

Perspectives



**ON
CULTURAL PARTICIPATION
IN MALTA**

an Arts Council Malta publication



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Foreword

Cultural participation is a fluid concept as both ‘culture’ and ‘participation’ are not monolithic even though the terms are often treated as if they were. When the research team led by Arts Council Malta was working on the design of the Cultural Participation Survey 2016 (CPS) in collaboration with the National Statistics Office and the Valletta 2018 Foundation, it was deduced that the wealth of data to be collected had the potential to be analysed and as a result initiate discussion from a range of related disciplines. This gave rise to the idea of having a collection of perspectives on the highly contested subject of cultural participation from individuals with expertise in their respective field ranging from economics to community studies. In this publication, which considers the CPS data as the starting point, we aimed to present an interdisciplinary critical understanding of what construes cultural participation through a collection of critical essays by going beyond the dominant policy discourse and somewhat reveal the challenges in measuring, defining and observing the phenomenon in question. This critical and open debate reflects the research objectives of Arts Council Malta’s Create 2020 strategy.

In the first chapter of *Perspectives On Cultural Participation in Malta*, Dr. Georgina Portelli addresses the importance of acknowledging the continuous changing contexts in which we live and thereby the ongoing evolution of forms in which cultural participation is taking place. She also points out how metrics such

as those within the CPS aim at addressing a wide definition of culture but cautiously need to reflect the changing reality especially with the prevalence of digital technology. Following this, Dr. Marie Briguglio presents an overview of a study on the 2016 CPS while also providing some insight on how these compare with 2011 statistics and the variations that exist within the population. She points out towards how the data can now give new possibilities in examining motives and barriers for audiences and creative producers as well as the relationship between well-being and cultural participation with the resulting policy implications. Delving more into the audience development aspect, Jo Taylor introduces the Malta Culture Segments based on a report by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre using the data from the CPS. This essay examines ways in which cultural organisations can use this insight to tap into potential audiences through value-based segmentation. In his essay, Dr. Toni Sant points out at trends in digital cultural participation from the survey data and the implications thereof. He takes a critical standpoint in addressing how future surveys can distinguish better between audience development and audience engagement in this context. Also drawing directly from CPS data, Dr. Valerie Visanich delves into the possible emergence of cultural ominvorousness by looking at the increased participation in folk events particularly the festa. She focuses on young people with post-compulsory education while taking into account their attendance in other cultural venues such as art galleries and museums. The author then attempts to deduce possibilities as to what leads to such patterns while addressing sociodemographic variables that influence such

choices. Also focusing on young people, Dr. Maria Pisani refers to Integra Foundation's work on facilitating space for marginalised individuals to be creative while confronting borders. They do this in the liminal space in which they are free from the dominant discourses that limit possibilities. Similarly, Michael Deguara's chapter summarises ongoing qualitative research on accessibility in Valletta specifically in relation to people with a disability. This is positioned in the context of Valletta 2018's cultural programme in addressing accessibility and its impact on Valletta's community. Dr. Glen Farrugia and Adrian Debattista also discuss cultural activity within local communities albeit in terms of volunteering within cultural organisations. They attempt to point at possible determinants that influence individuals' decisions to volunteer in the cultural sector and how community leaders can recognise more the potential of volunteers' contribution while increasing their engagement. In the last chapter Cristina Da Milano gives an overview of a recently published study on audience development practices in 30 cultural organisations across Europe. The argument in this essay focuses on the need of an audience-centric approach within the organisational environments and some lessons learnt that can be applicable to Malta.

Through this publication we hope to spark stimulating discussions, inspire further research and inform policymaking all the while contributing towards a knowledge base useful to cultural operators. While the CPS is an invaluable data source notwithstanding its inevitable limitations, these essays complement it by presenting

narratives from multiple angles that are poised to expand and produce new ones in the near future.

Toni Attard

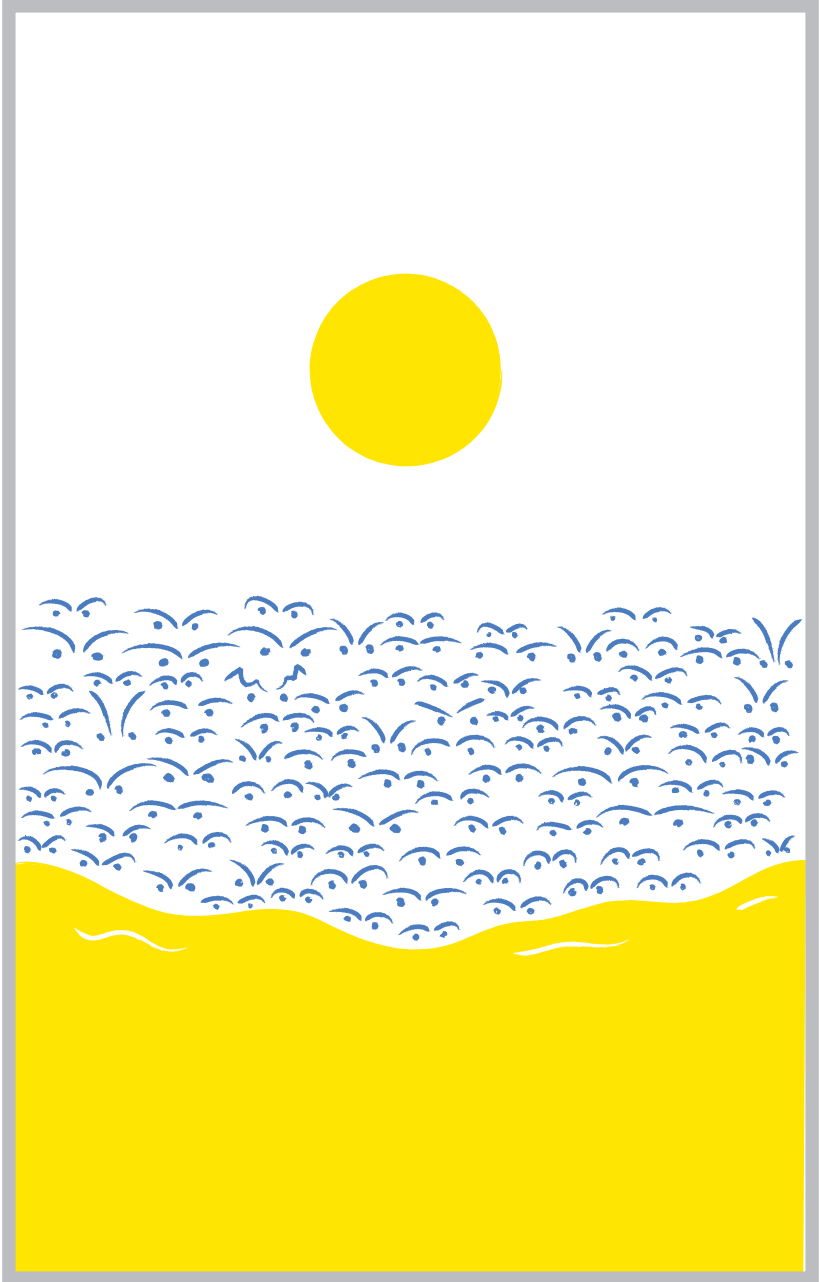
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Chapter 1

The Who, the What and the Where: Towards A Broader Understanding Of Cultural Participation

GEORGINA PORTELLI



Like most forms of human expression and interaction, culture, with its myriad complexities, is often dynamic and fluid, subject to changing attitudes and values. The metric tools for gauging cultural participation have to some extent broadened enough to include informal or more traditional activities (Morrone, 2006; Throsby, 2010; UNESCO-UIS, 2012) although the notion of creative consumption is still a dominant aspect of such surveys. The long-awaited NSO Cultural Participation Survey 2016, commissioned by Arts Council Malta, follows this trend and is a step in the right direction. Its results can inform policymakers and public cultural organisations on the nature of activity in the sector, its diversity and where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Moreover, this survey analyses attitudes towards culture and the arts, how culture is happening, where it happens and what is capturing paying or non-paying audiences.

Changing demographics, together with economic health or otherwise, coupled with the disruption caused by innovation and

new technologies and ease of access to these, pose new challenges that may perturb the accepted homeostasis. All this may give rise to new forms of engagement in new contexts and spaces which, for a variety of reasons, may be excluded or may fail to make it on to the cultural participation radar. As we acknowledge changing perceptions about what interactions can be perceived as having cultural or artistic significance, how do we go about defining and capturing it all? Or, to put it another way: how does one define cultural participation?

Participation alludes to action that is self-initiated. This can imply active creative participation initiated by those who perceive themselves as artists when they go about doing their art. This could take a variety of forms, such as visual art, music, dance, theatre, literature, film making, photography, design or a host of other creative interactions and expressions. It also tends to imply a more passive activity such as attendance or cultural consumption at more traditional cultural spaces such as museums, theatres, archives, libraries and cinemas. More often than not, participation tends to be associated with statistics for foot traffic and box office takings.

However we choose to look at it, we certainly need to ensure that we are more inclusive in what qualifies as cultural and artistic in terms of both activities and genres. In short, the context of cultural participation ought first and foremost to be representative of the wide range of activities and expressions present in our

communities. Those things that different people in different communities make happen. The present cultural ecology is not a homogenous environment but one that exhibits a lot of internal diversity and change. It is more of a continuum, a set of cultural intersystems with its own rules of cohesion and its natural share of intra-cultural tensions and points of contact. Bourdieu's (1973, 1984) concept of cultural capital is still relevant here. What is included matters. We still have communities that cannot access traditional cultural spaces because of obstacles such as entry fees and language barriers, as much as we have communities that self-exclude on the basis of perceptions and attitudes related to class, education, social desirability factors or general lack of interest.

A recalibration of how we measure activity in culture and the arts is necessary because we need to acknowledge that there are multiple modes of engagement that are not necessarily measurable through audience head counts. Indeed, some forms do not thrive on ticket sales at all. Cultural engagement is multifaceted and varied; however, we still seem to fumble with inclusion and this begs a number of questions. Should we ignore the informal art happening in council centres and homes? The online fan fiction writers uploading their storytelling? Those engaging with literature, film art and movies at home? Should we take note of amateur forms or culture-specific genres and crafts? Do we look down our noses at the engagement that is facilitated and possibly democratised by digital tools and new media? How do we rate those who follow 'how to' art instruction uploads on YouTube in the comfort of their

homes? Does the motivation to possess art commodities qualify as engagement? Should we ultimately look at a more inclusive definition of participation and engagement with arts and culture? My belief is that the answer should be a resounding yes.

Take the case of culturally specific art forms and crafts such as those pertaining to the traditional Maltese *fešta*. Most acknowledge the cultural relevance of the *fešta*, an identity reference for some; indeed its popularity is borne out in the survey, where 67.4% of respondents said they attend parish feasts (NSO, 2017). This is a community-based cultural effort and aesthetic expression that takes place within the demarcated confines of a village or locality with many creative engagement layers. Some points of entry pertain to creative output in woodcraft, sculpture, papier mâché art, pelmet/banner design and embroidery, flag making and painting. Other engagement is of a more performative nature, from marching bands to more formal concert-type performances to the poetic eulogies recited in front of statues of patron saints. Of course one can hardly ignore the aesthetic value of the fire art and design of local firework displays.

Certainly, even in the current NSO survey itself, lumping all this creative activity and engagement under the “one size fits all” question “active involvement in parish feasts” falls short of mining the true extent of engagement. This is a sector where specific participation/engagement surveys should be more inclusive or even addressed via sector-specific tools. Our *fešta* enthusiasts may

not issue paying tickets to their audiences but they are certainly masters at crowdfunding their activities. Their audiences are tangible - as are their creative producers of *festa* craft and fire art together with some fine cultural management in practice. *Festi* are undoubtedly also incubators for designers, artists, musicians and composers. Culture intrinsically comes about and is nurtured by the ideas that occur to people in the spaces they inhabit and in the communities they live in. It is a coming together of such factors as intent, creative sparks, opportunities, bridges with different networks and potential audiences not necessarily of the paying kind.

How do we then decide what has artistic or cultural value on the participation radar? Some genres do tend to be left out in the cold for far longer. Graffiti street art, well embraced today thanks to pervasively creative exponents such as Blade, Phase 2 and Banksy, is a good example of creative production belonging to specific fringe street communities. It was nonetheless excluded from the pantheon of accepted art forms and techniques given its share of subversive action that for years was regarded as vandalism. Tattoo art is another genre that has made some progress in this regard after centuries of repudiation both of the tattoo artist and more so of the body art consumer. Ultimately, inclusion should be consonant with a perception that art and culture can happen wherever people are, whoever they are. The perceived value of any community's cultural output and consumption should not be dismissed or de-legitimised.

Similarly, as with the wider inclusion of culturally specific manifestations, or emergent fringe forms, it is equally important to take into account the disruptions that new technology wreaks on the established cultural status quo (Rife et al., 2014). The NSO survey reveals that 71.5% of 16-44 year olds use the internet both at home and in other places. We need to keep this in mind and be motivated and ready to embrace emergent forms of engagement in a world now shaped by digital natives. We are slow to catch up with the highly fluid shifts technology catalyses forward, particularly its penchant for abolishing or making very fuzzy the divisions between consumers of culture and creative makers of art and culture. New media art keeps evolving with new techniques and cultural practices hand in hand with the emergence of innovative technologies. We are now more familiar with digital art, computer graphics, web design, computer animation, virtual art, mapping, internet art, interactive art, video games and robotics amongst others which are making their presence felt even in traditional culture spaces. We also need to acknowledge the hybrid forms of contemporary practice and consumption that evolve out of the conversation between new media art and other disciplines such as science, algorithmic formula, politics and cultural media activism.

Cultural participation pertaining to these constantly evolving online communities together with the highly creative use of digital tools, open source and crowd-sourced material, co-curation and social media will not be easy to measure or keep up with. One can

also observe this blurring of the line between artists and audience in genres which offer unfinished work that is constantly altered or edited by participants other than the originating artist. Who is what?

We need to widen our understanding of cultural engagement and participation. We should also perhaps start looking at more form-specific participation data to identify those points of contact that help ecosystems, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals to bridge with each other. What is clear is that, in a contemporary world, people can explore and engage with culture, as often as they like, however they like, privately, publicly, online and according to their evolving interests and tastes without necessarily needing a mediator. Inclusion to facilitate engagement with arts and culture is a given and needs to become a mainstream perspective to truly embrace the wealth of activity out there.

