of the cultural market.

II   The intervention of cultural engineering in the cultural field

A   Method

The method of cultural engineering includes successively *knowledge* (as a preliminary step), *use of specific instruments* and *the intervention of the operators* of cultural engineering.

- Knowledge of cultural data:
Spendings: …of different levels of government (national, regional, municipal): highest in big cities in France (more than 100 000 inhabitants = 14% of budget; 25% for Bordeaux and Nancy _Mollard 1999). Municipal spendings focus on music and art education (20%), performing arts (20%); 80% of direct spending and 20% in subsidies.
                … of private companies (Maecenas, sponsoring, purchases), still poorly evaluated in France.
                … of households: the biggest spender… given that Mollard takes cultural industries into account.

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[9] Here Mollard and Abbing's "veiled economy" get together.

Publics: The publics of culture are well-known in France, thanks to a huge research programme with data-collection every 8 years since 1973. The public of the arts remains obviously the cultivated elite described by Bourdieu. Increases in public come from a demographic increase of these categories in the general population. Social status and level of education remain good predictors of behaviour. The public becomes more and more eclectic in its tastes (therefore diversified cultural services experience more success). Amateur arts practices doubled in France from 1973 to 1997. According to the art-form, there are different degrees of involvement of the public in the art production (from theatre integrating the public through speech, to the museum with a public that remains exterior to the object). The treatment of the public by cultural organizations evolves between the two extremes of 'all-market' (the public as consumer, no risk-taking creation) and 'all-to-the-creator' (lump-sum subsidies allow to focus on creation so far as to forget the public _whereas the official ideal-type of public funding is that of 'public as citizen'). The "diffusion of culture is and will remain elitist" but targeted corrective action will be more effective than a general discourse on democratization.

Cultural policies: Public research bodies[10] and 'cultural engineering agencies' can audit local cultural policies. "The role of cultural engineering is to correct" the classical perspective of these policies by introducing cultural industries in the picture, "introducing statistical data belonging to the private cultural market", to give a wider account of cultural activities (in fields such as literature and music).

Cultural employment: Mollard includes employment in private sectors related to cultural industries (going as far as mentioning the production of equipment such as cameras and VCRs). Mollard puts this diverse phenomenon into the following categories: scientific employment (e.g. in museums; essentially public sector and trained in specialized schools), conceptual employment (e.g. curators, architects, editors; highly creative, public and private sectors, diversity of schools and trainings), technical employment (hands-on technical experience, training in technical schools), commercial employment (merely selling), assistant employment (under the direction of scientific or conceptual coordinator; high-qualification but young and poorly paid; introduced by cooptation; considered as in a training-phase), reception employment (e.g. museum-keepers and guides; less stringent qualification standards), communication employment (marketing, PR; more and more specialists from specialized schools) and production employment (mixes conceptual, technical, financial and craft-like skills). Generally, cultural employment is characterized by high-qualification for low income, dual expertise in arts and management, and more and more higher-education training (with more than 20 MAs specialized in some area of arts management in 1998 in France).

What is lacking in the knowledge of cultural data: geographic distribution of cultural investments, social and economic impact of cultural investments, systematic analysis of cultural spending of private companies, systematic typology of cultural employment.

- The instruments of cultural engineering:

"The engineer combines what is ingenious in an analysis and what is genius in an invention or a creation." Cultural engineering "symbolizes the appearance of professionalism in cultural and para-cultural fields". It also applies to domains close to culture such as "tourism, communication, environment and humanitarian matters." As a method, cultural engineering "is first of all a set of operational instruments.

