



The Impacts of the European Capital of Culture

Final Research Report

Valletta 2018



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INTRODUCTION

Valletta was officially awarded the title of European Capital of Culture 2018 in May 2013 following a rigorous bidding process which promised a ECoC title whereby “culture is the overriding force in building individual creative careers, promoting our well-being, and in fostering our communities’ international and intercultural outlook” (Valletta 2018 Bid Book). The Foundation’s Bid Book outlined the title’s intention to establish a long-lasting legacy that “will alter the cultural and social landscape of Malta dramatically and sustainably”.

Although the ECoC year itself was officially inaugurated on 20th January 2018, its effects arguably permeated Malta’s cultural and social life long before that. Trying to understand the true impacts of a project of the scale of the European Capital of Culture is no mean feat. This is particularly true within the Maltese context, whereby a cultural project of this magnitude was unprecedented and where impact research into culture and the arts is still in its infancy.

Nonetheless, the Valletta 2018 Foundation established a research department within its ranks with the precise aim of establishing a framework through which these impacts could be gauged, analysed and understood. With little local literature or experience to guide this undertaking, the first challenge was to identify the metrics by which the impacts of the European Capital of Culture title would be measured.

The various perceived impacts were condensed into five themes, namely (i) Cultural & Territorial Vibrancy; (ii) Governance & Finance; (iii) Community Inclusion & Space; (iv) The Tourist Experience; and (v) The Valletta Brand. A longitudinal research plan was created around these themes, establishing a number of relevant studies within each theme, selecting key methodologies, and identifying research partners, thereby setting out the process for the subsequent years.

It was agreed that the research plan would span the period of 2015-2018, with final results from each study presented in 2019. With 2015 acting as a baseline year, this timeline allowed for a detailed insight into the changes taking place in the run-up to the ECoC title and during the title year itself.

In 2014, the Valletta 2018 Foundation appointed a number of independent researchers to design and carry out the studies within the research plan. Together with representatives from a number of public entities, these researchers formed the Evaluation & Monitoring Steering Committee, a multidisciplinary team that led the research process throughout the subsequent years.

The public entities forming part of the Steering Committee were: (i) National Statistics Office; (ii) Malta Tourism Authority; (iii) Jobsplus; and (iv) Economic Policy Department in the Ministry of Finance, whereas various independent researchers were appointed based on their expertise within the following areas: (i) Cultural Programme; (ii) Branding; (iii) Sociology; (iv) Built Environment; (v) European Identity.

The studies presented within this report are the result of this extensive research process, outlining the legacy of the ECoC title across various spheres. These results, published only a few short months after the end of the ECoC year, aim to inform further research and cultural activity that will continue to build a sustainable legacy after Valletta 2018.





THEME 01

CULTURAL & TERRITORIAL VIBRANCY

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural and Territorial Vibrancy investigated the impacts of the ECoC title on the various forms of cultural participation within Malta, and the extent to which the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme is addressed issues related to cultural engagement, community involvement within cultural activities, and skills development.

This strand was formed of various studies. The Valletta Participation Survey, carried out by the National Statistics Office, provides crucial information on the degree to which various groups and individuals participate in cultural activity taking place in Valletta, and identifying the push and pull factors which encourage or discourage further participation.

A second, related study, being carried out by Daniela Blagojevic Vella, analyses the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme in detail, examining how this is devised and implemented, and reflecting upon its effectiveness in fostering international collaboration and community participation in cultural activity.

Finally, the study carried out by Dr Marcello Carammia examines individuals' sense of European identity throughout the Valletta 2018 process, looking into changes in the degree of trust and closeness to European and National institutions through a series of quantitative surveys and qualitative focus group sessions.

These are complemented by an audience profiling study carried out by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, which highlights a number of particular traits identified amongst the audiences that attended Valletta 2018-related activities.

Together, these three studies present a comprehensive overview of the current cultural participation and the ways in which Valletta 2018 influenced and encouraged further involvement within cultural activity and greater participation within artistic, social and civic processes.

VALLETTA PARTICIPATION SURVEY

National Statistics Office

INTRODUCTION

The scope of the Valletta Participation Survey (VPS) was to measure the level of participation and interest of the population of Malta and Gozo in cultural activities organised in Valletta as well as their participation in activities organised as part of the Valletta 2018 cultural programme. This survey also provided information on the prevailing perceptions regarding the city of Valletta and to identify and analyse people's feedback on various issues concerning the strategy of Valletta 2018. Having been carried out for five consecutive years, the VPS also provides a time-series of if and how people's attitudes, perceptions and attendance patterns changed along these five years.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology: Sampling and population coverage

The target population for this survey involved persons aged 16 years and over, living in private households in the Maltese islands. Every district in Malta was equally covered; however, there was oversampling for Valletta.

The selection of the sample was made through stratified random sampling based on three variables, namely sex, age group and district. If we consider the last VPS sample used for the survey which was carried out in May 2018, the targeted population was estimated to be 368,963, as can be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Population distribution by sex and age group: 2018

Age Group	Males		Females		Total	
	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%
16-24	23,352	12.7	22,983	12.4	46,335	12.6
25-44	66,432	36.0	62,114	33.6	128,546	34.8
45-64	56,253	30.5	55,529	30.1	111,781	30.3
65+	38,254	20.8	44,046	23.9	82,300	22.3
Total	184,290	100.0	184,672	100.0	368,963	100.0

Table 2: Population distribution by district or locality: 2018

District or locality	Males		Females		Total	
	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%
Southern Harbour (excluding Valletta)	31,781	17.2	31,276	16.9	63,057	17.1
Valletta	2,269	1.2	2,383	1.3	4,653	1.3
Northern Harbour	55,534	30.1	56,023	30.3	111,557	30.2
South Eastern	27,787	15.1	27,997	15.2	55,784	15.1
Western	24,664	13.4	24,467	13.2	49,131	13.3
Northern	28,895	15.7	28,585	15.5	57,480	15.6
Gozo and Comino	13,360	7.2	13,941	7.5	27,301	7.4
Total	184,290	100.0	184,672	100.0	368,963	100.0

As can be seen in Table 3, the net sample of persons interviewed was of 1,008 for the May 2018 wave. Of these, 771 were selected randomly from all over Malta, with the exception of Valletta. The rest, that is 237, were selected from Valletta. As in the case of all the VPS waves from 2014 onwards, the oversampling of Valletta residents ensured the production of good quality statistics for this locality.

Table 3: Sample distribution by district or locality: 2018

District or locality	Males		Females		Total	
	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%
Southern Harbour (excluding Valletta)	59	12.0	65	12.6	124	12.3
Valletta	117	23.7	120	23.3	237	23.5
Northern Harbour	65	13.2	64	12.4	129	12.8
South Eastern	63	12.8	73	14.2	136	13.5
Western	66	13.4	67	13.0	133	13.2
Northern	62	12.6	60	11.7	122	12.1
Gozo	61	12.4	66	12.8	127	12.6
Total	493	100.0	515	100.0	1,008	100.0

Methodology: Data Collection and response rates

The survey was launched on the 14th May 2018. The data collection process took two weeks and was concluded on the 31st May 2018. Similar to the previous waves, the data collection method was the CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) method and this was carried out by experienced interviewers who were trained specifically for this survey.

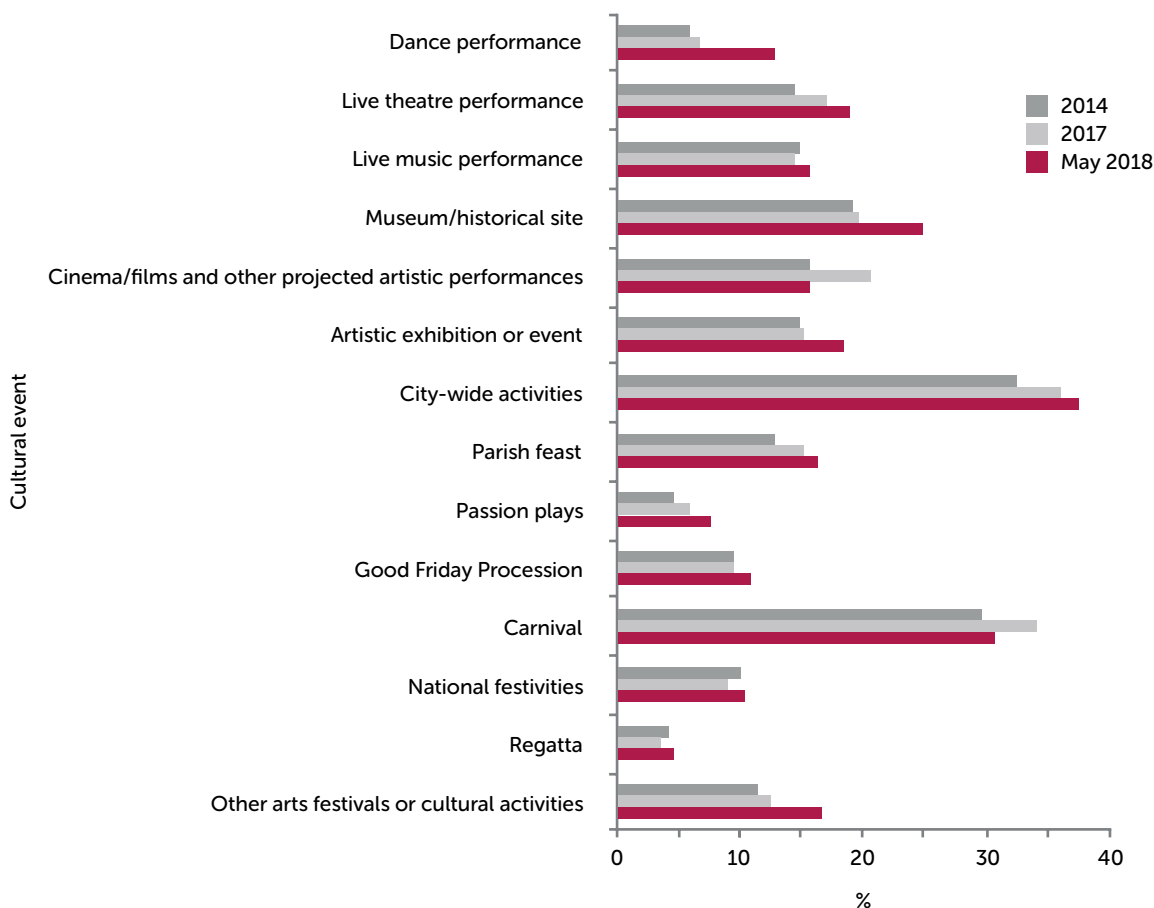
When one looks at the response rates, one can find that since 2014 the response rates were always over 75%. This was 84% in 2014; 77% in 2015; 81% in 2016; 77% in 2017 and 81% in 2018. On average, the response rate for the waves carried out since 2014 was 80%.

RESULTS AND IMPACTS

Cultural: Attendance to cultural events in Valletta

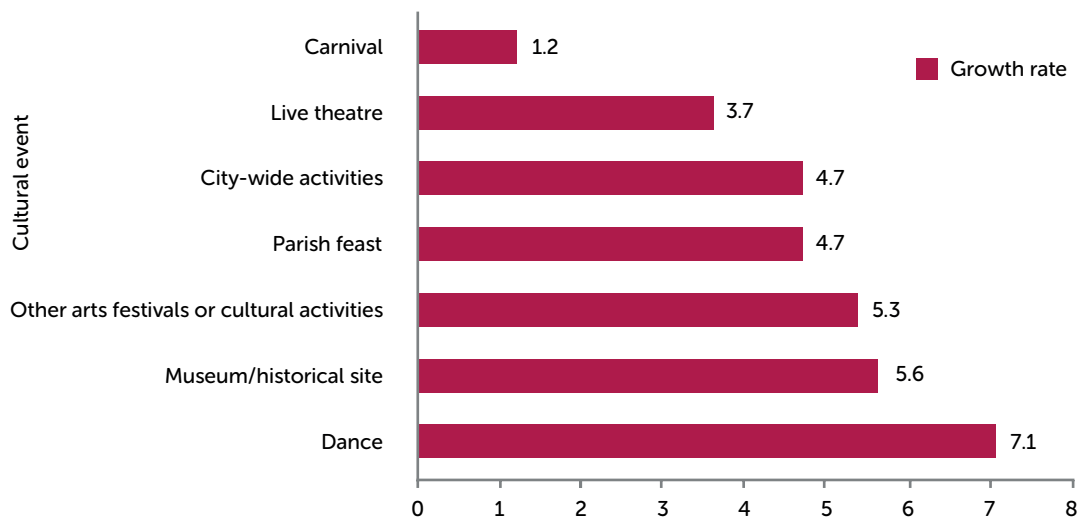
In the years leading to 2018, and as per the list in Chart 1, the two cultural events that attracted the most attendance in Valletta were city-wide activities, like the Notte Bianca, and the carnival. Beyond these two cultural events, when we aggregate the cultural events with a defined religious characteristic, namely parish feasts (religious feasts), the Good Friday procession and passion plays, we find that such religious events attract the same levels of attendance as city-wide activities and carnival.

Chart 1: Attendance to culture events in Valletta



A comparison between the rates of attendance to cultural events in Valletta in the twelve months preceding the data collections of 2018 and 2014 respectively indicates that attendance to both city-wide activities (e.g. Notte Bianca) and parish feasts increased by 4.7 percentage points, whereas attendance to the carnival increased by 1.2 percentage points. However, one must note that the top three cultural events which had the largest growth rate from 2014 to 2018 were the dance events (+7.1%), museum/historical sites (5.6%) and the other arts festivals or activities (5.3) (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Growth rates in attendance to cultural events in Valletta: 2014–2018

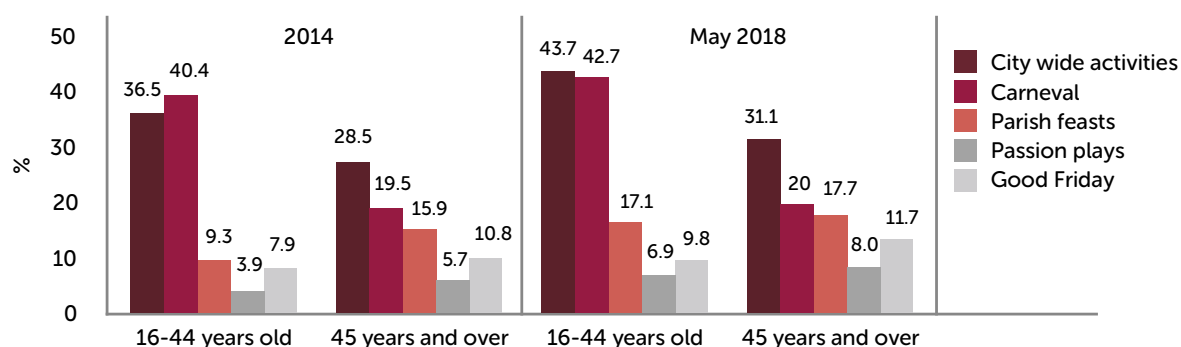


Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Cultural: Attendance to cultural events in Valletta by age group

As might be expected, city-wide activities were more likely to attract the younger age group rather than the older age group. As a case in point, as regards the 16 to 44 age group, 43.7% of the respondents reported that they attended to city-wide activities as opposed to 31.1% of the 45 years old and over age group in May 2018. In carnival events, the gap between the younger age group and the older age group is even more pronounced as there were 21.4% less of the younger age group who responded that they ‘never attended’ to the Valletta carnival. At 4.4%, the gap between the younger and older age groups gets narrower when it comes to the difference in attendance to cultural events with a defined religious characteristic. As a result, the 16 to 44 age group were only 4.4% less likely to have ‘never attended’ to such events in comparison to the 45 and older age group. The same trend is seen from 2014 until May 2018; however, one must note that city-wide activities increased in popularity from 2014 to 2018 with both age groups.

Chart 3: Attendance to cultural events in Valletta: 2014 and May 2018 (Attended at least once in the last 12 months preceding the survey)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Cultural: Attendance to cultural events in Valletta by education level and occupation

Respondents' level of education made a difference of 9.9% in the attendance to city-wide activities in the twelve months leading to May 2018. As such, persons who went beyond a secondary level of education were 9.9% more likely to have attended at least once to city-wide activities. Again, the gap between persons that went beyond a secondary level of education and those who did not gets narrower when it comes to the difference in attendance to cultural events with a defined religious characteristic.

Similarly, the employment variable accounted for a 10.0% difference in attendance to city-wide activities. Accordingly, persons in employment were 10.0% more likely to have at least attended once to such cultural events in Valletta than persons not in employment. Once again, the employment variable did not make any significant difference in attendance to cultural events with a defined religious characteristic in such a way that employed persons and non-employed persons were nearly alike in their level of attendance. One must note that non-employed persons include students aged 16 and over, the unemployed, the retired, housekeepers, and other inactive persons.

Occupation too sets apart some people from others. Indeed full-time service and sales workers and technicians and associate professionals were more likely to have attended at least once to a city-wide event in Valletta when compared to persons in other occupations. Again, service and sales workers, and professionals on a full-time basis were more likely than other employed persons to have attended at least once to carnival events in Valletta in a twelve-month period.

Table 4: Persons employed on a full-time basis who attended at least once to selected cultural events in Valletta during the twelve months prior to the survey, by occupation: May 2018, 2016 & 2014

May 2018						
Occupation (ISCO08)	Dance	Museum/historical site	City-wide activities	Parish feast	Carnival	Other art festivals or cultural activities
	Attended at least once					
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
Managers	12.0	10.6	10.0	15.6	10.3	14.6
Professionals	25.4	17.8	13.2	16.1	17.8	17.1
Technicians and associate professionals	16.8	17.8	17.1	19.6	17.6	18.9
Clerical support workers	13.8	19.4	15.0	13.6	14.1	15.3
Service and sales workers	22.6	20.1	22.7	20.0	23.5	16.8
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Craft and related trades workers	5.4	8.9	10.8	9.2	7.8	5.1
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	0.3	2.3	3.2	0.4	2.3	4.2
Elementary occupations	3.7	3.3	4.4	5.5	5.7	4.7
Armed Forces	-	-	3.6	-	0.8	3.4

2016						
Occupation (ISCO08)	Dance	Museum/historical site	City-wide activities	Parish feast	Carnival	Other art festivals or cultural activities
	Attended at least once					
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
Managers	12.0	9.6	9.5	9.0	5.8	14.1
Professionals	38.5	36.3	26.0	19.1	14.5	37.5
Technicians and associate professionals	21.7	14.8	18.7	19.0	21.4	23.0
Clerical support workers	6.9	12.0	11.5	13.1	12.4	7.6
Service and sales workers	6.4	12.3	17.1	14.7	20.2	7.3
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2.7	1.1	-	1.3	0.7	-
Craft and related trades workers	4.9	8.0	3.8	4.7	9.1	2.1
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	-	0.6	1.9	4.2	5.1	-
Elementary occupations	3.3	1.4	5.1	9.6	4.6	5.7
Armed Forces	3.6	4.0	6.3	5.4	6.1	2.6

2014						
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
Managers	7.0	0.8	9.0	2.5	4.9	1.6
Professionals	34.9	2.4	26.8	14.5	26.4	40.4
Technicians and associate professionals	9.7	1.3	13.8	19.0	15.7	17.0
Clerical support workers	15.9	1.0	11.5	18.5	13.4	15.7
Service and sales workers	13.6	1.3	15.4	21.0	16.4	11.5
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	-	-	0.9	2.8	-	-
Craft and related trades workers	14.2	0.4	10.9	8.2	11.2	5.8
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	1.8	0.1	1.6	1.5	2.8	2.3
Elementary occupations	2.8	0.4	10.1	11.8	8.8	5.7
Armed Forces	-	92.3	-	0.1	0.4	-

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

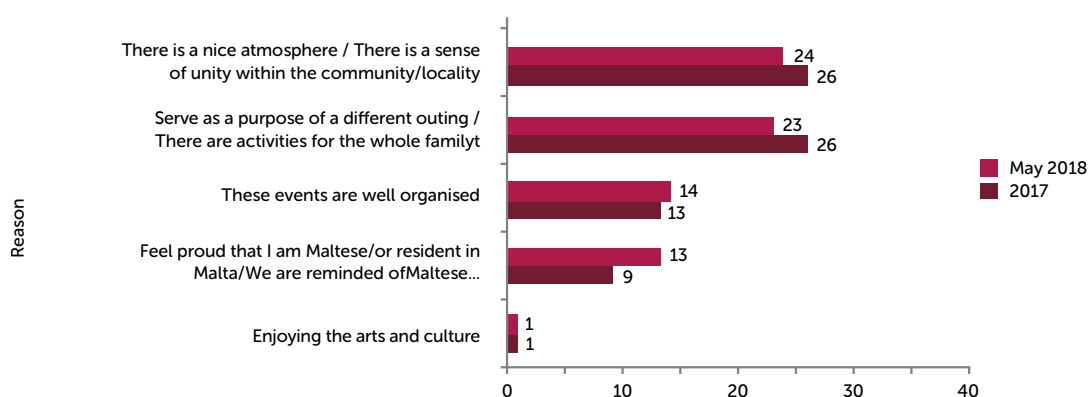
Cultural: Attendance to cultural events in Valletta by district

Again, as it might be expected, geographic location is another basic variable which made a difference in attendance to cultural events in Valletta. In this way, residents of the island of Malta were more likely to go to such events than their Gozitan counterparts. The data collection of May 2018 found 15.2% more Gozitans who had 'never attended' to the carnival in Valletta in a twelve-month period. Moreover, residents of Gozo were 9.4% more likely to have 'never attended' to city-wide activities in Valletta in comparison to their Maltese counterparts.

Cultural: Why people attend to cultural activities in Valletta

When respondents were asked the state why they attend to cultural activities in Valletta, consistently along the different waves of the survey, the majority held that they attend because of the nice atmosphere, the sense of unity and since it serves as a different outing for the whole family.

Chart 4: Reasons for attending cultural events in Valletta during the 12 months prior to the survey



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Cultural: Activities done in Valletta

When looking at the activities which are done by non-Valletta residents in Valletta, one can notice from Table 5, that in a typical winter's month, non-Valletta residents mainly visit Valletta to shop for clothes. This trend was consistent along all the years of the survey, although one must note that from 2014 until May 2018, there was a drop of -7.1 percentage points for this activity from 47.8% to 40.7%. On the other hand, for a typical summer's month, while shopping for clothes was the most popular activity in 2014, in May 2018, the most popular activity in Valletta for non-Valletta residents was dining. This particular activity recorded significant increases from 2014 until May 2018, with an increase of 14.4 percentage points for a typical winter's month and an increase of 15.7 percentage points for a typical summer's month.

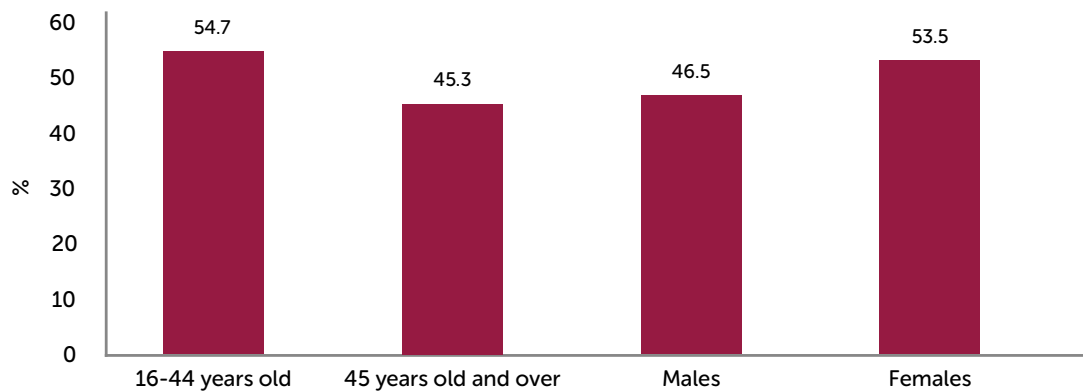
Table 5: Reasons for non-Valletta residents who visited Valletta in a typical winter's/summer's month (Maximum 3 reasons)

Reason	2014	2015	2016	2017	May 2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	May 2018
	Winter (%)					Summer (%)				
Shopping of clothes	47.8	33.9	39.9	46.6	40.7	38.8	30.9	33.8	39.0	35.0
For Work, administrative services	28.6	32.0	33.4	30.7	26.9	29.7	36.2	31.4	31.9	26.5
Dining	19.7	22.9	28.3	27.9	34.1	23.1	24.8	35.6	32.8	38.8

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

When looking at the profiles of those who are visiting Valletta for dining, one can notice that the majority are from the younger age group, at 54.7%. On the other hand, females are more likely than males to visit Valletta for dining, where we find that 53.5% of the persons who identified dining as one of the activities that they usually do in Valletta are females.

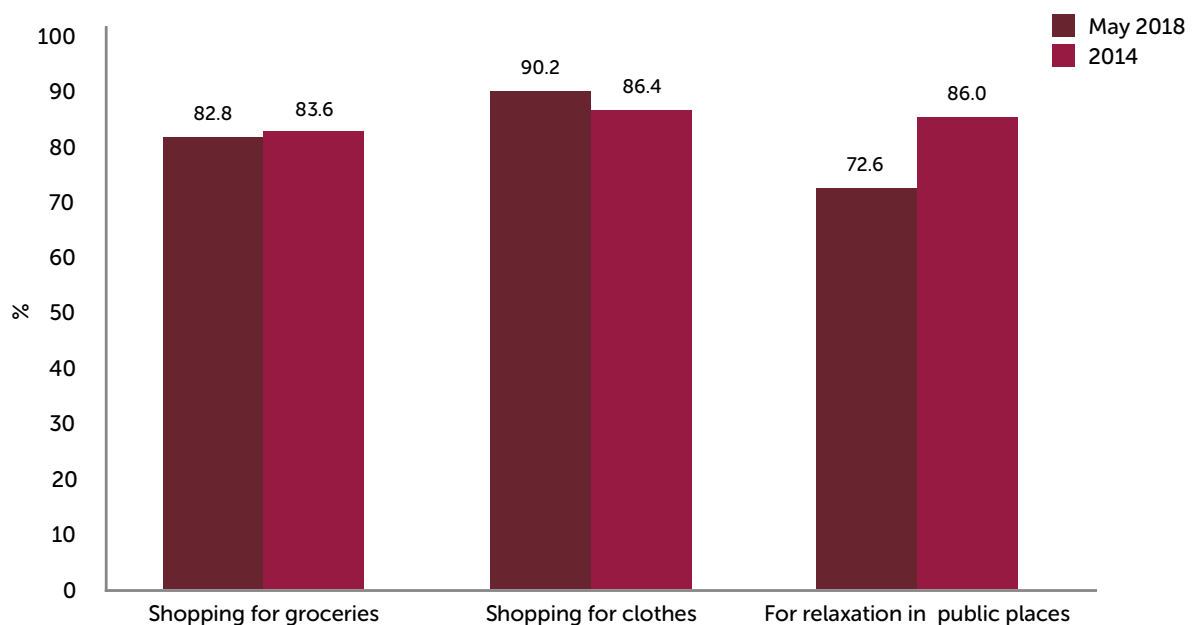
Chart 5: Non-Valletta residents who visit Valletta for dining by age group and sex (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Again, when the survey identified what the most common and frequent activities done in Valletta by Valletta residents were, shopping for clothes was still the most popular along the years of the survey with 90.2% for the first survey done and 86.4% for the most recent survey. However, it is significant to notice that there was an increase from 2014 to May 2018 of 13.4 percentage points for relaxation in public spaces.

Chart 6: Activities made by Valletta residents in Valletta itself

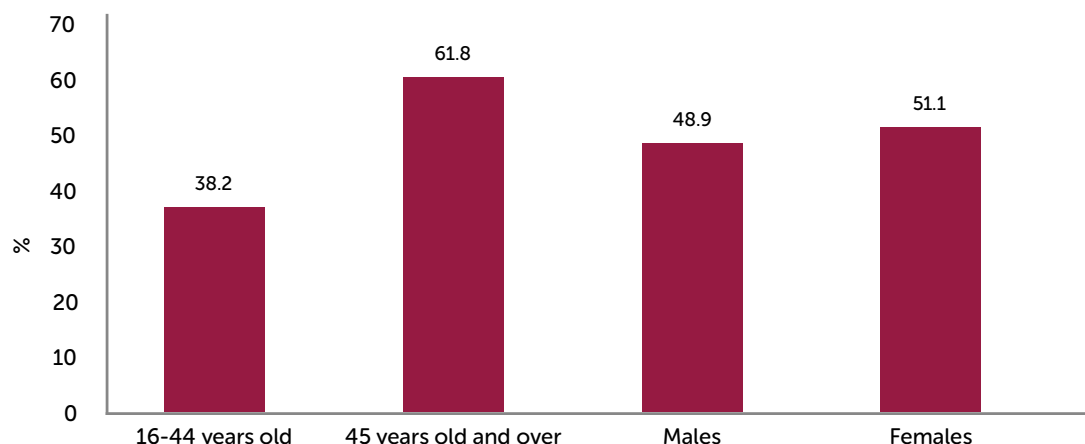


Source: Valletta Participation Survey

When looking at the activity which recorded the largest increase from 2014 onwards and what are the demographics of the Valletta residents who use the Valletta public spaces for relaxation one notices that the vast majority are aged 45 years and over, at 61.8%. On the other hand, there is not much difference

between the number of male respondents and female respondents who said that they enjoy relaxing in Valletta's public spaces.