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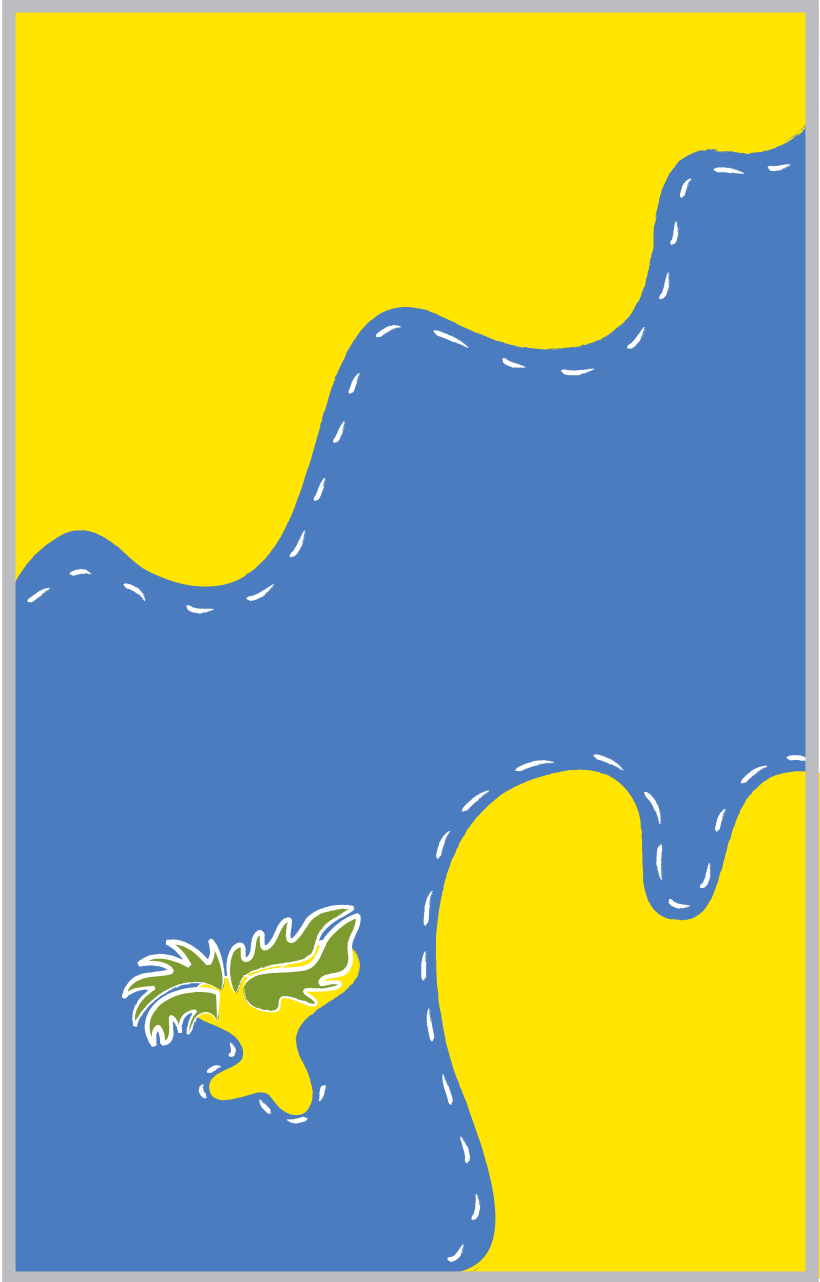
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Chapter 2

Cultural Participation: Small Population - Large Variation

MARIE BRIGUGLIO



Recent scholarly and public-policy interest has thrown up many novel insights, nuanced findings and recommendations for policy action for cultural participation in Malta. One notable headline message that emerged, based on 2011 data, is that, notwithstanding the variation, in most domains of culture non-participation is the norm in Malta (Briguglio, 2016; NSO, 2012). In 2011, attending art exhibitions and dance were the least popular forms of cultural consumption, and what attracted significant numbers in terms of audience was television, listening to music and using the internet for cultural purposes (NSO, 2012). Participants with a tertiary level of education made up a bigger share of the audience at art exhibitions, concerts, museum, performances and even cinema, while respondents with low levels of education were more present at traditional and local activities including village feasts and Carnival. Productive or active participation was mainly prominent in traditional village feasts, while other traditional events like Carnival continued to provide an opportunity for some segments of the population to actively engage (Briguglio and Sultana, 2015).

These findings resonated with the European Commission's 2013 evaluation of participation among member states, including Malta (European Commission, 2013). The Eurobarometer data exposed cultural participation in Malta to be generally at the lower end of the European Union spectrum. This was especially true when it came to cultural production (European Commission, 2013). The Eurobarometer data also revealed some of the key barriers to participation in Malta. Contrary to other member states, barriers in Malta appeared to relate more to lack of time and interest on the part of the participants themselves rather than cost or availability of the cultural offer. This, with the exception of young people, for some of whom price seems to have been somewhat of an issue too.

The data also provided clues to policy-makers to consider new ways of timing and placing the offer (for instance, to reduce the travel and time costs of participation), and to generally consider strategies for audience development. Other nuances that emerged from studies on the economics of cultural participation in Malta was that those who do participate in cultural activities, whether as audiences or as producers, report higher levels of well-being (Briguglio and Sultana, 2015; 2017), findings which aligned with those conducted in other contexts (Tavono, 2014; Sacco and Grossi, 2015). Juxtaposed against the generally low participation, this would seem to provide a clear mandate for policy-makers and sponsors of culture to think of ways to enhance participation.

Since then, Malta has, in fact, embarked on considerable institutional development, policy effort and numerous initiatives in the cultural domain. In 2012 Malta successfully bid to host the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2018 (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2012). Concurrently it embarked on a vigorous implementation of its National Cultural Policy launched in 2011 (Government of Malta, PSTEC 2011). Considerable public funds were invested in cultural policy and initiatives (WorldCP, 2015; Arts Council Malta, 2016). Of particular relevance, the 2011 Cultural Policy emphasised the contribution culture makes to everyday socio-economic life, and aimed to transform cultural and creative activity into its most dynamic facet. This was to be achieved, inter alia by empowering the public to participate in cultural activity through a people-centred approach (Government of Malta, PSTEC 2011).

Method and Context

In 2016, Malta's National Statistics Office embarked on a second detailed data collection process intended to evaluate cultural participation five years after the second-ever cultural participation survey. The survey interview was drawn up with the input of the newly set-up Arts Council Malta, the Valletta 2018 Foundation and various experts and data users in the field, following reviews of studies on cultural activity and wellbeing (Briguglio and Sultana, 2015; 2017; Steiner et al., 2014; Stiglitz et al., 2009). The Cultural Participation Survey (CPS) 2016 not only replicated cultural fields

assessed in 2011, but it also generated richer data on various barriers and motives and provided more detailed insights on cultural participation. The data collected was drawn from 1,125 face-to-face interviews conducted in October-November 2016 (NSO, 2017), set to represent the total population in Malta of around 430,000 (NSO, 2014). Judging by the gender, age and regional distribution of the respondents, the sample is representative of the Maltese population aged 16 and over. The data provides a very rich resource on the basis of which to undertake nation-wide analyses of: who participates in what cultural activities; what are the drivers and barriers to cultural participation in different domains and what are the effects of cultural participation itself on other outcome variables like wellbeing¹.

The very basic sample demographics are worth describing for, in and of themselves, they provide a glimpse of the reality within which cultural policy and interventions are contextualised. The gender balance of the sample was almost exactly 50:50 male and female. Some 98% were Maltese, which is slightly over the 94% in Malta itself (NSO, 2014). The Maltese population is an aging one, with an age structure that follows an inverted pyramid (Delia, 2017). In the sample 23% is composed of respondents over 65 years of age, followed by those aged 55-64, those aged 45-54 and those aged 35-44. The remaining 28% are 16-35 years of age. Just like in the national population, most respondents completed up to a secondary school level of education. A little over a third have

completed post-secondary or tertiary level of education. A fifth hold only primary or no level of schooling (slightly less than in the actual population). Only 9% of the respondents are from Gozo, and the rest of the respondents are distributed in the regions of Malta, just like in the Maltese population. Similar to the Maltese population (Eurostat, EU-SILC, 2015), just over half of the respondents are in employment, while the other half are either students, retirees, inactive or unemployed. Just over half of the sample respondents are married, while the rest are either single, widowed, separated or divorced. Only one-fourth of the sample have children under 16 living at home, which is less than the estimated 35% in nationwide data (Eurostat, EU-SILC, 2015).

It is also interesting to examine the lesser-known attributes and variation among the survey respondents and, by inference, in the population. For instance, if the survey is truly representative of the Maltese population, then what the data reveals, is that half of the Maltese never do any sport (2% do so once a year), while 9% do sports once a month, leaving about 40% of the population who engage in sport on a regular basis. It also reveals that around two-thirds of the population are church-goers: 14% daily, 42% weekly, 7% monthly. Around 80% of the population feels no particular health limitation and almost nine out of 10 respondents returned a life-satisfaction score between 6 and 10, with a mean (7.8), which compares well with other studies using similar measures (Briguglio & Sultana, 2017).

Analysis and Findings

But what of cultural participation? There are many ways to define and quantitatively measure cultural participation (Council of Europe/ERICarts, 2015) and the survey interview appears to have taken a stab at many of the options to do so. A fascinating headline statistic that emerges is that just over one-fifth of the population consider themselves as artists. A quick glance at the pair-wise correlations (95% level) reveals that those who consider themselves to be artists are also likely to have been engaged as producers and consumers of culture in various genres, to attend public organisation events and to be familiar with Valletta 2018. They are also more likely to consume culture overseas, to spend more on culture and to be willing to donate both time and money to cultural activities. Interestingly, however, they are no more likely to be involved in traditional events or festivals than non-artists. The survey also asks respondents to report their involvement in the arts when they were young, and the data also indicates a correlation between this datum and considering oneself an artist. Self-assessed artists tend to have higher levels of education and to have been arts students over the previous 12 months.

In terms of expenditure on culture, almost half of the respondents chose to either not answer the question (27%) or to admit that they spent nothing at all (18%). 27% said they spent less than €50 during the previous year, 15% said they spent between €51-€100, 6%

between €101- €150, 4% between €151- €200 while 4% estimated €251 and over. Once again, this is a new datum which yields fresh insights for the economics of participation, complementing that which emerges from the household budgetary survey (NSO, 2010). A question on the respondents' willingness to volunteer time or money revealed that some 30% would tend to agree to do so, while some 36% would tend to agree to donate money.

In replication of the 2011 approach, the 2016 interview included numerous questions on cultural attendance complemented, this time, by more detailed frequency options. Respondents could select anywhere from 0 to 8 or more as the level of frequency with which they attended theatre, concerts, dance, cinema, artistic performances, exhibitions, library, museum and historical sites. Except for cinema, all the domains returned a mean frequency that was between 0 and 1. In 2016, 88% of the population did not attend any dance events, 80% did not visit a library, 68% did not attend an art exhibition, 70% did not visit a museum, 69% did not attend live theatre performances, 67% did not attend live music events, 63% did not visit historical sites, 60% did not attend cinema. While these statistics confirm the norm of non-participation, they do show notable improvements over some of the 2011 data, when 79% did not attend an art exhibition, 75% did not visit a museum, 75% did not attend live theatre performances, 74% did not attend live music events and 68% did not visit a cinema (Briguglio and Sultana, 2017).

Meanwhile, participation in traditional activities continues to dominate the cultural calendar of the Maltese people, like the annual week-long celebration of the patron saint of each town/village (*festa*), Carnival celebrations which take place before Lent, and local council festivities which include commemoration/celebration days organised by any of the 68 municipalities in Malta and Gozo. In the 12 months prior to October 2016, 68% had attended a village *festa*, 52% a Good Friday Lenten procession, 33% a local council activity and 32% Carnival. A total of 17% had taken part in some national holiday festivity. A composite index capturing cultural participation in traditional cultural events reveals respondents attended just over two traditional events over the past 12 months out of a maximum of five events. These figures are not only strong but they are also higher than those reported in the 2011 (NSO, 2011), when 48% had attended a *festa*, 35% a Good Friday procession, 25% Carnival and 21% a local council activity. Both young and old appear to attend such events, and participation in Gozo is even stronger. How Malta and Gozo compare with other Mediterranean countries and what works to retain the popularity of traditional activities might be an interesting question to explore.

In a more detailed question set, respondents were also asked about their attendance at specific genre activities. The most popular activity, attracting up to 33% of respondents, was that of visiting historical sites. The least popular included ballet (3%), opera (4%), dance (5%) and jazz (5%). Next in line were classical music (9%), musicals (11%), books (11%), comedy (13%), pantomime (15%),

live music (17%), crafts (17%) and libraries (18%). Activities that attracted at least one fifth of the population include plays (20%), musical events (20%), art exhibitions (23%), museums (29%) and films (27%). A wide plethora of “hobbies” were explored among the respondents. Ranked in order of increasing popularity, the three most popular activities were sport (50%), going to a coffee shop (57%) and cookery, food and travel (60%). Respondents were also asked about activities they engaged in within their spare time (extending up to three years prior to the interview). The most popular activity related to culture is crafts (among 20% of the population), followed by parish work (10%) and computer for artwork, painting, creative computing and photography, Good Friday preparations, story-telling (around 5%). Theatre, musical instruments, ballet, singing, film making, plays, stories, writing music are popular among less than 5% even in the last three years. Just like cultural consumption, active production of culture by the Maltese population was strongest in traditional activities. Up to 9% were active in festi in the past 12 months while 3% were active in Carnival. This, again, represents a slight increase over the latest data (Council of Europe/ERICarts, 2015).

The 2016 survey interview also returned very detailed question sets which focused on particular domains, such as reading, dance, use of the internet, music and theatre. There are also some insights on the consumption of culture abroad. On the latter point, it is worth noting that among the minority that actually do engage in cultural consumption overseas this seems mainly to be focused on

attending museums (25%), historical sites (25%), art exhibitions, art galleries, photographic exhibitions, crafts displays (15%), concerts and performances (11%) and live theatre performances (10%). Cinema, dance, library and literary events are engaged in by only 4% to 6% of respondents when abroad.

For those seeking to promote cultural activities, it is worth noting that the most popular sources of cultural information remain TV/ radio, word of mouth/recommendation and outdoor billboards, at least among 60% of respondents. Facebook, venue leaflets, brochures and flyers, posters in venues and outdoors, newspapers, local newspapers (online or print), magazines, websites/ apps are the next most popular, at least among 30% to 60% of the respondents. Finally, lifestyle/special interest magazines, venue mailing lists, websites, e-newsletters, online videos, other social media, cultural calendars, artist websites and similar are the least popular, albeit reaching 10% to 30% of the population. Simple cross-tabulations of the data available can shed very useful insights as to which media are popular with whom. More generally, in a typical week, over 80% of the respondents listen to the radio and watch television, over 60% use the internet, and around 50% read newspapers. Language preferences also shed important insights for cultural promotion. The Maltese:English:Other ratio (where “Other” includes both languages, Italian or neither) remains mainly in favour of Maltese when it comes to how respondents prefer to speak (73:7:20), to listen to the radio (59:17:24), to watch theatre (40:18:42), and to write (37:31:32). Preferences are split

almost equally between English and Maltese in reading (33:35:32) and watching television (27:29:43).

Implications for Policy

Attempts at influencing participation can benefit from data on the barriers and motives to participation. A reflection of language preferences themselves, a majority of respondents expressed a preference for “Maltese art and culture” (57%). Many subscribe to the idea that “Access to arts and culture is important to being a well-rounded person” (54%), although fewer agree that “arts and culture are essential to my life” (33%). There tends to be a stronger preference for “things that have a track record and proven popularity” (49%) in contrast with trying “new ideas and innovations” (30%). The strongest barrier, in absolute terms, is that described by “other commitments in my life prevent me from having enough time to go to arts or cultural events” on which some 56% tend to agree. To a lesser degree, respondents also agreed with statements like “arts and cultural events are not for the likes of me” (33%); “I don’t think I understand arts and cultural events” (30%); “It is not convenient for me to travel to arts and cultural events” (30%); “I do not find enough of the kind of events I’m interested in attending” (27%); “Arts and cultural events in Malta are too expensive for me to attend” (22%) and “I don’t attend because I don’t have anyone to go with” (17%). Clearly an interesting research agenda lies in identifying the demographics that correlate with these motives and barriers and, in turn, identifying the strength of

these motives in actually influencing outcomes.

Of broader interest to policy makers are the statements gauging agreement or otherwise with specific policies. A strong level of agreement was registered with both the idea that private businesses should make donations or sponsorships to the arts and culture (70%) and that taxpayers' money should be used to finance arts and cultural initiatives (62%). A sizeable portion feel that "public funding of the arts does not benefit me" (43%) and that "most people are socially excluded from cultural opportunities" (30%). Equally relevant is the awareness and uptake in government-sponsored festivals and organisations. The majority of respondents seem to know about Notte Bianca (98%), Teatru Manoel (97%), Ghanafest (85%), the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra (83%), Pjazza Teatru Rjal (80%), the Malta Jazz Festival (78%), the Valletta 2018 Foundation (71%), the Malta International Arts Festival (69%), Spazju Kreattiv (69%), the Valletta Green Festival, the Valletta International Visual Arts Festival (VIVA) (65%), and the ŽiguŽajg Arts Festival for Children and Young People (54%). Fewer are aware of the International Baroque Festival (46%), ŽfinMalta (23%) and the Three Palaces Festival (22%). And yet, in general, fewer than 5% of respondents were present at any of these public sector offerings, with the exception of Notte Bianca, Pjazza Teatru Rjal and Teatru Manoel. Less than two years ahead of the Valletta Capital of Culture year, 97% had not engaged with the Valletta 2018 Foundation though some 80% had heard of it and 55% stated that they are keen to participate. Similarly 29% are keen to attend

the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra events, even though they have never been, as well as events at Pjazza Teatru Rjal (26%), Spazju Kreattiv (21%), Teatru Manoel (17%) and ŻfinMalta (21%).