Seeking optimal solutions: The problems are of all kinds (for creators to find diffusion and recognition; for publics to receive an answer to some longings; for mediators to set ranks and values). The first step is a systematic analysis of the cultural environment of the project, which can be either an evaluation from within the organization or an audit from an outsider. It

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[10] Such as the 'observatoire des politiques culturelles' in Grenoble.

applies to artistic programming, budgets, organization and to needs and levels of satisfaction of partners. The techniques are surveys and qualitative interviews with publics, interviews with personalities who are "representative of different cultural families concerned by the project". (Mollard evokes 'needs studies' which seem similar to market studies.) The second step is to formulate a concept in a 'project definition study', around 2 questions: What? (situation diagnosis +what actions to consider) For whom? (For which publics, which markets, on which geographic zone) This will lead to a cost-benefit study, with focus on fulfilling 3 imperatives: quality, deadlines and costs. The third step is a feasibility study, answering the questions where, when, how and how much?

Cost control: Cost considerations must not be placed behind care for quality and service. Costs study must stress several distinctions: …*Investment costs vs. operating costs:* Too often, the evaluation of operating costs is left out when a new cultural investment is realized; this results in deficit-plagued under-used facilities. One must set as goals either 'grand équilibre' (earned income should cover costs and debt-reimbursement) for private cultural organizations, or 'petit équilibre' (earned income should cover exploitation costs while investments are financed by public authorities) for public and subsidized cultural organizations. Sometimes in public/subsidized organizations, the latter may not be attained, thanks to 'equilibrium/balancing subsidies'. But the conditions of financial balance should always be set a priori.   ...*Fixed costs vs. variable costs:* In cultural organizations, the growth of fixed costs hinders the development of variable costs (which have an artistic character). Such situations are absurd for organizations that ought to develop artistic production. Besides, 'star-system' costs reduce the margins of artistic budgets. ... *Balance vs. deficit:* For private cultural organizations, a balanced budget is a necessity, whereas for the public/subsidized ones structural deficit is common… but even then, less and less accepted by public authorities. One of the goals of cultural engineering is to reduce the uncertainties of costs increases. Given the weight of labour costs, special attention must be given to time (delays) management.

Meeting deadlines: This is important on the market (to be the first, relative to competitors, and to be able to cover investments soon enough). This is a political necessity for public/subsidized organizations: Launching a new project takes time, yet the political deadlines of elections must be considered: Cultural spending is not well-perceived by voters if the project is not realized before the election, whereas an achieved project will be promoted and justified. Therefore projects should be launched in the first year of office of a mayor, to have them achieved before the end of his mandate. Cultural engineering proposes a general project-agenda in this perspective to decision-makers.

Goal-setting: Goals must be stated as clearly as possible. They are balanced differently in the public vs. the private sector, but in both cases they are expressed in terms of returns on sorts-of-investments: *Profitability effect* (can be expected if clearly expressed from the start and supported by thorough calculations). *Radiance[11] effect*, to increase the influence of the investing organization (the radiance effect of culture being very strong and pervasive). *Communication effect:* Culture is a very powerful image-carrier (more lasting image-building than advertising). *Democratization effect* (relevant to public authorities) will affect the type of cultural investment. Goal-setting is a difficult task because decision-makers are not willing to abandon their usual ambiguity. The aim of cultural engineering is to help them understand that clear goal-setting is in their own interest.

Programme realization: Programmes must be developed prior to realization of investments and events. Concerning investment, architectural programming is fundamental, and follows a method assessing goals, physical scales and visitors demand. Concerning events, artistic programming must establish a coherence and a clear positioning around a

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[11] The French mean a pervasive and powerful kind of influence by the metaphor of 'radiance'…

precisely defined concept (instead of following the heterogeneous solicitations of diverse artists).

Fund raising: The previously described instruments ensure the coherence of the project, which is a prerequisite to fund-raising. Relevant distinctions are: *Public/private:* Public financing is cross-financing; this implies long delays and complex procedures. Private financing is also complex because investors fear the high-risk of cultural production. *Immediate/delayed* (immediate financing is the initial investment allowing to launch a project; delayed financing is the income coming from the exploitation of the project). *Simple/multiple:* Simple financing is faster. Multiple financing is more complex, but offers more independence and sustainability for the project, and allows the initiating funding-body to 'share the burden' with others.