Chart 7: Valletta residents who uses public places for relaxation by age group and sex (May 2018)

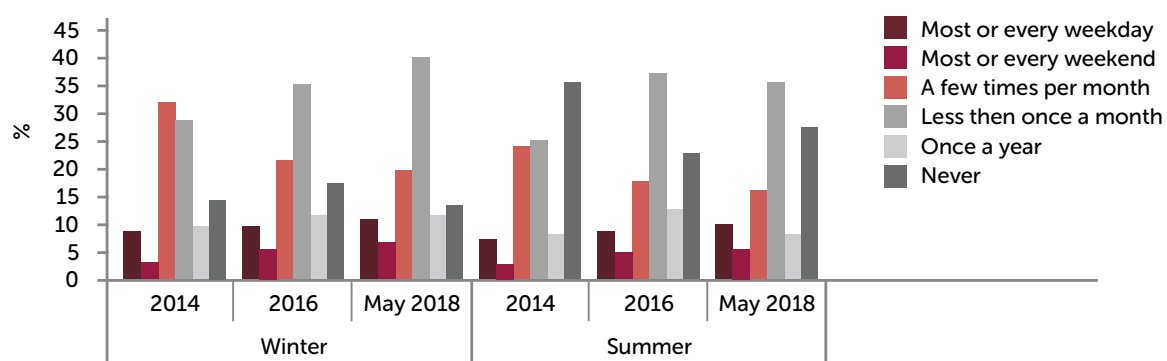


Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Social: Why people visit Valletta

Since the start of the VPS, that is in 2014, the residents of Maltese localities other than Valletta were found to be visiting the city in a typical winter's month mostly either 'less than once a month' or 'a few times per month'. In the twelve-month period prior to May 2018, this rate stood at 57.7%. On the other hand, around 10% of the population were found to be visiting Valletta in a typical winter's month 'most or every weekday'. Out of the number of persons who were found to be visiting Valletta on 'most or every weekday', there were 11% more males than females. Similarly, within the same segment, there were 12.2% more persons aged 45 years and over than persons aged between 16 to 44. When looking at the employment status one notices that 70% of those persons who had visited Valletta in a typical winter's month 'most or every weekday' were found to be in employment (including self-employed). The reason why these persons visited Valletta regularly during the weekdays was that their workplace was situated in the city.

Chart 8: Frequency of visits to Valletta made by non-Valletta residents in a typical summer's and winter's month



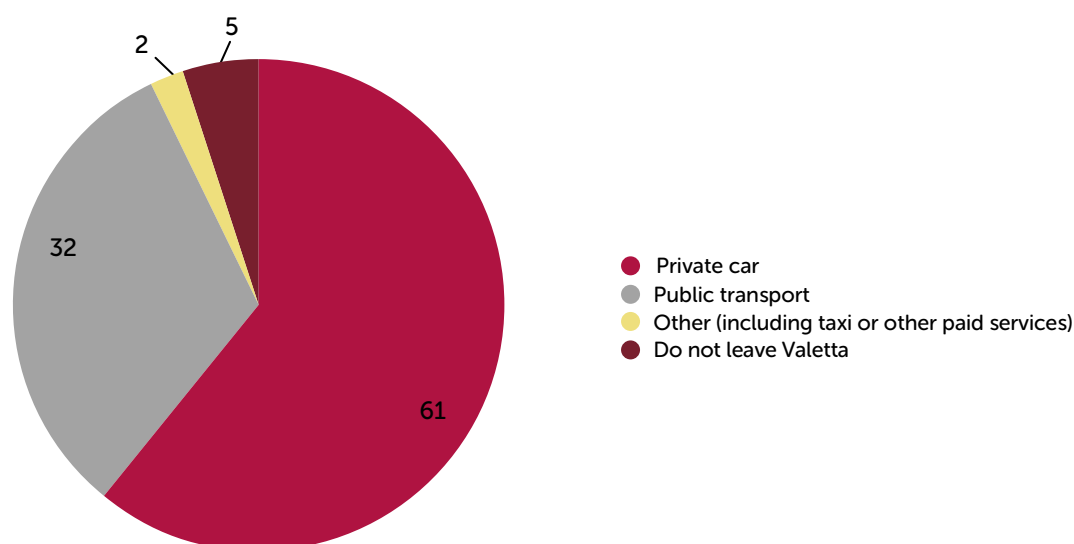
Source: Valletta Participation Survey

When it came to the typical summer months, the majority of residents of Maltese localities other than Valletta were found to be visiting the city 'less than once a month' or 'never'. In the twelve-month period leading up to May 2018, this rate stood at 59.5%. Similar to wintertime, around 10% of the population were

found to be visiting Valletta in a typical summer's month 'most or every weekday'. All in all, one could observe a decrease in the number of Maltese who visit Valletta in the summertime.

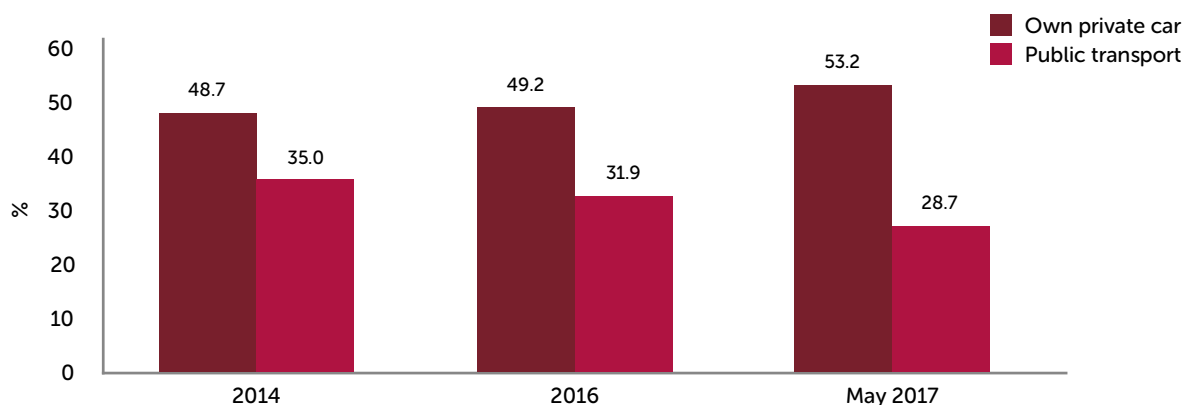
Irrespective of their purpose and whether we are referring to winter- or summertime, most residents of Maltese localities other than Valletta enter the city by means of their own private car. In the twelve-month period prior to May 2018, this rate stood at 53.2%. Beyond this, when we take into account only those persons who visit Valletta in a typical winter's month 'most or every weekday', we find that just over half of them, or 54.2%, use their own private car to reach the city. The others who visit Valletta in a typical winter's month 'most or every weekday' mainly use public transport. The latter amount to 30.4% of all those who visit Valletta in a typical winter's month 'most or every weekday'. Again, when we consider only those persons who visit Valletta in a typical summer's month 'most or every weekday', we find that more than half of them, or 61.7%, use their own private car to reach the city.

Chart 9: Type of transport mostly used to leave Valletta by Valletta residents (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Chart 10: Preferred means of transport used by non-Valletta residents to travel to Valletta

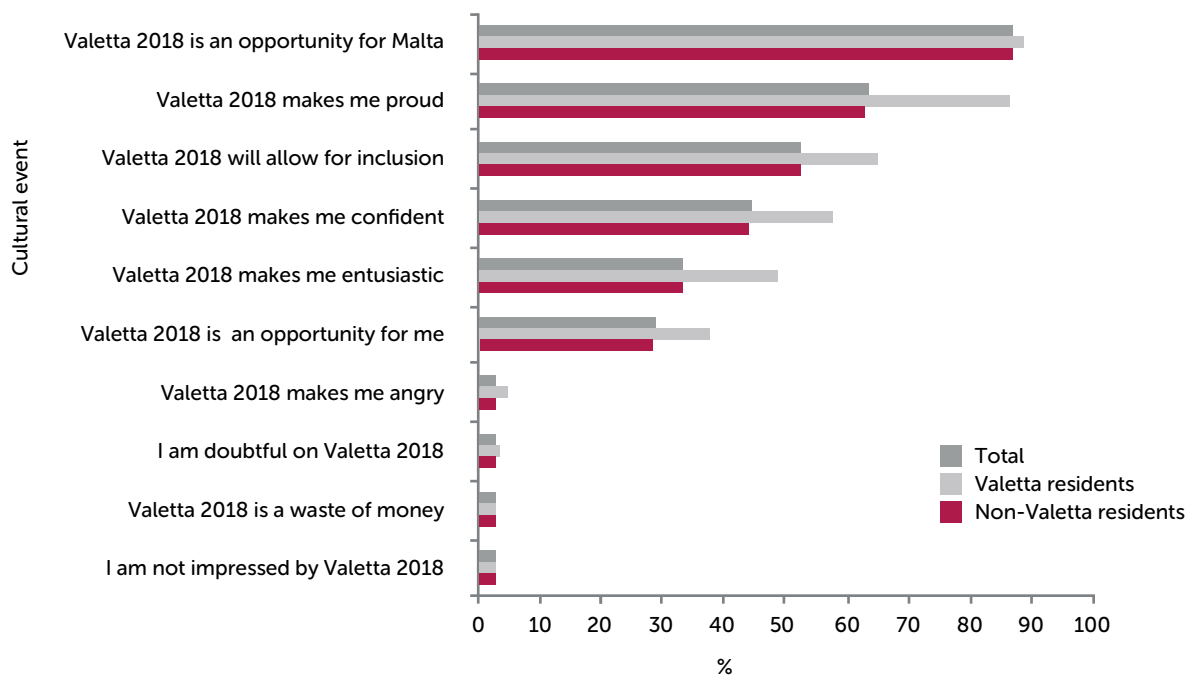


Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Social: How people feel about Valletta as European Capital of Culture and its effects

When presented with the statement that 'Valletta 2018 is an opportunity for Malta', residents of Valletta and residents of other Maltese localities 'fully agreed' to such a statement at 76.3% and 78.6% respectively. On the other hand, when presented with the statement 'Valletta 2018 is an opportunity for me', both categories showed a different attitude in that only 37.1% and 27.7% said that they 'fully agree' with it. The statements 'Valletta 2018 makes me proud' and 'Valletta 2018 makes me confident' found Valletta residents to be 12.5% more likely to 'fully agree' than other residents.

Chart 11: Levels of agreement with the following opinions regarding Valletta's designation of European Capital of Culture, by type of resident (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

In May 2018, the majority of respondents, or 60.5% of them, thought that 'important effects will have a long-term impact, even after the events are over'. Disaggregated data indicate that residents of Valletta are 11.1% less likely to subscribe to this view than persons who live elsewhere in Malta and Gozo. The time-series presented in Table 6 below suggests that respondents, whether they are Valletta residents or not, are more likely to be concerned with the here and now in such a way that their responses are affected by the point in time in which the data are collected.

Table 6: Opinion as to when the effects of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) will be mostly felt in Malta, by sex

Opinion	Type of resident					
	2015			May 2018		
	Non-Valletta residents	Valletta residents	Total	Non-Valletta residents	Valletta residents	Total
	Number of Persons					
Total	351,101	4,784	355,885	364,310	4,653	368,963
Effect will be mostly felt in the years leading to 2018	38,916	557	39,473	10,168	[360]	10,528
Effects will be mostly felt in the year activities will take place, i.e. 2018	75,195	716	75,911	99,539	1,353	100,892
Important effects will have a long-term impact, even after the events are over	163,836	2,417	166,253	220,810	2,306	223,116
The ECoC will not have an impact	[3,145]	[66]	[3,210]	[6,173]	[170]	6,343
Do not know	70,009	1,028	71,037	27,620	464	28,084
	%					
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
Effect will be mostly felt in the years leading to 2018	11.1	11.6	11.1	2.8	7.7	2.9
Effects will be mostly felt in the year activities will take place, i.e. 2018	21.4	15.0	21.3	27.3	29.1	27.3
Important effects will have a long-term impact, even after the events are over	46.7	50.5	46.7	60.6	49.6	60.5
The ECoC will not have an impact	0.9	1.4	0.9	1.7	3.7	1.7
Do not know	19.9	21.5	20.0	7.6	10.0	7.6

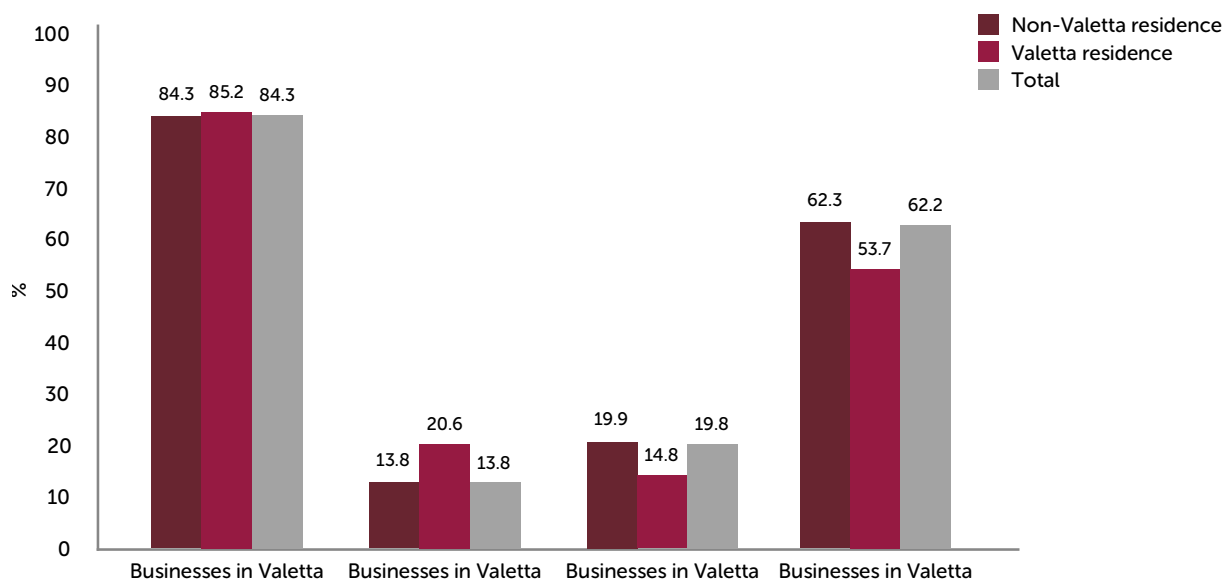
[] Under-represented (< 20 reporting individuals)

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Further small differences may be observed in the way residents of Valletta and residents of other Maltese localities reacted to the question of who will 'benefit' most from cultural events organised as part of Valletta 2018. While both types of residents put businesses in the city and tourists as the top two identified

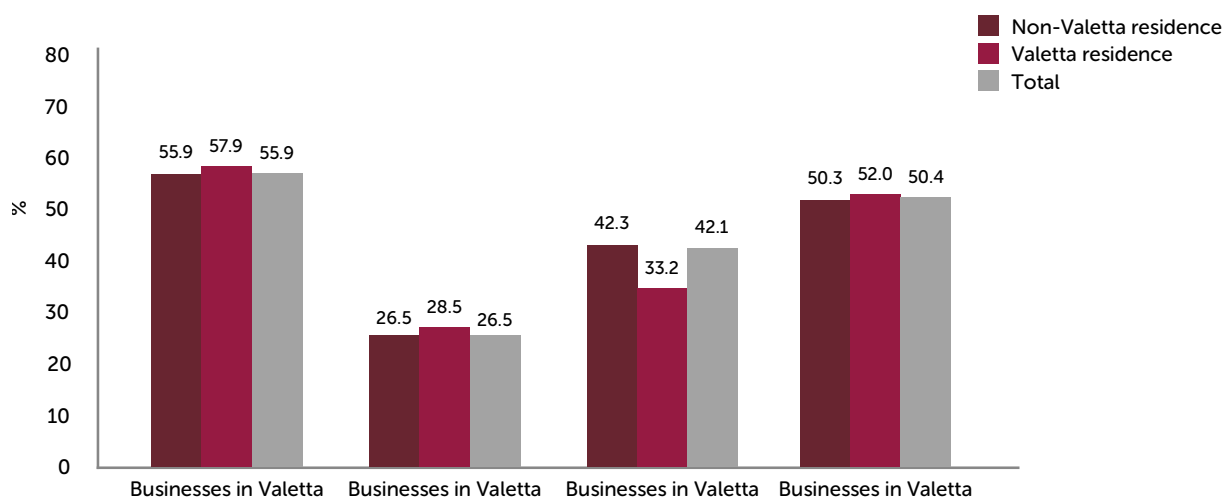
categories to benefit, Valletta residents and non-Valletta residents identified their own respective category as the third category in the hierarchy of beneficiaries. To the question as to who is most likely to 'participate' in events organised as part of Valletta 2018, the responses of Valletta and non-Valletta residents tended to converge more in that both of them put businesses in the city, tourists, and people who live in other localities outside Valletta as the top three categories as the most likely to participate.

Chart 12: Categories which will benefit most from cultural events organised as part of Valletta 2018, by type of resident (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

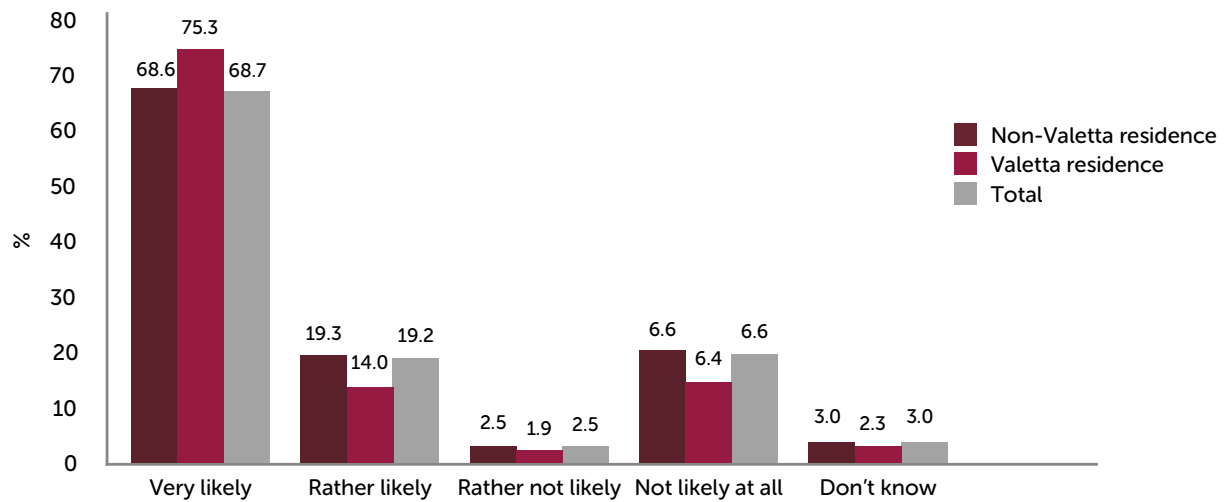
Chart 13: Categories which will participate most to cultural events organised as part of Valletta 2018, by type of resident (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

While the majority of both Valletta and non-Valletta residents were 'very likely' to recommend Valletta 2018 events, Valletta residents presented consistently at least six per cent more of this response along the years.

Chart 14: Respondents' likelihood of recommending events that are part of Valletta 2018, by type of resident (May 2018)

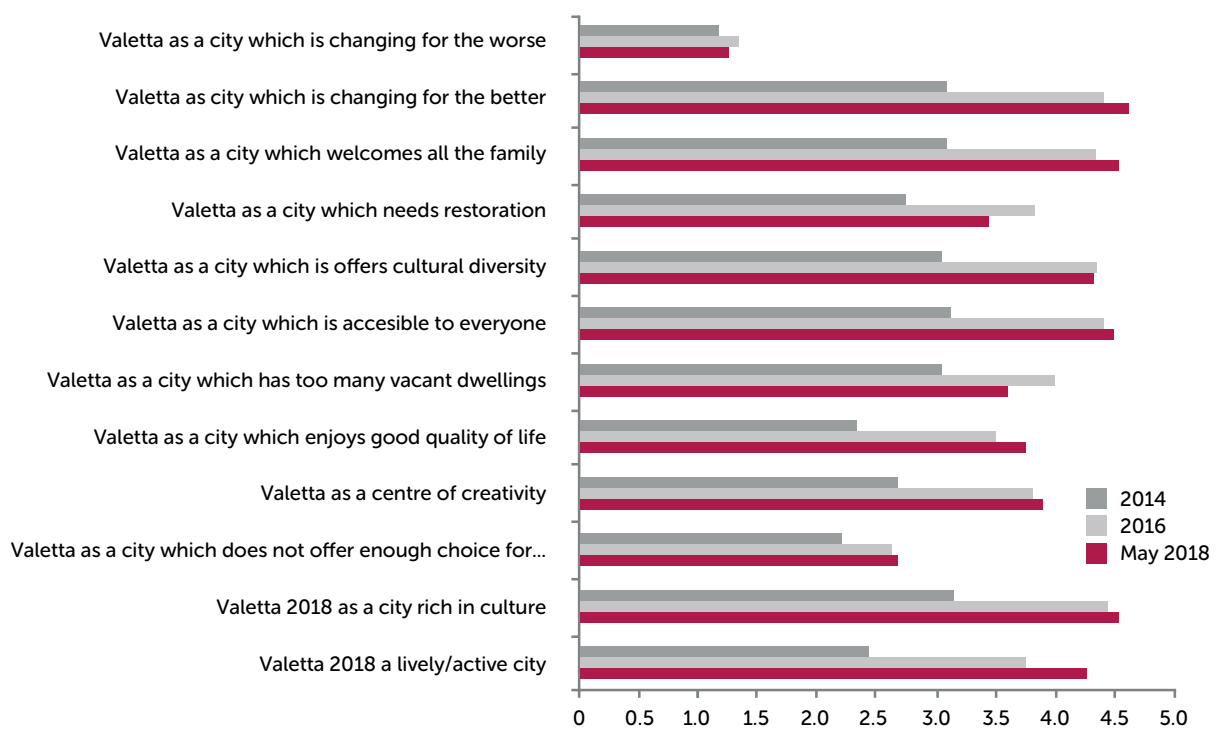


Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Social: Perceptions of Valletta

When the VPS used a Likert scale to measure the respondents' levels of agreement to a set of statements, the average respondent was found to be mostly in agreement with statements depicting Valletta as a 'city changing for the better', 'a city rich in culture', and 'a city which welcomes all the family'. The average respondent was also mostly in agreement with statements such as 'Valletta as a city which is accessible to everyone', 'Valletta as a city which offers cultural diversity' and 'Valletta as a lively/active city'. On the other hand, the average respondent did not agree at all when presented with the statement describing 'Valletta as a city which is changing for the worse'. There were no major differences between the sexes and the generations to the above statements.

Chart 15: Levels of agreement with the following descriptions of Valletta



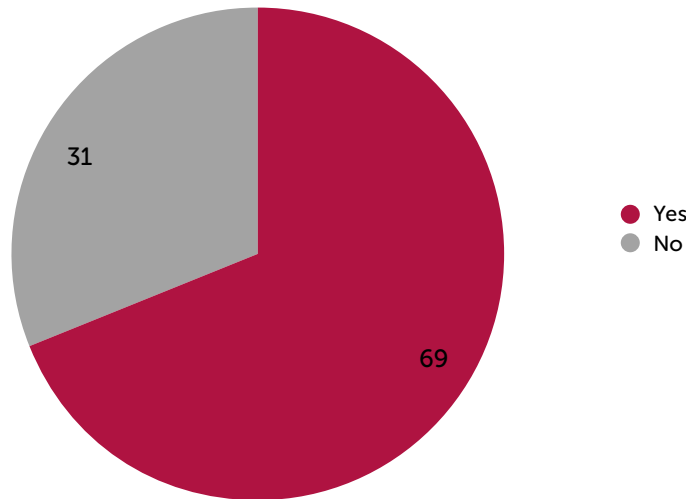
Average scores: Do not agree at all = 1; Fully agree = 5

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Image: Public expectations

When the VPS asked respondents whether Valletta 2018 events were meeting their expectations, the majority of them, that is 255,847 persons or 69.3%, replied in the affirmative. This response was very similar for males and females and for the 16 to 44 and the 45 years and over age group.

Chart 16: Respondents' fulfilment of expectations from Valletta 2018 events

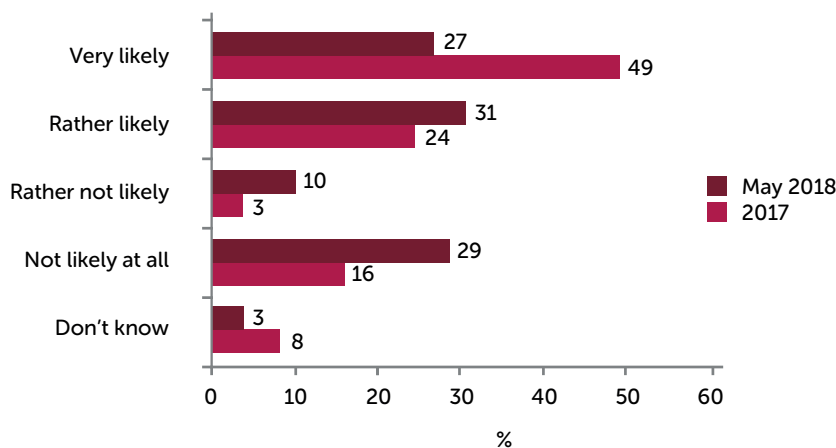


Source: Valletta Participation Survey

When looking at whether or not the respondents were likely or not to attend to events which take place in Valletta, one realises that those who said 'very likely' and 'rather likely' are over 60% for both 2017 and May 2018.

When taking into account only the other 30%, or 110,632 persons, who said that the Valletta 2018 events were not meeting their expectations, we find that 83% of them were also aware of the European Capital of Culture. Many of the persons within the segment of those who said that the Valletta 2018 events were not meeting their expectations were also 'not likely at all' to attend to events that take place in Valletta as part of Valletta 2018. In May 2018, the latter amounted to 46,932 or 42.4% of the 110,632 persons. Again, many of these persons were not to be affected in their current participation in cultural events by the organisation of Valletta 2018.

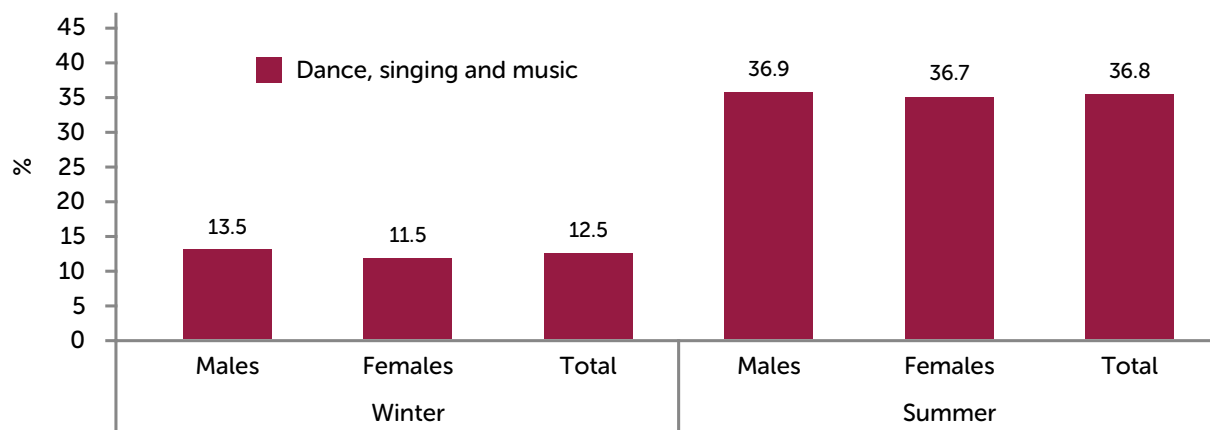
Chart 17: Respondents' likelihood of attending events that take place in Valletta, as part of Valletta 2018



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

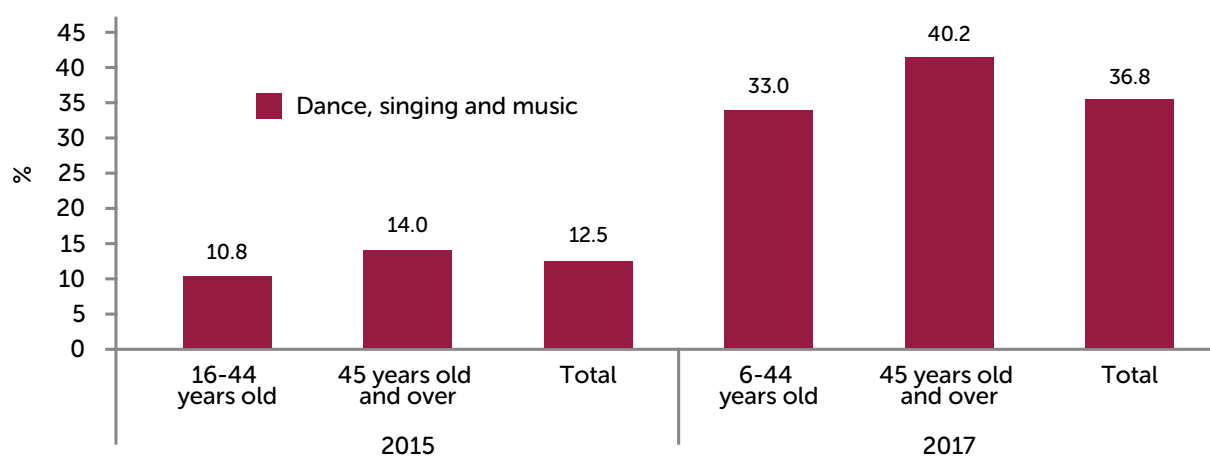
When respondents were asked to mention the cultural events they expected in 2018, activities related to 'dance, singing, and music' got the most mentions. While males and females were equally likely to mention such activities, persons aged 45 years and over and residents of Maltese localities other than Valletta were 7 percentage points more likely to mention 'dance, singing, and music' activities.