Conclusion

The past few years in Malta have seen some very exciting developments in cultural participation, some of which have been captured in cultural participation statistics (NSO, 2012; 2017). There are some fascinating variations both within the population itself, as well as within the population over time: cultural participation is increasing overall, and there seems to be considerable latent interest to attend a broader range of cultural activities. Fresh data has made it possible to examine the shifts in the demographic profile of audiences and creative producers, the preferences of latent audiences, the motives and barriers which may be responsible for shifting the needle of cultural participation and the media preferences of audiences needing to be reached. It is also possible to obtain both a demographic characterisation of artists in Malta, as well as a distinction of their cultural preferences from those of non-artists, and to assess non-market voluntary activity in the cultural fields. More broadly, it is now possible to examine the relationship between increasing/decreasing cultural participation, lifestyle preferences, well-being and other economic implications, as well as the appetite and evidence base for cultural policy. Scholarly and public-policy interest in cultural participation in Malta has grown over the last few years. With the

kind of data now available, this promises to be a thriving research area for years to come.

Notes

¹ The percentages and correlations reported here are calculated on the basis of the anonymised microdata as part of the CPS 2016 collected by the National Statistics Office (basis November 2016). Percentages are computed after excluding nil/don't know responses. Answers were coded into fewer categories for ease of reporting. For this reason percentages may differ slightly from those reported in the Cultural Participation Survey (NSO, 2017) report.

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Chapter 3

*Audience Atlas Malta:
Revealing the huge potential in the Maltese
culture market*

JO TAYLOR



All markets are composed of a mass of endlessly diverse individuals who engage with organisations and brands for different reasons, driven by different needs. While it is too simplistic to approach the market as if it were one homogenous mass – one size does not fit all – it is equally impractical to expect to treat every single member of the audience individually. Therefore, in order to understand the Maltese cultural market in a useful and practical way, we wanted to look at the different segments in this market and how they might most successfully be engaged in the national cultural offer.

Audience Atlas Malta¹ answers the big questions: How big is the market? How much additional potential remains? Which art forms have room for growth? The data is collected with robust samples and is carefully weighted using local census data to ensure accuracy. It includes detailed information about audience demographics, behaviours, motivations and attitudes which enables us to accurately determine current, lapsed and potential market sizes for artforms and genres.

Included within this is Culture Segments, the international standard market segmentation for the arts, culture, heritage and leisure sectors. It defines the current and potential market segments by their needs, wants, attitudes and motivations, providing the tools to answer the most important questions: How do we reach that potential? What should we say to them when we do? What parts of our offer should we target at which segments? Ultimately, how can we reach more people and engage them more deeply?

Two decades of audience segmentation have exhausted old-fashioned demographics, proven that commercial consumer profiling translates poorly to cultural engagement and exposed the limits of box office or behavioural data. Culture Segments is specific to the arts, culture, heritage and leisure sectors and based on deep-seated cultural values and beliefs. It delivers rich, powerful insights to help you target people more accurately, engage them more deeply and build lasting relationships. It provides a compelling, shared language for you and your colleagues to talk about and understand your audiences. From Sydney Opera House to the British Museum, Culture Segments is driving audience development and enabling organisations to target effort and resources more efficiently and much, much more effectively. And now it's in Malta.

Audience Atlas Malta reveals that more than three quarters of the Maltese adult population have attended some kind of cultural

event in the past three years and nine out of 10 are in the market to do so; that is, they have either visited or, if they haven't, are interested in doing so. This has huge ramifications in terms of the potential for audience development strategies. Furthermore, this culture market has a very similar age profile to the population overall – younger people are as likely as their older counterparts to be open to persuasion when it comes to arts and culture.

What is clear is that, whichever art form you are presenting, there is significant potential within the Maltese market. The most popular artform – film or cinema – has seen 55% of the market attend within the past three years, while there remains a further 30% who can be considered potential visitors. Similarly, 43% of the culture market have been to an art gallery in the past three years, and a further 29% would be interested in doing so. Among the less frequently attended artforms, such as classical music, ballet, contemporary dance and opera, the potential for growth is even more significant. Around twice as many people are in the potential market than within the current audience.

In order to tap into these huge potential markets we need to take a more targeted approach and look at which segments are most open to which artforms.

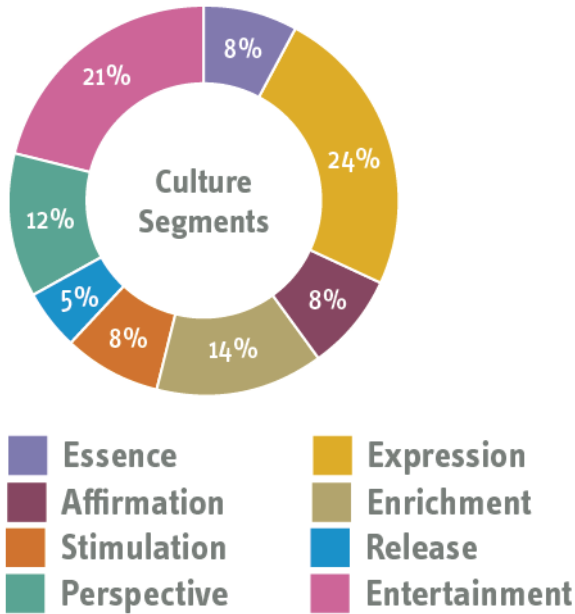


Figure 1 Malta Culture Segments (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2017)

Meet the Culture Segments

The eight Culture Segments in the market for arts, culture, heritage and leisure are named to reflect what they hope to get out of engaging with the arts. Culture Segments is based on people’s core cultural values, giving insight into why each segment would like art in their lives; what benefits they perceive it to offer; how they

feel their lives will be improved by it. We haven't tried to simply explain, predict or describe current patterns; instead, we've set out to give you the drivers to influence and change those patterns. This means messages and marketing can be crafted for a specific segment that will resonate with them and increase their likelihood to respond. It also enables us to identify which media channels and information sources they are most likely to use – meaning budgets can be focused where they will generate the most return.

The largest segment in Malta (24%) is the Expression segment. They are in tune with their spiritual side. Confident and fun-loving people, they accommodate a range of interests, from culture and learning to community and nature. While open-minded, they are not dismissive of more popular culture and their attendance interests may gravitate towards mainstream enjoyment. Expression index significantly above average for current attendance of mainstream artforms, such as historical sites (59%, +14) and museums (53%, +12), but less so when it comes to artforms considered specialist such as music or dance.

8% of the Malta market is in the Essence segment. These are highly active cultural consumers across a wide range of artforms. They are leaders rather than followers and are confident in their own tastes. Essence are dedicated to arts and culture; they index significantly above the market average in current attendance for a variety of artforms, from art galleries (65%, +32) and museums (70%, +29), to more specialist ones such as musicals (36%, +17) and literature

events (33%, +16). They also demonstrate potential amongst more specialist music or dance artforms.

The Stimulation segment (8%) is an active group who live life to the full, looking for new experiences and challenges. They are open to a wide range of experiences, from culture to sports and music, but like to be at the cutting-edge of everything they do. Those in the Stimulation segment are avid cultural attenders, significantly over-indexing within the current audiences for many artforms. They demonstrate a particular inclination for live rock or pop music (70%, +38) and comedy (45%, +18), but are typically engaged across the spectrum.

Also accounting for 8% of the market is the Affirmation segment, who tend to see cultural engagement as allowing for both enjoyment and their development. They have an adventurous spirit and are very open to most art forms, but are careful decision-makers and make cautious choices between all available options. The Affirmation segment demonstrates significant current engagement with many artforms in the culture market, from intellectual trips to a historical site (66%, +20) or museum (55%, +14), to more fun days out at the cinema (65%, +10). This segment also suggests potential amongst both contemporary (42%, +23) and classical dance (34%, +20).

Those in the Enrichment segment (14%) typically have a mature outlook on life and like spending their leisure time close to the

home. They have established tastes and enjoy culture that links into their own interests and more traditional forms. This segment tend to under-index within current artform audiences, particularly those such as rock or pop music (12%, -29), and may require significant persuasion to encourage visits.

The Perspective segment (12%) is settled, fulfilled and home-oriented. A self-sufficient segment with personal passions, they are not looking to others - or institutions - for fulfilment. Their underlying spontaneous nature and desire to learn provides a focus for engaging with arts and culture, but they engage on their own terms. Although those in the Perspective segment can, and have, engaged with artforms in the past, they are often ambivalent towards much of the sector. This is reflected in low current attendance across a breadth of artforms, notably with film (32%, -22) and rock or pop music (14%, -18), while it may also be difficult to directly influence their visit behaviour.

21% of the market is in the Entertainment segment. This tends to be conventional and contemporary, a group for whom the arts are on the periphery of their lives. Their occasional forays into culture are usually for spectacular, entertaining or blockbuster events and have no desire to experiment or stand out in their peer group as “arty”. Those in the Entertainment segment are not naturally predisposed to cultural artforms, and significantly under-index within current audiences across a wide variety, from art galleries (3%, -30) and museums (15%, -25), to historical sites (22%,

-24) and plays (20%, -16). Their low tolerance towards ‘culture’ compared to mainstream leisure activities make them a tough segment to attract.

Malta’s smallest segment is Release (5%). This segment tend to have busy lives and while they used to enjoy arts and culture, other priorities have taken over. Consequently, they feel they have limited time and resources to enjoy arts and culture, although they claim they would like to do more.

Exploiting the Potential

With nearly one in four of the Maltese culture market in the Expression segment, there is huge potential to be gained from optimising messaging – and indeed experiences – for this segment. This segment dominates the current audience for many artforms – including museums, galleries, comedy, musicals, classical music, traditional Maltese music and opera, as well as featuring in several potential markets. Expression prize inclusivity and shared experiences and will favour organisations who demonstrate the same values and demonstrate a warm welcome for all. To fulfil your potential and reach further into the Expression market requires an organisation to consider things from their perspective and be willing to change to accommodate their needs. As well as sharing experiences, Expression welcome the chance to discuss and exchange reactions to the work they’ve seen – to hear from the artists what the performance meant to them – but also between

fellow audience members. Getting behind the scenes, the chance to see costume displays or even turn their own hand to creativity will all be welcomed. They believe that everyone has something to bring to the experience and that no one should be left out.

While 21% of the market is Entertainment, this segment may not reflect such high return on investment as a target. Cultural institutions are only likely to successfully target the Entertainment segment when they have big title, star cast productions. They are more likely to be found in the market for cinema than other presentation forms – even comedy and musicals do not hold big sway for this segment in Malta. However, their “days out” approach means that they may be in the market for accessible and entertaining museums and they also over-index in the potential market for historical site visits. They will refer to marketing campaigns as an indication of what carries the most popular endorsement. Any marketing needs to compete on a commercial playing field alongside that for their other leisure pursuits.

Although Stimulation and Essence make up smaller proportions of the market, they are very engaged, interested and adventurous segments making up significantly greater number of visits than their relative sizes represent. They significantly over-index in most current markets, and the only reason they are less present in potential markets for a number of artforms is that large proportions of them are already actively attending. These two segments make a strong choice for targeting. Less well penetrated

markets – especially contemporary dance – also see significant room for growth in these segments.

Stimulation are driven to experience the new and the novel and are searching to add surprise and variety to their lives. They have an appetite for new ideas and are innately curious. Consider unusual settings or juxtapositions and promote things as the best-kept secret or next big thing so they can enjoy being ahead of the curve. Marketing needs to pique their interest with clever design and by highlighting the quirky or unusual aspect of an event or exhibition. However, no spoilers, please – give them enough to hook them but leave some intrigue and discovery for when they get there.

Essence consider themselves experienced and fully equipped for most arts experiences – as long as they are of the highest quality and have integrity to them. This confidence in their own tastes means they don't like feeling sold to with overt marketing pitches. Rather, they need assurance of high quality and simple information to help them select what they would personally find the most rewarding.

The Affirmation segment also offers opportunity for development. They play a very significant role in the audience and potential audience for dance – both classical and contemporary – where they make a primary target. They are also actively engaged in visiting museums, galleries, historic sites, drama and comedies. Furthermore, those artforms they have yet to engage with also appeal – in particular they would be very willing to try most forms

of music. Affirmation are looking to marketing to help with this conscientious decision-making. They are keen to do the right thing, so full disclosure of every detail is required, allowing them to see what they are letting themselves in for. In short, don't leave anything out. Reviews and star ratings will play a significant role in assuring them they have picked the best option.

Enrichment report an interest in the more traditional but may still need some coaxing to visit. We more commonly see them in the potential markets including literature, museums, historic sites and plays than as current attenders. They are far less willing to consider experimenting with jazz, contemporary dance or opera. Opportunities to try before they buy, details to help them plan their itinerary and evidence of experience and traditional roots will indicate to Enrichment that this is for them.

Audience Atlas Malta contains full details how each segment engages with each artform as well as pen portraits to give full and rich understanding of the segments' preferences, motivations and needs – and how to reach and develop them. It covers the whole market, so as well as transforming our view of existing audiences, it should help those working in arts and culture to broaden out, engage and delight more people. Culture Segments is in 17 countries where, as well as fuelling strategies with powerful insights, it provides a common language for talking about audiences that can put them at the heart of our conversations and make them central to our planning.

Notes

1 The essay is based on the Audience Atlas and Culture Segments Malta Report compiled by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM) which analyses the microdata obtained from the NSO Cultural Participation Survey 2016, commissioned by Arts Council Malta. The report, published in June 2017 is available from <http://www.artsCouncilmalta.org/pages/the-council/our-strategy/research/culture-segments-malta-report> .

It also takes less than a minute to find out which segment you are in here: www.mhminsight.com/culture-segments/survey

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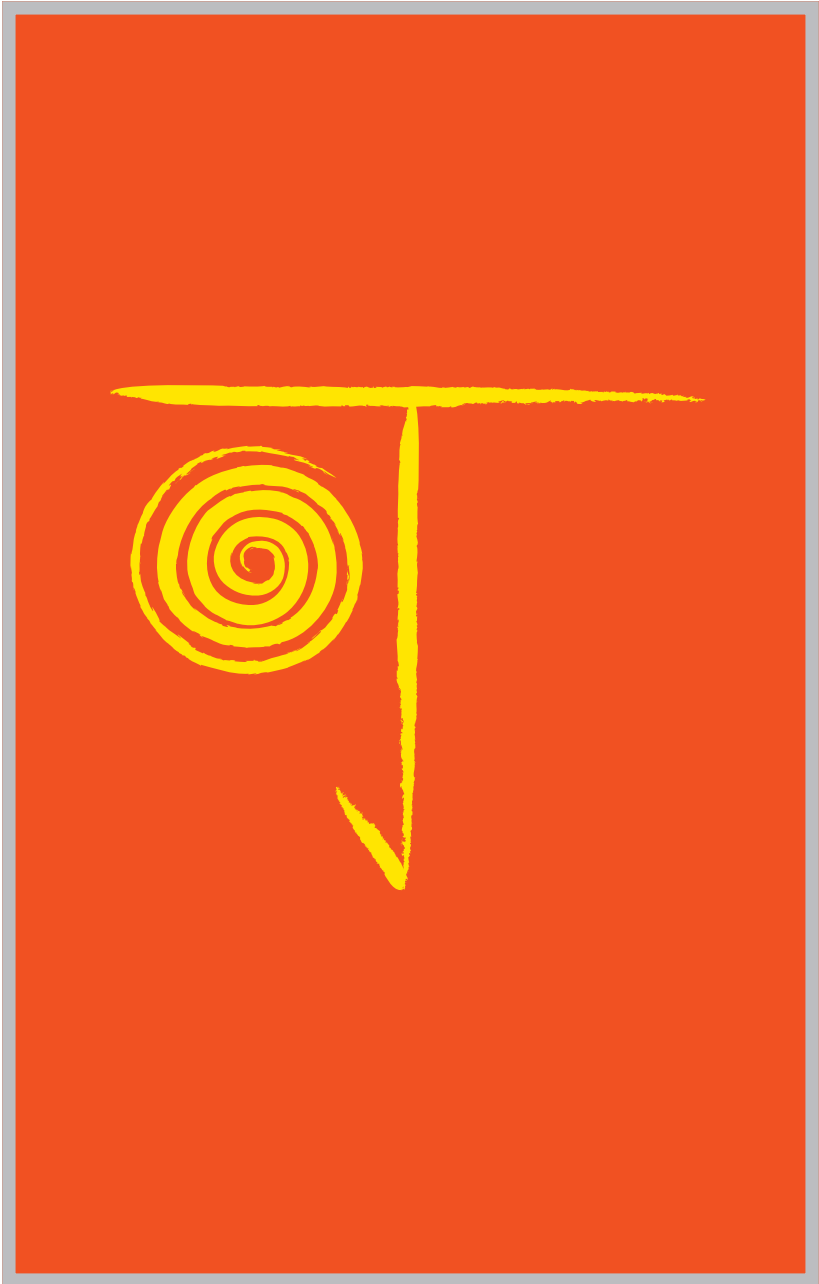
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Chapter ④

Digital Cultural Participation in Malta

TONI SANT



Participation in cultural sector activities in Malta through digital means is a subject that has received little scholarly and/or critical attention until recent years. Although the 2011 Culture Participation Survey (CPS) from the National Statistics Office (NSO) contains a 10-page chapter on internet use (NSO, 2017), there has been no notable critical analysis of the data presented in that report. The 2016 Cultural Participation Survey (NSO,2017) needs to be addressed appropriately to begin tackling this gap. The main aim of this essay is therefore to provide a critical perspective on the findings, along with some broader context for the particular extended moment in time covered by the CPS.