The technical realization of projects: For facilities, most important is organization and distribution of responsibilities. For events, most important are the artistic director's skills in associating (to the project) contributions with high-quality. In this filed, cultural engineering has an advisory and supporting role.

- The operators:

The worth of the techniques of cultural engineering depends a lot on the worth of its operators.

The cultural engineers: They can be integrated to the cultural organization or exterior to it. They develop special skills. These are different from the amateur competence claimed by politicians. These are rather a diversified know-how, diplomacy, artistic culture, knowledge of processes and stakes in the cultural field. Being a cultural engineer requires strong personality but also accepting to work for others and believe in a project before detaching oneself from it once it's on wheels, leaving it to a regular manager[12]. Finally, a cultural engineer must have a strong deontology (independence towards financers, authority towards clients, criticism towards project-conceivers) and an interest for new projects and innovative cultural practices.

The cultural engineering agency: It is independent and able to mix its clients and products. Its clients are mainly public bodies (70% in the case of ABCD _which still means 30% of truly private clients), with thus a role to help public bodies approach the cultural market. Its products are mainly preparatory studies for cultural facilities and the organization of events (and also some auditing). The cultural sectors it reaches are diversified (including 25% of 'multi-sector' projects for ABCD), but either concentrated around visual arts (the case of ABCD) or around performing arts. Its activities are half studies, and half organization of projects: This is what maintains its know-how, which distinguishes it from university research institutes[13].

B   Fields of application

- Piloting of cultural enterprise:

The cultural enterprise: [Mollard includes cultural industries in the picture here too.] The 'spirit of enterprise' (French equivalent of 'entrepreneurship') means having objectives of financial results + innovative and artistic creation + strong image-building (in communication, radiance and diffusion) and an independent identity + a conquered clientele. The cultural enterprise has a dual leadership: artistic + management (with a "cultural management, which can be defined as the ability to lead from conception to realisation, permanent or temporary cultural projects").

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[12] Mollard implicitly makes a difference between the engineer who designs a project and the manager who keeps the old house (but this distinction is not consistently maintained throughout any of the 2 books).

[13] And Mollard is also proud to mention that his agency ABCD is called in cases of crises.

Piloting: Management conceives the organization of leadership differently according to the size of the enterprise: in individual enterprise, the artist's charisma is essential. In middle-sized enterprise (theatre), the creator is given priority over the administrator. In large-size enterprise (large museums, large cultural industries), leadership belongs more to administrators than to creators (which are often outsiders invited in the enterprise) and bears more similarities with regular industries and services. The conception of the products/services: Production definition has to do with market-positioning, and especially with the choice of collaborating artists, given that "success goes to the most exacting quality". Intuition and imagination are essential, especially in finding a new potential market. The realisation of the products/services: The entrepreneur must take care, that non-artistic costs doe not leave too little for creative costs, in order to avoid losing the ability to innovate and create. Also, high quality of realisation must be monitored all along the process, especially if the organization unfortunately has to sub-contract some activities (subcontracting raises the risk of quality-loss). In a context of high uncertainty, the reunion of offer and demand is risky (e.g. risk that offer "anticipates too much"[14]). Essential instruments for piloting are: an 'enterprise project' building solidarity among members of the organization, results assessment (financial results in private sector; audience's fidelity and lasting reputation in public sector) and human resources management.

- Engineering of cultural facilities:

"An important part of cultural engineering deals with defining, studying, making and managing cultural facilities, which are the living matter of cultural policy. […] A cultural facility is an institution, generally non-profit, relating the works of artists to publics, in order to facilitate the conservation of heritage, artistic creation and training, and more generally the diffusion of the products of the art and of the mind, in a building or a set of buildings specially adapted to its missions." Cultural facilities are "the privileged space of the encounter between creators and publics outside the private market of culture".