Chart 18: Cultural events expected by respondents in 2018 by sex



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Chart 19: Cultural events expected by respondents in 2018 by age group



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Image: Knowledge and the main source of information

The majority of the Maltese had heard of Valletta 2018, the European Capital of Culture. This was ascertained by all the waves of the VPS as well as by the Culture Participation Survey (CPS 2016) that was conducted in 2016. Accordingly, VPS 2014, VPS 2015, VPS 2016, VPS 2017 and VPS May 2018 respectively found that 65.4%, 62.7, 67.0%, 71.4% and 90.9% of the Maltese had such knowledge. CPS 2016 had found that 79.9% of the Maltese had heard of Valletta 2018.

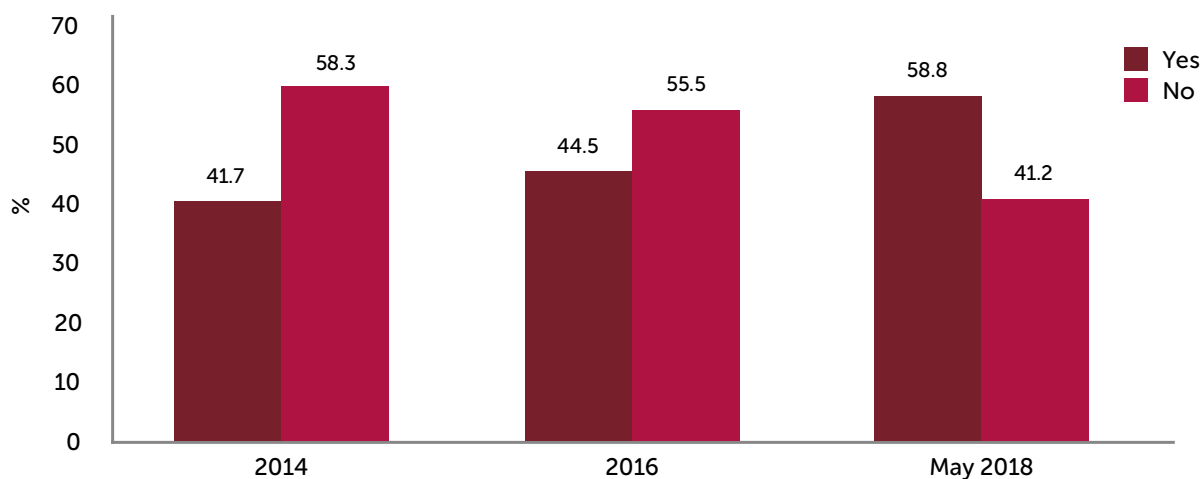
Table 7: Knowledge of the European Capital of Culture, by sex

	Sex								
	CPS 2016			VPS 2016			VPS May 2018		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
	Number of persons								
Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	181,206	179,165	360,372	184,290	184,672	368,963
Yes	148,697	139,322	288,019	137,701	103,764	241,465	170,995	164,283	335,277
No	30,879	41,437	72,316	43,506	75,401	118,907	13,296	20,390	33,686
	%								
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Yes	82.8	77.1	79.9	76	57.9	67	92.8	89	90.9
No	17.2	22.9	20.1	24	42.1	33	7.2	11	9.1

Source: Valletta Participation Survey

Along the last five years through which the VPS has been conducted, the rate of persons that were keeping themselves informed about Valletta 2018 has been consistently on the increase. In May 2018, the rate of these persons stood at 58.8%, up by 17.1% when compared to 2014.

Chart 20: Are respondents updating themselves with information on Valletta 2018? (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

In May 2018, there were minor differences between males and females in these figures in that the latter were 7.6 percentage points more likely to have been keeping themselves updated about Valletta 2018. Older persons were also found to be more informed about Valletta 2018 as the gap between persons aged 45 years and over and persons aged 16 to 44 amounted to 13.3%. Valletta residents were far more likely to be more informed about Valletta 2018 than the residents of other Maltese localities. Actually, in May 2018, the gap between the two types of residents stood at 17.8%. When considering these responses against the marital status of respondents, we find that married persons were far more informed about Valletta 2018

than single persons. Indeed, the difference between the married and the single amounted to 16.1%. Again, when we consider these responses against the variable of the respondents' level of education, we note that persons that have completed vocational post-secondary education are the least likely to have been keeping themselves informed about Valletta 2018. Accordingly, the rate of persons with vocational post-secondary education who were keeping themselves informed about Valletta 2018 stood at 51.1% as opposed to persons with a general post-secondary education whose rate stood at 62.8%. Moreover, when we consider the same responses against the variable of employment status we find that retired persons were the most likely category to have been keeping themselves informed about Valletta 2018, while students were the least likely. Indeed, the rate of the former reached 72.6%, while the rate of the latter stood at 41.8%.

Referring to the CPS results, when this survey attempted to measure the level of public awareness of a number of public cultural organisations, it transpired that, out of a given list of six organisations, Teatru Manoel was the most known, whereas Żfin Malta was the least known. Valletta 2018 Foundation came in fourth place with 72.1% of respondents saying that they had heard of it.

Table 8: Knowledge of venues or cultural entities, by sex

		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
		Number of persons			%		
... Teatru Manoel	Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Yes	172,685	177,201	349,886	96.2	98.0	97.1
	No	6,892	[3,558]	10,449	3.8	2.0	2.9
... Malta Philharmonic Orchestra	Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Yes	82.8	77.1	79.9	76	57.9	67
	No	17.2	22.9	20.1	24	42.1	33
... Spazju Kreattiv (ex-St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity)	Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Yes	121,118	129,819	250,937	67.4	71.8	69.6
	No	58,458	50,940	109,399	32.6	28.2	30.4
... Żfin Malta	Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Yes	35,468	47,718	83,186	19.8	26.4	23.1
	No	144,109	133,041	277,150	80.2	73.6	76.9
... Pjazza Teatru Rjal	Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Yes	142,305	148,558	290,863	79.2	82.2	80.7
	No	37,271	32,201	69,472	20.8	17.8	19.3
... Valletta 2018 Foundation	Total	179,576	180,759	360,335	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Yes	133,540	126,083	259,623	74.4	69.8	72.1
	No	46,037	54,676	100,712	25.6	30.2	27.9

[] Under-represented (< 20 reporting individuals)

Source: Valletta Participation Survey 2016

Further analysis indicates that, of all the major occupational groups, Managers (ISCO-08 1) and Professionals (ISCO-08 2) were the most likely to have heard of Valletta 2018 Foundation. On the other hand, Plant and machine operators, and assemblers (ISCO-08 9) and Craft and related trades workers (ISCO-08 8) were found to be the least likely to have heard of the Valletta 2018 Foundation.

Table 9: Knowledge of the Valletta 2018 Foundation, by occupational group

ISCO-08 Major Groups	Yes		Total	No		Total
	Number of persons %					
Total	155,245	79.6	39,711	20.4	194,959	100.0
1 Managers	21,481	92.8	[1678]	7.2	23,159	11.9
2 Professionals	34,718	89.7	[4008]	10.3	38,725	19.9
3 Technicians and associate professionals	22,208	81.0	[5208]	19.0	27,417	14.1
4 Clerical support workers	16,725	82.3	[3606]	17.7	20,331	10.4
5 Service and sales workers	24,460	75.7	7,853	24.3	32,314	16.6
6 Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	[1,566]	60.4	[1,026]	39.6	[2,591]	1.3
7 Craft and related trades workers	14,250	70.6	[5935]	29.4	20,186	10.4
8 Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	7,652	65.6	[4006]	34.4	11,659	6.0
9 Elementary occupations	11,232	66.6	[5639]	33.4	16,872	8.7
0 Armed Forces	[953]	55.9	[752]	44.1	[1,705]	0.9

[] Under-represented (< 20 reporting individuals)

Source: Valletta Participation Survey 2016

When we dissect the data for the Valletta 2018 Foundation by the respondents' labour status, we find that, among all the categories mentioned in Table 10, employed persons were those who had heard the most of the organisation in question. Accordingly, 79.6% of the employed persons said that they had heard of the Valletta 2018 Foundation.

Table 10: Knowledge of the Valletta 2018 Foundation, by labour status

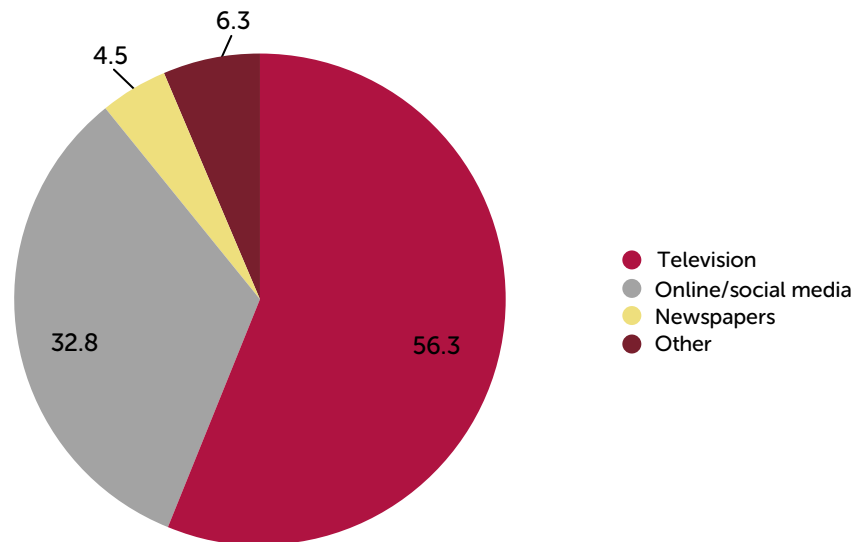
Labour status	Yes		Total	No		Total
	Number of persons %					
Total	259,623	100.0	100,712	100.0	360,335	100.0
Employed	155,245	79.6	39,713	20.4	194,958	54.1
Unemployed, seeking work	[2,812]	52.2	[2,570]	47.8	[5,382]	1.5
Student or trainee	15,774	66.2	8,069	33.8	23,843	6.6
Retired	40,571	66.1	20,852	33.9	61,422	17.0
Cannot work because of disability or illness	[2,529]	62.7	[1,507]	37.3	[4,036]	1.1
Housewife/ homemaker	41,551	61.1	26,471	38.9	68,022	18.9
Other inactive	[1,142]	42.7	[1,530]	57.3	[2,672]	0.7

[] Under-represented (< 20 reporting individuals)

Source: Valletta Participation Survey 2016

Television was the main source that was consistently helping respondents to keep themselves informed about Valletta 2018. In this regard, this medium reached 56.3% in May 2018, down by 12.1% since 2014. The second means of communication was the internet/social media. In May 2018, this relatively new media reached 32.8%, up by 22.2% since 2014. Newspapers as a main source of information to respondents on Valletta 2018 reached only 4.5% of responses, down by 4.4% since 2014. Data collected by the VPS has consistently shown that, in the main, people had heard of Valletta 2018 on television. This was also confirmed by the data of CPS 2016.

Chart 21: Main means by which respondents were keeping themselves informed about Valletta 2018 (May 2018)



Source: Valletta Participation Survey

While the television was the main source of information for both males and females, the two genders differed from each other in that the proportion of the former was more conspicuous in those that chose television, while the latter were more concentrated among those that chose internet/social media. Again, the younger and older age categories differed from each other in that the 16 to 44 age groups were more inclined to receive information about Valletta 2018 from the internet/social media, while the 45 and over age group were more inclined to receive such information via television. Further analysis from the point of view of marital status indicates that the share of persons whose main source of information was the television was the highest within the category of the widowed. Actually, 48.8% out of all the widowed were being informed about Valletta 2018 via the television. Moreover, when we disaggregate the data on the basis of the level of education we observe that the higher the academic background, the less central television becomes as a source of information about Valletta 2018.

CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, the Capital City of Culture provided an exceptional opportunity for the urban regeneration of Valletta as well as the restoration of many buildings in this city. Along the years of the VPS data collection, respondents also took note of the restoration projects that were being carried out given that the response of 'agree mostly' and 'agree very much' to the given statement that Valletta 'needs restoration' went down from 65.1% in 2014 to 50.1% in May 2018. Indeed, in the last five to ten years, Valletta enjoyed what may be called a great revival with various restoration projects that brought back life to the architecture of auberges, churches, palazzos, fortifications, and even streets. Open spaces around St George's Square, Jean De Valette Square, and the Triton Fountain have also been established with a new impetus to the pedestrianisation of the city. In this regard, it is relevant to note that according to VPS data the percentage of Valletta residents who said that they use open/public spaces in Valletta for relaxation purposes went up from 72.6% in 2014 to 86.0% in May 2018.

This urban regeneration of Valletta has also resulted in the sprawl of commercial activity. In relation to this development, the VPS data indicated that respondents have repeatedly perceived businesses in Valletta as the category that was benefitting most from cultural events organised as part of Valletta 2018. Beyond the restoration projects and the promotion of the enterprise, it is still relevant to ask and to invest in further research which can evaluate and identify whether the living conditions and quality of life of the residents have improved or not thanks to the experience of Valletta 2018.

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VALLETTA 2018 CULTURAL PROGRAMME

**Daniela Blagojevic Vella
with Vikesh Godhwani**

INTRODUCTION

This report starts with an introduction explaining the scope, methodology and the main findings and observations of the analysis over four years. It concludes with overall findings and recommendations.

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) Programme is a much-coveted title that brings with it high expectations for multiple objectives. It offers unique opportunities for cultural visibility, vibrancy and participation. This multi-faceted dimension of the ECoC has attracted a growing body of academic literature and commissioned reports on the subject. O'Callaghan (2012) reflects on the Programme's unrealistic expectations and deliverables that many cities do not achieve, resulting in alienation (p. 186). However, Garcia and Cox (2013) interpret this as an increase in the standard and ambition of the ECoC.

Valletta was selected as the ECoC on 12 October 2012. The Foundation, which spearheaded the application process, has been responsible for the organisation of the ECoC and the creation and implementation of the Cultural Programme. As has been identified in various ECoC evaluations (ECORYS 2012, 2013, 2014; Palmer/Rae 2014a, 2014b) the Cultural Programme is continuously in development and changes are frequent.

Valletta 2018 is no exception with changes happening within the Foundation and in the development of the programme. Changes in artistic direction and senior management posts throughout these five years were discussed widely and attracted significant media attention and debates within the artistic community.

The process of developing an ECoC Cultural Programme can be described in itself as a process of change. These changes and challenges grappled with by those on the ground make the research and evaluation of the Cultural Programme ever more pertinent. The Valletta 2018 ECoC offered a unique opportunity to design and conduct research in parallel with the development and delivery of the Cultural Programme.

This study was commissioned by the Foundation and focused on the creation, development and actualisation of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme and the individual projects included in this programme.

Scope of the study

The study started in 2015 and was led by 3 main objectives, namely (i) to analyse how the Cultural Programme is developed, devised and implemented (ii) to explore the factors that influence the creation of the Cultural Programme projects; (iii) to track the long-term development of the programme in terms of the cultural offer, participation and European collaboration as experienced by the main contributors including the Foundation programming team and producers.

The study set out to investigate the following research questions:

- 1. How has the Cultural Programme been developed and devised?**
- 3. What are the range and diversity of the cultural offer and programming balance?**
- 4. What strategies are adopted by the organisers and creators to engage audiences?**
- 5. How do the projects/events reflect the European Dimension?**

In the first three years of observation, the study focused on the work in progress to establish the full range of projects and the programme's vision as articulated in the published material and as experienced by the

content programmers. In 2018, the study could then observe the programme as it was being delivered and the experience of the creators on completion of their project. Table 1 lists the main highlights across the years.

Table 1: Programme highlights 2015-2018

ECoC Cultural Programme development 2015-2018			
2015	2016	2017	2018
Focus on refining vision and objectives.	Consolidation of projects to be included in the 2018 programme with over 60 projects included.	Finalisation of projects to be included in the 2018 programme.	Opening ceremony held on 20 January.
Development and piloting of initial projects.	Greater emphasis on the international dimension.	Launch of Programme including around 140 projects and 400 events on 27 September.	ECoC year and delivery of Cultural Programme including 140 projects.
Work on recruiting programming team members and engaging strand coordinators.	Engagement of international adviser.	Change in Executive Director and Programming Coordinator.	Announcement that the Valletta Cultural Agency to be set up to carry forward EcoC work.
Initial contracts drawn up.	Launch of the Tal-Kultura Volunteering Scheme.	Inauguration of new offices in August.	Closing ceremony on 15 December.

Methodology

This qualitative study adopted a mixed method approach to reflect the multi-dimensional dynamics of the programme and the developments unfolding over the years as shown in Table 2. The aim was to achieve reliability by triangulating the data collected from the institutional analysis, the semi-structured interviews, focus groups and online survey over the four years as follows:

- a.** An institutional level analysis: An overview of the Valletta 2018 objectives set the context of the broader institutional framework in which the programme was drawn up. In this first year of analysis, the focus was the collection of secondary data from Valletta 2018 documentation, European Commission selection panel reports and background literature, academic literature, Foundation website, programme schedules and other relevant material. This was done to refine further the criteria by which to assess the programme.
- b.** Interviews: Over 4 years, primary data information was gathered from around 40 key respondents through interviews, consultation meetings and focus groups. The interviews were held primarily with those responsible for programming and relevant stakeholders. The participants' knowledge and experiences were used to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject. The interviews and focus group included:
 - i.** Foundation Programming team members (in particular the two Programme Coordinators), regional coordinators and Artistic Director;
 - ii.** Strand coordinators and individual producers of projects in the Cultural Programme;
 - iii.** Independent artists and groups contributing to the programme.

- c. **Project Visits:** Project visits were conducted on a monthly basis. These on-site visits aimed to reach a sample of events and performances representing different categories, art forms and contributors to understand the range and content of diverse activities. For each visit, a data sheet (Annex) was inputted to a central system so that the information on each project visit was compiled. This could be compared and confirmed with the contributions received through the online questionnaire.
- d. **Online survey:** In 2017, it was decided to include an online survey for project leaders to ensure coverage of a wide range of projects happening in 2018 especially. This method was ideal in the case of contributors based abroad. In both 2017 and 2018, the response rate did not exceed 40%. Nonetheless, the outcomes from the online questionnaire give some interesting insights into the programme, which are included as an Annex to this report.

Strengths and Weaknesses in methodology

Unlike most post-evaluation studies, the ongoing evaluation here implies that this research could directly observe the individual projects as they progressed. The variety of methods also ensured that the Cultural Programme was understood holistically and included perspectives of various stakeholders.

However, the variety of projects made it problematic to draw comparisons between the different events. Moreover, the development of the programme is a process of constant reworking and this included a change in the contributors and projects. While acknowledging that there are time and resource constraints, the research had to ensure that the data updates were frequent and that the methodology was flexible.

The methodology used was adequate to gain detailed and in-depth perspectives. However, in-depth interviews have their limitations mainly because of biases by both the interviewees and interviewers. As established in previous reports (Blagojevic, 2015), caution is needed to be aware of personal interpretations for granted what Tinic refers to as the "situatedness" (Caldwell, 2008, p.8). In interviews, it may sometimes be challenging to filter through the self-promotion. Caldwell (2008) invites production studies researchers to sift through the personal branding and industry parlance (p. 318).

Also, studies on events commissioned by event organisers also tend to focus on positive aspects and neglect other critical aspects or do not focus sufficiently on social impact (Richards, 2013). Previous ECoC studies have noted the limitation of conducting interviews after the ECoC event, as they were reliant on respondents' recollections and perceptions (ECORYS, 2014). This study had the advantage of analysing the programme while it was still in progress.

The online survey for project organisers and the project visits helped to gain more data complementary to that collected in interviews. The main difficulty was that of attracting a high response rate especially since the report had to be completed before the actual closing event.

This study is limited to the perspectives of people working on the programme and does not include the views of cultural operators whose projects were not included in ECoC.

Table 2: Methodology 2015-2018

Methodology	2015	2016	2017	2018
Institutional Analysis	•			•
Focus groups and in-depth interviews	•	•	•	•
Online questionnaire			•	•
Project visits		•	•	•

MAIN FINDINGS (2015-2018)

Cultural Offer and Programming Balance

In analysing the Cultural Programme offer, various elements and approaches were considered as identified in ECoC evaluation studies (Garcia and Cox, 2013; Palmer/Rae, 2014;). These include the chosen themes, seasonal programme, art forms, type of events and programming balance.

The first year of study findings immediately showed the complexity of developing an ECoC Cultural Programme and the practical, day-to-day challenges encountered by those developing the programme. The changes in artistic direction influenced the development of the Cultural Programme, which before 2013 included one artistic director to oversee the entire programme and six assistant directors. In 2015, the study established that the Executive team would manage the core programming while the Artistic Director Mario Azzopardi would oversee the high profile "special" events.

In 2015, the documentation analysis showed a reworking of the objectives from the first bid book's 8 objectives to the final bid book and later to the strategic plan published in 2013 (Table 3). There were clear connections between all objectives, but throughout the planning phase, these were further clarified and refined.

In 2016, the study observed progress in the consolidation of the Cultural Programme with over 60 projects across different disciplines included and confirmed for 2018. Nonetheless, changes were ongoing. Over four years, the projects were either developed further, altered or even abandoned. Contributors and creatives working on the programme also changed. The most impactful changes occurred at Foundation level with changes in the artistic direction in 2013, in top management in 2017 and programming team members throughout 2018, directly influencing programme content.

Themes

In 2012, the Valletta 2018 bid-book presented four themes and orientations, namely "generations", "cities", "routes" and "islands". The themes were matched to four areas - education, skills, community and events.

At the development stage and later during the implementation phase, respondents from the foundation’s programming team observed that the themes were interpreted as flexible and the approach was not one of strict adherence to the original themes. In the words of the Cultural Programme Coordinator: “Rather than linking individual performances to a particular theme”, the themes were used as a narrative across the full programme with some of the projects having a more obvious link to the themes than others did. Nonetheless, the themes were also mentioned in the external communication of programmes as part of the Foundation’s aspirational vision.

In 2018, the Capital of Culture Programme was described as a celebration of “an island-wide festa”, and the programme themes were identified as “island stories”, “future baroque” and “voyages”. The overall “island” theme featured prominently with no less than 80 mentions in the official programme and a common theme running across project descriptions.

Table 3: Reworking of objectives Valletta 2011-2013

Bid Book 17 October 2011	Bid Book September 2012	Strategic Plan March 2013
Supporting a European Vision for Democracy and Culture	Establishing Valletta as a creative city	Transforming Valletta into a creative city
Ensuring Cultural Sustainability through the Reinvention of Cultural Education	Making careers of culture	Stimulating awareness of Malta’s diverse cultural identities
Encouraging the Dynamic Flourishing of Diversity	Growing internationally from the world within us	Driving collaboration and excellence in culture and the arts in Malta
Interpreting and Developing Multifaceted Cultural Identities	Nurturing sustainable relationships with our environment	Improving the quality of life in Valletta through culture
Incentivising and Sustaining the Economy of Culture		
Benefitting European Cooperation by Promoting International Networking		
Contributing to the ECoC Legacy by Supporting Monitoring and Research		
Nurturing a Sustainable Relationship to Our Environment		

Source: Valletta 2018 Foundation Bid Book 2011, Bid Book 2012, Strategic Plan 2013

Mass events and small projects

From the early stages to delivery, the Foundation made a clear distinction between large events led by the Artistic Director and the rest of the programme managed by the programming team. These big events were mainly the opening ceremony *Erba’ Pjajez*, *the Pageant of the Seas* and the opera *Aħna Refuġjati* all targeting mass audiences.

The Cultural Programme also included 15 festivals, both public and private, including the Malta International Arts Festival, ŻiguŻajg Children's festival, the Jazz festival and Earth Garden as part of its offer. These already existing festivals either widened their offer or included special events in 2018.

Apart from the popular large-scale events and festivals, the programme was characterised by a significant number of small, grassroots projects and initiatives happening throughout the year and across different locations. These smaller projects were not meant to attract thousands and can be considered more niche, under the radar projects. Projects like *Darba Waħda*, *Naq̄sma il-Muża* and *Fragmenta* are the result of a process-led approach and had been piloted in the previous years. These projects mostly led by Maltese or Malta-based creatives stood the test of time and made it to the ECoC final programme. Similarly, projects like *Oħloq Kultura*, *KantaKantun*, *the Box* and *Sounds Out Loud* had started their collaboration in schools beforehand.

Some initiatives like *Il-Festa l-Kbira* and *Ħabbilni ħa Nirbaħ* were not listed on the official programme but were then inserted as part of the programming later in the year. On the other hand, some projects like *Story Works*, *Qatt ma' Ninsa*, *Windrose Project* and *Pjazza fi Pjazza* were abandoned and came to a close before the capital of culture year.

Art Forms and Seasonal Programming

Throughout the years, the Foundation managed its programme by grouping the projects according to genre or type with a coordinator responsible for each strand. The categorisation was made either by the type of artistic discipline or by the theme or by the kind of target group and interaction with the audience. The strands were useful to help in the internal management of the programme and to ensure a balanced offer. In its internal documents and website, the Foundation uses multiple tags to categorise individual projects as follows: community, visual arts, design, children and young people, performance, opera, music and film. These categories were also used in external communication with the Cultural Programme publication and website, clearing making references to these categories.

In 2018, the Cultural Programme included activities across main art forms with music (31%) and visual arts (28%) being the most represented genres. The music strand included 7 Foundation events and 17 Open Call events. Theatre, dance and literature were less prominent. However, a substantial number of projects adopted an interdisciplinary approach (21%) with different art forms included, suggesting broader definitions and approaches.

Throughout the planning phase, the team considered the timing of other long-standing activities such as the Malta International Arts Festival, the Baroque Festival, the St Paul's Feast and local council festivals. The equal distribution of projects across different months and seasons and other practical issues for outdoor events was another concern in devising the project timing.

In practice, during the delivery stage, the distribution of projects was not ideal. Following the opening event in Valletta, the first quarter of the year included a focus on musical events showcasing work by international groups and artists. The second and third quarter saw an increase in the number and frequency of performances as well as outdoor events as is expected since this timing also coincides with arts festivals like Ghana Fest, Valletta Film Festival, the Malta International Jazz festival and the Malta International Arts Festival. The September and October months can be said to have been the opera season with *Aħna Refuġjati*, *Aida*, *Corto Maltese* and *Tosca* all happening within the span of a few weeks.

As observed in the 2018 report, the concentration of big events during one season, as in the case of opera, created difficulties and pressure for the organisers. In the words of the Programme Coordinator:

"This meant that performances were competing for the same venues, talent, technical resources and audiences. The number of events happening in the last quarter created a strain on the limited resources available". Various respondents working on the programme emphasised that the unprecedented increase in the culture offer created pressure on resources and coordination of activities.

Space and Location

From the outset, the Foundation announced that Valletta 2018 projects and events would be performed across various localities and not only in Valletta. The Valletta title is described as "an award shared among all localities on our Islands" (Cultural Programme 2018, p.3). The five Regional Coordinators worked with the programming team to broker the Cultural Programme in Valletta, Gozo, the North, Centre, South and South East regions and to engage residents across different localities. In 2016, the study observed that the Regional Coordinators also stepped up their role and helped the Foundation to understand the needs of different locations to address gaps in the programme and to identify the different target groups across the five regions. The role of the regional coordinators was a new initiative within the Maltese cultural sector, and as expressed by the programming team their role is still to be fully exploited.