I discussed participation levels and types in digital culture within a Maltese context on two previous occasions; both were published in books. The first of these was a chapter I contributed to *Exploring the Maltese Media Landscape* (2009) edited by Joe Borg, Mary Ann Lauri and Adrian Hillman, the first book-length work to discuss the broad media spectrum in Malta. The other was a chapter in a

collection on radical social justice and education called Lorenzo Milani: *Bejn Ilbieraħ u Llum* (2010) edited by Carmel Borg. Both these contributions wave a flag at the utopian paradigm shift afforded by an open communication medium available to the many to address the many. Many have argued that the openness championed by early proponents of the internet as social liberator has led to a glut of uninformed opinions and a rather limiting echo chamber effect on popular social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Keen, 2007; Morozov, 2011; Carr, 2011; Turkle, 2012; Keen, 2015). However, those who have taken to other outlets, such as YouTube, blogs or even Wikipedia, clearly demonstrate the power of the medium to enable alternative modes of presenting knowledge, information and opinion, among other forms of personal expression.

As there are no published critical perspectives that precede my own work from 2009-2010 in terms of digital cultural participation in Malta, my initial observations on this subject should now be reconsidered against the statistical evidence provided by the 2016 Cultural Participation Survey (CPS). 26.5% of respondents in the 2011 survey reported that they had no access to the internet in the 12 months preceding the study. This figure has decreased significantly to 18% in the 2016 edition of the survey. The NSO data provides detailed breakdowns on labour status, age, sex, marital status, level of education, residential district and specific household characteristics. From the perspective of the main argument presented in this essay, such findings are of secondary significance.

The growing number of internet users in itself is enough to focus on at this point, especially in the absence of previous sustained critical engagement with this aspect of cultural participation. Looking closely at both the 2011 and the 2016 CPS, it seems to me that the affordances that come with open communication channels (like personal blogs) and contrasting opinions on the openness of use of social media networks are not addressed directly. This is possibly, in part, because of the lack of sustained engagement with internet use beyond media consumption and commenting practice on mainstream media sites or popular social media networks like Facebook.

The useful findings in terms of participation from a pragmatic viewpoint relate to the purpose of internet usage. Here there is no meaningful difference between the sexes. Furthermore, behaviour differences among the major age groups (16-44 years old and over 45 years old) yield the sort of numbers you would expect in favour of more conventional use by the older group. This amplifies the popular belief that there is such a thing as a net generation (Tapscot, 1998) or digital natives, who contrast with digital immigrants by their seemingly automatic immersion in the ubiquitous quotidian use of digital technology (Prensky, 2001; 2010). However, it should be made clear that this notion has been challenged as simplistic and problematic by a number of opponents (see McKenzie, 2007; Helsper and Eynon, 2009; Holton, 2010; Jones and Shao, 2011). That in itself makes a reading of the statistics subdivided by age worthy of closer inspection.

Significantly, even if still within the same formalistic subdivisions, the 2016 CPS measures relatively new activities that are rather useful to get a better sense of participation in cultural activities through digital means. Two questions imply the use of digital technology – i.e. photography and films or videos “as an artistic activity (not family or holiday videos)” – while another two directly refer to the use of a computer (or computing) “to create original artworks or animation” and “designing websites or blogs.” This is certainly a step in the right direction to gather better data about creative uses of digital devices (presumably the NSO’s CPS does not consider a mobile device smaller than a laptop to be “a computer”, especially judging from the distinction made towards other devices in Table 35) and contrasts well with the data gathering undertaken in the 2011 CPS. The earlier survey merely captured basic data on “use of the internet for leisure activities” with 56% reported users and “use of internet for purchasing cultural goods” reported by 48% of respondents. These general categories are not reported in the 2016 CPS and a relatively granular approach is used for measuring the purpose of internet usage.

Here it is also useful to point out the two major categories of digital participation that are inherent in the very nature of digital technology and the internet. Users are not only consumers or passive participants in cultural activities (increasingly hearing about such activities through social media and other online platforms according to findings presented in the 2016 CPS) but also producers or interactive participants in various aspects of

the sector in ways they were less likely to be before the rise of the digital means.

This distinction is clearly articulated in the European Commission's work on audience participation in cultural activities via digital means. The European Commission's 2013-2015 Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group work on the topic of Promoting Access to Culture Via Digital Means – on which I was Malta's sole representative – gives credence to the distinction between audience development and audience engagement. The report of this working group of EU member states' experts points out that:

“Audience development in all definitions relies on acquiring an in-depth knowledge of, and relationship with, current and potential audiences. Some definitions distinguish between audience engagement – the manner in which audiences relate to the event, by watching, participating, curating and commenting on - and audience development which undertakes thorough research into the market as its starting point and from there looks at the range and diversity of potential audiences and creates ways to reach those audiences either through marketing and promotion, through ancillary activity or through targeted evidence-based activity” (European Commission OMC, 2017: 7).

Further explorations of digital cultural participation need to take into consideration this distinction between audience development

and engagement to start unpacking the complex activities and behaviours within the various cultural sectors brought about through the use of digital technologies and the internet.

The opportunity to look beyond the quantitative data provided through the CPS and glean a sense of the complex contexts within which cultural participation takes place is wholly embedded in the work of the OMC. Thus, further iterations of the CPS could benefit greatly from considering new questions, if not entire new sections, within the next survey to gather data relating to points raised in the EU report, as well as to ascertain more clearly measurements pertaining to audience development and those aligned with aspects of audience engagement.

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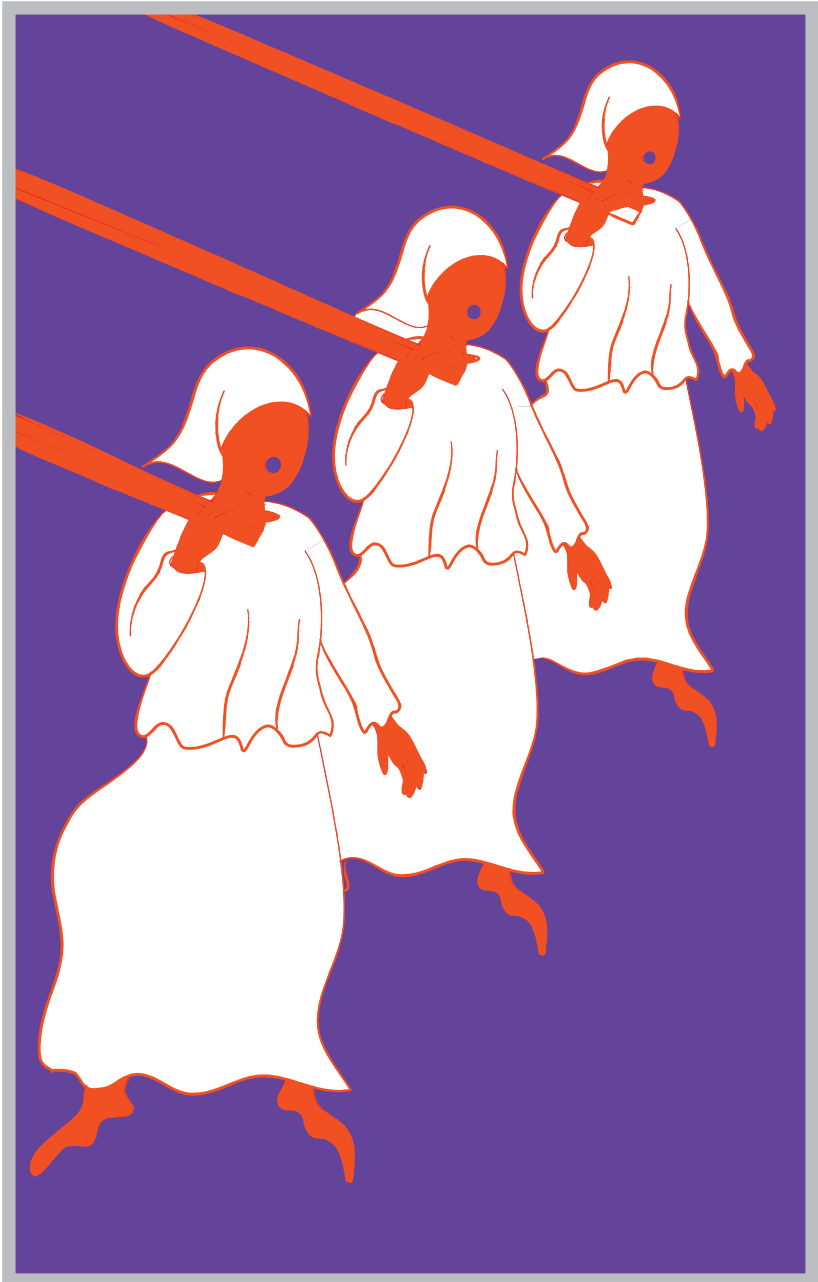
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Chapter 5

*Increased Participation in the Festa -
A manifestation of Cultural Omnivores?*

VALERIE VISANICH



The latest Cultural Participation Survey (NSO, 2017) shows an increased participation in some folk events such as the festa, when compared to data from the 2011 survey. This increase is particularly noted amongst younger persons with post-compulsory education. The aim of this chapter is to make sense of this increased interest in folk events in contrast to the general lack of interest in institutional forms of art in places like museums, galleries, theatres and music chambers.

This article draws attention to one factor attributed to the increase in the interest in folk arts: the possible emergence of the cultural omnivore – persons who have wide cultural tastes and are open to different forms of cultural events. It is indeed true that the highest number of participants who took part in different kinds of events, such as visiting art galleries and museums as well as getting involved in folk events, were those with higher education.

Nevertheless, this article contends that it is not only a matter that

these individuals are cultural omnivores. Their participation in folk events has much to do with the meanings and feelings that are embedded in such participation.

Generational Difference in Cultural Participation Patterns

“To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry - an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld” (Danto, 1964).

The Cultural Participation Survey as 2016 shows that people are less interested in visiting institutional forms of arts compared to participating in folk events that are usually held in public open spaces. As examples of institutional forms of arts, this study refers to statistics on visits to art galleries and museums. The majority of participants, coming from various age groups, said that they have not been to an art gallery or museum during the 12 months preceding the survey. There is a noticeable generational difference in patterns of cultural consumption – younger persons are more interested in different cultural events. Furthermore, the number of younger participants (16-44 years) visiting museums at least once in the preceding year (18.4%) was higher than for the older participants (14.3%). The percentage of persons visiting art galleries at least once stood at 19.1% for the age group 16-44 and 12.7% for the older age group. Moreover, older persons showed less interest in going to cultural events they haven't been to, compared to younger persons.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTA -
A MANIFESTATION OF CULTURAL OMNIVORES?

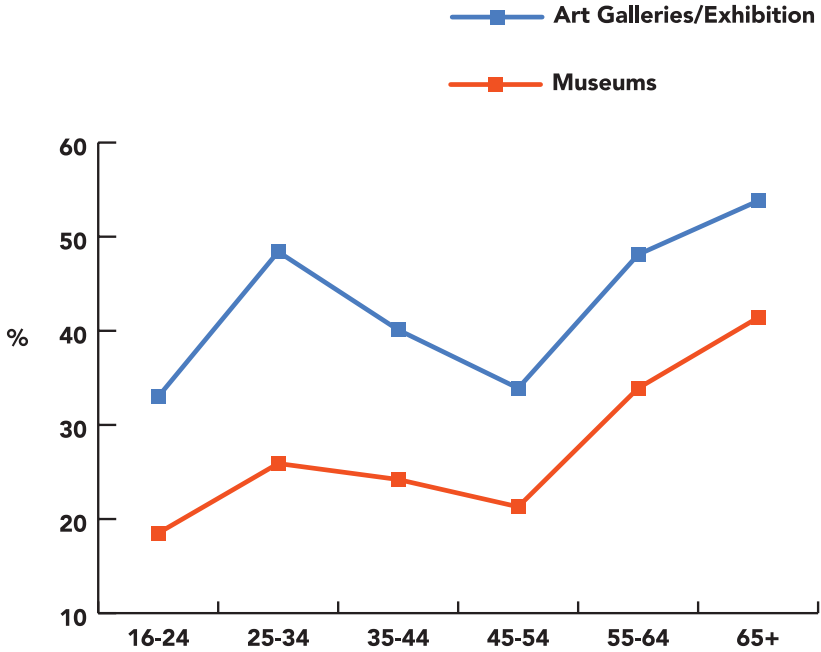


Figure 1 Age and attendance: Never been to and not interested (NSO, 2017)

These findings are in line with another research study in Malta: the qualitative study on cultural participation at the National Centre for Creativity (Visanich and Sant, 2017). In this study it was evident that despite the fact that the general public thought that “prestigious” art forms are displayed/performed at what is now known as Spazju Kreattiv (formerly the St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity), they felt out of place and did not intend to visit. One of the recommendations of this study was to work on democratising this art space. Strategic directions towards this

were the inclusion of more folk events as well as attracting more youth.

The Festa as a Case Study: A Manifestation of Cultural Omnivores?

The latest Cultural Participation Survey shows that participation in folk events for persons with higher education is on the increase, when compared to the 2011 statistics¹.

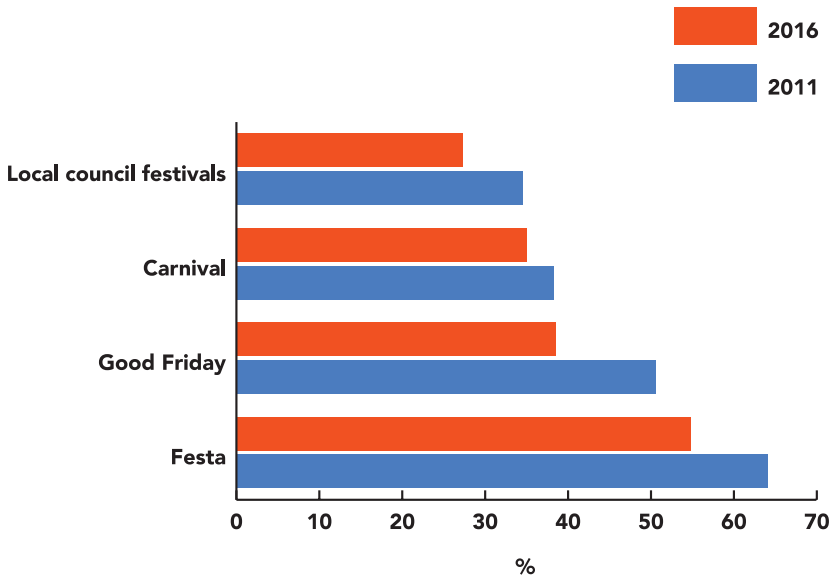


Figure 2 Participation at least once a year by persons with post-compulsory education (post-secondary/non-tertiary/tertiary/higher (NSO, 2012; 2017)

One possible explanation for youth's augmented participation in different cultural events, especially folk events, is the increase of the cultural omnivore: persons with wide cultural taste, especially by those with post-compulsory education. The omnivore theory rejects Pierre Bourdieu's² (1984 [1979], 1973) distinction in tastes and instead argues that individuals with tertiary education are more like "cultural omnivores", embracing different cultural tastes (Peterson and Simkus, 1992). In line with Van Eijck's and Knulst's (2005) argument, patterns of cultural consumption are considered omnivorous if an increased number of persons, with post-compulsory education, participate in different cultural events.