Classifying cultural facilities: according to… *Size*: measured through budget-size (investment budget between 1 million euros for small local facilities and 1 billion euros for 'grands projets'; operating budget between 200 000 euros yearly for small local facilities and 200 million euros for 'grands projets'), attendance figures (more than 1 million visitors yearly for big facilities[15], between 10 000 and 100 000 for most facilities) and surface area (300 000 m2 for the BNF[16], 65 000 for Pompidou, between 1 and 10 000 for middle-sized facilities, less than 1000 m2 for small projects). …according to… *Fame*: depends on the quality of invited artists, the events organized and the international audience. …according to… *Functions*: conservation (reserves, preservation spaces, consultation spaces), diffusion (performing arts live, recorded performances, exhibitions), creation (direct support, indirect incitement) and training (specialized, professional, general/amateur).

The diversity of cultural facilities: They are named 'museums' if a permanent collection is made accessible; 'historical monuments' if recognized so by authorities and opened to the public (with an appropriate scenography); 'theatres', often short-lived facilities (can be open to music, dance, opera); 'auditoria' with special acoustic qualities and fit for professional recordings; 'libraries' centred on book-collections but open to sound and image (then called 'médiathèques' _media libraries); 'art centres' which are spaces for temporary exhibitions; 'art/music schools' for professional education; 'county/municipal archives'; 'cinemas' also if the programming is labelled as artistic ('art et essai'). 'Multipurpose cultural facilities' are very diverse (such as cultural centres, and integrated structures which are getting rare).

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[14] Mollard recycles the popular idea of the artist "ahead of his time".
[15] 9 million visitors yearly in the case of Centre Pompidou.
[16] Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The operation of cultural facilities: The *budget*: Investment budget is organized around cross-financing (mainly by the State, Region, County and City). Operating budget is mainly supported by the local level of public authorities (most often the municipality supporting 90 to 100% of it). Most of the time, the facilities are under a regime of stewardship, meaning that the directors are not financially responsible because own income is poured back into the general income of the municipality. The *people:* Leaders can be either contractors or civil servants, while the administrative supervision is held by the State (Ministry of Culture) or municipality.

The users: Associating them to the management of the facility (in the case of NPO-NGO-owned facilities) fosters their fidelity but can bring conflicts with decision-organs. Associating them indirectly, through "friends of x"-like-NGO-NPOs, prevents conflicts while allowing their contributions and financial gifts.

- Engineering of cultural events:

Cultural events make up the ultimate form of cultural projects and they realize the mediation between works of art and publics. In the last 30 years, the distinction between cultural facilities holding permanent activities and those holding temporary events has disappeared, so that today even the archives realize temporary exhibitions. The existence of an artistic director is the answer to this need for projects.

The scenography and 'muséographie' of cultural events: Theatre-directors, as well as Museum curators, have gained a higher status as 'artists'. Both use, in their own way, scenography, answering the needs of audiences whom have become less tolerant to static, didactic and irksome presentations.

There are four different types of cultural events: The performance: Taking place more and more in open space, public space, and with increasing use of medias (e.g. for broadcasting). *The exhibition:* Its space is standardized (after the model of New York galleries, 'Blanc de Blanc'[17]), it conquers unused (often industrial) buildings and open space and opens itself to new areas and themes. *The festival:* After a booming period, festivals raise questions on 4 levels: identity (a desire for fame by municipalities → multiplication of the number of festivals and their standardization → a rat-race for originality ignoring declining public interest → the concept of festival loses its identity), financing (increasingly high financial burden, while returns are not obvious and self-financing is hardly possible), attendance (some festivals having only 1000 visitors or even less, increasing their deficit), reception spaces (most often amateurish structures and in open air, thus under the threat of weather conditions …a need for more professionalism), seasonality (questioning the concentration of festivals on the summer-time) and insertion of the festival in its cultural environment (often festivals are felt as parachuted on a city, disconnected from local cultural institutions; they should be better integrated and valorize the local institutions). Finally, festivals should be better integrated in the tourist, economic and cultural policy of municipalities, and should involve more the local population. *'Salons' and fairs:* While traditional 'salons' have almost disappeared, they found a new life in the form of fairs (visual art fairs as the FIAC in Paris, music, architecture and even comics[18] fairs), in which the role of the market is acknowledged.