Both public and private spaces were used to host various events, but respondents commented that private venues were found to have fewer facilities and equipment. Use of public space also presented some challenges. Outdoor events required substantial work on logistics and lengthy processes to acquire permits from various entities.

Traditional and Contemporary

The focus on contemporary art and bringing "contemporary culture to our capital city" (Cultural Programme p.15) was a priority articulated by interviewees responsible for programming. In 2016, the Executive Director observed that Valletta 2018 could not just be a reflection of the past, but it is crucial to challenge ideas of what it means to be Maltese, Mediterranean and European in contemporary society.

The programme, however, also describes a suspension between traditional and contemporary. Similarly, 57% of the project leads responding to the 2018 online survey described their project as contemporary while 43% described their activities as including elements of both traditional and contemporary.

Overall, the Cultural Programme included a varied cultural offer and a mixture of projects ranging from the much-publicised mass events to community-focused niche projects. Such variety necessitated diverse forms of engagement with audiences varying from mere attendance to co-creation and active collaboration.

Audience participation

Strategies and challenges

The ECoC discourse was strongly characterised by participation, community outreach and public engagement. The study needed to acknowledge that participation is a wide-ranging term to define. Increasingly, the emphasis on participatory culture is to involve citizens not only as spectators but also as creators or co-creators (Jenkins, 2016).

The Cultural Programme preview published in 2017, announced: "Inclusivity, accessibility and participation are at the core of our Cultural Programme. All our community and participation-focused events are an open invitation to a celebration that begins in the symbolic heart of our programme (...)" (p.15).

The interviews before the ECoC year, particularly those with the Foundation's programming officers showed awareness on the "quality participation as opposed to numbers" (Focus Groups, 2017) and ambition towards active and meaningful participation. In the words of one of the respondents: "I hope people are transformed from a state of passivity to a state of being active. As someone active, you believe in the power to change things. Ultimately, from an ethical or moral perspective, you are spending public money to make people active citizens."

The study set out to identify how creators of the programme set out to involve citizens. In 2015 and 2016, programmers, project leaders and artists shared a common concern that reaching out to audiences is not without difficulty and that increasing audience participation requires a significant cultural change. The programming team members spoke about moulding the marketing strategies or engagement techniques according to the specific projects and target groups, always being sensitive to their particular needs.

There was also an awareness of the balance needed between promoting the programme as a whole and disseminating information about individual activities. This difficulty was experienced throughout the delivery.

As identified through the 2017 and 2018 online questionnaire, the Foundation and project leaders used mixed methods to reach out to audiences. This was also emphasised in the qualitative analysis with the project leaders as they agreed that marketing needed to vary according to the particular needs of individual projects and reflect the eclectic nature of the programme. The various methods used include social media, traditional marketing and communication, information session and use of regional coordinators and volunteers.

In 2018, generally, the programming team observed unpredictable trends in participation. Some events were initially thought of as hard to sell and were eventually sold out. Other performances registered lower attendance than expected. Respondents also commented on influencing factors like location, weather and the world-cup football games. Other producers commented on the positive trends in participation which were "bigger and better than expected". The 2018 online survey confirms this as respondents showed levels of satisfaction in the numbers reached.

Moreover, it proved easier to get the general public to initiatives that were familiar such as the very traditional *il-Festa l-Kbira* rather than to the more contemporary innovative work. For *il-Festa Kbira*, a large number of local councils even arranged free transport for people to attend due to demand. In some cases, like with *Orpheo*, workshops and community involvement was successful while in other cases like in *Każin Barokk*, getting local communities to engage proved harder due to the last minute decisionmaking nature of devised performances.

The Foundation's programming and communications teams needed to work continuously at awareness raising level and repeated efforts were needed to engage different groups of citizens. As observed by the Programming Coordinator, for some events and workshops, the Foundation issued calls several times in an attempt to encourage more take-up.

Other trends were observed by the programming team such as the difficulty in attracting participation by creative professionals to commit to a week-long workshop led by top artists. On the other hand, short, one-off workshops targeting younger audiences were more popular. The commitment by creatives or the lack thereof was a common concern of programmers observed across the four years.

The significant amount of events and the limited size of audiences was mentioned by respondents as an ongoing challenge. In the words of one of the strand coordinators: "The reason we did not reach the

desired audience numbers in all of the foundation events is that there were perhaps too many events on the go, often clashing, which automatically results in a dilution of potential attendees". Similar concerns on the programme activities competing for the same audiences were expressed by another project coordinator. Specifically, it was noted that:

The project was very successful in terms of satisfaction of artists, participants and audience members. The only hiccup that we had was that another last-minute event was planned on the same day as the concert, which severely hampered audience numbers.

Commenting on the Foundation's efforts to attract audiences, 61% of the project leads responding to the 2018 questionnaire said that enough was done while 39% were not satisfied, more specifically one respondent commented that there was no marketing strategy for the individual project and others commented on stretched resources. An international contributor commented that audience engagement strategies were done by the Foundation but they were not aware of what methods were used.

Specific Target Groups

At the development stage but even more so in the 2018 analysis, the specific target groups of individual projects could be observed. Table 4 illustrates some examples of targeting specific groups either as co-creators or as audiences. Some projects also consisted of different initiatives targeting multiple groups.

Table 4: Information on specific target audiences as gathered from project visits and online questionnaire

Specific Group Targeted	Examples of Cultural Programme projects/events
Migrants	<i>Rima, Utopian Nights, Exiled Homes</i>
Maltese Diaspora	<i>Latitude 36, Sempre Viva</i>
Valletta Residents	<i>Ġewwa Barra, Valletta Forum, Valletta Design Cluster - Design4Dcity</i>
Children and Youth	<i>Kanta Kantun, Años Luz and Hush. Programmes, Gaħan18, Ohloq Kultura, The Box and Taf x'Naf, The Strange Travels of Señor Tonet, Mewġa Mużika, Code Red, Solar Cinema, Rulina, Subjective Maps, Playspace, Poetry Potato Bags</i>
Disabled	<i>Sounds out Loud, InVisible, Tactile</i>
Hospital patients	<i>Deep Shelter, Dance4All</i>
Amateur Musicians	<i>Mewġa Mużika</i>
Older Adults (and children)	<i>Darba Waħda, 1001 Dreams</i>
Local Councils and residents in particular localities across Malta and Gozo	<i>Magna Żmien (Birgu, Mellieħa, Siġġiewi and Victoria (Gozo); Subjective Maps (Victoria and Birżebbuġa, Qawra); Solar Cinema (various); Altofest (Rabat, Manikata, Qormi, Hamrun, Santa Venera, Żejtun, Cospicua, Vittoriosa, Gżira and Sliema); Bodies in Urban Spaces (Mellieħa); Naqşam il-MUŻA (Birżebbuġa, Marsa, Kalkara and Gżira)</i>

The Foundation categorised over 15 projects as 'Community Projects'. These included process-led projects like *Subjective Maps*, *Altofest*, *Rulina*, *Latitude 36*, *Exiled Homes*, *Ġewwa Barra*, *Rima*, *Shake It*, *Darba Waħda* and *Magna Żmien*. The emphasis of this kind of programming was not on the quantity of the persons participating but on the quality and type of engagement.

Projects like *Ġewwa Barra* and *Altofest* were designed to include active participation and co-creation from early stages where creatives worked directly with residents over a longer period. In these activities, the approach was to engage groups like the Valletta residents in the creation process. The use of space for such projects is also part of the participatory element and in *Altofest* residents hosted events inside their private homes and community spaces. Valletta 2018 offered a unique opportunity to develop these long-term projects which would probably not have been developed and sustained were it not for the ECoC and its focus on community.

Other projects like *Cabinets of the Future* worked with experts and citizens through communal workshops. It created opportunities for participants to share aspirations and concerns that explore visions of the local future. Similarly, the initiative *Utopian Nights* encouraged the public to engage on societal issues. While larger events focus on mass audiences, such projects strategically focused on working or appealing to niche groups. 54% of survey respondents said that they targeted specific groups.

Migrant groups and the Maltese diaspora were the specific target group of projects like *Exiled Homes*, *Rima*, *Utopian Nights* and *Latitude 36*. Producers of *Exiled Homes* described the openness of the Filipino community to work collaboratively and enthusiastically.

Children and youth were another target, and over 11 projects were designed to target younger audiences like the performances *Años Luz* and *Hush*. Programmes like *Sounds Out Loud*, *Gahan18*, *Ohloq Kultura*, *The Box* and *Taf x'Naf* were delivered within school settings and created opportunities for children to co-create and explore different art forms.

Vulnerable groups were another target group identified by programmers. Young people with different abilities and their carers worked on the *Sounds Out Loud* project. The visual arts exhibition *Tactile* targeted the visually impaired community. The group Opening Doors participated in the programme and worked with persons with different intellectual abilities as well as volunteers, artists and other practitioners. The group's performance (*In*) *Visibility* is one of the final events of the 2018 Programme.

The Foundation also set out to facilitate the participation of vulnerable or hard to reach groups by working with active ageing centres, schools and hospitals. Another strategy was to provide specialised transport to those communities that required it such as mental health patients at Mount Carmel Hospital who visited the *Orfeo Majnun Parade* and the Toi Toi performance *Down Memory Lane*.

Performances like *Kazin Barokk* and *Kantina* also engaged audiences in a more active manner by making them part of the performance; in *Kantina* audiences were invited to have a meal during the performance while in *Kazin Barokk*, audience members were encouraged to play a game to immerse them in the world of gambling.

The Volunteering scheme was launched in 2016 and was observed as being a common element for public engagement adopted by previous ECoCs (Garcia, 2013). This strategy was also used by the Foundation to encourage active citizenship through the *Tal-Kultura Volunteer Scheme* done in collaboration with the organisation SOS Malta. The aim was that of fostering a sense of active citizenship through the volunteering

experience. The take-up for this scheme by non-Maltese residents was significant. However, their role in engaging audiences was mostly limited to offering assistance to usher guests and distribute materials during events.

European Dimension

In November 2012, the selection panel observed that the Valletta 2018 bid needed improvement in highlighting the European dimension of the programme and that this should not be solely interpreted as a showcasing of Malta to Europe but rather raising awareness on Europe with Maltese citizens (Final Selection Report Valletta, 11 November 2012). The monitoring report (September 2015) recommends that the European dimension should be further emphasised.

In line with ECoC objectives, the European dimension in the form of transnational collaboration and cultural diversity is a priority in the design of Cultural Programmes. The island theme and Malta's geographical position was interpreted as an opportunity to create meaningful links between Europe and Africa.

Beyond the rhetoric of external communication that stresses the importance of making connections beyond island-life, it is essential to understand how creators set out to collaborate with European artists in practice.

A significant shift was observed in 2016 preparations showing a more outward-looking approach and emphasis on the international dimension. The appointment of Airan Berg as International Artistic Advisor contributed to this development and increased the focus on establishing international links. An International Officer was also engaged early in 2016 to assist the programming team in this area. The programming team deliberately sought to explore European connections and the new programme content attests to this. The Programming Coordinator and other members of the team travelled to various festivals and more links were created through these visits.

The vast majority (92%) of respondents responsible for individual projects viewed their work as relevant to European audiences while 69% believed their project could be exported in the future. Throughout the entire programme, the European and/or international dimension was present either through the themes tackled or through the participation of international artists and communities. The migration strand, in particular, focused on creating connections, representing minorities and working on the themes of departure, exile and stories of minority groups. The programming team also commented that foreign artists associated Malta with migration and this seemed to be the most common thematic interest for international collaborators.

The Meeting Points strand and the artist residencies also had the objective of improving international networking with a focus on the Euro-Mediterranean region. Artists from different countries including Jordan and Australia were hosted and encouraged to share their work through these residency initiatives.

The exchange with the EU-Japan Fest Committee also allowed for international exchanges. The *Valletta Design Cluster*, the *Tactile* exhibition and *Modern Music* days all benefitted from this collaboration. The island theme also made this collaboration further relevant as shown in the project *Island Lights* highlighting aspects within both Maltese and Japanese cultural experiences as islands.

The collaboration was also ongoing with the twin European of Capital Culture Leeuwarden-Fryslan. This included higher education student mobility programmes for MCAST and Friesland College students. The projects *Poetry in Potato Bags*, *Taf X'Naf*, *Subterranean Matter*, *Kirana*, *Ohloq Kultura* and *Aida* also established direct links with the Dutch counterparts. Links with Austria were created through the Artistic adviser Airan Berg.

Beyond the diversity, exchange and Maltese culture export benefits, the programmers also reflected on the challenges in establishing meaningful international collaboration. The Programming Coordinator described the showcasing of international acts in Malta as being relatively straightforward to manage when compared to devised and collaborative work with foreign artists.

Collaboration on original and commissioned work proved to be more difficult in practice. As expressed by the programming coordinator, “the focus of some of the international artists was about bringing their art here and less so about collaborating with local artists”. In the case of the performance *Każin Barokk*, the original idea was that of collaborating with local artists, but throughout the selection process, very few Maltese performers were included. In other auditions and calls for participation in internationally-led workshops, attracting the participation of Maltese creatives also proved to be challenging. In some cases, it was problematic to bring Maltese creatives on board to work on international projects that required a long-term commitment. Although good collaborations were created, the programmers commented that there was still some fear and hesitation from local artists in making use of the international opportunities provided to them by Valletta 2018, particularly by the less established artists.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

In the first years of study, respondents highlighted difficulties related to finding the right professionals to work on projects and to strengthen human resources to ensure the successful delivery of the programme. The commitment of professionals over a number of years proved to be an ongoing struggle.

The lack of experience by cultural players in Malta to produce projects at this scale was an equally mentioned barrier. Respondents, both Foundation representatives and artists, highlighted the need for capacity building, development of knowledge, competencies and skills. These challenges reflect changes in the Maltese arts sector but were particularly pronounced as the ECoC approached. The need for greater professionalism in the culture industry became more apparent. As articulated in several interviews, many view the ECoC process as one that should lead to a change in mindsets and improved quality standards in the arts.

Another challenge voiced throughout was the lack of effective strategies to attract and engage audiences. Contributors needed to understand the overall objectives of the Cultural Programme and to share best practices on reaching and engaging audiences. Early on, interviewees spoke of the need for a forum to debate and strategise around the issues faced by cultural players. There was a need for contributors to understand the over-arching Valletta 2018 vision and how the work of individual artists or groups contributed to these broader objectives. Project leads reiterated the need for more communication with the Foundation.

Beyond the actual development of the programme, the focus groups generated debates on the challenges faced by independent artists in Malta. The concerns included the lack of resources and access to public institutions. The artists interviewed also saw a potential for the Foundation to facilitate relationships with both cultural stakeholders and audiences.

The contractual agreements drawn up by the Foundation, the rigid public procurement procedures and “bureaucratic processes” were also described by programmers and producers as a major challenge hindering relations with artists. In some cases, collaborators found it difficult to understand why lengthy administrative measures were being adopted at the detriment of artistic quality and requirements.

Respondents' concerns on lack of resources and flexibility show that the implementation of the programme needs to be seen in the broader context, such as the need for improvement of organisational strength in the Maltese creative sector and the need for overall capacity building at both public institution and cultural operator level.

The experience gained by the programming team and producers throughout these years should be used to improve future cultural aspirations and programming in Malta beyond 2018 in the next phase of legacy development. Most respondents spoke of their ambition of carrying projects forward in years to come or to showcase work abroad.

CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

This study looked at the development and delivery of the ECoC. The focus was the creator's experience on the ground and the strategies used to offer varied projects, engage the public particularly in community-based projects and create European and international links.

The cultural offer was varied in range offering opportunities to different groups across many localities in Malta and Gozo. The programme was balanced in relation to the involvement of both Maltese and international artists. Most producers saw their projects as relevant to the broader international audience, and the vast majority also saw the potential for their project to travel and be developed further in years to come. Valletta 2018 gave opportunities to creatives and audiences alike to experience projects that may have otherwise not been created.

Concerning the restraints of this study, because this analysis has been undertaken just before the end of the ECoC, the overall reflection by programmers and producers may not yet be fully apparent and articulated. It is recommended that future studies in 2019 focus on gathering responses from the main programme contributors a few months after the programme has ended to allow for detachment and hindsight reflection on the effectiveness of the Cultural Programme.

This report focuses on the perspectives of those directly involved in programme delivery and does not include perspectives of cultural players who distanced themselves from the programme or did not participate. Further studies should also explore the attitudes of local creative practitioners and operators who may have been alienated by ECoC. Moreover, studies on governance and how political changes affect the development and delivery of the Cultural Programme are also relevant to understand large-scale national initiatives and how they can be more efficient and effective.

THE IMPACT OF VALLETTA 2018 ON THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY OF THE MALTESE POPULATION

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2012, Valletta was selected to be the 2018 European Capital of Culture (ECoC). The cultural programme envisaged considerable community and outreach components all around the Maltese Islands. The present study examines the extent to which European identity in Malta may have been affected by the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme, to what extent, and among what segments of the population. Consistent, accessible and comparable research and evaluation directly linked to culture is one of the requirements of hosting a ECoC (Garcia and Cox, 2013). In light of this, this study employs a mixed-method and whole country approach spread over the period 2015-2018.

European-ness and ECoCs

The “European dimension” is a key aspect of the ECoC programme. Programmes are to a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector, b) highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe and c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore (European Parliament, 2006). The assumption is that by hosting a ECoC, feelings of “European-ness” will be enhanced among members of the host community.

But whether this is actually the case remains a question worthy of investigation. Indeed, the term “European identity” is itself an inherently elusive concept. Studies of European identity can be traced back to classic studies of European integration (e.g. Deutsch, 1953). The shift from economic to political integration, and the recent legitimacy crisis, revitalised this area of study and sparked a new wave of empirical analyses of European identity (Bellucci and Sanders, 2012; Cram, 2012; Duchesne and Frogner, 1995; Fligstein, 2008). Conducting a comparative study of the impact on European identity, capable of systematic analysis, comparison, and replication is complicated by the fact that identity is considered to be context-specific.

While the study of the impact of cultural events became more sophisticated (Richards, 2000; Richards and Wilson, 2004) and multi-dimensional and longitudinal monitoring became increasingly the norm (Richards, 2015), the impact on identity also became the object of analyses. However, most such studies analysed identity in the repertoires of action, discourses, and frames in ECoC events (Sassatelli, 2002 and 2009). The actual impact of those events on the identity of the host societies was confined to in-depth studies of single events (Dragoman, 2008; Lähdesmäki, 2012; O’Callaghan and Linehan, 2007).

A recent pan-European study (Steiner et al., 2014) which did examine the effects of hosting ECoCs over time and across a number of ECoCs focused on wellbeing. While the ECoCs may well have beneficial impacts on culture, infrastructural improvements, the creation of additional jobs tourism and economic turnover, but they also created environmental deterioration, crowding-out of public investments, mismatched infrastructure, crime, and housing affordability (Steiner et al., 2014).

Context

The study takes a whole country approach in the context of Malta. Contemporary research on Malta’s European identity focused on the impact of Europe on the complex, multidimensional identity of the country (Baldacchino, 2002; Cini, 2000). Some empirical studies focused on Malta’s attitudes towards the EU. While the Maltese society was relatively lukewarm in comparison to other ‘new’ EU members (Pace, 2011), recent studies found evidence of an increased positive image Europe (Carammia and Pace, 2015). However, the causes of this change have not been the object of systematic analysis.

The study is also informed by recent research in Malta on the extent and nature of cultural participation in Malta. A recent study finds that three years ahead of hosting the ECoC, both active and passive participation were generally lower in Malta than in other EU countries (Briguglio and Sultana, 2015). The studies also document evidence of higher levels of life-satisfaction among Maltese people with higher cultural participation, arguing that while this provides some basis for justification for interventions like ECoC, it is important to conduct longitudinal studies to find causal effects.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method approach spread over a four-year period (2015-2018), with people in the entire country of Malta as the focus.

Defining Identity

The study builds upon innovative approaches for the study of European identity as developed in recent authoritative, large-scale comparative research (Bellucci and Sanders, 2012). Following this lead, we envisage identity to be complex in nature resulting from the interaction of three interrelated components: a. Identity, or the feeling of belonging to the European Union; b. Representation, or the extent to which actors perceive that EU the provides representation to their interests; and c. Scope, or the degree to which actors would like the EU to have jurisdiction on a wide range of policies.

These three components together define the extent to which actors feel 'European'. Each component results in a different form of identification and is driven by distinct motivations. Identity captures the affective dimension of identification, resulting from long-term socialisation processes. Therefore, this core component of European-ness should be relatively more resistant to change. Representation and scope, in turn, capture respectively a rational/instrumental and a political form of identification. Since rational/instrumental and political judgements are relatively easier to change than affective judgements, the representation and scope dimensions of European-ness should be more likely to change following exposure and participation to Valletta 2018 events.

2.2. Hypotheses

The study tests three hypotheses, namely

H1. The impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society is conditional on the definition or dimensions of European-ness: affective dimensions of European-ness are least likely to change;

H2. The European-ness of Malta's society responds positively to participation and involvement in Valletta 2018;

H3. The impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society is influenced by controls and demographics.

Mixed-methods

In the first year of the study (2015), extensive desktop research was undertaken to obtain the baseline scenario on the definitions of European Identity, Cultural Participation and Valletta 2018 exposure, alongside of data on several socio-economic descriptors of people in Malta. During the second year of the study (2016), a large-scale cross-sectional survey was carried out, employing computer assisted

telephone interviews (CATI) on individuals aged over 18 years residing in private households. The survey returned 850 responses, which revealed interesting behavioural patterns in cultural attendance and participation that echoed the findings of the Malta cultural participation survey. This survey was repeated in the year during which the ECoC was hosted (2018) Focus groups were set up and analysed in the third year of the study (2017).

The study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive and nuanced definition of European Identity among people in Malta; systematically documenting the changes which occurred over a period of four years; systematically documenting the determinants that contributed to the change in that sentiment; focusing on the extent to which the EcoC, knowledge thereof and participation therein contributed to such change, if any, once other factors are carefully controlled for; and conducting in-depth qualitative analysis to understand the nuances which the numbers may not reveal.

We emphasize the importance of complementing quantitative studies with insights from in-depth, qualitative discussions. While the former can provide robust evidence and permit systematic comparison, the latter complements them with essential context and texture.

2.4 Quantitative analysis

A survey interview was designed specifically for this study to tap the relevant dimensions of both the dependent variable (European-ness) and the possible explanatory variables, of which ECoC participation is the key variable of interest. In defining identity, reference was made to recent, authoritative, large-scale comparative research (Bellucci and Sanders, 2012), which define European-ness as a complex construct composed of (i) Identity, or the feeling of belonging to the EU; (ii) Representation, or the extent to which people see their interests represented in the EU; and (iii) Scope, or the degree to which actors would like the EU to have jurisdiction on a wider (or narrower) range of policies.

In designing indicators of cultural participation, reference was made to similar work conducted in Malta (Briguglio and Sultana, 2015). The questions also drew on those included in standard Eurobarometer, European Social Survey, and the World Value Survey. The final survey (as described in the 2015 report) included questions on degree of attachment to their town or village, region, country, Europe; nationality and the meaning assigned to having that nationality; being European and what it means to be European; feeling European and extent of voting in European elections; perceived consequences of Europe on people; knowledge of EU members; perceived benefit for Malta and its citizens of being in the EU; views on integration and responsibility of the EU in various domains; awareness of Valletta 2018; ability to name Valletta 2018 events; participation and attendance of any Valletta 2018 events. Further questions included those on age, gender, locality of residence, number of persons and children in the household, educational level, labour status, marital status and income. Other questions relate to self-assessed health, wellbeing, level of socialising and religious affiliation and frequency of religious service attendance. Respondents were also asked about institutional trust, political interest, whether they have ever resided abroad for a continuous period of at least 12 months or visited another EU country in the last 12 months.

The second wave survey benefitted from the insights of in-depth discussions conducted as part of the focus groups held in 2017, insights drawn from the response rates in the first wave and discussion in a number of scholarly conferences where the first wave results were presented. In particular, there was the removal of a question (related to detailed policy fields) which respondents seemed to find difficult to answer and which was not particularly relevant to the question at hand. There was also the inclusion of a question on the sense of "Mediterranean" identity.

In April 2016 the Electoral Register for the Maltese Islands was used to create a simple random sample of respondents aged over 18, with replacements. The respondents were then identified and telephone numbers acquired. Early terminations were not included in the final dataset to ensure consistency and limit missing data. In line with requirements from the Data Protection Commission, the dataset was duly anonymised, and case was given a unique code. The data set was then checked for inputting errors. The sample is representative of the Maltese population in terms of both spread (across the different localities as per sequential random sampling as sorted by locality and street name). Females are over-represented (mean of 0.6) and skewed towards older age groups (higher frequency in the 50+ age categories when compared to Census data with a mean age of 55.4) which is expected in CATI.

A second large-scale survey was conducted in 2018 to yield a panel of observations. The 2018 wave of the identity survey was conducted on the same sample interviewed in 2016. Considering the natural decay rate of repeated surveys, the 2018 wave aimed at obtaining a final representative sample of at least 400 respondents from across the Maltese Islands by 20 November 2018. The final sample included responses from 435 respondents (35 extra interviews were held as a safeguard for defaulting interviews) and was completed in 12 November 2018. As in Wave 1, a considerable number of extra calls were made. Surveyors were issued with a primary set of 400 combined numbers and subsequently another three backup lists, resulting in circa 1600 calls being commissioned. Surveyors stated that the period of completion of the interview ranged from 10 minutes to 50 minutes. The Margin of Error of the resultant 435 completed surveys is that of 4.7%. The data had a confidence interval of 95% as based on a population of 425,000. Where new persons were identified due to loss of the original respondents, such were elicited from the same street as those dropping out.

Qualitative approach

In October 2017 (year 3 of the project), focus group sessions were carried out to obtain qualitative insights into the relationship between cultural participation and European identity. The participants were divided in two groups of 6-7 persons. The two focus groups were composed in a way to ensure representation to the diverse social structure of the Maltese society (male-female, Married-single, with young children or without, old-young, high-low engagement in society, high-low education, from Malta-Gozo, actively attending religious events or not); plus some variables more specific to this study, such as artist-non artist, from Valletta or not, and high or low exposure to ECoC.

The questions around which the discussion was organised were the same, one session was conducted in English and the other in Maltese. Participants were first shown the list of questions used in the survey carried out in 2016 on a representative sample of the Maltese population, and asked to provide comment. The objective was twofold: to familiarise participants with the if, how, and why of the topic of the discussion, and to obtain additional feedback on the questionnaire used for the quantitative component of the study. A semi-structured discussion followed, which took the form of a typical focus group. The discussion revolved around the three questions at the core of the study: Do you feel European? What does it mean to be European? Are you involved in (informed of, actually participate, intend to participate to) Valletta ECoC? Does Valletta as the ECoC make you feel European?

RESULTS AND IMPACTS

We start by providing the main insights from the focus groups. We then proceed to comparative statistics, presenting the main descriptive statistics for the two waves of data collection – before and after the ECoC. We then conduct a correlation analysis between the key variables of interest: between the main demographic variables for 2016 and 2018 respectively and between the main Identity variables and the main Exposure Variables for 2016 and 2018 respectively. Finally, we present the results of regression analysis.

Insights from the focus groups

The findings from the focus groups provided an interesting complement to the survey. The discussions highlighted that feeling European is linked (if in complex forms) to feeling Maltese. The answers given reflected this connection and showed how these two concepts live side-by-side. Some participants in the English-speaking group showed sentiments of feeling proud to be European or embracing the concept of “Europeanness”. This type of response was given by those more exposed through travelling and working or meeting foreigners in Malta. Most of these participants also tended to feel comfortable and even proud to be Maltese. Some reservations were expressed, but mostly in connection to particular issues such as the environment. One participant highlighted the relevance of the North African and Mediterranean legacy, sparking a discussion on the topic. Yet most participants were comfortable with feeling European and Maltese at the same time.

The sentiment of familiarity with Europe was echoed in the Maltese-speaking group. These also attached the idea of Europe to the notion of safety. As to the difference between being Maltese or European, the reaction was similar to the participants of the English-speaking group. One remarked very explicitly: “I do not see why we have to choose. I am Maltese and European in the EU”. However, the specific Maltese element was also underlined: “every European can feel European, but only Maltese can feel Maltese”. When asked specifically whether they felt Maltese, almost all participants in both groups agreed that they do primarily feel Maltese: “in my core I feel Maltese, and then European”. There were some exceptions, however. Some felt they possibly felt more European than Maltese. Others stated that day-to-day, they did not feel any affinity with the concept of nationality and even admitted their confusion with the concept of feeling Maltese or feeling European. Also, when travelling beyond Europe some people tended to present themselves as “Europeans”.

As at 2017, three participants already knew they would actively contribute in Valletta 2018. In terms of participating as audiences or attendees to events, only a couple of participants who had already identified one or two events in the programme already one year in advance. However, there was a general awareness that numerous events were planned and the attitude of almost all participants was that they would hear or look up particular events as the time drew near. Some claims were contradictory. One participant stated that the advertisements or coverage on television was becoming a bit too intrusive, while another stated that advertisements were “not in your face.” One person stated that the crowds would keep him away, together with the problems of transport or parking. There was a general concern that while most events in Malta are well-organised, it was not clear that the organisation had taken into consideration the logistics of dealing with massive attendance.