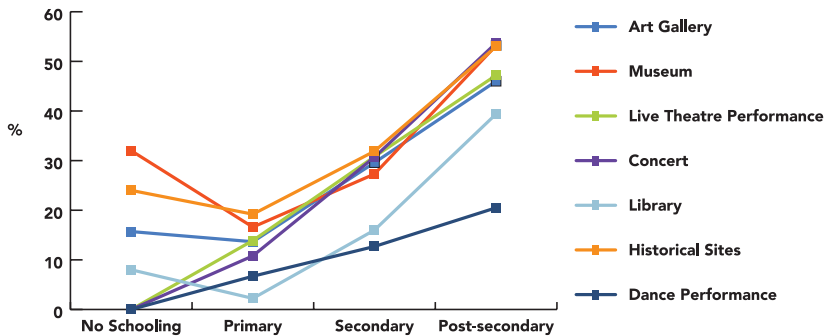


Figure 3 Frequency of attendance to local cultural events in the 12 months preceding the survey by those who attended the festa every year and highest level of education (NSO, 2017).

In view of the recent Cultural Participation Survey, omnivore tendencies in cultural participation in Malta are observed. There is significant increase in the frequency of attendance to different local cultural events by those with higher education who also attended the *festa*. For instance, 46% of persons with post-compulsory education participated in the *festa* and also visited an art gallery at least once in the preceding year of the survey.³ This contrasts with the 15.7% of those with no schooling.

One factor which may have led to increased participation in folk events among persons with post-compulsory education is the fact that this cohort has been constantly increasing in number, which could be attributed to policies and efforts of successive governments the past 30 years. It is obvious that the only way one can drastically expand this section of the population is by facilitating members from social groups traditionally cut off from post-compulsory education to attain higher education. Thus, due to social mobility, persons acquire different cultural tastes - those of their class of origin as well as those of their present class status. Taking a cue from Bethany Bryson (1996), the matter of cultural choices is not only a question of increased tolerance but also due to the family background of the socially and economically mobile individuals. The *festa* is an exemplary case of folk events in which the family background plays a crucial role in patterns of cultural participation.

The *festa*⁴, in theoretical terms, presents a classic example of a Durkheimian ritual of community. Despite the fact that traditionally the *festa* was more associated with lower social classes, it was also the setting for patronage; an environment for various client-patron processes where favours are generously dispensed. For example in the late 19th to mid 20th century, the presidents and top officials of the band clubs (village bands being an indispensable ingredient in the *festa*) were usually the village lawyer, doctor, notary or members of the judiciary. Later on, this role was taken up by politicians who made sure to be seen in the *festa*. The *festa* is an occasion to be seen and fêted and where the politician both courts and is courted.

The anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain (1965, 2006, 2013) saw the *festa* as an event worthy of international scholarship by his detailed ethnographic research in Malta. In *Saints and Fireworks: Religion and Politics in Rural Malta* (first published in 1965) Boissevain presented a rich account of the *festa* in Malta and its role in generating solidarity. In the 1970s Boissevain predicted a cultural transformation of the demise of the *festa* when he maintained that “saints were marching out” due to secular patterns in wider society; a notion that he revisited and revised later on in 2013. Far from diminishing in importance, the *festa* is intensifying with more elaborate firework displays and youth involvement. However, the *festa* is also a site for factionalism and rivalry between different confraternities, band clubs and groups of enthusiasts. Boissevain

(2013) maintained that the *festa* is not always a site for shared collective representations that strengthens both faith and society. He highlights the notion of the “other”, created at times through different party-political factions that produce antagonism.

Participation in the *festa* goes beyond having omnivore tendencies, according to a recent study in Malta about a substantial group of persons occupying middle-class and professional jobs, actively involved in the village festa (Visanich, 2015). Participants in this study maintained that the *festa* was embedded in their lived experiences and family background. Participants referred to their feeling of conscious intimate engagement with their patron saint. The village saint, a semi-idolatrous figure, is paradoxically a distant public personage with whom one can feel a personal intimate relationship at the same time. For the research participants, their engagement in the popular event of the *festa* goes beyond simply having cultural omnivore taste. This study (Visanich, 2015) focused on three of these reasons for engagement in the *festa*.

First, *festa* participation needs to be explained within the ambit of memory studies; that is, how is this event remembered? The collective role of remembering is vital in this regard since a person’s memory of the *festa* is at the intersection of collective influences from the family of origin. Following Erl’s (2011) argument, the shared memory by this social group is the consequence of cultural mediation, primarily of textualisation and visualisation.

Secondly, such sensory experience provides a space for this social group to escape their everyday life and return to their culture of origin. For the socially mobile participants, the *festa* brings home a feeling of familiarity and sociability.

Thirdly, the meaning of the *festa* goes beyond the collective effervescence and relates to a degree of cohesion, family loyalty and a feeling of nostalgia. Nevertheless, further studies are required on the correlation between cultural consumption and social mobility in the last few decades in Malta.

Discussion & Conclusion

A number of assumptions can be drawn from the foregoing discussion on generational differences and cultural omnivores in cultural consumption, which will be elaborated on in detail elsewhere. It cannot be left unnoticed that the increase in cultural participation is also partly due to the increased prioritising of the arts in Malta. One example of this is the increased opportunity for artists to apply for grants with Arts Council Malta (ACM). Nevertheless, it is also often the case that such prioritisation runs the risk of being simply reduced to a discourse of increased economic benefits of the creative industry - which is currently growing at an average of 9% per annum⁵.

Recent literature on tastes in cultural consumption refers to omnivore attitudes (Peterson, 2005, 1996; Bryson, 1996). Highly educated individuals are assumed to be more cultural omnivorous and open to different cultural tastes. While this study does not dispute this theory - indeed this is evidently manifesting itself, to a certain degree, in the local folk art scene - the author maintains that the increase in participation in such cultural events can be attributed to other factors. For certain, the role of meaning-bearing symbolic structures in cultural consumption cannot be taken too lightly.

Albeit being quantitative in nature, the latest Cultural Participation Survey 2016, paid more attention to attitudes towards cultural participation, or the lack of it, when compared to the previous survey 2011. These results yield pertinent questions about the mechanisms that constrain or facilitate participation. One example is the question asking persons who did not visit or participate in a cultural event during the last 12 months if they were interested in participating if they were to have an opportunity. Such data yields important knowledge on what persons, of different age groups and socio-economic situations, are interested in. Moreover, apart from addressing what people want to experience, it is equally relevant to ask why they make such choices in their cultural consumption. Such knowledge can only be acquired through qualitative techniques, by making sense of the feelings and meanings of individuals in relation to their cultural system and lived experiences. Such systematic study is needed to identify and present the epistemological reasons

for cultural participation. This is beyond the scope of this chapter - but future research will address this lacuna.

Notes

1 It is noteworthy that the answers for the 2011 survey are based on attendance in the past 12 months, whereas for 2016, answers are based on attendance every year.

2 Bourdieu argued that there is a strong homology between taste, class and power and the appropriation of the arts as status markers, in which dispositions, cultural knowledge and skills, modes of thought and linguistic competences are acquired through the process of socialisation (Bourdieu, (1973, 1984 [1979])).

3 It is noteworthy that data obtained from the Cultural Participation Survey for this graph (figure 3) takes into account persons with post-secondary education - such a cohort includes as one category persons having Advanced level of qualification as well as those with undergraduate, postgraduate and PhDs. Nevertheless it cannot be assumed that persons with post-compulsory education behave in the same manner as those with tertiary education when it comes to their cultural consumption.

4 The festa in Malta is a traditional religious celebration that takes place weekly, in turn, across all towns and villages. It brings together members of society in a collective celebration with the patron saint being a central symbol or totem of the community (Mitchell, 2002). Rituals during the festa create what Emile Durkheim (1995[1912]), referred to as a mental state of excitement, a collective effervescence that is an essential part of the spectacle of the festa.

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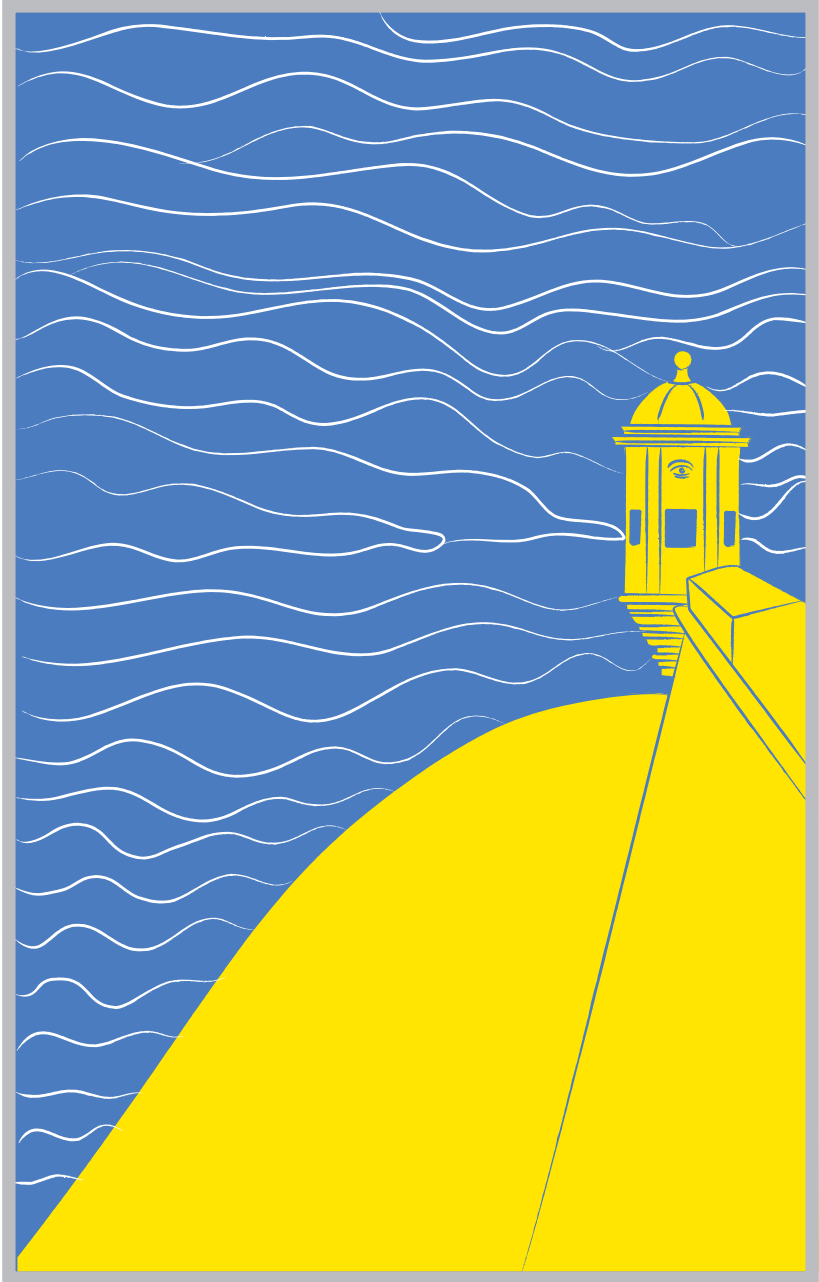
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Chapter 6

Transgressing The Fortress...Creativity in the Borderlands

MARIA PISANI



Migration is no stranger to the Maltese narrative. Accession to the European Union coincided with new possibilities for migration for the Maltese, and the arrival of migrants from the European Union and beyond. For many, migration has created opportunities for adventure and new possibilities – for others it has served as an escape route, in the search for safety and security. The attempts to securitize the European Union and control the migrant ‘other’ have been violent, divisive and dehumanizing; the consequences on human lives have been devastating. But this is only part of the picture. The border also embodies a creative, exciting and humanizing space that provides the possibilities for transformative practice. In this short piece I position Malta and contemporary migration patterns within a historical and geopolitical narrative, and present some of the creative initiatives implemented by a team of young people committed to working beyond the border.

On 'Malteseness', the border and migration...

Colonialism, trade, poverty, conflict, sea and sunshine, love or employment- just some of the many reasons that people have travelled to, from or through the islands of Malta. Migration lies at the core of the Maltese narrative: for thousands of years, and for an array of reasons, migrants from around the world have reached the shores of Malta and made it their home. Evidence of these migratory movements are everywhere in the languages we speak, the buildings we inhabit and the food we eat. Towards the end of the twentieth century migratory movements to Malta took an interesting turn. Accession to the European Union meant that Malta could now benefit from a 'borderless' Europe, and thousands of migrants from around the EU chose to make Malta their home whilst many Maltese spread their wings in search of employment, education and adventure in another EU member state.

In order to ensure free movement within the EU, the removal of internal borders coincided with the strengthening of the external borders. Situated at the centre of the Mediterranean, Malta is located on what has come to be known as the Central Mediterranean Route. In the absence of any safe and legal routes, the Maltese islands are located along one of the key passages – and by far the most deadly - used by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, forced to flee the coast of North Africa in search of security and safety.

Fortress Malta

The historical fortresses surrounding the Maltese islands were reinforced - metaphorically and physically - as a new group of migrants, specifically asylum seekers fleeing war, persecution, violence and poverty from countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, sought refuge in Malta. The majority were young men, in their late teens and twenties, in search of safety and new opportunities. Their arrival has largely been met with structural violence. For many years Malta implemented a mandatory detention policy for all arrivals, the conditions and duration of which were condemned by the European Court of Human Rights as violating basic human rights. Racism, Islamophobia and hard line policy approaches that are rooted in militarized border apparatuses became the norm; attempts to strip the 'illegalized' body of agency and a life of dignity.

At a political level, the border serves as a state instrument of control, and also as the ideological marker for the construction of national and political identity – delineating who belongs, and who does not; who has rights, and the right to rights (Pisani, 2016). For those making the deadly crossing, the border has come to represent both death, and hope.

At the borderlands...

It is within this context that we decided to establish Integra Foundation, a not-for-profit NGO. The Foundation's vision is that of supporting inclusive, non-discriminating and non-disabling societies, where all individuals have the right to human dignity, freedom, respect and social justice. Our mission is that of facilitating the space for marginalised individuals and groups to be listened to and to have an active and meaningful say in their lives and well-being on their own terms. Over the years the Foundation has grown and developed, thanks to a team of volunteers who are committed to our core values and eager to work towards our vision of a safer, just and more inclusive world. Our work includes advocacy, research, lobbying, the provision of English and Maltese lessons and running *Dinja Waħda*, a community drop-in centre.

Nestled in the backstreets of the fortified city of Valletta, the drop-in centre was set up to provide a space for young asylum seekers and refugees to meet up, learn English, access information, forge new relationships and feel safe.

In many ways, *Dinja Waħda* has emerged as a hybrid, liminal space wherein “the prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants” (Anzaldúa, 1999: 25). Thanks to our volunteers, and the relationships they have forged with young refugees and asylum seekers, the Integra drop-in has morphed and embraced new pedagogical conditions, disrupting and contesting divisive

geopolitical borders and the binaries established in policy and populist discourse. Young people, be they volunteers, interns or refugees, locate a liminal space: neither adults nor children, transiting perhaps between school and employment, positioned between multiple spaces of belonging: nation, gender, sexuality, legal status. Within these borderlands, albeit still bounded by time and space, young people construct a sense of self, and create their own possibilities, confronting borders. Their bodies, the site of multiple scripts, inscribed by patriarchal, colonial, statist, ageist and capitalist histories (Pisani, 2013), are no longer subject to control and regulation, but instead explore, embrace new opportunities, and take on new and multiple subjectivities and untamed possibilities; they laugh together, they cry together, they play, they write, they discuss, they share, and they struggle. They create. In doing so, they defy the dominant discourses of who can and who cannot belong, of who is human, and indeed what it means to be human: who has the right to rights? Creative projects using different mediums have taught us how imagination can be a catalyst for transforming the group. Learning English moves beyond the functionality of conversing in a new language, or compiling a CV, to writing poetry and short stories. And as they write, their flesh becomes text that can move through each of our bodies, transforming the writer and the reader (Keating, 2009).

The space has opened up new possibilities for entertainment and laughter. Evenings include film nights, followed by discussions and the sharing of experiences, hope, dreams and fears and film

nights include food preparation and sharing. And as weeks have morphed into months, the young people have started to explore beyond the confines of the safe space. Together they have danced at Maltese festas, followed the Carnival floats, jumped on buses and explored the beaches and countryside, attended art exhibitions and museums. They explore, they photograph and document, they laugh and they share. In doing so they reconstruct that liminal space and what it means to 'belong'.