Cultural communication: A synthetic strategy should be designed early enough, well before the event takes place. It should answer the 4 following questions: *Why?* To develop the fame of the facility. To foster the participation of future publics to the projects (upstream communication fosters demand, offering a clear and strong image). To support the quality of the proposed artistic production (with the help of the media). To help the cultural project play a steering role in local development (the image of a city, its force of attraction and job-

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[17] 'white of white' or 'white on white'
[18] in Angoulême in the case of France

creations). *For whom?* Target-groups must be set, at 5 levels: decision-makers, cultural mediators (critics should be associated to, or at least aware of, artistic choices), partners (to the project _public and private), publics (foster the fidelity of specialized publics and build networks of information for accustomed publics, and aim advertisement at potential publics) and public opinion (difficult to reach because very large). *How?* There are 3 types of strategies (which can be combined): the radiance strategy (local radiance to the population, national or international radiance to art circles), the event strategy (if there are events being organized often enough), the public-fidelity strategy (grounded in marketing and in fostering an attachment to the global policy including the regular service and the temporary event, and dependent on a network). *What communication-plan?* Adequate means are necessary: people (pedagogic personnel especially, and a common language spoken by all personnel) and budget (20 to 30% of the total cost of the event _less for a large event; and looking for additional funding from private Maecenas).

III   The contribution of cultural engineering agencies to the cultural market

A   *How to valorize cultural know-how?*

The enterprise of cultural engineering is an enterprise of valorisation and mobilization of the know-how described in the previous section. It is compelled to obey both the rules of the market and goals of 'general interest'. Swinging between the public and the private, the enterprise of cultural engineering has to make clear choices between alternatives:

Pyramid or network: The pyramid organization of large companies and administrations is absolutely not relevant to cultural engineering. The development of cultural service implies an especially important involvement of the individual and a multiplicity of competences. It thus requires network organization, contracts between partners. Cultural engineering realizes the synergy of scattered forces. The enterprise of cultural engineering therefore has to be at the nexus of networks, animate them and not substitute itself to them.

Know-how or How-do-I-know[19]: Communication and diffusion to the media, for their own sake, are meaningless. Cultural competence is sentenced to death if not made known and open to the eyes of others. Therefore cultural engineering must always link the two. This mobilisation takes the following steps: know (…the cultural market and the multiple factors affecting projects), do (concrete action based on goals), make do (the ability to delegate and to have a new organization for each project, to invent flexible, mobile and temporary organizations) and tell around about this know-how (the 'how-do-I-know' element, implying that cultural engineering always must be 'médiatique').

Public or private financing: Cultural engineering agencies work on contracts signed with public and private financing bodies, and often with both together. But to prevent being involved in unfair competition, they have to avoid being subsidized by public authorities apart from precise projects (therefore, no structural subsidy for such agencies!).

Relationship with the State: Of course, cultural engineering agencies will work with the State, how could it be otherwise? The State could even subcontract tasks to these

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[19] The French play on words of Mollard is : "Savoir-faire ou faire-savoir", the latter one meaning speaking about what one does and can do (ensuring a high media coverage, communication and difusion).

professionals. But the relationships between the two parties should in all instances be clearly stated and written down through mutually agreed-upon conventions.

B   Which provisions for which clients?

Cultural engineering agencies have to respond to the demands of the market, Mollard insists. The basic principles of its provisions to the market are the following:

Diversity: A large variety of interventions is to be proposed (from a simple audit to the management of a project from a to z). The repetition of successful operations should not be missed; not every project needs to be a prototype anew. The variations to accommodate specificities should not be unreasonable.