As to the question of legacy and on feeling European, there was an across the board discussion on the legacy that Valletta 2018 would leave on Malta. Several participants insisted that more attention should be given to this issue, and that authorities should consider taking steps to set up an institution to assist artists

beyond 2018. One participant in the Maltese-speaking group noted that “Valletta, as a European City of Culture does not have a proper public library”. The commercial and social impacts of Valletta 2018 were also discussed. In both groups it was clear that the general climate for business was good, and that the value of property was going up for owners, although some highlighted that the gentrification of Valletta was having a negative impact on people who eventually would be unable to afford higher rent. The general consensus within the Maltese-speaking group was that Malta would enjoy a better reputation as a country on a European level. “We will be taken much more seriously now”, as long as things are executed well. Most participants shared a common confidence that Valletta would rise to the occasion.

Several interesting points came out when discussing whether having Valletta as a ECoC would make people feel more European – in the words of a participant, a “one million dollar question”. There was a general feeling of being “proud to be Maltese, recognised by Europe”. There was also the idea that having the capital city declared ECoC was proof that Malta was European: “when I think about Valletta 2018, increasingly, I think that it makes me feel that, listen, we are really European, not just Maltese”. As another participant put it, people would feel proud to be Maltese and European: “we never thought about ourselves as Europeans. In the sense that as the others said, we are Maltese, who ... are proud that at least this little island will be known for something done at a certain level.”

To some participants, the label “European” was associated to accountability and pressure to deliver, although some questioned the real social and economic impact on poverty in Valletta. But there was a desire that the ‘true’ Maltese identity would come to be accepted on a European level and that certain traditions that are no longer popular would be revived, ideally through exposure during the coming year. Again, concerns were raised about the legacy of Valletta 2018. There was consensus that activities should continue on a yearly basis, beyond 2018, even to establish Malta as a global cultural attraction. There was also some disenchantment at the news that another city would be an ECoC in 2018. Most were deeply surprised, and asked why there were not more references to this in the Valletta 2018 promotion or programme. Some participants even questioned whether this would go against the spirit of collaboration between EU countries. Some argued that there should have been more references to the ‘other capital’, and combined activities could have been planned. Other comments also reflected that people are not sufficiently aware that the ECoC is a yearly occurrence and that this is not an exclusive recognition for Valletta.

And yet, there was no question that having Valletta 2018 would have a positive impact on whether people would feel more European. There was an emphasis that if things were done right and well-executed, then this would leave a positive impression on many Maltese and their feelings towards being European.

3.2 Comparative Statics

The tables below present a snapshot of the averages in 2016 and 2018 respectively.¹ We present the main findings pertaining to exposure to ECoC and the Identity variables below.

The socio-demographic profile remained rather stable. Respondents had a similar status of education and self-assessment of health, and religion. The average household size and marital status also remained stable as is the labour market profile and the age composition of the respondents. There is a somewhat higher frequency of respondents travelling abroad, a lower interest in politics, lower sociability and slightly higher trust. Interestingly there is lower participation level in cultural activities (cultural engagement index formed as a simple index of all participation activities).

¹ The frequency of value labels do not add up to the overall frequency as non-responsive, don't know and none of the above answers were not included in the value labels to eliminate biasedness in descriptive statistics.

Table 1: ECoC Exposure Comparative Statics 2016-2018

Description of Variables & Value Labels	2016			2018		
	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
How many Valletta 2018 events did you attend yourself?	707	0.1	0.3	435	0.4	0.5
0=No	601			230		
1=Yes	99			177		
Have you visited the Valletta 2018 website in the last 12 months?	707	0.1	0.2	435	0.2	0.4
0=No	663			351		
1=Yes	42			82		
Have you heard about Valletta 2018, the European Capital of Culture?	707	1.8	1.4	435	2.2	1.4
0=No, I did not hear about it	135			29		
1=Yes, mainly on the radio	155			105		
2=Yes, mainly on TV	288			190		
3=Yes, mainly in newspaper/ magazine	38			26		
4=Yes, mainly online	29			22		
5=Yes, other	58			53		

The headline statistic is that for attendance in any Valletta European Capital of Culture event: 40.7% of the respondents answered affirmatively while 52.9% of the respondents did not attend any Valletta European Capital of Culture event. 6.4% either did not know or were non-responsive. The proportion of surveyed respondents that answered that they attended any Valletta 2018 event increased by 26.7 percentage points since the first wave. In relation to active participation in any Valletta European Capital of Culture event, 94.0% of the respondents did not actively participate in any Valletta 2018 cultural events while 5.3% responded that they did participate. A marginal decline in no active participation (1.6 percentage points) was registered since Wave 1. Frequency by the types of media remained relatively stable compared to Wave 1, with 48% saying that they heard about the event on the TV compared to 51% in Wave 1. Compared to Wave 1², the share of respondents that heard about Valletta 2018 through TV, radio and online increased by 3, 5

²These questions were only asked to the sub-sample of respondents that had already acknowledged awareness of Valletta 2018. As a consequence, the resulting data may differ significantly from surveys asking the question to the entire sample. Although different, however, the data should be consistent with regards to the two key findings: a relatively low exposure, and the TV as main medium.

and 1 percentage points, respectively. Awareness of Valletta 2018 from other media sources increased by 4 percentage points. 80.7% of the respondents replied that they did not visit the Valletta 2018 website in the last year. Compared to Wave 1, the share of respondents that did not visit Valletta 2018 website decreased by 13.1 percentage points.

Table 2: Identity Comparative Statics 2016-2018

Description of Variables & Value Labels	2016			2018		
	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
People feel different degrees of attachment to their town or village, to their country and to Europe. What about you? Are you very attached, somewhat attached, not very attached or not at all attached to Europe?	707	1.9	1.0	435	1.9	1.1
0=Not at all attached	77			5		
1=Not very attached	143			23		
2=Somewhat attached	230			89		
3=Very attached	237			317		
I am going to ask you a question on how you see yourself in relation to Malta and Europe. Do you see yourself as...?	706	0.7	0.8	435	0.7	0.6
0=Nationality	341			157		
1=Nationality and European	237			201		
2=European and Nationality	97			22		
3=European Only	11			4		
How much does being a European have to do with how you feel about yourself in your day to day life?	707	1.7	1.0	435	1.7	1.0
0=Not at all	96			56		
1=Not very much	133			77		
2=Somewhat	247			173		
3=A lot	160			80		

Description of Variables & Value Labels	2016			2018		
	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Generally speaking, do you think that Malta's membership of the European Union is...?	707	0.8	0.4	435	0.9	0.3
0=A bad thing	84			27		
1=A good thing	454			328		
Taking everything into consideration, would you say that Malta has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?	707	0.9	0.3	435	1.0	0.2
0=Has not benefited	44			17		
1=Has benefited	554			352		
And what about of people like you? Have people like you on balance benefited or not from Malta's EU membership?	707	0.7	0.5	435	0.8	0.4
0=Has not benefited	172			71		
1=Has benefited	385			280		
In most European countries some policy decision are made by National governments and some by the European Union. In your opinion who should decide on fighting unemployment.	707	0.1	0.3	435	0.1	0.4
0=National level	470			273		
1=EU level	77			48		
In most European countries some policy decision are made by National governments and some by the European Union. In your opinion who should decide on immigration policy	707	0.6	0.5	435	0.5	0.5
0=National level	194			135		
1=EU level	278			130		

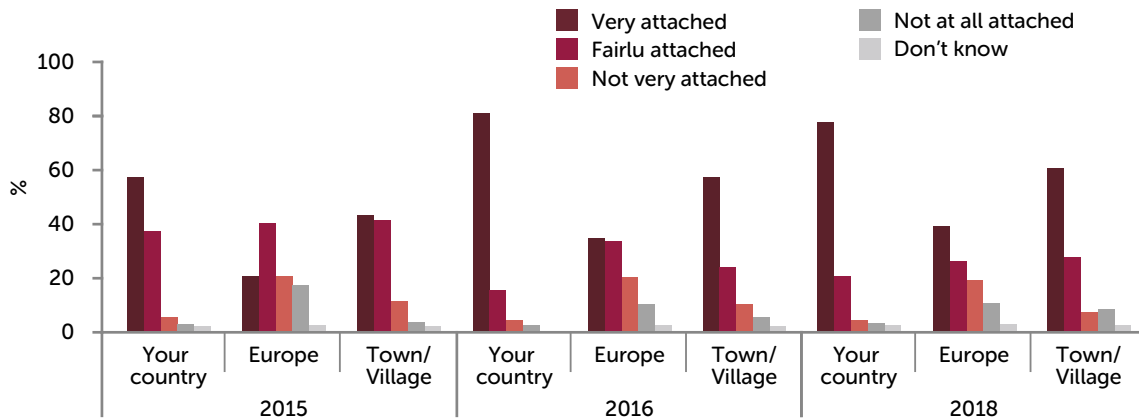
Description of Variables & Value Labels	2016			2018		
	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Some say European unification has already gone too far. Others say it should be strengthened. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a 10-point-scale. On this scale, '0' means unification "has already gone too far" and '10' means it "should be strengthened". What number on this scale best describes your position?	706	6.0	3.2	435	6.3	3.0
0	48			28		
1	29			11		
2	22			6		
3	33			5		
4	28			8		
5	97			91		
6	37			31		
7	57			31		
8	69			31		
9	32			11		
10	125			86		
How far do you feel that what happens to Europe in general has important consequences for people like you?	707	2.4	0.8	435	2.1	0.8
0=Not important	24			17		
1=Not very important	56			74		
2=Somewhat important	231			160		
3=Very important	357			145		

In comparison with Wave 1, respondents have the same level of attachment to Europe and have the same relation to Malta and Europe. The average profile of respondents was the same as Wave 1 for how being a European affect the everyday life. A higher share sees Malta's membership to European Union as beneficial and is a good thing both at personal and country level. Compared to Wave 1, respondents have

the same tastes for policy intervention from EU regarding fighting unemployment, but lower preference on immigration. Preference for further European unification was similar to Wave 1, but with a weaker opinion of the consequences of Europe for people.

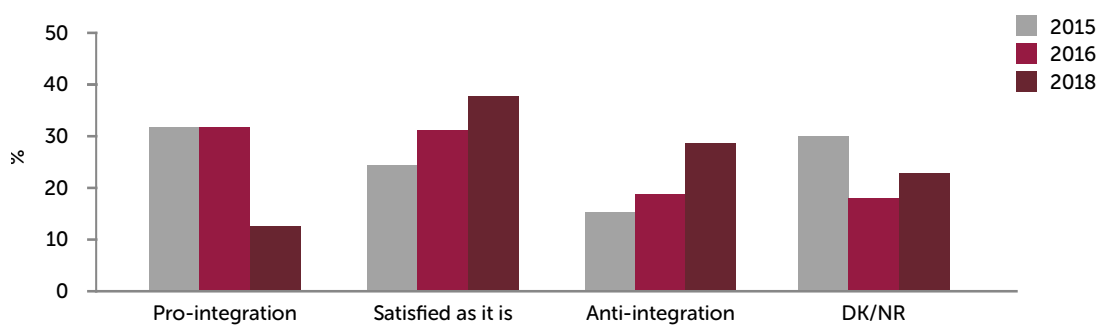
Figure 1-5 illustrate some of the main findings above.

Figure 1: Degree of Attachment to Europe



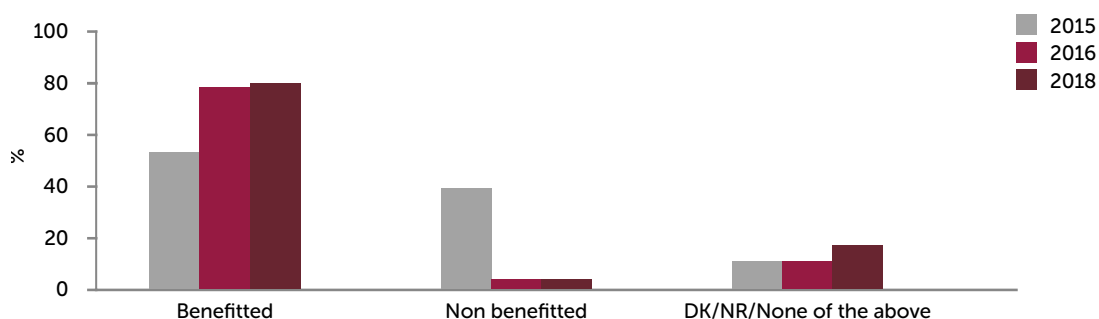
Source: Eurobarometer surveys data (Wave: 27/03/06) & Primary Survey Data

Figure 2: Views on European Unification – What is your opinion on European Unification?



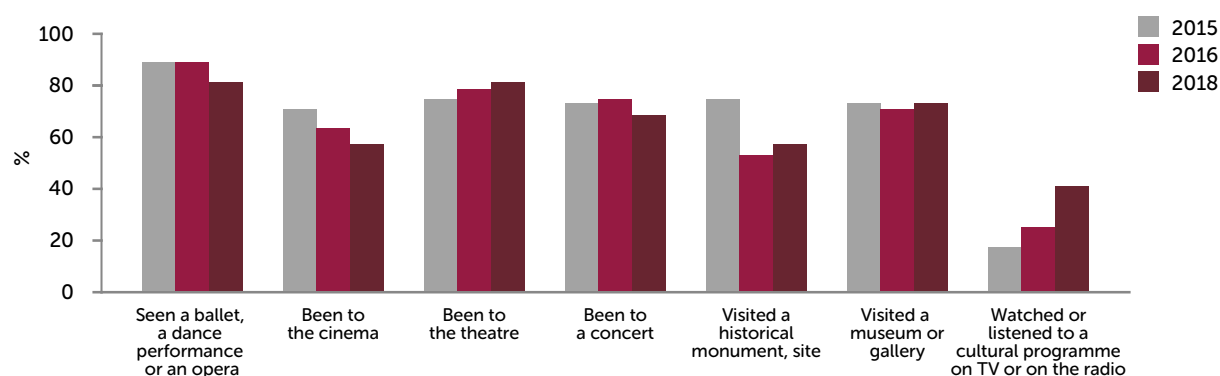
Source: European Elections Study (2009) & Primary Survey Data

Figure 3: Benefits of EU membership – Did Malta benefit from EU Membership?



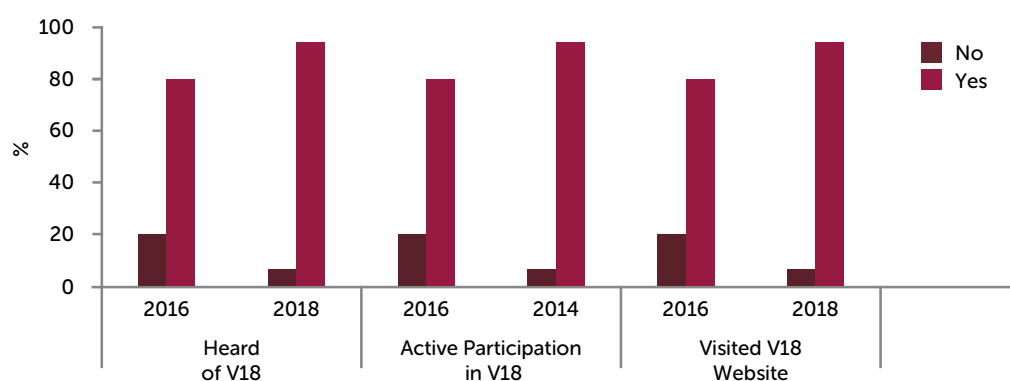
Source: European Elections Study (2009) & Primary Survey Data

Figure 4: Cultural Participation – Did not attend in the last 12 months



Source: NSO Cultural Survey Data (2012) & Primary Survey Data

Figure 5: Exposure before and after to Valletta 2018 – Exposure to V18



Source: Primary Survey Data

Correlation analysis

In 2016, we found that respondents with higher levels of education tended to report higher level of perceived overall health, visited more EU countries, earned higher income levels, met socially more frequently with friends and family, and were younger. Education was also found to be positively associated with people in household under 18 years of age and with engagement in cultural activities. In Wave 1 we also observed that younger respondents reported better health status, were more likely to be single, to be culturally engaged and to have resided abroad. Respondents who were interested in politics were more likely to trust people. In 2018, we found that education correlates in an expected manner. A higher level of education attainment is found amongst younger, socially active and culturally engaging respondents. Younger respondents have better perceived health status, higher frequencies of engagement in cultural activities and lower religious participation. Better health was also found to be positively correlated with social life. Trust was positively correlated with a stronger social life. The main changes observed are i. weaker correlations between education, age and social life, and between education, health and travel, ii stronger association between education and the cultural engagement index, between health and social life, interalia.

Turning to the identity variables, in Wave 1, we found that Attachment to Europe was positively correlated with feeling European and assessing positively Malta’s membership in the EU. Respondents who felt European were also likely to positively assess Malta’s membership in the EU. Respondents who thought that Malta’s membership of the European Union was a good thing also tended to feel that people have

benefited from the EU, that unification should be strengthened and that immigration policy should be solved at EU level. Those respondents who favoured a more harmonised immigration policy also believed that combating unemployment should be the responsibility of the EU. In the second wave, respondents who think that Malta's membership of the EU was a good thing, were again more likely to favour positively the effect of the EU on Malta and people's life. Again, respondents who think that the immigration policy should be tackled at a European level also believe that in the EU should decide on fighting unemployment. Compared to 2016, in 2018 there were weaker relationships between respondents who think that Malta's membership with the EU was a good thing and thoughts on having benefitted from being a member of the EU. However, there is a stronger positive correlation between EU handling both the immigration and labour policy.

In Wave 1, we found that having heard about Valletta 2018 was positively correlated with attendance of events organised by Valletta 2018, or visits to Valletta 2018 website. We also found a positive association between this and seeing oneself as European. In the ECoC year itself, we observe a new association between attendance and visiting Valletta 2018 website and we find that respondents who heard about Valletta 2018 tend to sense that what happens in the EU in general has important consequences. The association between having heard of Valletta 2018 and the sense of attachment to Europe is not observed in Wave 2.

Table 3: Correlation analysis of ECoC exposure and Identity variables

	Heard about Valletta 2018 IN 2016	Attended a Valletta 2018 event IN 2016	Valletta 2018 website IN 2016	Heard about Valletta 2018 IN 2018	Attended a Valletta 2018 event IN 2018	Valletta 2018 website IN 2018
Heard about Valletta 2018	1			1		
Attended a Valletta 2018 event	0.2040*	1		0.1151	1	
Valletta 2018 website	0.1462*	0.0556	1	0.0867	0. *	1
Attachment with Europe	0.145	0.0478	0.0775	0.0918	0.0559	-0.0528
See yourself as	0.1572*	0.0246	0.0291	0.1613	0.1504	0.1721
Feeling about being European	0.0903	-0.0564	0.0609	0.0554	0.0523	0.0891
Malta's membership in the EU	0.1343	0.0047	0.0324	0.0235	0.0363	0.0718
Malta benefit from EU	0.1451	-0.0137	0.0244	-0.0626	0.0136	-0.0522
People benefit from EU	0.1469	0.0215	0.0733	-0.0777	0.1198	0.0893
Fighting unemployment	0.0282	0.0274	0.0333	-0.0453	-0.0498	-0.0024
Immigration policy	0.0986	0.0312	0.024	0.0668	0.1212	-0.017
European Unification	0.113	0.0005	0.0251	-0.095	0.0213	0.0034

Regression analysis

In order to assess systematically the effect of single determinants on our dependent variable, we run a regression model. The conceptual model for the regression estimation is

$$Y_{1-3} = a_0 + a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + a_3X_3 + a_4X_4 + a_5X_5 + a_6X_6 + a_7X_7 + a_8X_8 + a_9X_9 + a^*X^* + e \text{ (MODEL 1)}$$

Where

- Y is EU identity, Y_1 is Identification, Y_2 is Scope and Y_3 is Representation, each construct measured by 3 variables.
- X_1 = Knowledge (measured by the highest level of education obtained)
- X_2 = Health
- X_3 = Age
- X_4 = International exposure (measured by a variable indicating lived abroad or extent to travel)
- X_5 = Income (measured by a variable indicating income or unemployment)
- X_6 = Nationality
- X_7 = Status (Measured by a variable indicating marriage or number of children)
- X_8 = Socio-political Engagement (measured by a composite variable – Simple Additive Index composed of 8A-8D)
- X_9 = Cultural engagement (measured by an index of cultural participation)

and

- X^* = Exposure to V18 measured by variables capturing
 - Having Heard of Valletta 2018
 - Attendance to Valletta 2018 activities
 - Web exposure
 - Distance from Valletta

The variables used to estimate the model were drawn from the questionnaire. A small number of variables required recoding, or to be collapsed into indexes before they could be used in the regression. Two indices aimed at capturing respondents' socio-political engagement and cultural participation were created. Table 6 and 7 provide the descriptive data used to estimate these models.

Model 1 is estimated in the same way for 2016 and 2018 data. In each case, three distinct models were estimated in order to identify the relationship for identity, scope and representation. Several robustness checks were undertaken to ensure that identity, scope and representation are well-captured. These include regressing against different identity variables and explanatory variables until the best fit was identified. The best specification fit for 2016 was then employed to 2018 data to allow comparability. Results are presented in Table 4. In all instances the fitted parameters explain the individual effect of each of the explanatory variables (X) on the dependent variable, after taking into consideration the effects of other control variables.³ Although the R-squared is on the low-side (as is generally the case in studies utilising data at the level of individual respondents), the control variables in the specification do explain parts of the variance. Indeed, the null hypothesis that there is no effect of the independent variables, taken together, on the dependent variable is comfortably rejected in the majority of cases. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses to address the possibility of heteroscedasticity, this being frequently observed in cross-sectional datasets.

³The Ordered Logit Model was used for discreet dependent variables while Ordinary Least Squares was used for regressions with 'Scope' as the dependent variable. In ordered logit, a significant positive (negative) coefficient implies that a one-unit increase in the independent variable increases the log-odds of being in a higher (lower) level in the identity variable. The results present the main

The first round of analysis seems to confirm that the determinants of identity, scope and representation in Malta broadly echo those observed in the literature. The factors that significantly and positively co-determine identifying with the EU as defined by the variable "IDENTITY" (as measured by the question "People feel different degrees of attachment to their town or village, to their country and to Europe. What about you? Are you very attached, somewhat attached, not very attached or not at all attached to Europe?") are the number of visits to EU countries and socio-political engagement, while being divorced/widowed/separated exerts a negative effect on identity measured this way. With regard to the variable 'REPRESENTATION' (measured by the question "What about of people like you? Have people like you on balance benefited or not from Malta's EU membership?"), age is negatively correlated while having a non-Maltese nationality exerts a positive effect. Results for identity as defined by "SCOPE" (as measured by the question "Some say European unification has already gone too far. Others say it should be strengthened. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a 10-point-scale. On this scale, '0' means unification "has already gone too far" and '10' means it "should be strengthened - What number on this scale best describes your position?") suggest that people with higher education and better health have stronger scope-type European-ness.

Turning to the test variables, we find that the only variable which predicts identity once all other considerations are parsed out is proximity to Valletta (which predicts REPRESENTATION in 2016). In further tests, we examined the potential impact of knowing about the EU presidency. We find knowledge of this to positively predict both affective identity (attachment) and representation.

A number of variables which were significant in 2016 are no longer significant in 2018. This may be due to a smaller sample effect. On the other hand, the effect of social exposure becomes significant and positive to identity in 2018, which is worthy of note. All other tests of the exposure variables returned non-significant relationships and are not reported in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression with Identity as Dependent Variables

	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
Model	Identity	Identity	Representation	Representation	Scope	Scope
	Y1A EUID Q047	Y1A EUID Q047	Y2C EUREP Q075	Y2C EUREP Q075	Y3C EUSCO Q068	Y3C EUSCO Q068
X1A KNOW_EDU Q086	-0.0280	0.0581	0.395	-0.00318	0.597**	0.728*
	(0.334)	(0.356)	(0.438)	(0.0732)	(0.304)	(0.403)
X2 HEALTH Q089	-0.0995	0.407	-0.540	0.0558	0.0880	1.602**
	(0.395)	(0.501)	(0.413)	(0.0731)	(0.424)	(0.737)
X3 AGE Q099	0.0303	-0.0104	-0.0748**	0.00268	0.0234	0.0495
	(0.0189)	(0.0309)	(0.0317)	(0.00337)	(0.0153)	(0.0377)
X4B INT_TRAV Q092	0.647**	0.183	0.101	0.00880	0.0180	0.111
	(0.266)	(0.193)	(0.195)	(0.0252)	(0.0164)	(0.206)

	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
Model	Identity	Identity	Representation	Representation	Scope	Scope
X5A INC_ANN Q093	0.0000174	0.0000237	-0.0000302	0.000000459	-0.0000327	0.0000176
	(0.0000183)	(0.0000199)	(0.0000308)	(0.00000224)	(0.0000202)	(0.0000165)
X6 NATIONALITY Q048	0.323	0.000	18.90***	0.000	-1.192	0.000
	(1.072)	0.000	(1.418)	0.000	(1.791)	0.000
X7B STAT_MAR Q088	-0.649*	-0.173	0.208	-0.0653	-0.519	0.204
	(0.344)	(0.398)	(0.408)	(0.103)	(0.324)	(0.428)
X8 SOC COMPOSITE	0.0217	0.321**	0.0714	0.0171	0.0990	0.0861
	(0.0652)	(0.129)	(0.0756)	(0.0144)	(0.0683)	(0.152)
X9 CULTURE Q027	0.0294	0.0203	0.0440	-0.000988	-0.00701	0.0489
	(0.0310)	(0.0504)	(0.0326)	(0.00752)	(0.0201)	(0.0419)
TEST: X*D V18CLOSE Q001	-0.0115	0.0220	0.0288*	-0.00202	-0.0149	-0.0354
	(0.0109)	(0.0297)	(0.0154)	(0.00342)	(0.00965)	(0.0332)
TEST: X*E EUPRES1 Q083	0.636*	-0.0533	2.355*	-0.0832	-0.0766	0.400
	(0.336)	(0.852)	(1.236)	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.537)
Constant	na	na	Na	168.3	Na	na
	na	na	Na	(206.2)	na	na
N	110	50	91	46	104	49
Log likelihood	-117.9	-47.07	-37.99	na	-206.97	-73.89
Prob>chi2 (Prob > F)	0.00	0.02	0.00	(0.9897)	0.05	0.01
Pseudo R2 (R2)	0.12	0.18	0.29	(0.18)	0.05	0.11

Note: ***, **, * denotes significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level respectively.

Tests of Hypotheses

We can summarise the support we found for each hypothesis as follows.

H1. The impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society is conditional on the definition or dimensions of European-ness: affective dimensions of European-ness are least likely to change. We do find variations in the impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society depending on the way that we define European-ness.

H2. The European-ness of Malta's society responds positively to participation and involvement in Valletta 2018; We find weak but positive evidence of this. The exposure variable that predicts European-ness is proximity to Valletta. Knowledge of the EU presidency event – itself a form of exposure – also predicts identity.

H3. The impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society is influenced by controls and demographics. We find some evidence of this. Indeed the factors that predict European-ness include education, travel abroad, having a non-Maltese nationality (including dual), age, marital status and health.

CONCLUSION, LEGACY AND WAY FORWARD

The contribution of the study lies in providing a comprehensive and nuanced definition of European Identity among people in Malta; systematically documenting the changes which occurred over a period of four years; systematically documenting the determinants that contributed to the change in that sentiment; focusing on the extent to which the EcoC, knowledge thereof and participation therein contributed to such change, if any, once other factors are carefully controlled for; and conducting in-depth qualitative analysis to understand those nuances which the numbers may not reveal. We defined the variable of interest, "European identity", as a complex construct with an assumedly stable core component unlikely to change in few years, complemented by additional dimensions which could be assumed to be sensitive to exposure to EcoC. We also specified (particularly cultural) determinants of identity capable of comparison and replication.

The study employed a mixed-method approach spread over a four-year period (2015–2018), with people in the entire country of Malta as the focus. In the first year of the study (2015), extensive desktop research was undertaken to obtain the baseline scenario on the definitions of European Identity, Cultural Participation and Valletta 2018 exposure, alongside of data on several socio-economic descriptors of people in Malta. During the second year of the study (2016), a large-scale cross-sectional survey was carried out, employing computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) on individuals aged over 18 years residing in private households. The survey returned 850 responses, which revealed interesting behavioural patterns in cultural attendance and participation that echoed the findings of the Malta cultural participation survey. This survey was repeated in the year during which the EcoC was hosted (2018) Focus groups were set up and analysed in the third year of the study (2017).

In 2015 we find that the Maltese generally have positive identification with Europe and low cultural participation. In the two waves of data collection 2016 and 2018 we find awareness, active participation and attendance of Valletta 2018 events to be, on average, higher in wave 2 compared to wave 1.