Stejjer Imfewha, Integra Foundation – *Photo Credit: Kasia Zmokra*

Our projects have also included collaborations with artists and creatives. The project *'Hwawar u Fjuri'* (Herbs and Flowers)

created opportunities for Maltese and migrants from around the world to meet and to ‘get to know the other’ through the narration of stories on the use of herbs and flowers in one’s own country and culture of origin. The following passages, documented during one of the workshops, provide the reader with a small example of how simply talking about flowers can break down the borders. Anyone familiar with the Maltese landscape will be familiar with the bougainvillea, a flowering vine also found in Somalia. The first passage recounts memories of home before the war, whilst the second narrative is that of a young Somali and life in Mogadishu. Those of us who have not encountered war, however, may now begin to appreciate the devastation of violence:

“I grew up with flowers actually. They did not grow in the war time, when I saw the picture of our house, it was gone, I could not see a dead root of the flowers in my house, not even on tree I planted. We had these hanging trees from the wall, there was a gate, it was a small villa, the house was... what is it called? I take a picture of this flower every time I see it, ‘bougainvillea’...It was the colour of my house... When I see it I stop and dreams for two minutes, and then I continue walking.”

“In Somalia we never saw flowers, only in a peaceful place, they are like humans. War kills flowers”

Building on the success of *Ħwawar u Fjuri, Stejjer Imfewħa*

(Scented Stories) was an artistic heritage project that aimed at creating, preserving and communicating the historical and cultural significance of spices and flowers. Artists worked with the narratives that emerged through workshops, and documented them through various art forms including photography, performance and collage. Both projects aimed at reaching out, inviting others to enter the borderlands and exploring new possibilities, new ways of knowing, together.

We live in difficult and uncertain times. Borders can be deadly and divisive – I want to use this space to invite the reader to cross the border, to enter and embrace an alternative space which offers a response that is rich in creative expressions, with unexplored possibilities and experiences that defy the tick box analysis provided by the Cultural Participation Survey 2016 (NSO, 2017).

Within the borderlands, a messy, vague space that transgresses imposed borders, young people are resisting false binaries, both physical and metaphorical. For a moment they are liberated they resist, they reclaim their voices, they cling to new opportunities for political and creative expression, they expose us to new ways of knowing, of understanding and of resistance.

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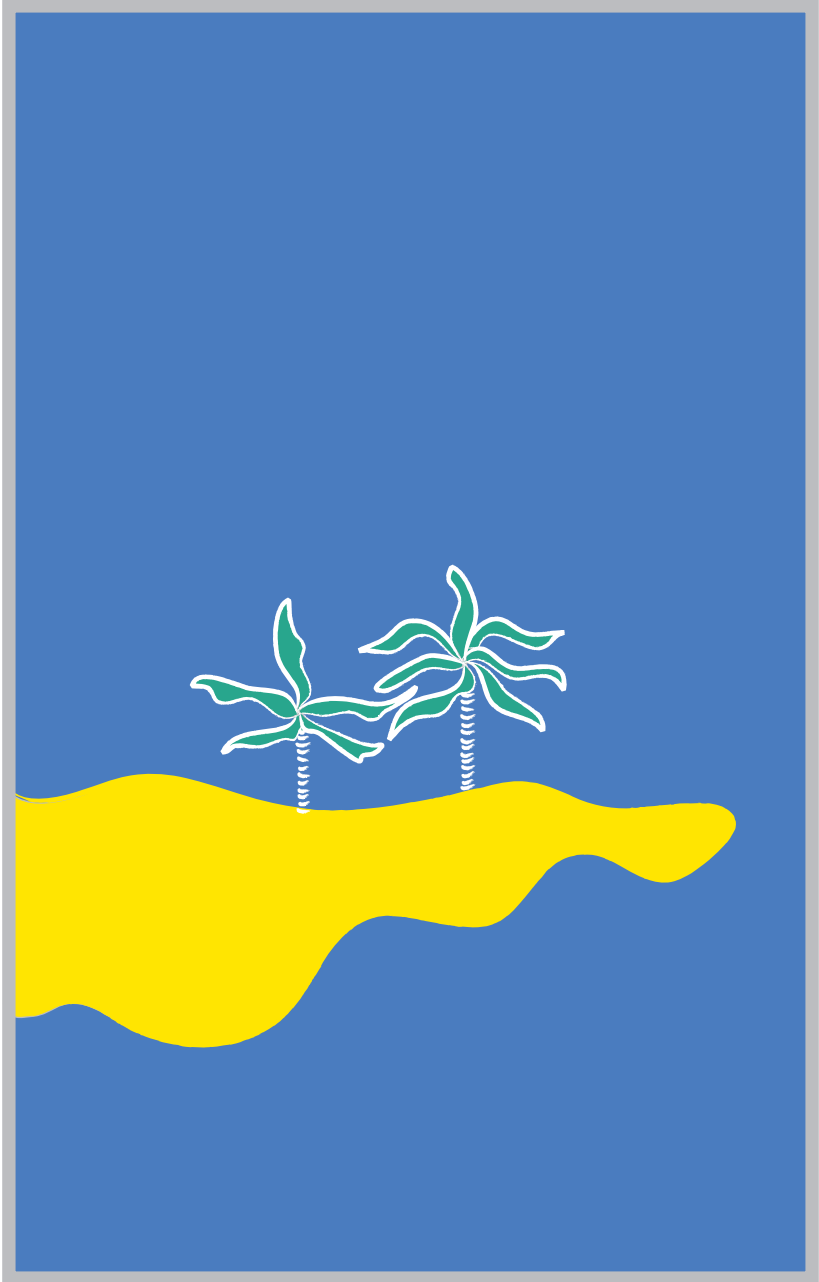
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Chapter 7

Engaging With The City: Community Participation And Accessibility in the Valletta 2018 Programme

MICHAEL DEGUARA



This essay looks at various community groups and their level of awareness of the Valletta 2018 Programme. It also explores factors which help or hinder community participation, taking note of literature which indicates the importance of local involvement and context as common success factors for European Capitals of Culture (EcoC) (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004; Garcia and Cox, 2013). Another concern will be accessibility, with a particular emphasis on people with a disability.

These findings emerge from an ongoing research project commissioned by the Valletta 2018 Foundation and carried out by the author with Marguerite Pace Bonello and Rene Magri, which consisted mainly of semi-structured interviews carried out with representatives of six identified community groups, five of which are defined through the variables of residence and symbolic belonging, particularly the social sense of being from Valletta, which may apply irrespective of residence.¹

These groups include (a) people who identify as *Beltin* (i.e. from Valletta) who reside in the capital; (b) people who identify as *Beltin* but reside in other parts of Malta; (c) Valletta residents who do not identify as *Beltin*, including expatriates; (d) individuals residing within the Inner Harbour area; and (e) individuals residing in other parts of Malta who commute to Valletta with varying degrees of regularity. A sixth special group has been included which consists of persons with a disability, as this brings concerns related to accessibility to the fore.

This research project was qualitative in nature and is based on four case studies from each community group for each annual research cycle. Two cycles have so far been completed, in 2015 and 2016 respectively. These case studies, though non-representative, provide rich descriptions of people's attitudes, opinions and experiences. Insights from the qualitative research are also being complemented with reference to the Valletta Participation Survey (VPS)² and the Cultural Participation Survey (CPS) 2016 (NSO, 2017).

Locating Valletta in the Social Landscape

The research carried out indicates that Valletta is a place which has multiple layers of meaning for the community groups that interact with it. While capital cities always hold intense symbolic

national value, the level of actual interaction of communities with Valletta is high, making “engagement... less imagined than known” (Mitchell, 2002). This is borne out by the Valletta Participation Survey of 2015 which indicates that only 13% of non-Valletta residents replied that they never go to Valletta.

Valletta also straddles the paradox of being simultaneously the capital of the nation state and an intimate place to those who call it home, regardless of whether they reside there or not. Valletta incorporates both “monumental time” – the formal history which feeds the national narrative – and “social time” – the intimate, personal histories of individuals and families (Herzfeld, 1991). Indeed, in the interviews conducted, *Beltin* tended to emphasise the intimate aspect of Valletta as a place of community and local history, often with a strong sense of nostalgia. Non-*Beltin*, on the other hand, tended to emphasise the historical, architectural, administrative and commercial importance of Valletta.

Accessibility

As a geographical space, Valletta is well-connected by public transport but effectiveness is diminished by congestion and a shortage of parking facilities. The VPS shows that mode of transport tends to change by age group, with respondents aged 45 and above preferring public transport, and younger people opting for private transport. Two other factors limiting accessibility are the natural topography and built environment of the city which reduces its

physical accessibility, especially for persons with limited mobility.

The research conducted showed that difficulty in accessing Valletta as a physical space in turn limited the level of engagement that individuals had with the city as a social place, and consequently with the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. In fact, persons with a disability interviewed in 2015 had demonstrated little to no engagement with either Valletta or the Valletta 2018 Programme.

Respondents with a disability who were interviewed in 2016 were still frustrated that most events, retail spaces, catering establishments and other public spaces in or around Valletta remain largely inaccessible, with Strait Street being a case mentioned by all respondents. Nevertheless, there was also a marked feeling among this cohort that the situation has improved, with Valletta 2018 being mentioned as a main catalyst for this development. Progress was noted with regard to a number of cultural venues which are wheelchair-accessible, such as Pjazza Teatru Rjal. Mention was also made of the Valletta 2018 Foundation's close collaboration with the National Commission for Persons with a Disability (KNPD).

The general outlook of the respondents from this cohort towards urban regeneration within Valletta was largely positive, as this has been seen to have helped make the city a more welcoming place, and provided persons with a disability with new avenues of cultural and social participation. However, respondents also

voiced scepticism on a number of developments, including the increase in the number of boutique hotels and catering or entertainment spaces. These were not, from the perspective of the disability cohort, increasing the city's accessibility profile, with the developments in Strait Street being the clearest example of this. In other cases, works related to construction and development, were seen as directly reducing accessibility.

Awareness of Programme

Interviews held in 2016 showed that, compared to 2015, there was a general increased awareness of the Cultural Programme across the various groups. All cohorts acknowledged that establishing a legacy is one of the main indicators of the success of the Valletta 2018 Programme. Respondents were, however, more keenly aware of individual events rather than the Valletta 2018 Programme as a cohesive initiative and often indicated attendance to a good number of events, but only after being prompted with a list. This was also reflected in the results of the Valletta Participation Survey where, despite registering a high level of knowledge of the EcoC title, many were unable to name any specific activities carried out.

Initiatives of a more overtly public and collective nature, such as Notte Bianca, were understandably more widely known than projects which had limited visibility, such as the Valletta Design Cluster project, or those which targeted a specific audience, such as Orpheus in the Underworld. Indeed, the CPS bolsters this

observation, indicating a variation even between festivals, with 98% of respondents being aware of Notte Bianca, whilst only 21% were aware of the Three Palaces Festival, which attracts a more niche audience.

The respondents' uncertainty or lack of awareness that these events formed part of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme suggests that although individual events are being well publicised and attended, there is room for Valletta 2018 to have more visibility as a cohesive project and brand. Many respondents specifically expressed that they felt that the Cultural Programme needed to be more visible, and showed a keen interest in knowing more.

Finally, it was interesting that some strongly polarised perceptions with regard to the Cultural Programme were encountered. Two respondents, both highly-educated and intensely engaged with Valletta, gave diametrically opposed perceptions. One respondent expressed a concern that the programme will be highbrow and inaccessible to most people, whilst the other was worried that the programme may tend towards populism and events which cater only for the masses. This extreme difference in opinion (which is not representative but significant) indicates that the diversity of the Cultural Programme needs to be highlighted in a way that can adequately target different audiences.

The Changing City

Both research cycles indicated a number of recurrent issues regarding Valletta. Common concerns included the need for better refuse collection, improved street infrastructure, the issue of parking (which also impacts on the mobility of residents and pedestrians), and the topic of abandoned buildings and their deleterious effect on the city's vitality. In this regard it is interesting that the VPS indicates that Valletta residents are almost twice as likely to "agree very much" that there are too many vacant buildings in Valletta, compared to non-residents.

Nevertheless, in the interviews conducted in 2016, all community groups expressed a realisation that the social fabric of Valletta is changing at a rapid rate. Respondents generally expressed a positive attitude with regard to immediate changes, including those which are understood to have been triggered by Valletta 2018. These, in fact, are seen as upgrading Valletta's profile both culturally and infrastructurally, and the VPS confirms that respondents have a positive perception of Valletta, tending to agree more strongly with positive statements about the city and its cultural heritage.

However, this optimism about Valletta regaining its former glory was also contrasted by a general concern and helplessness about Valletta's long-term destiny. An increased number of respondents expressed concern about changes in property and rental prices,

which make it more difficult for people from Valletta, and for Maltese people in general, to live in the city, leading several respondents to suggest that Valletta will eventually become a city in which only foreigners and some wealthy Maltese can reasonably afford to live.

This ambivalence which respondents displayed between a strongly positive outlook towards the way in which buildings are being restored and reused, and fatalistic concern with regard to the ultimate future of Valletta as a communal space, reflects the inherently multifaceted nature of urban regeneration projects as well as the complex power relations which permeate such processes. As de Certeau noted, “the restoration economy tends to separate places from their practitioners” (de Certeau et al., 1998: 139) and gives priority to strategies over the tactics which people on the ground use to navigate the city.

Michael Herzfeld (2006) observes, along similar lines, how hegemonic ideas of aesthetics and town planning give rise to “spatial cleansing”, whereby “relationships defined in terms of neighbourhood” are replaced by “abstract description, enumeration and measurement”. A case in which this occurred was the Valletta Market (*is-Suq tal-Belt*), which had suffered neglect but became reconceptualised as a national monument. This conceptual change brought with it a rethinking of power relations, with the shopkeepers being considered speculators at best and squatters or a threat to national progress at worst (Pace Bonello, 2013). The

restoration of the Suq has been incorporated within the Valletta 2018 Programme and, although interviewees have so far expressed a positive outlook, they have also voiced scepticism on the eventual character and affordability of this market.

It is to be noted that, in this process, a simple dialectic between two groups (e.g. speculators vs community) does not suffice to give an accurate picture of reality. Despite the feeling that, as discussed earlier, foreign investment and boutique hotels are a “lesser evil”, there is a general sentiment that, as the legal and economic situation stands, there is very little to be done but play one’s part in the game by maximising any properties one owns in Valletta, as it would be foolish not to do so. Everyone with property is thus being turned inexorably into a speculator, the “products of an exploitative society” (Berry, 1977).

These observations indicate that it is essential that any intervention in Valletta which is bound to affect communal life needs to be adequately discussed with the community in ways that encourage their involvement. Furthermore, it is crucial that any strategic action taken with regard to the city takes into consideration that social life in public spaces is a fundamental contributor towards individual and social quality of life, and that the will “to create spaces that work for people” makes “a tremendous difference... to the life of a city” (Whyte, 1980: 15).

Conclusions

From the research conducted, it transpires that the Valletta 2018 Foundation is bringing about a significant change in the city. One point that was found to be particularly encouraging was that persons with a disability are participating in events that form part of the Valletta 2018 Programme and are thereby also engaging with the city itself. Much work still needs to be done to render Valletta a more physically accessible place, but there is increasing confidence and optimism that this can be achieved. Nevertheless, by catalysing urban regeneration, it is evident that rapid changes are taking place in Valletta's communal fabric. In terms of the immediate future, the major disturbances are manageable (though by no means unimportant) issues and, in this regard, the process of urban regeneration which has been given momentum by Valletta 2018 is largely welcomed.

Concerning the long-term future, however, respondents tended to express concern and helplessness at the prospects of Valletta eventually becoming a place where it is unfeasible for most *Beltin* and Maltese people in general to live in. If Valletta is to remain "a living city", as expressed in the Strategy for Valletta (June 2016), it is crucial to adopt consultative, inclusive and people-centred approaches that empower the city's community groups with regard to any strategic development or planning within Valletta.

Notes

1 Although residence may constitute an official state-recognised form of belonging to a particular locality, especially if confirmed formally through one's identity card, this does not readily capture the culturally nuanced sense of belonging to and being from Valletta: being Belti or Beltija, deriving from il-Belt, "the City", as Valletta is generally referred to in Maltese.

2 Commissioned annually by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, the Valletta Participation Survey is carried out by the National Statistics Office. So far three surveys have been commissioned, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Another survey is scheduled to take place in 2017, whereas two surveys will be commissioned in 2018.