Profitability: Cultural projects must be taken seriously. The services of cultural engineering will only be highly valued if they are paid for, and paid enough to be profitable for the cultural engineer. The spirit of contract places the contractor (the cultural engineer) in a position where no complacency is needed, and where the cost of time is rightly evaluated. That way, and with more clarity, more rationality and more rigor, Mollard hopes to attract more private corporate funding for arts projects, because the private sector will then recognize culture as an economic sector of its own.

Competition: Competition between several cultural engineering agencies is desirable, both to maintain a healthy competitive market and to push for a continuously increasing professionalism in cultural enterprise.

Openness: Mollard means here that the agencies should be able to work with experts, wherever they are, and even if they are civil servants from the Ministry. It would also be good for those civil servants to alternate working for the public and private sector, as they do in the US (according to Mollard).

Pedagogy: De-partitioning the market of culture is not enough. Cultural engineering must also improve the education of people, and especially training in 'cultural management' all the actors of the cultural market. "The step of management must be crossed. Our credibility is at stake", says Mollard.

Conclusion: Cultural engineering and the fundamentals of arts management

Mollard supports a number of 'original' ideas which differ sometimes from what I heard up to now in terms of arts management. He proposes the reproduction of prototypes, blending arts and cultural industries by creating objects (one can think of the case of museum shops where the two indeed blend together), commercializing products and, even more original, reproducing and commercializing (even exporting if possible) successful arts projects (selling the specific know-how as a brand that would be franchised[20]).

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[20] By the way, both are what the Kunstfabriek is doing in Amsterdam right now (yet if the end-result is of the low aesthetic quality of the Kunstfabriek, in my opinion it could be a dangerous option for the arts).

Mollard is clearly a supporter of more market mechanisms to balance State intervention in France (and in continental Western Europe) and views this as an essential mission of cultural engineering, being part of a counter-power to the State in the cultural field.

But Mollard shows some incoherence on the issue of profit as a goal. Profit should be a goal for cultural engineering agencies and for private cultural organizations (not surprising in the case of cultural industries, which Mollard blends with the arts in his analysis, and in his practice). But the author is well-aware that it cannot be a goal in all cases, and especially not for a number of arts forms. Therefore, some ambiguity to say the most, or some balancing to say the least, is visible in Mollard's position towards profitability.

The author is more classical in other respects. He is a proponent of project management and of de-partitioning of the cultural sector (as are the authors in Evrard et al. and as is Hagoort). Besides, Mollard's search for 'optimal solutions' and other elements of his method sound a lot like strategic management.

In terms of the metaphors of Morgan about organization theory, Mollard combines a strong machine metaphor (heightened by the vocabulary of engineering) with the use of elements of the metaphor of the decision-making unit: his understanding of the cultural field is halfway towards a systemic understanding, thanks notably to his knowledge and experience of the French political system.

Apart from mentioning Bourdieu and the usual tributes to French intellectuals and policy-makers in general (especially a number of Parisian essay-writers in a critical tradition, and a number of experts from the Ministry of Culture and of historians of French cultural policies), Mollard refers often to cultural economics (Farchy, Sagot-Duvauroux, Herscovici, Dupuis, Rouet, Frey and Pommerehne) and sometimes to arts management (mainly Evrard et al. 1993, but ignoring non-French authors in arts management). The obsession with the French case hinders the development of a theoretical framework in Mollard's 2 books.

He mentions his own experience very often, as well as he claims using his own social theory of culture (for which he refers to his earlier book *Le mythe de Babel, essai sur l'artiste et le système*, 1984, which I did not have the opportunity to read). Finally, although he doesn't mention it, it is clear that his perspective could be inspired by network analysis and the literature on network structures in companies.

If there was only one theorem which Mollard puts to the front, it is that of *the eclectic leader:* the ideal manager of culture according to him has to be both a quasi-artist and a strategic entrepreneur. This high demand maybe reflects the high self-esteem Mollard vests in himself as a cultural engineer.