Demographics remained fairly stable. In our regression analysis, we find that the impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society is conditional on the definition or dimensions of European-ness: affective dimensions of European-ness are least likely to change. We find weak evidence that the impact of Valletta 2018 on the European-ness of Malta's society responds positively to participation and involvement in ECoC. Living close to Valletta creates some positive effect on identity in 2016 but not in 2018. Rather it is knowledge of the EU presidency event – itself a form of exposure – which seems to have had an effect. The kind of factors that predict European-ness in Malta include education, travel abroad, having a non-Maltese nationality (including dual), age, marital status and health.

In our study, we emphasized the importance of complementing quantitative studies with insights from in-depth, qualitative discussions. While the former can provide robust evidence and permit systematic comparison, the latter complements them with essential context and texture. The focus group sessions provided a more in-depth insight as to feelings relating to being Maltese, being European and how these concepts live side-by-side. It revealed that questions of nationality or belonging are complex issues and provided interesting insights into the topic.

In conclusion, when designing research we aimed at producing a study that would be immediately relevant to policy makers, but could also connect to the broader literature on ECoC programmes, cultural participation, and European identity. We hope that the systematic and replicable methodologies employed in this study will encourage researchers and analysts to analyse and compare their findings with ours, thus building a bridge between past and future studies on the topic.

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AUDIENCE PROFILING REPORT

Steve Mangion
Valletta 2018 Foundation

INTRODUCTION

The Audience Profiling exercise was undertaken by the Research Department within the Valletta 2018 Foundation, with the purpose of building a comprehensive profile of the audiences attending various Valletta 2018-related events throughout 2018. This profile is based upon an understanding of the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, as well as their patterns of cultural consumption.

This study took place over a one-year period throughout 2018, using on-site data collection carried out during the events themselves. Detailed results are contained in the appendix, with the main conclusions and implications outlined in the body of the report. To summarise, this report will show the main audience profile per strand.

This study intends to provide a body of data which can have real-world implications upon the local cultural sector, allowing for further understanding of local audiences, their different characteristics and motivating factors, and their basic behavioural patterns in relation to cultural activity.

HEADLINES

The headlines from this report are the following:

- (a)** With just over 30,000 individual responses this is one of the largest and most comprehensive quantitative research project conducted during cultural events.
- (b)** The study analysed audiences at over 80 events across 9 different strands. A full list of events that participated in this study can be found in Annex 1.

The findings are the following:

- (a)** Most audiences who participated in this exercise were Maltese (61% or 18,594). The remaining 39% of the respondents were non-Maltese of which only 6% were non-European.

With regards to the implications of this project on future research, the following conclusions arise:

- (a)** The way in which artists and companies undertake or benefit from the research needs further consideration.
- (b)** Several areas have been identified for further research.

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out by the Research Department prior to 2018. A number of activities were identified throughout 2016 and 2017 and a pilot survey was conducted consisting of 4 demographic questions, 1 marketing question and 5 event-specific linked questions. These surveys were distributed across the identified events using a number of Tal-Kultura volunteers, in collaboration with project managers and organisers.

From this pilot study it emerged that a number of changes were required, both in terms of the format of the survey, as well as in terms of the data collection method. It was decided that the survey would be changed to focus exclusively on the development of an audience profile, rather than the examination of the particular event under survey. Furthermore, a private research company was engaged to coordinate the logistics of the data collection, using data collectors engaged for this specific purpose.

Survey design

A conscious decision was taken to focus the survey exclusively upon the audience profiling element, thereby eliminating additional questions related to assessing the quality or perception of the specific event under question. In conjunction with this, it was decided to keep the survey length to a minimum, thereby allowing for minimal disruption to participants' experiences during the events themselves.

The survey questions themselves were kept homogenous throughout the year in order to ensure comparability between audiences at different events. The survey was composed of ten questions in total, divided as follows:

- (a)** Core set of 4 standard demographic questions, comparable with other sectorial surveys
- (b)** 1 question related to the marketing and promotion of the event
- (c)** 5 questions related to pull and push factors related to attending events

Data collection

The target population for this survey consisted of an audience of all ages, genders, and nationalities, provided they are part of the audience for the particular Valletta 2018-related event. The collection period was throughout the main cultural events happening in 2018, which started on 20th January 2018 with the Valletta 2018 Opening Ceremony (Erba' Pjazez) and ended with the Valletta New Year's Eve Party on the 31st December 2018.

The data collection process was assigned to a private research agency, which engaged data collectors for the specific purpose of collecting data related to this survey. All surveys were collected via the use of e-surveys on tablets given out to audience pre/during/post events, depending on the type of event. The collection of data was done as a supervised self-completion survey with guidance provided to support this process.

The results presented here are not weighted but in summarising most questions either an average (mean) overall results or, occasionally, an 'average of averages' has been used in order to provide a fair representation of the different sizes and types of events to strip out unusual outliers or other biases. We are confident that the good responses and samples received across all events make this a rigorous set of results.

MAIN FINDINGS

Here we will concentrate on the key findings which have been identified and have relevance for stakeholders and those working in the sector.

Chart 1: All survey responses collected during events, sorted by strand. The majority of the surveys (15,936 or 52%) were collected during the Foundation’s large-scale events, such as the Valletta 2018 Opening Ceremony, the Closing Spectacle, the Valletta Green Festival and other established events such as Notte Bianca and Earth Garden Festival. The remaining (14,456 or 48%) were collected from the various other events within the Foundation’s cultural programme.

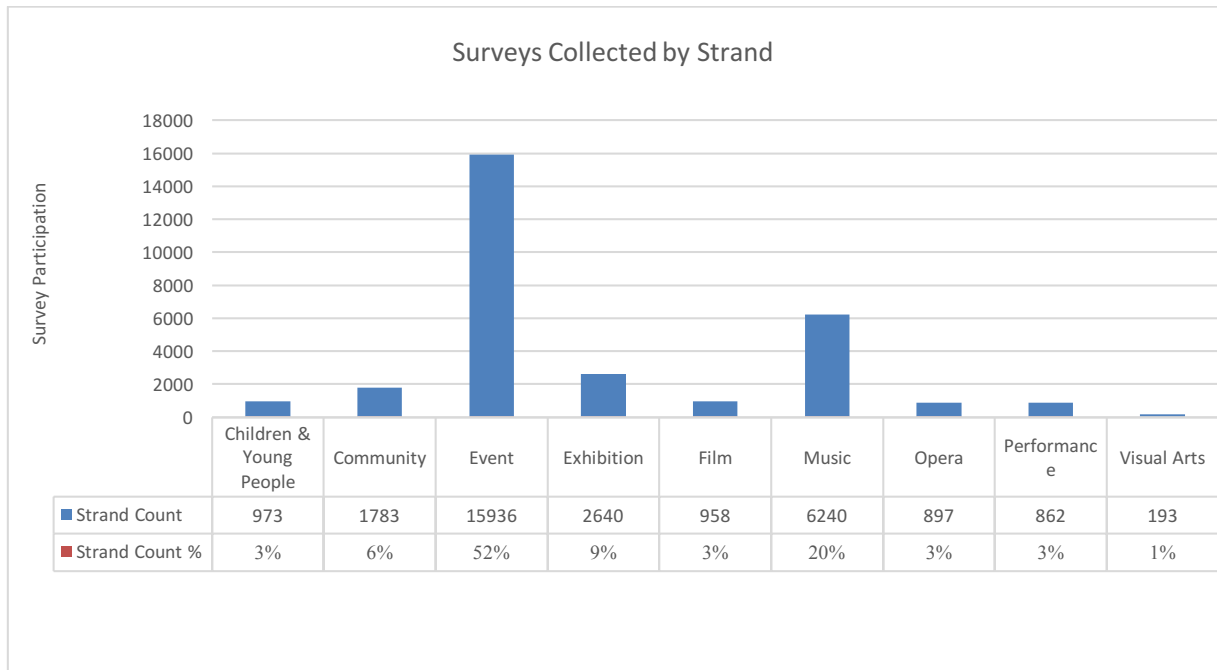


Chart 2: Gender mix of the survey participants. 54% (or 16,474) of participants were female, and 45% (or 13,617) of participants were male.

Surveys Collected by Gender

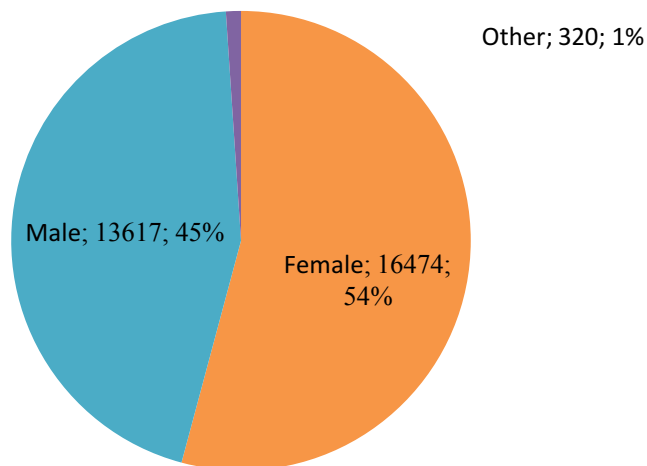


Chart 3: Distribution of survey participants by age group. 67% of respondents (or 20,251) were between 16 and 44 years of age. The highest collection rate was between the ages of 16-30 with 10,665 or 35% of the total respondents. More than a quarter (7,820 or 26%) of participants were over the age of 45.

Surveys Collected by Age Range

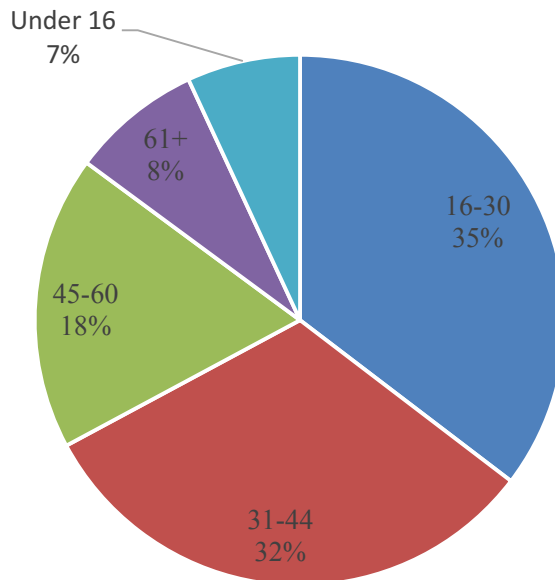


Chart 4: Nationalities of survey respondents. As expected, the highest percentage of surveys were collected from Maltese nationals (18,277 or 61%). Other respondents identified as British (2,217 or 7%), followed by Italian, German, French and Spanish, which altogether total 7,219 or 17%.

Surveys Collected by Nationality

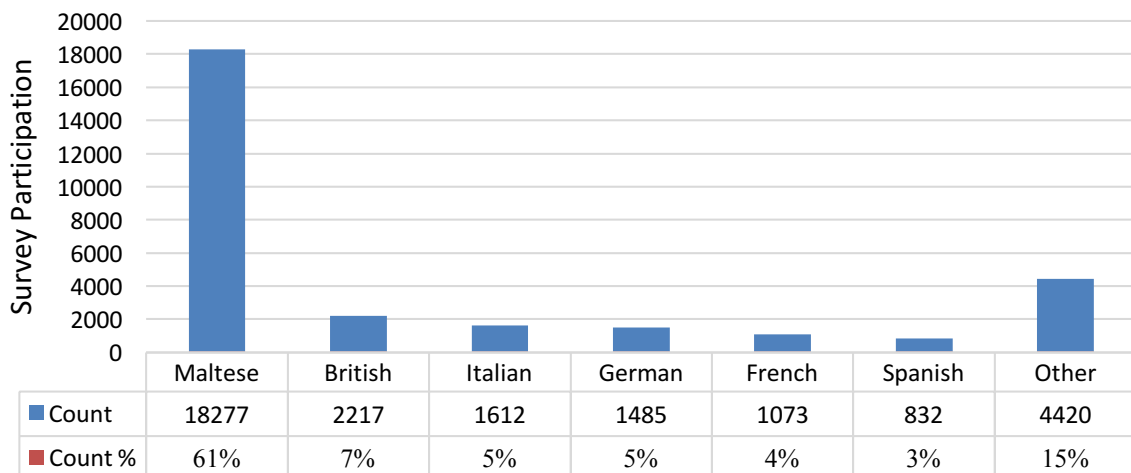


Chart 5: Comparison between European and non-European respondents (excluding Maltese nationals). From a total of 11,443 non-Maltese respondents, 9,561 or 81% were from the European continent.

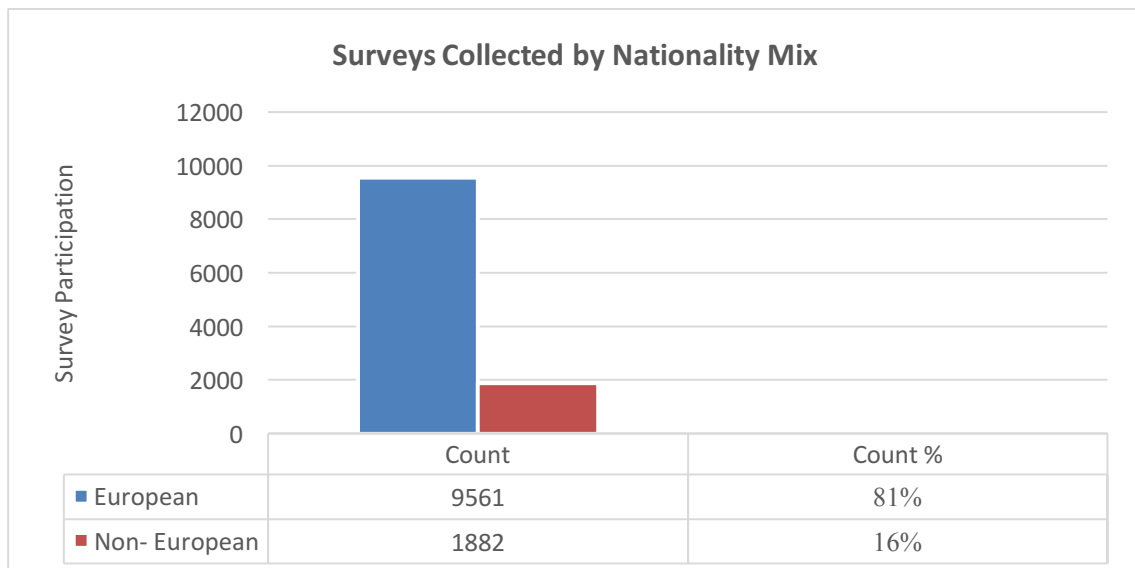


Chart 6: Participants' distribution by locality. Participants were distributed across most localities in Malta, with Birkirkara (7%), Sliema (7%) and Valletta (6%) leading the way.

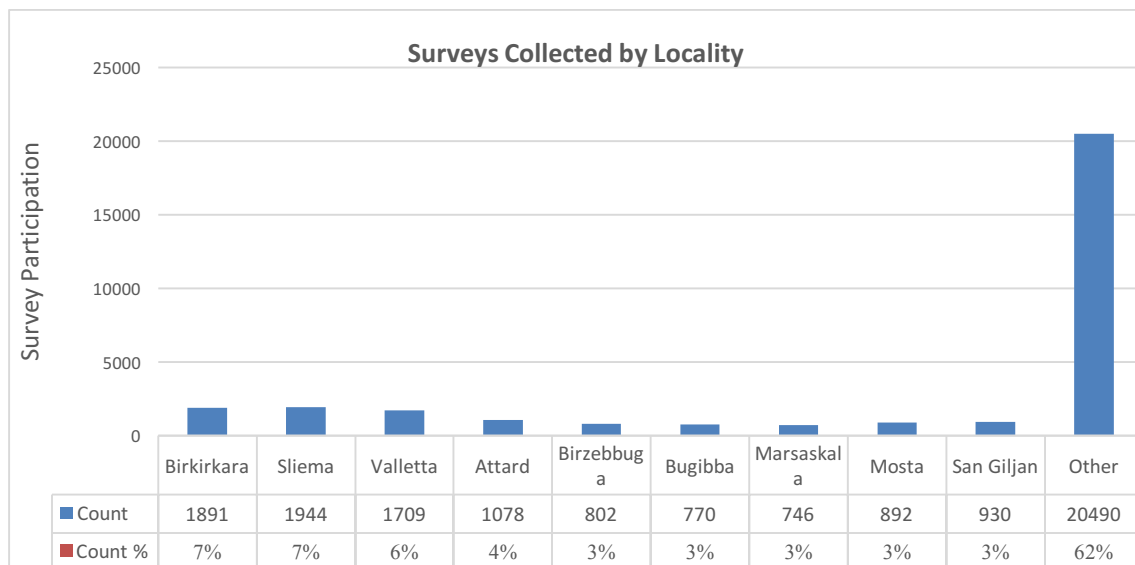


Chart 7: Reasons why survey participants attended events. The main three reasons for attending were, "Type of Event" (10,489 or 34%), "Activity for the Whole Family" (8,793 or 29%) and because it is a "Valletta 2018 Event" (8,157 or 27%).

Surveys Collected by Motivation (Q5)

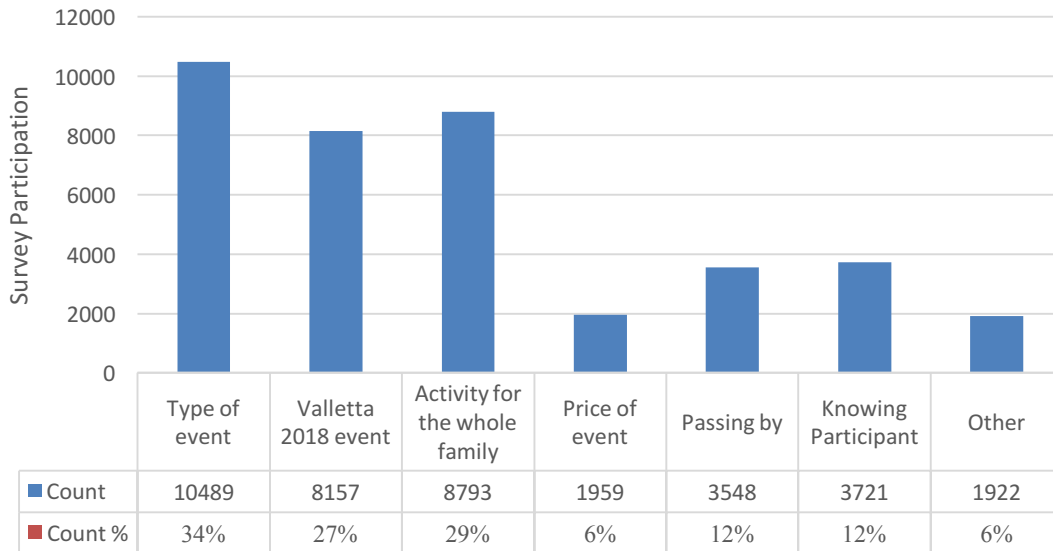


Chart 8: How participants found out about the event. 14,297 or 47% of survey participants stated that they learnt about events, mostly through "Facebook/Social Media".

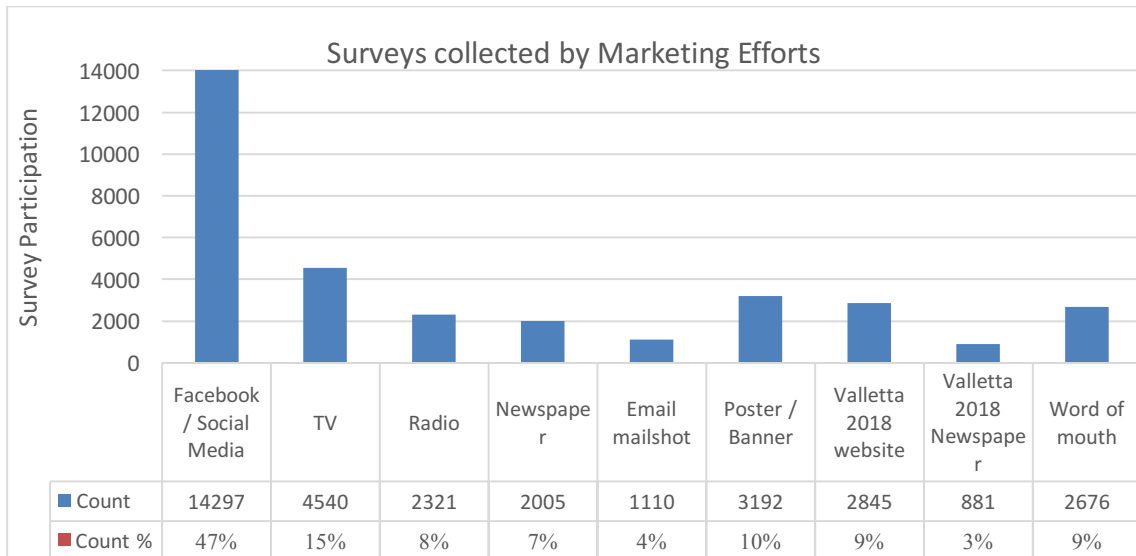


Chart 9: From the data collected, it shows that the preferred cultural activities are Music (19,155 or 63%), followed by Festivals (13,103 or 43%) and Performances (12,819 or 42%).

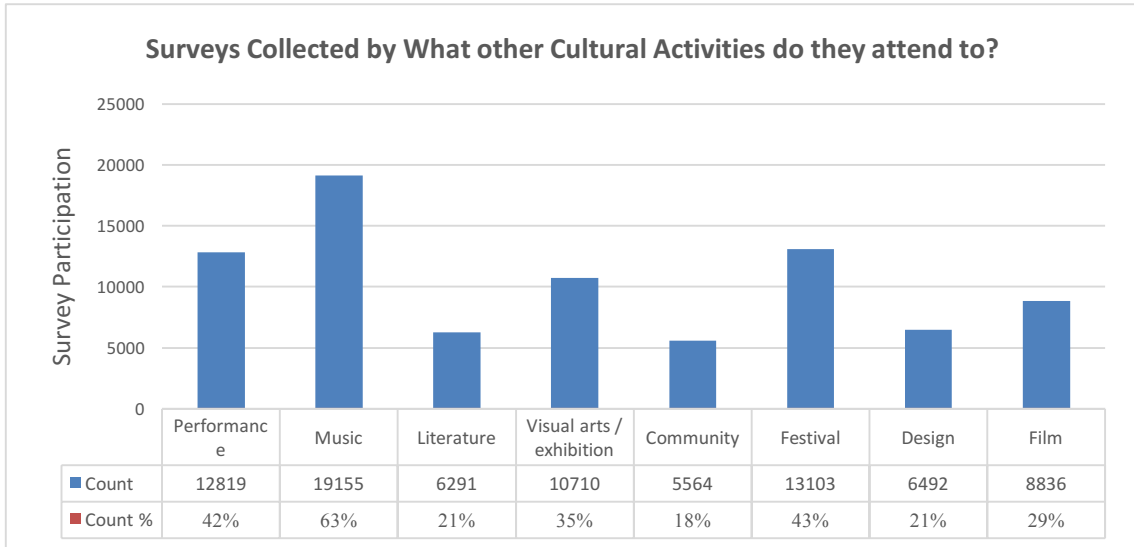


Chart 10: We asked our participants if they feel they are the Primary Decision Maker or not when deciding whether to attend an event or otherwise. 22,018 or 73% of respondents stated that they are the primary decision maker. Females lead with 12,196 or 40%.

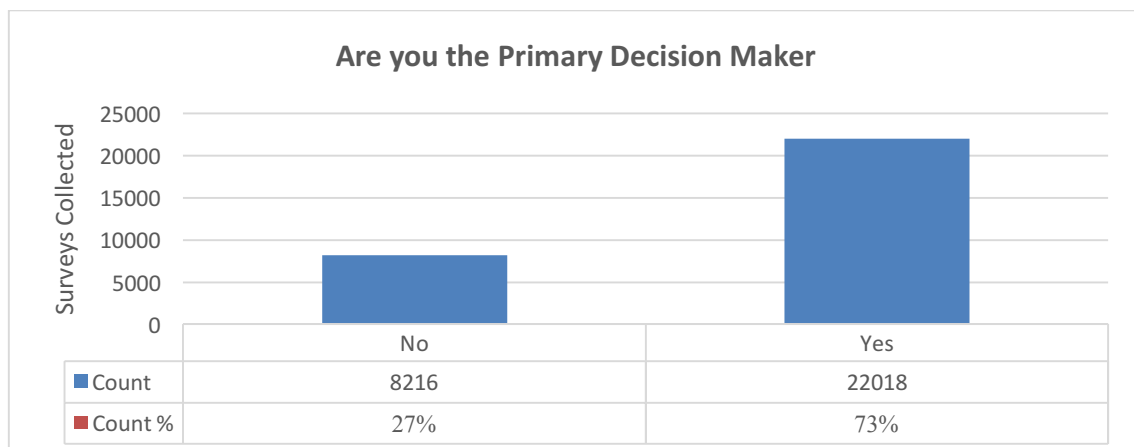


Chart 11: Delving deeper into the previous question, 7,709 or 35% of respondents of those who said "Yes" to whether or not they were the primary decision makers when deciding whether or not to attend events were between 16 and 30 years of age. This was followed by those who were between 31 to 45 years of age, making up 7,125 participants or 33%.

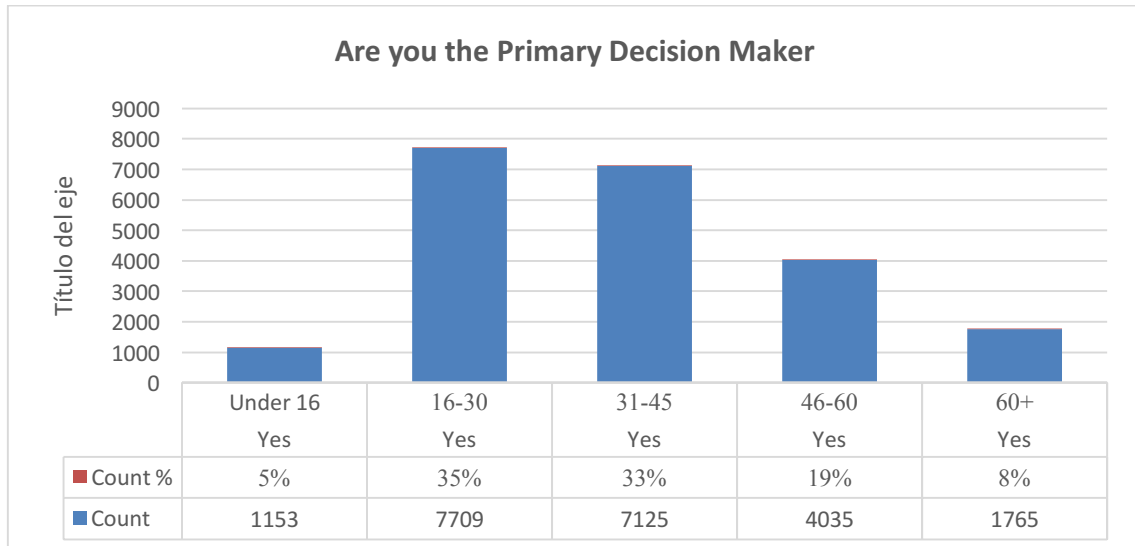


Chart 12: 20,690 or 69% of respondents decide to go to an event during the week of the event. 10,860 or 36% decide to go to an event on the day of the event itself. Only 31% decide to attend to an event two weeks in advance or more. In the latter two categories, two events stand out, namely the Earth Garden Festival (1,740 or 6%) and ComiCon (849 or 3%).