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Chapter 8

Determinants of Volunteering in the Arts and Cultural Sector: A cursory Review

GLEN FARRUGIA AND
ADRIAN DEBATTISTA



According to the 2011 Eurobarometer survey, cultural, educational and arts associations attract the second largest percentage of volunteers in Europe, i.e. an overall of 20%, with the majority being individuals aged between 25 and 39 who formally contribute towards specific organisations (European Parliament, 2011: 9). Despite volunteering being an important resource, particularly to those segments with limited financial return on investment, the absence of detailed information about volunteers and their engagement within this sphere leaves their activities ‘virtually invisible to policymakers, philanthropies, and the media’ (McCarthy et al., 2001:iv). To this effect core aspects such as the motivation behind the volunteers’ actions in relation to their geodemographic characteristics often fall between the cracks of much fragmented research (Smith, 1994; Wilson and Musick, 1997; Primavera, 1999; Harris, 2000). This essay has two conceptual aims, namely, to look into community determinants of volunteer engagement in Malta’s arts and cultural sector while identifying any geographic characteristics that could be linked to such activity, particularly

within the rural and the urban local context. In order to reach these objectives, the following text will first present an overview of the international literature dealing with volunteerism and its core components. A more empirical approach shall be employed in the second part, notably by drawing on the outcomes of the NSO Cultural Participation Survey 2016 (CPS). The overall framework of this essay will help to formulate notions which will hopefully provide new insights not only to those involved in volunteering within the arts and cultural sector, but also to policy makers who have the task of overseeing and fostering such an important resource.

Volunteering for Community Cultural Development

Volunteer motivation has been understood as being derived from both altruistic and egoistic factors (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glenn, 1991; Phillips and Phillips, 2011). Going beyond this seemingly binary approach, Mueller (1975) had posited the ‘selective incentive’ concept as comprising of benefits sought from volunteering falling in between altruism and egoism – present in a number of studies (Bussell and Forbes, 2002). This relates to a sense of belonging, the need for affiliation, attaining a degree of prestige or self-esteem or volunteering as a way of developing friendships. Volunteering can then be linked to the accumulation of social capital underpinning community development “where individuals work collaboratively towards common goals and in the process build systems of mutual trust” (Burden, 2000: 355). In the context of local cultural events,

volunteers who demonstrate concern for their communities are expectedly more likely to volunteer for community development in long-term involvement (Rogers & Anastasiadou, 2011). This may be reflective of altruistic and intrinsic motivations that may be more prevalent in volunteers involved in local events as in the case of local festivals. This contrasts with volunteering in geographically wider events, possibly more likely driven by career oriented objectives (Wang, 2006; Hoye et al., 2008). In line with this, Wilson and Musick (2007: 329) argue that this could be more prevalent among rural communities with relatively low population density due to “a strong sense of solidarity and norms of reciprocity being well-known and enforced”. Thus it could then be said that a solid social connection at a local level is a key factor that results in internally motivated individuals to volunteer within a community in a committed manner.

Indeed this can also be applicable in the arts and cultural activities forming part of the creative development within local communities. In this regard, Bussell and Forbes (2007) attempted to understand volunteer motivations in the arts through a case study of a rural community theatre. In this study social identification was seen as a motivating factor in arts volunteering which may encompass both a relationship with fellow volunteers and with the organisation itself and what it represents. Thereby goal congruence occurs where the volunteers and the organisation share a common goal, bringing forth the social and psychological benefits sought. It is then seen that volunteers in the arts are more likely to share

cultural interests and be like-minded, driven by the willingness to build social relationships while possessing a strong connection with the arts. So much so that Nichols (2007) had found that arts volunteers tend to show a higher dedication to their cause than other volunteers and are more engaged in social networking. This is considered to be key when aiming for artistic progression within a community, as argued by Duxbury et al.(2009) who observe culture-led regeneration in rural communities. Furthermore having adequate cultural infrastructure is seen as a cornerstone in facilitating community cohesion and thereby appealing to the intrinsic motivators of potential arts volunteers (Bussell and Forbes, 2007). Thus community cultural venues such as community theatres should focus on maintaining long lasting relationships with the local community. In turn this would augur well in terms of attracting new volunteers and also maintaining current ones, as such relationships mean a wider social network and an increased likelihood that individuals identify themselves with the common cause.

Coming to terms with the practical side of local artistic and cultural activities, one would realise that these come at a cost, irrespective of whether or not such activities are managed or coordinated by volunteers. Taking community theatrical productions as an example, even though these are mostly run on a voluntary basis, they still require lighting, sound, props and many other specialised equipment during a performance. Therefore, the role of the volunteers here may not only be to provide their

time and expertise but also to search for external financial resources to reach the activity’s main objectives. Additionally, not all organisations which function within a voluntary ambit own or make use of a fixed built space from where to operate – therefore, this may increase the financial constraints volunteer organisations may encounter, not to mention the time required to explore possible venues which are fit for purpose. These setbacks may arguably discourage prospective volunteers; however there is no specific evidence about such statement. Therefore, to shed some light on the argument, the essay will draw upon data from the CPS with regards to volunteering in the arts and cultural sector in terms of the geographic variables while attributing this to information on the cultural infrastructure available in the regions. In distinguishing between rural and urban areas, population density per district based on the latest Census (NSO, 2014) will be considered as in Table 1. This is based on the rationale as provided by MEPA in the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development (2015) that considers low population densities as characterising rural areas, together with other factors that are beyond the scope of this essay.

District	Population per km ²
Southern Harbour	3,035
Northern Harbour	5,014
South Eastern	1,281
Western	802
Northern	866
Gozo and Comino	457

Table 1 Population density in Malta by district. (NSO, 2014)

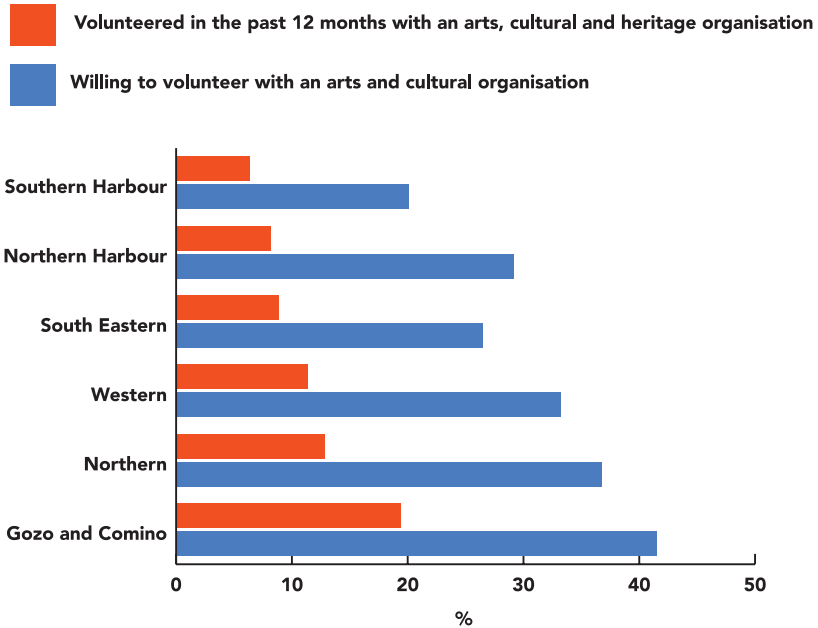


Figure 1 Volunteering in an arts, cultural or heritage organisation as a percentage of each district’s total population (NSO, 2017)

Figure 1 may indicate a linear growth in arts, cultural and heritage volunteers in the more rural regions of the Maltese islands (Gozo and Comino, Northern and Western) when compared to the more urbanised regions (South Eastern, Northern Harbour, Southern Harbour) in terms of population density shown in Table 1. As for willingness to volunteer, there also seems to be similar trend in terms of urban and rural regions, even though this includes people that for multiple reasons had not actually volunteered but seem to show a desire to do so nevertheless. This does not necessarily imply that geographic location alone determines volunteering or

willingness to do so as other demographic variables are present. Still the above may indicate that the social and cultural contexts deemed to be more prevalent in geographically rural communities are more likely to be associated with higher participation in cultural volunteering. This is in line with the literature referred to above that demonstrated positive links between small-scale local events in rural communities and cultural volunteering largely due to the shared interests within the community's creative development, social identification and networking.

While taking into consideration the possible geographic indications, it is also worthwhile looking at the cultural infrastructural conditions that as literature demonstrated, facilitate community cohesion and are key to intrinsically motivate volunteers in the arts and culture. An exploratory analysis of the data published in *Spazji Teatrali: A Catalogue of Theatres in Malta and Gozo* (Farrugia and Buhagiar (eds.) , 2017) reveals that, except for the Southern Harbour Area, which houses the largest amount of performing spaces in the Maltese islands, the number of theatres reviewed in the current edition are evenly scattered throughout Malta (Figure 2). In addition to the geographic setting of these spaces, no notable differences were recorded with regard to their state of maintenance, with an average score of 2.4 points (out of 5) for theatres in Gozo and 2.5 for the remaining regions, i.e. Northern, Central, Southern and South-Eastern regions. Therefore, this preliminary review hints at a scenario where neither the number of available cultural and artistic space nor their corresponding

overall state of maintenance affect the decision of individuals or practitioners to volunteer in this sector. So what motivates local communities in Malta to engage in voluntary cultural and artistic activities?

Despite the above questions warranting in-depth qualitative studies (e.g. ethnographic research among specific groups of volunteers), some initial thoughts can already be drawn from the informal participant observation carried out by the authors of *Spazji Teatrali* and which provides useful insights on what might in fact determine voluntary cultural participation among local communities. In an essay published in Think Magazine titled ‘Setting the stage’ (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2017:65) Sean Buhagiar speaks about his experience when conducting site visits in local theatres as part of the research for the book *Spazji Teatrali*, which took place throughout 2015 and 2016 – to an extent a period coinciding with that observed by the CPS. Buhagiar describes the hours spent listening to interesting stories about the volunteers acting as theatre custodians who nostalgically spoke about the ‘golden age’ of local theatre, when large crowds used to attend performances, to the gradual disinterest in the current climate. Despite the custodians’ hope of a renaissance in this sector, they are somehow afraid of the change, or perhaps of the burden on volunteers that such an increase in interest might actually bring. Most of these custodians are of an elderly age, and that is why Buhagiar argues that the culture and arts sectors “need to involve more young people [as] inspiration and change are needed”

(Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2017:67).

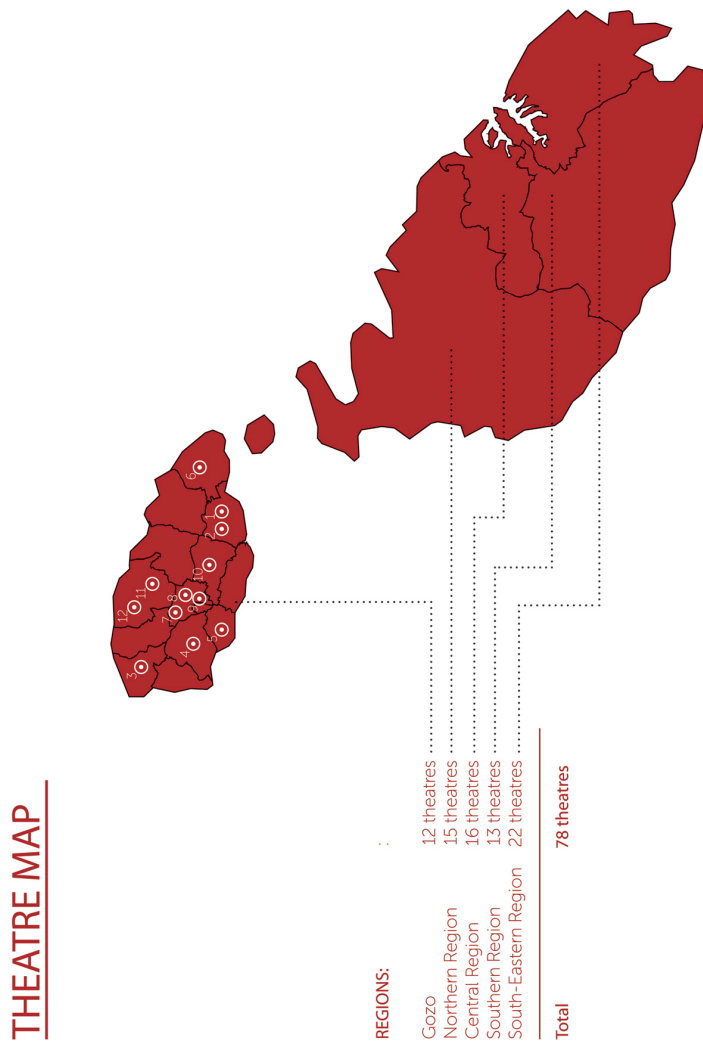


Figure 2 Map of Malta showing theatres per region (Farrugia and Buhagiar (eds.), 2017)

Reaching Out While Looking In

So what type of change is being envisaged here? Surely, this is not much about the physical infrastructure required as it is about the need of change in mentality and enthusiasm to renew the interest among the local community, thus increasing the possibility of creating a new culture of volunteering in this sector. In order to kick-start such a process, the sector must first start by evaluating the management structures and the modus operandi of those who are legally responsible for local performing spaces. In this respect, questions like: what are the legal representatives of these spaces doing to encourage and attract people in the local theatre sector? What are the restrictions which are discouraging such direct and indirect participation specifically in terms of volunteering? Are these legal representatives consulting with cultural professionals who might assist in fostering constant participation in their activities from within their local communities, thereby increasing the potential pool of interested volunteers? The answers to these questions might be determinants of why volunteering within the cultural and artistic sector is stronger in certain areas than in others. Could this be related to the management structures and the way people are being entrusted with local culture and artistic assets? An initial observation does in fact shed some light on this. Indeed, during the data collection for *Spazji Teatrali*, it has been noted that participation was higher in theatre spaces where their legal representatives entrusted and supported volunteers with operational activities (Sean Buhagiar 2017, pers. Comm., 9

June). With reference to Bussell and Forbes (2007), this brings forth the importance of community cultural venues building and maintaining close relationships based on trust with their local communities.

Conclusion

Scholarly literature discussed above showed that rural communities tend to volunteer more. This aspect can be compared with the Maltese case where the northern localities which are, or where once set, in a rural context, notably Gozo, obtained the highest percentage in volunteering within the arts and culture sector.

Nowwithstanding the above, it has to be understood that due to Malta's size, distance may not be a prevalent contributor towards people's motivation to volunteer as all localities could be considered to be within close proximity to one another. Moreso the CPS focuses largely on Maltese individuals in terms of nationality (only 2.6% are 'Non-Maltese') which limits the extent to which observations can be made in this regard when considering social and cultural aspects. Still, this preliminary review of volunteer data from the CPS and the informal anecdotes from *Spazji Teatrali* may provide the inspiration for further ethnographic research on the matter and possibly indicate to community leaders (such as Local Council representatives) how community determinants motivate or demotivate current or potential arts and cultural volunteers. This being said, the discourse presented here, if not

fully exhaustive, should at least raise the eyebrows of those who see the contribution of volunteers to be of significance within their cultural field.