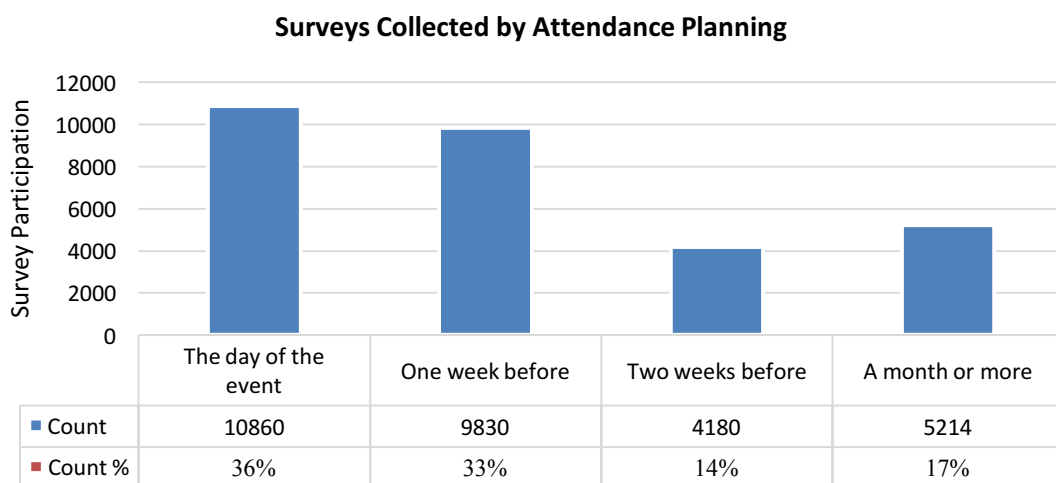
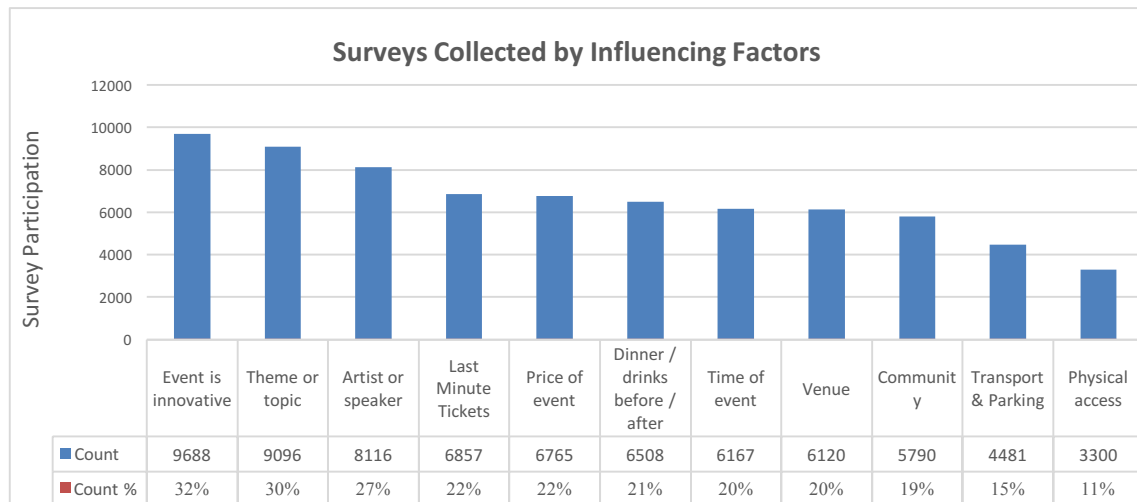


Chart 13: The survey’s final question examined the main factors influencing the respondents’ decision on whether or not to attend an event. The most common factors were “Event is Innovative” (32%), “Theme or Topic” (30%) and “Artist or Speaker” (27%).



RESULTS

AUDIENCE PROFILING CUMULATIVE

This study illustrates the following main audience profile for cultural events:

- (a) Maltese
- (b) Female
- (c) Between the ages of “16-30”
- (d) The main reason for attending depends on the “The Type of Event” and because it is a “Valletta 2018 Event”
- (e) They learn about the event through “Facebook/Social Media” and “Word of Mouth”.
- (f) They are the decision makers when it comes to deciding whether or not to attend to events
- (g) They decide during the “Week of the Event” but mostly during the “Day of the Event”
- (h) They prefer “Music” & “Performances”
- (i) They are likely to attend if “Event is innovative” or they like the “Theme or Topic”

AUDIENCE PROFILING BY STRAND

Strand	Children & Young People	Community	Event
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Gender %	58%	57%	54%
Age		31-44	16-30
Age %		40%	34%
Nationality		Maltese	Maltese
Nationality %		79%	60%
Reasons For Attending (1st)	Activity for Family	Type of Event	Valletta 2018 Event
Reasons For Attending %	35%	32%	28%
Reasons For Attending (2nd)	Type of Event	Activity for Family	Activity for Family
Reasons For Attending %	23%	29%	26%
Marketing Efforts	FB/Social Media	FB/Social Media	FB/Social Media
Marketing Efforts %	39%	43%	32%
Marketing Efforts (1st)	Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth
Marketing Efforts % (2nd)	30%	28%	20%
Decision Maker (1st)	Female	Female	Female
Decision Maker %	41%	43%	39%
Decision Maker (2nd)	Male	Male	Male
Decision Maker %	25%	28%	32%
Attendance Planning (1st)	One Week Before	One Week Before	Day of Event
Attendance Planning %	41%	37%	41%
Attendance Planning (2nd)	Day of Event	Day of Event	One Week Before
Attendance Planning %	33%	34%	33%
Other Cultural activities (1st)	Music	Music	Music
Other Cultural activities %	2%	3%	30%
Other Cultural activities (2nd)	Performance	Performance	Festivals
Other Cultural activities %	2%	3%	22%
Influencing Factors (1st)	Theme or Topic	Theme or Topic	Event is Innovative
Influencing Factors %	14%	14%	14%
Influencing Factors (2nd)	Event is Innovative	Event is Innovative	Theme or Topic
Influencing Factors %	13%	12%	11%

Strand	Exhibition	Film	Music
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Gender %	52%	56%	54%
Age	31-44	31-44	16-30
Age %	35%	37%	46%
Nationality	Maltese	Maltese	Maltese
Nationality %	55%	72%	58%
Reasons For Attending (1st)	Activity for Family	Type of Event	Type of Event
Reasons For Attending %	25%	35%	41%
Reasons For Attending (2nd)	Valletta 2018 Event	Activity for Family	Knowing Participants
Reasons For Attending %	22%	20%	41%
Marketing Efforts (1st)	FB/Social Media	FB/Social Media	FB/Social Media
Marketing Efforts %	30%	49%	40%
Marketing Efforts (2nd)	Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth
Marketing Efforts %	27%	28%	34%
Decision Maker (1st)	Female	Female	Female
Decision Maker %	38%	43%	41%
Decision Maker (2nd)	Male	Male	Male
Decision Maker %	31%	29%	35%
Attendance Planning (1st)	Day of Event	One Week Before	One Week Before
Attendance Planning %	50%	39%	28%
Attendance Planning (2nd)	One Week Before	Day of Event	Day of Event
Attendance Planning %	29%	30%	24%
Other Cultural activities (1st)	Music	Performance	Music
Other Cultural activities %	5%	2%	16%
Other Cultural activities (2nd)	Performance	Music	Festivals
Other Cultural activities %	4%	2%	10%
Influencing Factors (1st)	Event is Innovative	Event is Innovative	Artist or Speaker
Influencing Factors %	13%	14%	14%
Influencing Factors (2nd)	Theme or topic	Theme or Topic	Theme or Topic
Influencing Factors %	12%	13%	13%

Strand	Opera	Performance	Visual Arts
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Gender %	54%	60%	56%
Age	45-60	31-44	16-30
Age %	29%	32%	37%
Nationality	Maltese	Maltese	Maltese
Nationality %	60%	64%	48%
Reasons For Attending (1st)	Type of Event	Type of Event	Activity for Family
Reasons For Attending %	34%	36%	36%
Reasons For Attending (2nd)	Valletta 2018 Event	Valletta 2018 Event	Valletta 2018 Event
Reasons For Attending %	22%	22%	20%
Marketing Efforts (1st)	Word of Mouth	FB/Social Media	FB/Social Media
Marketing Efforts %	28%	33%	36%
Marketing Efforts (2nd)	FB / Social Media	Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth
Marketing Efforts %	27%	29%	22%
Decision Maker (1st)	Female	Female	Female
Decision Maker %	43%	45%	38%
Decision Maker (2nd)	Male	Male	Male
Decision Maker %	28%	25%	20%
Attendance Planning (1st)	One Week Before	One Week Before	Day of Event
Attendance Planning %	35%	45%	43%
Attendance Planning (2nd)	A month or more	Day of Event	One Week Before
Attendance Planning %	24%	22%	34%
Other Cultural activities (1st)	Music	Music	Music
Other Cultural activities %	2%	2%	0.3%
Other Cultural activities (2nd)	Performance	Performance	Performance
Other Cultural activities %	2%	2%	0.3%
Influencing Factors (1st)	Theme or Topic	Event is Innovative	Theme or Topic
Influencing Factors %	16%	17%	12%
Influencing Factors (2nd)	Event is Innovative	Theme or Topic	Last Minute Tickets
Influencing Factors %	13%	15%	12%

APPENDIX 1

EVENT LIST AND SURVEY COLLECTION FIGURES

Month	Event Type	EVENT NAME	Surveys Collected	Estimated Audience	Estimate Collection Rate %
January	Mass	Opening Ceremony	1561	N/A	N/A
February	Confined	Años Luz	32	150	21%
February	Confined	Icon Island	76	100	76%
February	Confined	Mokadelic	74	102	73%
February	Confined	The Other Europeans	139	250	56%
March	Confined	Años Luz	32	50	64%
March	Confined	Ida Kellarova	51	125	41%
April	Mass	Il-Festa l-Kbira	1644	N/A	N/A
April	Mass	Malta Robotics Olympiad	1435	N/A	N/A
April	Mass	Dal-Baħar Madwarha	519	N/A	N/A
April	Confined	Apocalypse Trio	64	80	80%
April	Confined	European Eyes on Japan	79	120	66%
May	Mass	Dal-Baħar Madwarha	517	N/A	N/A
May	Mass	Valletta Green Festival	3225	N/A	N/A
May	Confined	Altofest	87	120	73%
May	Confined	Amalgama	46	80	58%
May	Confined	Cantina	161	200	81%
May	Confined	Carlos Bojarski	148	200	74%
May	Confined	Hush	275	350	79%
May	Confined	Rulina	73	100	73%
May	Confined	Solar Cinema	206	300	69%
June	Mass	Earth Garden Festival	2896	N/A	N/A
June	Mass	Pageant of the Seas	1115	N/A	N/A
June	Confined	Cendrillon	113	150	75%
June	Confined	GħanaFest	474	800	59%
June	Confined	Japanese Choir	39	80	49%
June	Confined	From Malta to Motor City	40	60	67%
June	Confined	Modern Music Days	58	100	58%
June	Confined	Sky Classics	71	150	47%
June	Confined	Solar Cinema	80	120	67%
June	Confined	Taf X'Naf	57	80	71%
June	Confined	Valletta Film Festival	187	250	75%
July	Mass	Malta Jazz Festival	676	N/A	N/A
July	Confined	Aria	74	120	62%
July	Confined	Burhan Ocal	113	150	75%
July	Confined	Choir of Claire's College	46	60	77%
July	Confined	Daqxejn ta' Requim	57	80	71%
July	Confined	Divina Commedia	132	350	38%
July	Confined	Il-Hanina Maddalena	64	180	36%
July	Confined	Le Mer MPO	34	80	43%

Month	Event Type	EVENT NAME	Surveys Collected	Estimated Audience	Estimate Collection Rate %
July	Confined	Modern Music Days	72	125	58%
July	Confined	Phantom of the Opera	69	125	55%
July	Confined	Solar Cinema	76	120	63%
August	Mass	Baħħ Blu	207	N/A	N/A
August	Mass	Serata Għana u Lejla Rap	116	N/A	N/A
August	Confined	Ahna Refuġjati	459	700	66%
August	Confined	Corto Maltese	147	250	59%
August	Confined	Ġewwa Barra	205	350	59%
August	Confined	Ira Losco and Friends	204	400	51%
August	Confined	Solar Cinema	312	450	69%
August	Confined	Utopian Nights	151	250	60%
August	Confined	Wooden Circus	109	170	64%
September	Mass	Science in the City	525	N/A	N/A
September	Confined	Aida	178	250	71%
September	Confined	Aubergine Performance	86	120	72%
September	Confined	BE-WYLD Festival	81	120	68%
September	Confined	Curatorial School	19	35	54%
September	Confined	Hofesh Shechter	61	120	51%
September	Confined	Każin Barokk	120	250	48%
September	Confined	Malta Mediterranean Literature Festival	205	400	51%
September	Confined	Mewġa Mużika	225	450	50%
September	Confined	Modern Music Days	34	80	43%
September	Confined	Rock the City	65	120	54%
October	Mass	Notte Bianca	1559	N/A	N/A
October	Mass	Orfeo & Majnun Parade	1111	N/A	N/A
October	Confined	Cliff Zammit Stevens	208	500	42%
October	Confined	Sharing the Legacy Conference 2018	40	80	50%
October	Confined	Constellations	29	50	58%
October	Confined	Design for the City	85	250	34%
October	Confined	Orfeo & Majnun Performance	135	719	19%
October	Confined	Rima	76	125	61%
October	Confined	Malta International Doom Festival	114	250	46%
November	Mass	ComiCon	1533	N/A	N/A
November	Mass	Military Mtarfa	207	N/A	N/A
November	Confined	Island Lights	28	80	35%
November	Confined	Malta International Organ Festival	25	80	31%
November	Confined	Malta Philharmonic Orchestra Concert	58	150	39%
November	Confined	Public Lecture	222	300	74%
November	Confined	The Book Festival	1098	2500	44%

Month	Event Type	EVENT NAME	Surveys Collected	Estimated Audience	Estimate Collection Rate %
November	Confined	Utopian Nights - Santa Lucia	31	60	52%
December.	Mass	NYE 2019	1977	N/A	N/A
December.	Mass	Valletta 2018 Closing Ceremony	1416	N/A	N/A
December.	Confined	(In)vizibility	34	100	34%
Grand Total			30482		

APPENDIX 2

SURVEY TEMPLATE

Audience Profiling Valletta 2018 Foundation

Audience Profiling

1) What gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Other

2) Which of the following age ranges do you belong to?

- Under 16
- 16-30
- 31-44
- 45-60
- 61+

3) What is your nationality?

- Maltese
- British
- Italian
- German
- Spanish
- French
- American (USA)
- Japanese
- Polish
- Australian
- Dutch
- Bulgarian
- Other - Write In: _____

4) Where do you live (locality)?

- Valletta
- Floriana
- Birkirkara
- Sliema
- Birgu
- Bormla
- Isla
- Attard
- Balzan
- Birzebbugia
- Bugibba
- Dingli
- Fgura
- Gharghur
- Ghaxaq
- Gudja
- Gzira
- Hamrun
- Zebbug
- Ibragg
- Iklin
- Kalkara
- Kirkop
- Lija
- Luqa
- Madliena
- Marsa
- Marsascalea
- Marsaxlokk
- Mellieha
- Mgarr
- Mosta
- Mqabba

- Msida
- Mtarfa
- Naxxar
- Rahal Gdid
- Pieta
- Qawra
- Qormi
- Rabat
- St Julians
- San Gwann
- St Paul's Bay
- Santa Venera
- Santa Lucia
- Swieqi
- Siggiewi
- Swatar
- Tarxien
- Ta' Xbiex
- Xghajra
- Zabbar
- Zejtun
- Safi
- Zurrieq
- Qrendi
- Sannat
- Rabat, Gozo
- Mgarr, Gozo
- Kercem
- Marsalforn
- Xlendi
- Manikata
- Xemxija
- Mdina
- Other - Write In: _____

- 5) What were your reasons for attending this event? (Tick any that apply)
- Type of event
 - Valletta 2018 event
 - Activity for the whole family
 - Price of event
 - Passing by
 - Knowing participant
 - Other - Write In: _____

- 6) How did you find out about this event? (Tick any that apply)
- Facebook/Social Media
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Newspaper
 - Email mailshot
 - Poster/Banner
 - Valletta 2018 website
 - Valletta 2018 newspaper
 - Word of mouth

- 7) What other cultural activities would you be interested in attending? (Tick any that apply)
- Performance
 - Music
 - Literature
 - Visual arts/exhibition
 - Community
 - Festival
 - Design
 - Film

- 8) Are you the primary decision maker to go to an event?
- Yes
 - No

- 9) How far in advance did you plan your attendance to this activity?
- The day of the event
 - One week before
 - Two weeks before
 - A month or more

- 10) What factors influence your decision on whether or not to go to an event? (Tick any that apply)
- Theme or topic
 - Artist or speaker
 - Event is innovative
 - Ability to buy tickets at the last minute
 - Transportation & Parking
 - Venue
 - Physical accessibility
 - Ability to go out for dinner and drinks before or after
 - Time of event
 - Price of event
 - I feel part of a community attending

Thank You For Your Time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The studies presented throughout this theme are amongst the most directly pertinent to the overall development of the ECoC title in Valletta. Dealing directly with issues such as the cultural programme, the audiences nurtured throughout the years, perceptions of Valletta, and the impacts on identity, these studies enable a more holistic understanding of the impact of the ECoC on the cultural sector.

The Valletta Participation Survey provides a unique snapshot of participation across various forms of cultural activity over a number of years, along with tracing perceptions of the changes taking place in Valletta in the run-up to the ECoC title. When read alongside the study on the impact of Valletta 2018 on European identity, these reports map out the patterns of behaviours and attitudes towards Valletta 2018 over the past years.

The audience profiling study within this report fills a crucial gap in knowledge in the local cultural sector, by outlining the various different audiences that chose to attend cultural activities throughout 2018. For the first time, the local cultural sector is able to avail itself of the findings of a large-scale, year-long survey into the choices and preferences of its audiences. Although the paper in this report presents some of the main findings, this represents only the tip of the iceberg, with the data available to provide more detailed and segregated analyses, where necessary.

The analysis of the Valletta 2018 cultural programme frames all these studies, providing a more detailed understanding of the development of the programme itself, and contextualising all the developments noted in the other studies within this report. This study provides a crucial glimpse into the conceptual and thematic growth of the programmes, as well as outlining the practical and occasionally unexpected challenges faced throughout the planning and implementation of the programme.





THEME 02

GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

Creative Economy Report: 2015-2017 Economic Policy Department, Ministry for Finance	06
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**CREATIVE
ECONOMY REPORT:
2018 UPDATE**
ECONOMIC POLICY DEPARTMENT

Ministry for Finance

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the Culture and Creative Industries accounted for 7.9% of the total gross value added (GVA) created by the Maltese economy, up from 7.7% in 2015. To put this into perspective, this exceeds the direct contribution of the construction and civil engineering sector (4% of GVA) or the accommodation and food services sector (5% of GVA). The CCIs continued to expand following 2015, reaching an average annual growth rate of 9.4% in 2017, thus outperforming the rest of the economy.

Between 2015 and 2017, employment in the CCIs increased by a significant annual average rate of 6.8%. In 2017, the CCIs also accounted for 6.5% of total full-time and part-time gainful employment. The CCIs increased employment by almost 926 in 2016 and 1,153 in 2017, following the significant increase of more than 3,600 between 2010 and 2015.

Overall gross value added per person employed in the CCIs in 2017 is estimated at €45,700 which is currently higher than what is on average generated in either manufacturing (€35,300) or services (€40,700).

These indicators all point to the growing importance of the CCIs in Malta. They show a dynamic industry which generates growth and jobs. Nevertheless, the strong performance during this period is mainly attributable to the creative business services sub-sector, whilst the more traditional sub-sectors registered a more moderate or negative performance. This was primarily attributable to the fall in value added generated in the audiovisual sector, which negatively affected the arts sub-sector particularly in 2016. The decline in the Arts in 2016 was mainly due to the extraordinary increase registered in 2015 which was primarily related to artistic services rendered to the film industry within the audiovisual sector which had also recorded a substantial surge during that year.

There is scope to strengthen further the indirect contribution of the CCIs, particularly the linkages with the various other industries in Malta. Earlier Research carried out by the Economic Policy Department within the Ministry for Finance (see Box 1) suggests that in general (excluding the arts which were not covered by the study) and with a few exceptions, the CCIs display relatively weak GVA multipliers compared to other sectors of the economy. Such multiplier effects are not captured by the direct contribution as measured in this report. This report provides an account of the economic performance of the CCIs between 2015 and 2017. Annual data from 2010 has however been updated with the latest national accounts data.

METHODOLOGY

The study continues to use the original 2014 Report data as a base. As a result, data for the period 2000 to 2010 remain unchanged from the previous reports. This data was in turn based on detailed information at 4-digit level available from the SBS. Unfortunately, the current SBS no longer contains detailed sectoral data at 4-digit level for most of the sectors represented in the CCIs. Therefore, to complete this update, the aggregate data at 2-digit level from (unpublished) national accounts, made available by NSO, was used to update the figures. For a detailed exposition of the representation of the CCI sub-sectors, you may wish to refer to the January 2017 update of this report.

It is assumed that despite these over/under representations, the evolution of the CCI sub-sectors over time closely follows the evolution of the selected national accounts data at 2-digit level. This is deemed to be a relatively benign assumption in most cases. Nevertheless, in view of the exclusion of the printing of currencies from the definition of the CCIs, this report adjusts the national accounts data accordingly on the basis of published financial accounts of enterprises operating in this sub-industry. The major constraint remains in the aggregation of the arts which are predominantly based on NACE 90 (Creative Arts and Entertainment Activities) and do not, therefore, allow an accurate distinction between the annual performance of visual arts, performing arts and music. In any case, the detailed results at a sub-sector level should be viewed with more caution given the data limitations.

FINDINGS

In 2017, the Culture and Creative Industries accounted for 7.9% of the total gross value added created by the Maltese economy, up from 6% in 2010. The composition of the CCIs is shown in Figure 1. Since 2010, the CCIs have changed drastically and became more business oriented. This was predominantly marked by the growing share of the Creative Business Services (75% in 2017 compared to 62% in 2010). The Media sector lost its share in the CCIs (from 28% in 2010 to 19% in 2017). Heritage and the Arts also lost their combined share within the CCIs (from 10% in 2010 to 6% in 2017). A more detailed composition is provided in Figure 2, which shows the various sub-sectors making up the CCIs.

Over the course of the last sixteen years, the CCIs have seen their direct share of the Maltese economy grow by 3.3 percentage points, indicating that over this period the CCIs have outperformed the rest of the economy. This followed a period of relative decline in performance up to 2007, after which the CCIs almost consistently outperformed the rest of the economy. Figure 3 shows the share of the CCIs since 2001.

The period between 2015 and 2017 was characterised by the further strengthening of growth in the CCIs. Nevertheless, if we exclude the creative business services sub-sector, the more traditional CCIs registered an annual average decline of 4.1%. This performance was primarily attributable to base effects from the exceptionally strong performance recorded in the audiovisual and arts sector in 2015, whose performance was due to a substantial but one-off growth in the film industry in that year. Since then, the audiovisual sector recorded an average annual decline of 5.7%. Most of the decline in the audiovisual sector occurred in 2016 but persisted in 2017. A more significant and related decline in relative terms was also recorded in the Arts sector. These developments were, however, reflective of the performance in the film industry, primarily artistic services rendered to the film industry. The decline in the arts did not persist in 2017 when the sub-sector registered a strong growth of 19.4% in gross value added. This represented the strongest growth among the sub-sectors of the CCIs in that year but only led to a partial recovery following the previous year's decline. Within the traditional CCIs, a notably strong performance was registered in the crafts sub-sector with an average annual growth of 14.1% between 2015 and 2017. The trend increase in the creative business services continued during this period with a formidable increase of 15.3% during the two-year period under review, consolidating the performance of the last seventeen years. Further details are provided in Table 1.

Chart 1: Composition of the CCI in 2017

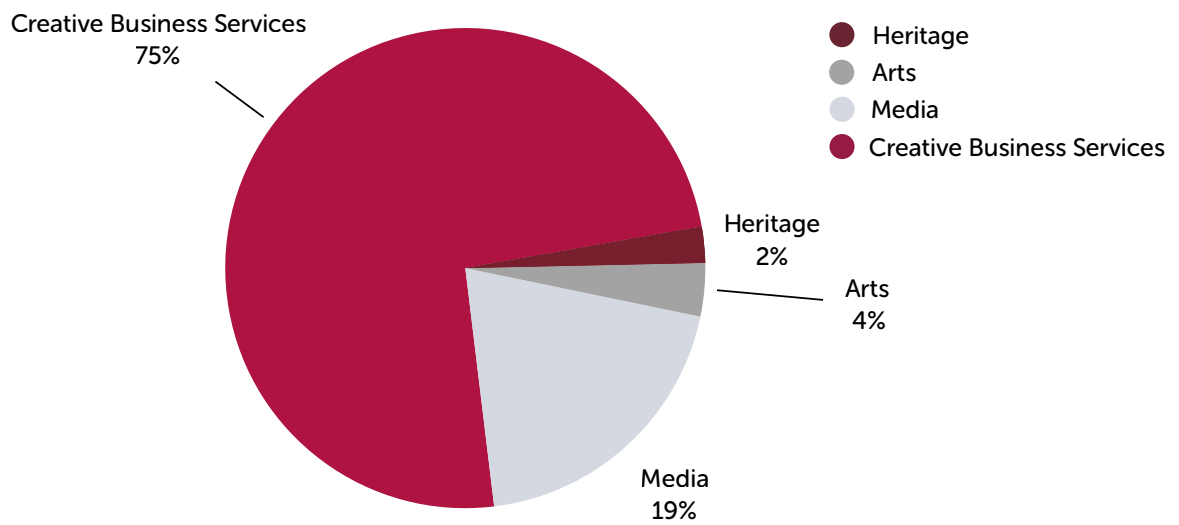


Chart 2: Detailed composition of the CCI in 2017

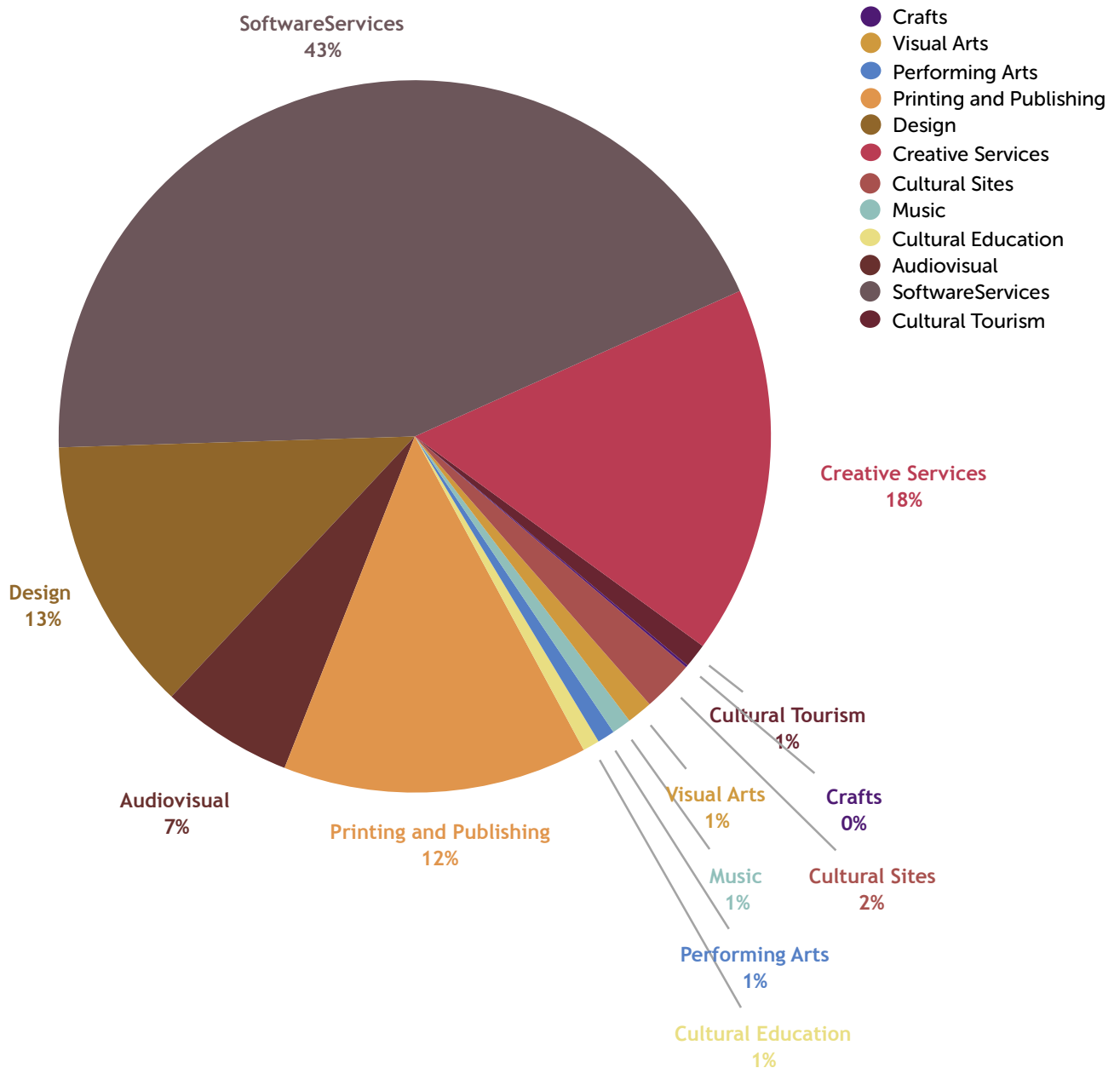


Chart 3: The CCIs as a share of GVA

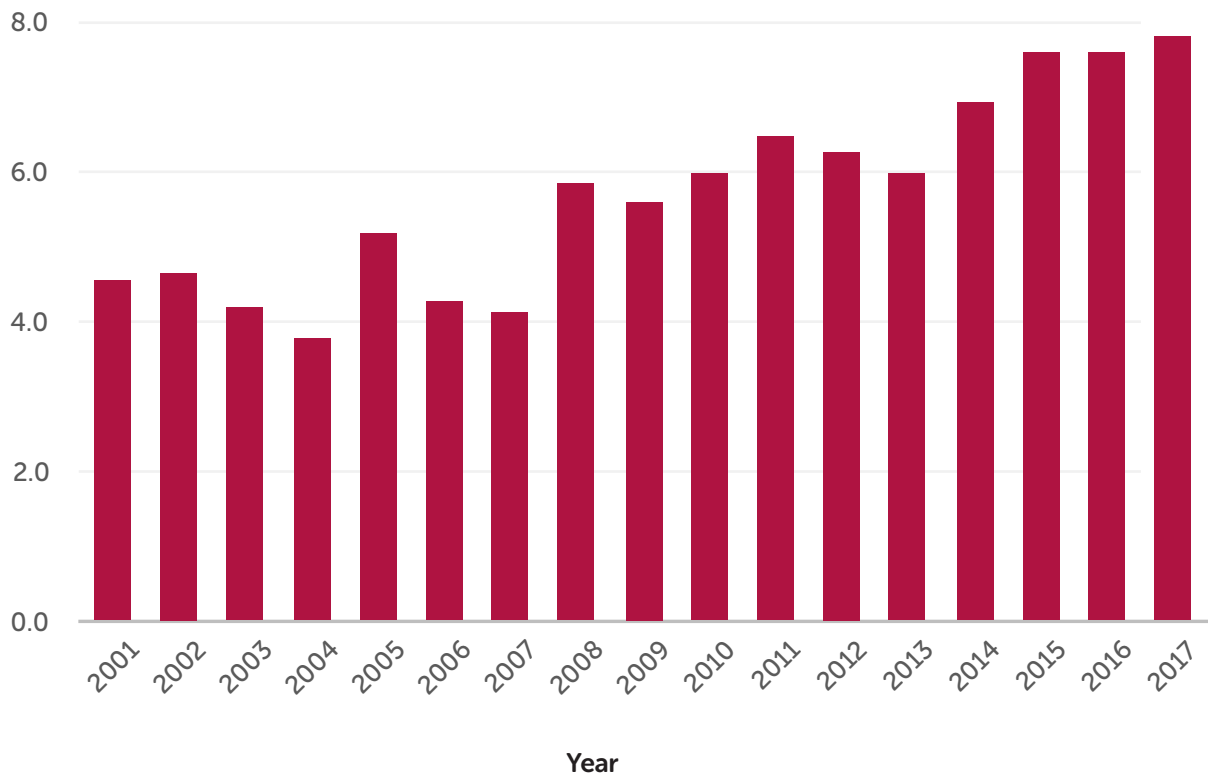


Table 1: Average Annual Growth in Gross Value Added

Average Annual Growth in Gross Value Added (%)				
	2000/05	2005/10	2010/15	2017/15
Crafts	-0.9	-10.9	0.0	14.1
Cultural Sites	-	-2.6	10.1	4.8
Heritage	47.1	-3.6	9.3	5.4
Visual Arts	24.2	11.6	-	-
Music	0.1	30.9	-	-
Performing Arts	-4.1	7.3	-	-
Cultural Education	-	-	7.0	6.6
Arts	5.0	17.6	13.0	-18.1
Printing and Publishing	0.4	4.0	4.1	1.6
Audio-visual	0.0	7.0	19.6	-5.7
Media	0.3	4.7	8.8	-1.3
Design	-	2.1	9.9	13.2
Software Services	32.1	19.3	15.9	15.5
Creative Services	145.5	7.3	21.8	17.6
Cultural Tourism	-	-	-1.0	-3.8
Creative Business Services	57.6	12.2	15.3	15.3
CCI	17.3	9.4	13.3	9.4
excl. CBS	2.8	5.6	9.7	-4.1