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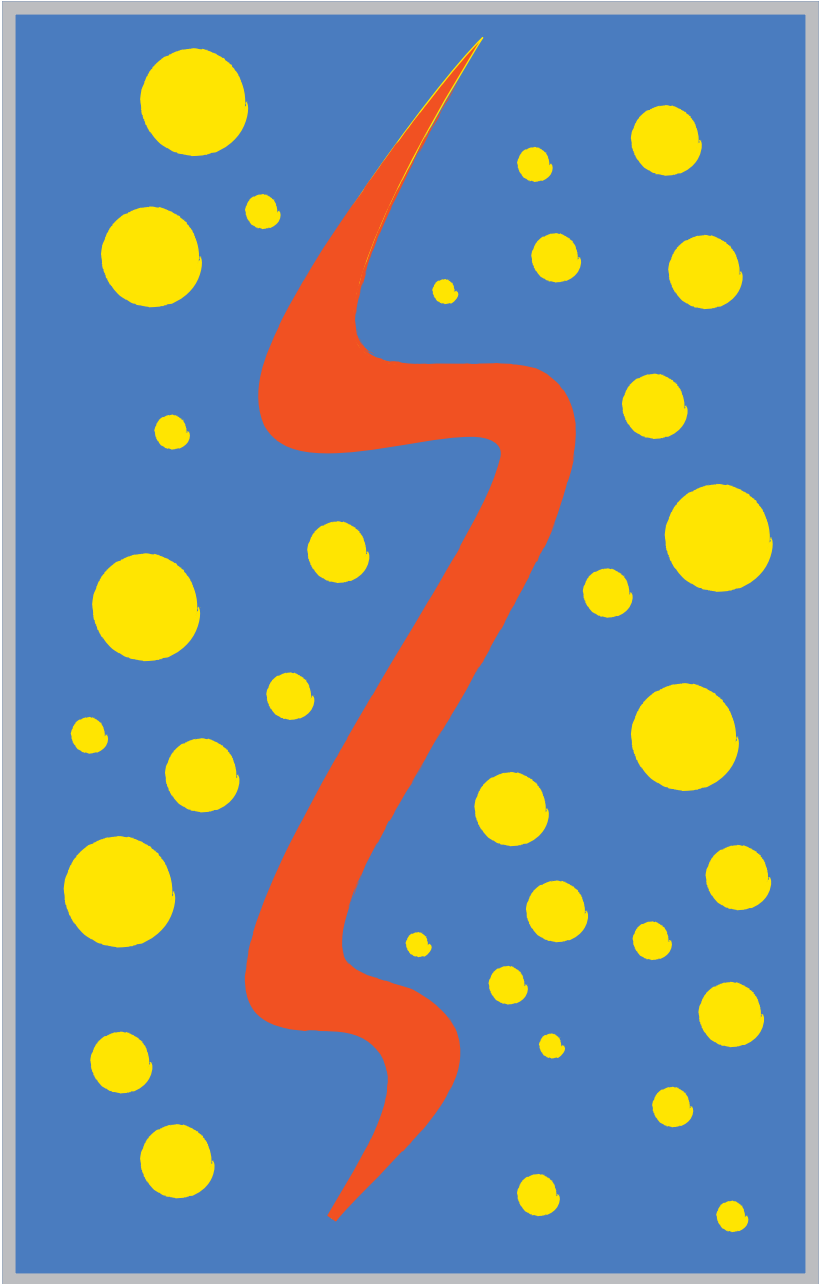
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Chapter 9

*Organisational Change and
Audience-Centricity:
European Perspectives*

CRISTINA DA MILANO



Unquestionably, the cultural sector operates in a period of seismic shifts: on the one hand, economic insecurity has highlighted the incapacity of old paradigms and models to lead us into an uncertain scenario; on the other, wide social transformations and pervasive digital ecosystems impact on the way people produce and participate in culture, on their claims for more personalized and authentic experiences, on the need for collaborative spaces. At the same time, public funding shrinks and the social legitimacy of culture as an investment is questioned. Many cultural institutions have begun to rethink their role, to find new relevance, to meet the challenge.

Cultural policies at the European level, and even at national and local levels, despite noticeable differences between countries, have encouraged the cultural sector to adopt audience centric approaches, to enlarge and diversify audiences.

This is happening also in Malta, where the issue has become

particularly relevant in the last years and especially nowadays, also due to the fact that on the one hand Valletta will be the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2018: in terms of cultural attendance data, a Eurobarometer survey carried out in 2013 (European Commission, 2013) showed that the Maltese are among the least active participants in culture in Europe but a recent survey realised in 2016 seems to indicate that the trend is changing¹.

Audience development, organisational implications and leadership

The Creative Europe program identifies Audience Development (AD) as one of the primary challenges for the future and it defines as “a strategic, dynamic and interactive process of making the arts widely accessible. It aims at engaging individuals and communities in experiencing, enjoying, participating in and valuing the arts through various means available today for cultural operators, from digital tools to volunteering, from co-creation to partnerships” (Bollo et al., 2017: 54).

The shift towards a more audience-centric approach requires the creation of an organisational environment able to provide change through open innovation processes and a strong involvement of all the staff: leadership plays an important role in introducing innovative and alternative approaches and in unlocking internal resistances. There are many different ways to tackle the challenges related to audience development and engagement that depend on

the diversity of cultural organisations: from established institutions that are rethinking themselves, to organisations born as audience centred, from artistic paths naturally drawing to participatory practices, to marketing and communication changes motivated by a new management.

Nevertheless, as the recent EU funded ‘Study on Audience Development. How to put audiences at the centre of cultural organization’² demonstrates through an in-depth analysis of 30 case studies from all over Europe, those which have been successful in promoting and implementing audio-centric policies have something in common: a listening attitude, a trial and error approach, data relevance and shared objectives. Most of them clearly describe the link between audience development and organisational implications and leadership issues.

Also the bibliographical research, which formed part of the Study³, demonstrates that audience-centric approaches require change touching upon different dimensions: institutional and organisational, relationships with artists, and with citizens/users directly. No matter how AD is materialised - in reaching new and diverse audience, in raising awareness, in fostering engagement, in building sustainable relationships, etc. - it should be embedded in the organisation and form part of the organisational culture, as a responsibility of the whole institution (and not of one department). It is important to claim that AD, before coming to be recognised as theory, arose as a practice that was born of cultural

organisations' need to pursue their missions: for this reason, AD has been mostly planned and run by single departments (usually education or marketing departments), often without involving the whole organisation. As an activity run by single organisational areas, it started to show its limits and ineffectiveness in pursuing its audience goals.

At the same time, literature agrees that AD should therefore involve an understanding of multiple connections between an institution's policy, its profile, its artistic aims, its financial setup, its staff composition, its competition reality, its partners and collaboration circumstances, its programming tradition, its community anchoring and its potential development.

On that background, many cultural organisations are testing new management models and are willing to take on new responsibilities with a view to diversifying their visitor policies. Those organisations will recognise that (economic and social) sustainability can be achieved through an audience-focus and that this requires organisations to be vision led; outcome oriented; insight guided; inter-disciplinary and interactively engaged.

Leadership is an issue clearly related to the new management models and also one of the key factors to fully understand how organisations deal/tackle AD. Notwithstanding the fact that the importance of leadership is recognised by institutions and practitioners in order to develop effective AD policies, there is a

scarcity of theoretical reflections on this subject⁴.

The case studies

The case studies analysed in the Study⁵ proved immensely useful in interpreting the nature of these changes and the consequences for the entire organization². Change management theories help us to see the case studies as a varied and balanced mix of ‘reactive’ and ‘pro-active’ changes. The reactive approach still dominates for many cultural organisations as they try to respond to external pressures (funding cuts, specific political requirements, the constant shrinking of current audiences).

Still some case studies demonstrate proactive organisational behaviours, anticipating and interpreting emerging phenomena (e.g. migration flows, digital ecosystems, civic activism, social innovation). These examples produce ad hoc answers and innovation in terms of proposals, formats and engagement strategies. Leadership normally plays an important role in introducing alternative approaches and unlocking internal resistance, particularly when change is not yet perceived by the staff as necessary, at the risk of losing relevance and economic sustainability.

Some organisations have started to conceive AD as a long-term and organisation-wide commitment (for example, the *John Rylands Library*⁶ and *York Citizen’s Theatre*⁷); in other cases, the

adoption of a rigorous audience-centric approach has led to strong changes in the organisational mind-set (*Renlund Museum*⁸, *Cirkus Cirkör*⁹, *Kilowatt festival*¹⁰); in some case studies, organisational change has led to the creation of designated ad hoc departments and functions as well as interdepartmental links: this is the case of *Maison des Métallos*¹¹, where the staff was strengthened with a new function, the Chief of Audiences, whose role is to develop and coordinate all activities related to audiences, linking all the frontline activities - from reception and assistance to bar service - with the artistic ones; in a similar way, *MAXXI*¹² created a new department called Public Engagement, to strengthen and diversify the relationship with the audiences. *The Point*¹³ has experimented with a “creative team” (Creative Producer, Executive Director, Drama Development Manager, Dance Development Manager, Marketing Manager and Theatre Programmer) that develops the professional programme alongside Audience Development initiatives linked to both the programme and wider creative learning and outreach practices. Similarly, *New Wolsey Theatre*¹⁴ has undergone recent change in the structure of the team, putting all front-of-house functions into one flexible team: reception, sales, catering, marketing, relationships, designed in “a matrix way”. *Mercat de les Flores*¹⁵ has developed horizontal relationships between Education, Creation and Parallel Activities. This means, for example, that educational activities or those associated with shows are not born out of a fixed programme, but instead have the autonomy to devise their own content, always close to the artistic creation processes. In the Study there are few case studies

that fit the concept of “emergent change”, defined (change) as a continuous and unpredictable process of aligning and realigning an organisation to its changing environment. In a shift towards an audience-centric approach, the creation of an organisational environment enabling change through involvement of the entire staff and a receptive attitude to external impulses is needed.

Rather than directing change, cultural leaders provide a climate in which change can occur. This is the case of *York Theatre Royal*¹⁶, characterized by a strong inter-dependence between key management functions. Open leadership facilitates and triggers free exchange of creative energy with external ideas, people and projects. This approach led to a completely new offer, TakeOver Festival, run by young people. Over years, the festival has enhanced institutional sensitivity and capacity to deal with young and difficult-to-reach audiences.

Conclusion

Despite different reasons for change and diverse strategies adopted, one lesson learned from the bibliographical research and the case studies is the importance of an organisation-wide commitment and profound change in the mind-set. Many organisations refer to a need for an improved coordination between different functions, particularly the artistic direction and the programming, marketing and education departments.

Leadership as well plays a crucial role in activating, promoting and sustaining AD approaches, particularly in the first stages: the Study confirms the importance for leaders and staff to build clarity and consensus around audience engagement objectives.

In broad terms, it can be said that one of the main lessons learned thanks to the Study is that AD should not be confined only to one specific department and that one of the great challenges is to create horizontal and flexible teams that take part and contribute in the early stages of a specific project, approaching the target from different perspectives.

This is particularly relevant for the Maltese cultural sector, considering that the National Cultural Policy (Government of Malta PTSEC, 2011: 21-22) is guided by three principles:

1. Empowering the public to participate in cultural activity through a people-centered approach;
2. Enabling relationships between all stakeholders;
3. Knowledge building and sharing through dissemination of best practices and reliable and valid information.

The first principle is clearly related to AD in terms of vision and strategy and it seems to be particularly meaningful in a country like Malta, where the most recent survey on cultural participation shows that in the 12 months preceding the survey 68.9% of the respondents never visited a museum, 63.2% never visited a historical site, 67.9% never visited an art exhibition and 66.8%

never attended a theatre performance (NSO, 2017). A people-oriented approach of the whole cultural sector is much needed in order to overcome barriers to participation, which might be economic, physical and geographical in nature, although in this specific case the main obstacle seems to be a cultural one, since respondents claimed that they do not visit/attend due to lack of interest, and the current circumstances of individual lifestyles that might impede participation. In either case, it has to be underlined that these recent data show a slightly positive trend if compared with the 2011 survey (NSO, 2012), confirming that a shift towards an audience-centred cultural policy has begun in Malta and it has started bearing its fruit. A great effort is required to keep on changing the current situation in the country, a result which can only be achieved if cultural organisations adopt an audience-centered approach at all levels, being ready to confront themselves also with deep organisational changes.

Notes

1 NSO's Cultural Participation Survey 2016 shows that 71% of Maltese people attended local performances and venues in the 12 months preceding the survey, although these percentages are significantly lower if related to specific cultural activities on their own (for example, in the 12 months preceding the survey, 30% visited a museum, 35% visited a historical site and 32% attended a live theatre performance).

2 This paper is mainly based on the "Study on Audience development. How to put audiences at the centre of cultural organizations", realized by Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Culture Action Europe, ECCOM and Intercult on behalf of the DG Culture and Education of the European Commission in 2016 available on www.engageaudiences.eu. It is based on excerpts of the Study itself, re-organised and in some cases re-phrased by the author. The author represents ECCOM.

3 Bollo et al., 2017: 58.

4 One of the rare attempt of clearly stating the role of leadership in AD processes has been made by the Morton Smyth Limited in *Not for the Likes of you* (2004), where it is affirmed that the leader of the institution must have a clear vision - which has attracting a broad audience at its heart - plus all the features which distinguish a positive leadership behaviour: active listening; creating the right systems and structures; setting high standards; managing risk and mistakes; using a range of leadership styles; using the whole person; ensuring strong support and sticking at it (Bollo et al., 2017: 72).

5 Catalogue – case studies, http://engageaudiences.eu/files/2017/04/NC0116645ENN_002.pdf.

6 Bollo et al., 2017: 43.

7 Bollo et al., 2017: 137.

8 Bollo et al., 2017: 106.

9 Bollo et al., 2017: 34.

10 Bollo et al., 2017: 47.

11 Bollo et al., 2017: 69.

12 Bollo et al., 2017: 78.

13 Bollo et al., 2017: 124.

14 Bollo et al., 2017: 88.

15 Bollo et al., 2017: 82.

16 Bollo et al., 2017: 137.

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view or policy of Arts Council Malta.

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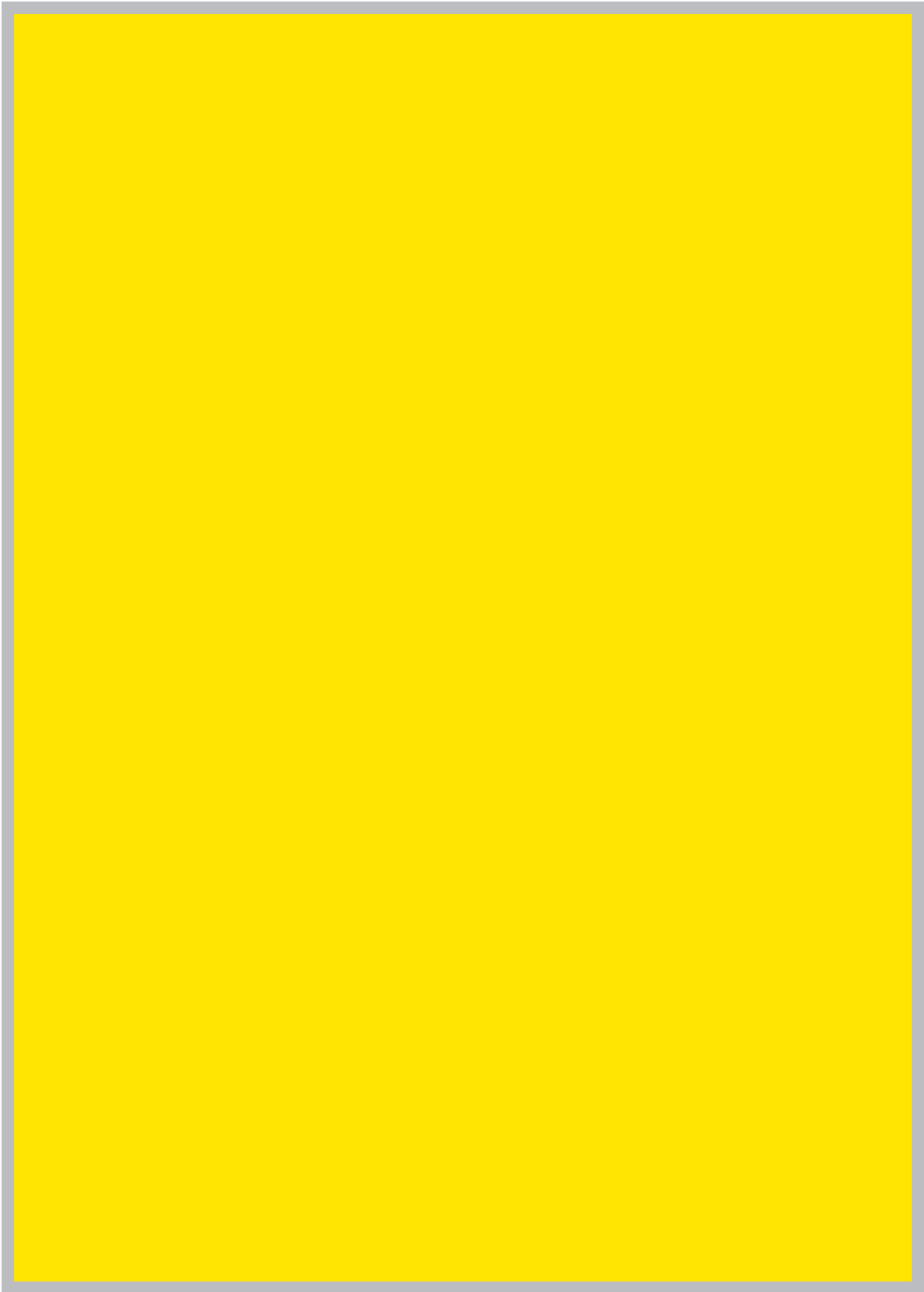
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