The employment performance in the 2015/7 period was also relatively strong, even though it generally lagged behind the growth in gross value added in reflection of labour productivity gains. The CCIs created new jobs as employment increased by more than 2,000 in the two-year period under review. Employment in the CCIs increased by a significant annual average rate of 6.8% over these two years, in line with recent trends. Notwithstanding the decline in gross value added in the Arts, the sub-sector registered the strongest growth in employment of 12.0%. This was followed closely by the Creative Business Services which recorded a growth of 11.9% during the period. Further details are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Average Annual Growth in Employment

Average Annual Growth in Employment (%)				
	2000/05	2005/10	2010/15	2017/15
Crafts	-2.7	1.6	-1.8	-1.6
Antiques	-	-	-	-
Cultural Sites	-	-7.8	2.0	-0.4
Heritage	42.5	-6.1	1.2	-0.7
Visual Arts	16.3	8.7	-	-
Music	2.6	17.6	-	-
Performing Arts	-1.1	-6.8	-	-
Cultural Education	-	-	1.8	1.0
Arts	3.8	5.5	6.5	12.0
Printing and Publishing	2.2	3.9	0.0	-6.3
Audio-visual	2.8	-4.1	4.4	-6.7
Media	2.4	1.2	1.3	-6.4
Design	-	-2.1	7.6	10.8
Software Services	11.2	8.0	13.5	15.5
Creative Services	75.3	1.3	8.4	7.1
Cultural Tourism	-	-	-2.3	5.2
Creative Business Services	44.3	2.6	9.4	11.9
CCI	13.6	2.1	5.9	6.8

Productivity in the CCIs is high relative to the other sectors of the Maltese economy. Every person employed in the CCIs in 2017 generated on average €45,700, which is currently higher than what is on average generated in either manufacturing (€35,300) or services (€44,900). The performance varies significantly by sub-sector as shown in Table 1. The strong performance is mainly attributable to the Creative and Software Services. The Media sector displays similar productivity levels as the rest of the economy. The more traditional Arts and Heritage sub-sectors display low GVA per person employed, even though this mostly reflects the predominance of part-time employment.

Indeed, the figures used above, which are consistent with the methodology employed in the original 2014 Report, tend to underestimate labour productivity when there is a predominance of part-time employment. The advantage of using national accounts data is that data for employment converted in full-time equivalent is available upon request from NSO. Based on this information, it is possible to get a better idea of labour productivity. This information is also presented in Figure 6. Internal estimates based on these unpublished figures suggests that labour productivity in the crafts, the arts, and in printing and publishing is much higher than previously suggested, whereas productivity in the software services, creative services, the audio-visual and in cultural education is overvalued when full-time equivalent employment is not used. The remaining sub-sectors record relatively contained differences. The main difference in the assessment when utilising FTEs is however noted in the Printing and Publishing sub-sector which now displays a higher productivity relative to the rest of the economy and becomes the third most productive sector among the CCIs.

Chart 4: Productivity per person and per FTE in 2017



Table 3: Average Annual Growth in GVA per person employed

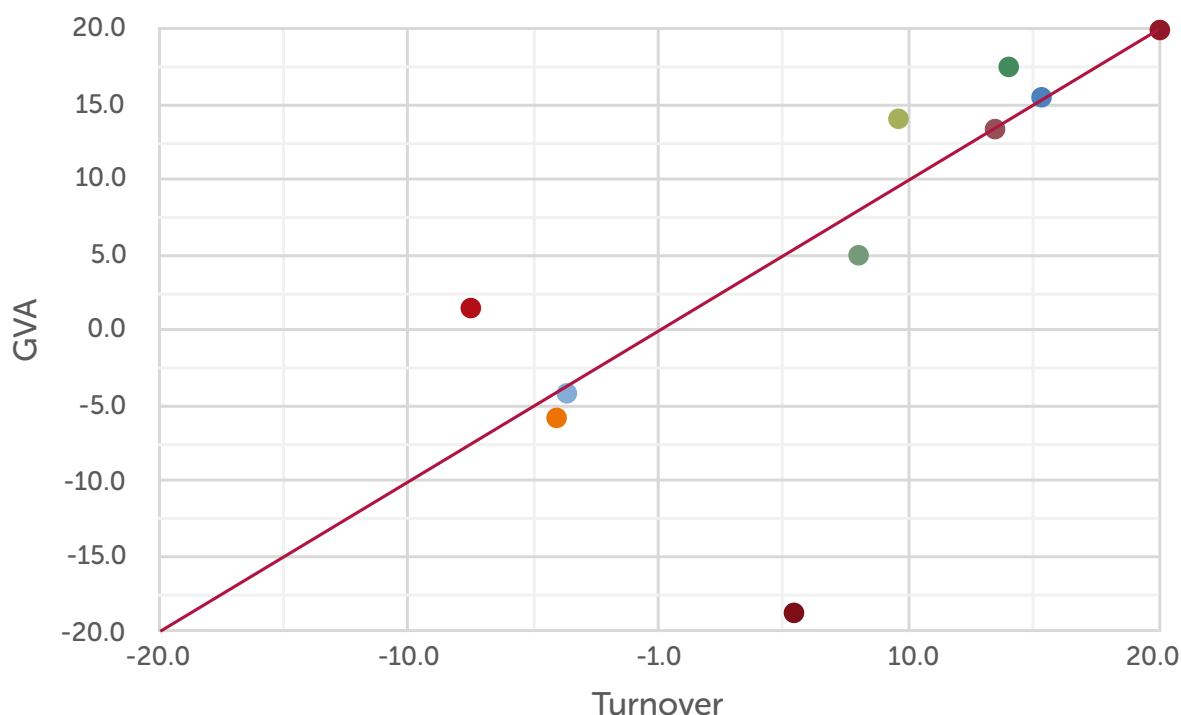
Average Annual Growth in GVA per Person Employed (%)				
	2000/05	2005/10	2010/15	2017/15
Crafts	1.9	-12.3	1.9	16.0
Cultural Sites	:	5.6	8.0	5.3
Heritage	3.2	2.7	8.0	6.1
Visual Arts	6.8	2.6	-	-
Music	-2.4	11.3	-	-
Performing Arts	-3.1	15.0	-	-
Cultural Education	-	-	5.1	5.5
Arts	1.2	11.5	6.1	-26.9
Printing and Publishing	-1.8	0.1	4.0	8.4
Audio-visual	-2.7	11.6	14.6	1.1
Media	-2.1	3.5	7.4	5.5
Design	-	4.3	2.1	2.2
Software Services	18.8	10.5	2.1	0.0
Creative Services	40.1	5.9	12.4	9.8
Cultural Tourism	-	-	1.3	-8.6
Creative Business Services	9.2	9.4	5.4	3.0
CCI	3.3	7.2	6.9	2.5

As indicated earlier, the 2015/2017 period was characterised by further improvements in labour productivity (measured in GVA per person employed) with the growth reaching an annual average of 2.5%. Whilst this is a relatively slower rate of growth than the rest of the economy, this was influenced by the slowdown in the audio-visual sector and the strong but temporary decline in the arts attributable to the film industry performance documented earlier. Meanwhile, strong improvements in labour productivity were recorded in the crafts sub-sector as well as the creative services and the printing and publishing industry (excluding currency printing). Table 3 indicates the productivity trends in the various sub-sectors of the CCIs.

Chart 5 shows the relationship between growth in turnover and value added with the 45-degree line representing the degree to which the two variables are moving together. For most sub-sectors, performance was very close to this 45-degree line. This suggests that the overall growth in value added by sub-sector generally followed closely the growth in turnover registered during the 2015/17 period suggesting that the improvement in demand conditions or gains in market shares were the main factors contributing to the growth in GVA.

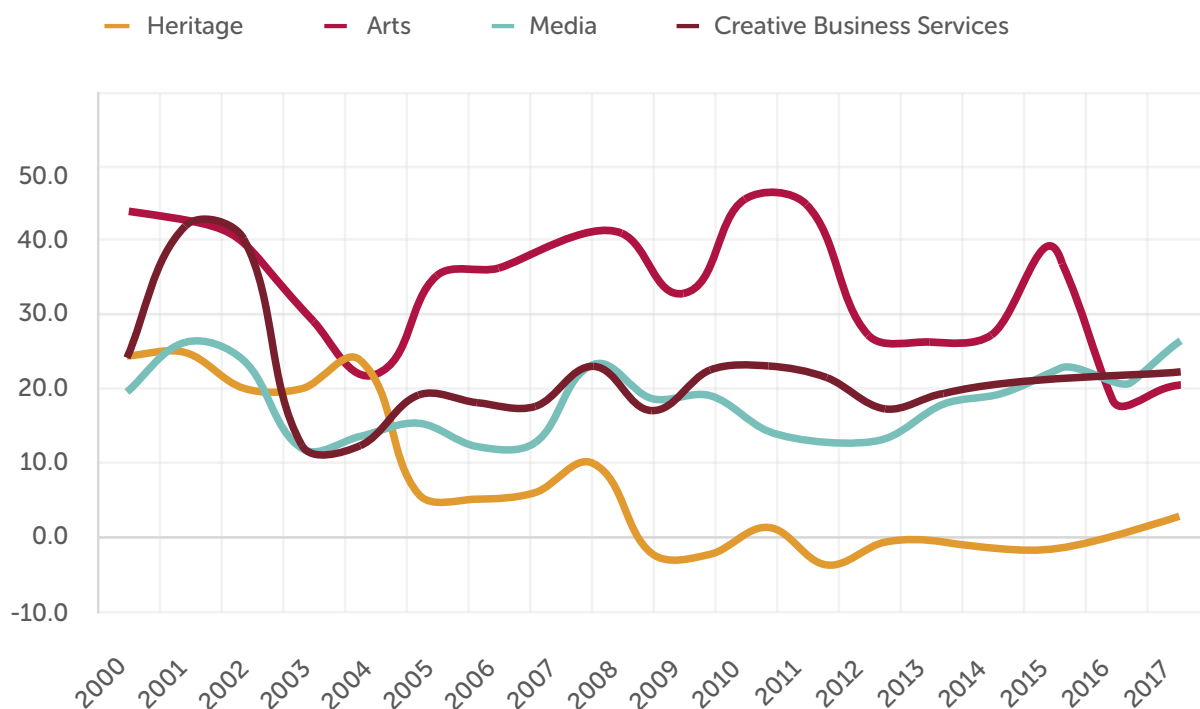
Sub-sectors above the line represent those that have registered a stronger increase (or weaker decline) in gross value added than turnover, indicating that supply-side factors may have further supported the growth of the industry (namely the case of Creative Services and Crafts) or mitigated the loss in demand (namely the case of Printing and Publishing). Sub-sectors below the line represent those that have registered a weaker increase (or stronger decline) in value added than turnover, indicating that supply-side factors may have partially undermined the growth of the industry (cultural sites) or amplified the loss in demand (audiovisuals and the arts).

Chart 5: Growth in turnover and value added in 2015/17



Profit margins have generally improved for most CCIs, meaning that the growth in turnover generally exceeded the growth in the wage bill. However, profit margins in the Arts declined substantially in 2016 and did not recover sufficiently in 2017. Profit margins have generally converged towards the mid-20s as a per cent of turnover. The heritage sub-sector is the major exception to this convergence rule, but even here, a marginal profit margin was evident in 2017, compared to the marginal losses characterising this sub-sector since 2009.

Chart 6: Profit Margins

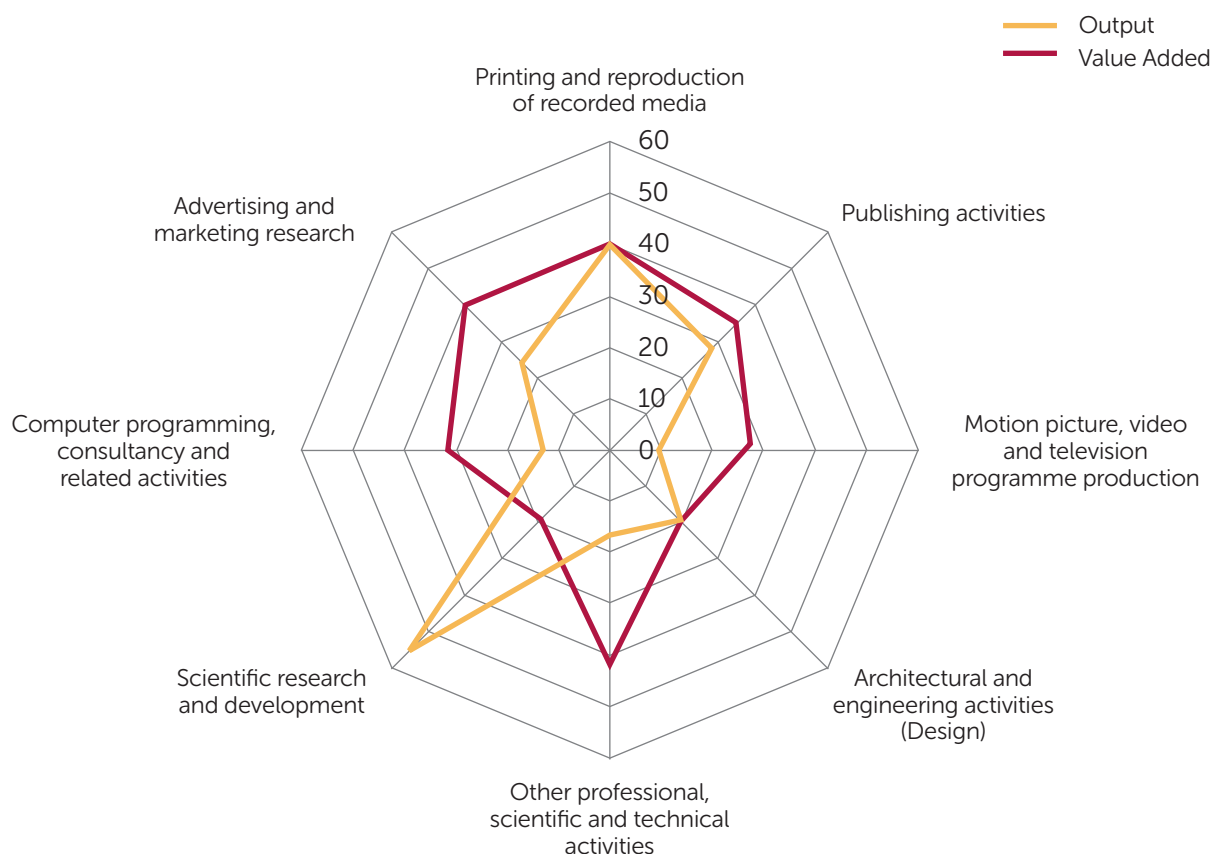


Linkages and Multipliers of Business Oriented CCI and the rest of the Economy

In 2016, Sean Buttigieg and Kevin Vella, within the Economic Policy Department, reviewed the industry multipliers and linkages generated by Media and Creative Business Sectors of the CCIs. The selected CCIs display relatively strong output linkages with the rest of the economy and consequently relatively strong Type I multipliers. They are generally ranked among the top 20 industries (out of 59 industries). In particular, this applies to the audiovisual sector but also to the design, software services and creative services. On the other hand, inter-industry linkages and hence output multipliers are relatively weaker for the printing sub-sector and for engineering research activities within the design sub-sector.

When excluding leakages, primarily the purchase of imported inputs in the production process, only design activities, followed by the audiovisual sub-sector, continue to display strong Type I value added multipliers. The other CCIs (namely creative services, software services, printing and publishing which rank between 32 and 42 out of 59 industries) display moderate to low Type I value added multiplier effects. When compared to the stronger output multiplier, the deterioration of the relative strength of the value added multipliers of these CCIs reflect relatively high import content involved in direct and/or indirect production. The rankings in terms of Type I output and value added multipliers are reproduced in Chart 7.

Chart 7: Ranking of Type I Output and Value Added Multipliers



A strategy to strengthen the economic contribution of the CCI need not just look at the growth of the industry but also at the possibility of improving (backward and forward) linkages with the rest of the economy and the provision of domestically-produced competitive inputs. This is the essence of the idea behind the creation of a cluster of activities.

In this respect, this study indicates that the major inputs used by the selected CCIs are primarily services, including legal and accounting, rental and leasing, computing and IT, financial, telecommunications, advertising and market research. These services almost invariably rank among the major inputs in the production process of the selected CCIs. The products and services provided by the selected CCIs are more varied and depend on the specific creative sub-sector. But among the major common consumers of the selected CCIs, one finds the remote gaming industry, wholesale and retail, printing and public administration. The advertising and market research sub-sector is also a major consumer of the printing, publishing, audiovisual and software services sub-sectors of the CCIs.

The absence of manufacturing industries as major consumers of the selected CCIs is worth analysing further. The only noted exception is the demand by the furniture industry for specialised design services. Otherwise, the input-output analysis suggests that the potential of creating closer links between the CCIs and manufacturing exists and could provide scope for the strengthening of the CCIs as well as improving the economic contribution of manufacturing to the Maltese economy.

CONCLUSIONS

This report provides an overview of the developments of the CCI in 2015/2017. The sector has generally outperformed the rest of the economy both in terms of growth in gross value added and employment. The positive performance also supported higher profit margins in 2017. The decline registered in 2016 in the Arts has also been partly reversed, even though the audio-visual sector registered another decline, albeit more moderate than in 2016. Meanwhile, the CCI continued to be dominated by the strong double-digit growth in Software Services, Creative Services and Design, which continue to cement the growing share of business-oriented CCI. If this sub-sector is excluded, the more traditional CCI are shown to have declined by 4.1%. This decline is, however, due to base effects related to the exceptionally strong but one-off performance of the film industry in 2015 and its effects on the arts sub-sector.

The research by the Economic Policy Department also suggests that despite the overall strong performance over the years, the CCI are yet to mature and there is scope to further strengthen the indirect contribution of the CCI, particularly the linkages with the various other industries in Malta. With a few exceptions, the CCI display relatively weak GVA multipliers compared to other sectors of the economy and there is scope to strengthen backward and forward linkages with the rest of the economy, particularly manufacturing.

WAY FORWARD

As noted in the methodology, the absence of detailed SBS data at 4-digit level somewhat limits the accuracy and reliability of this analysis and improvements in the underlying data is necessary for a deeper and richer economic analysis.

CREATING A CAREER IN CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

JOBSPLUS

Adonia Dalli

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of Jobsplus' research and contribution is to analyse the impact of the investment and management in Valletta 2018 on employment within Malta's Cultural and Creative Industries. Such analysis is based on statistical indicators to establish changes in the employment structure in CCI's pre- and during Valletta 2018.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been adopted during this research is primarily based on quantitative techniques. A statistical analysis of a number of employment indicators has been carried out. Such indicators include:

- Full-time employment in CCI's
- Part-time employment in CCI's
- Total employment in CCI's
- Registered jobseekers (searching for jobs relating to CCI's)
- Vacancies notified to Jobsplus (relating to CCI's)

Employment statistics have also been segregated by gender and nationality in an effort to capture any changes in the employment structure during the period under review. Since the research is aimed at analysing the impact on employment pre- and during Valletta 2018, the statistical analysis will run from 2015 up to 2018. For the purpose of this research, the pre-Valletta 2018 period will cover 2015 and 2016 whilst the period incorporating data from 2017 to 2018 will be referred to as during Valletta 2018. Due to the number of events (both on a large and small scale) involved in the years leading up to the Valletta 2018, a priori it is expected that employment in CCI's should experience gradual increases over time during the period under observation.

All data relating to employment, vacancies and registered jobseekers has been extracted from Jobsplus' database. This implies that any vacancies, which are not notified to Jobsplus and any individuals looking for a job through channels other than registering with Jobsplus, are excluded from the data.

In order to determine the NACE¹ codes which should be classified under the Cultural and Creative Industries, feedback was gathered from other public entities such as the National Statistics Office (NSO) and the Ministry for Finance (MFIN). Furthermore, reference was made to a number of reports which included guidelines on the NACEs and ISCO² codes which should be included under CCI's. A full list of NACE codes included under CCI's for the purpose of this research is included in Appendix A.

¹ NACE or Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne is the statistical classification of Economic Activities in the EU.

² The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is one of the main international classifications for which the International Labour Organisation is responsible. ISCO is a tool for organising jobs into a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job (ILO web portal).

Jobsplus carried out a number of other qualitative researches, which can be utilised and analysed in the context of CCIs at a broad level. During 2015, an Employability Index Report was launched aimed at facilitating the transition from further and higher education to employment. The results relating to CCIs can also be extracted from this report to determine whether in the pre-Valletta 2018 period, students furthering their education in the creative sector managed to find a job that required the individual's level of education and one that matches the relevant area of study. The Employability Index Report launched in 2015 covered students who graduated in 2012 and 2013 from three main educational institutions: the University of Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the Institute of Tourism Studies. Their individual areas of study were compared to their respective employment in the years subsequent to their graduation year (in this case 2012, 2013 and 2014). Should the Employability Index Report be updated in the near future, an inter-temporal comparison of results tied to CCIs could be carried out. Such results could be further examined to determine whether Valletta being the European Capital of Culture had any impact on the type of jobs students pursuing studies in the creative sector find after completing higher education.

FINDINGS

Statistical Analysis

The main results of the research conducted between 2015 and 2018 are displayed and described in detail below.

Full time employment in the CCIs

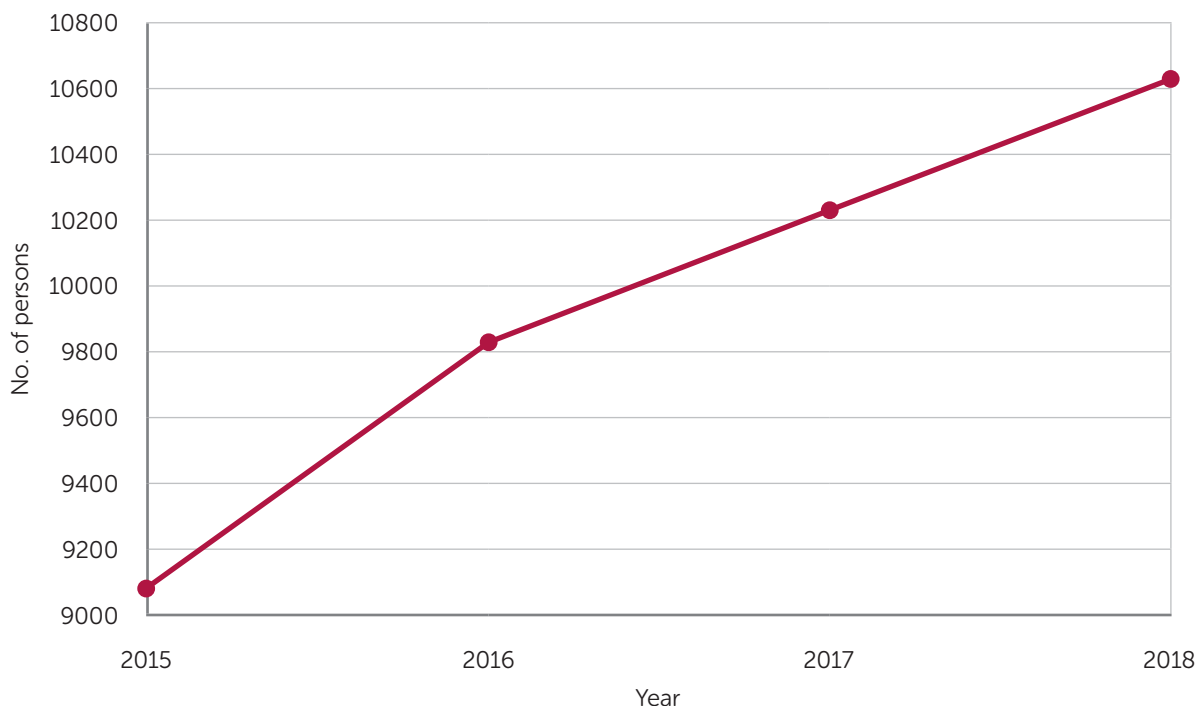
As depicted in Figure 1, full-time employment in CCIs has increased from 9,111 as at Q4 (December) of 2015 to 10,629 as at Q2 (June) of 2018, equivalent to a 16.7% increase over the three-year period, reflecting the situation of full-time employment across the Maltese economy. This increase is equally reflected in both gender cohorts with 12.5% more males and 22% more females engaged in gainful employment within the creative sector. The majority of the 10,629 individuals or 93.6% employed on a full-time basis in CCIs were employed in the private sector, whilst the remaining 6.4% were employed in the public sector. Out of the individuals gainfully employed in CCIs as at the end of 2017, 72.4% were Maltese nationals, 23.0% were EU nationals and 4.6% were third-country nationals. The number of foreigners employed in CCIs pertains to approximately 7.3% of the total number of foreign workers in gainful employment during the same period of which 64.6% were males and 35.4% were females.

The top 5 NACEs contributing to full-time employment in CCIs as at the end of June 2018 (i.e. 2018 Q2), were:

1. 62.01 – Computer Programming Activities
2. 18.12 – Other Printing
3. 73.11 – Advertising Agencies
4. 71.11 – Architectural Activities
5. 71.12 – Engineering Activities and Related Technical Consultancy

19.5% of persons employed on a full-time basis in CCIs were employed in *Computer Programming Activities* followed by *Other Printing and Advertising Agencies Activities* with 13.5% and 11.6% respectively. It is pertinent to point out that this list has been consistent over the years under review, with only minimal changes in the share of people engaged in full-time employment in each NACE.

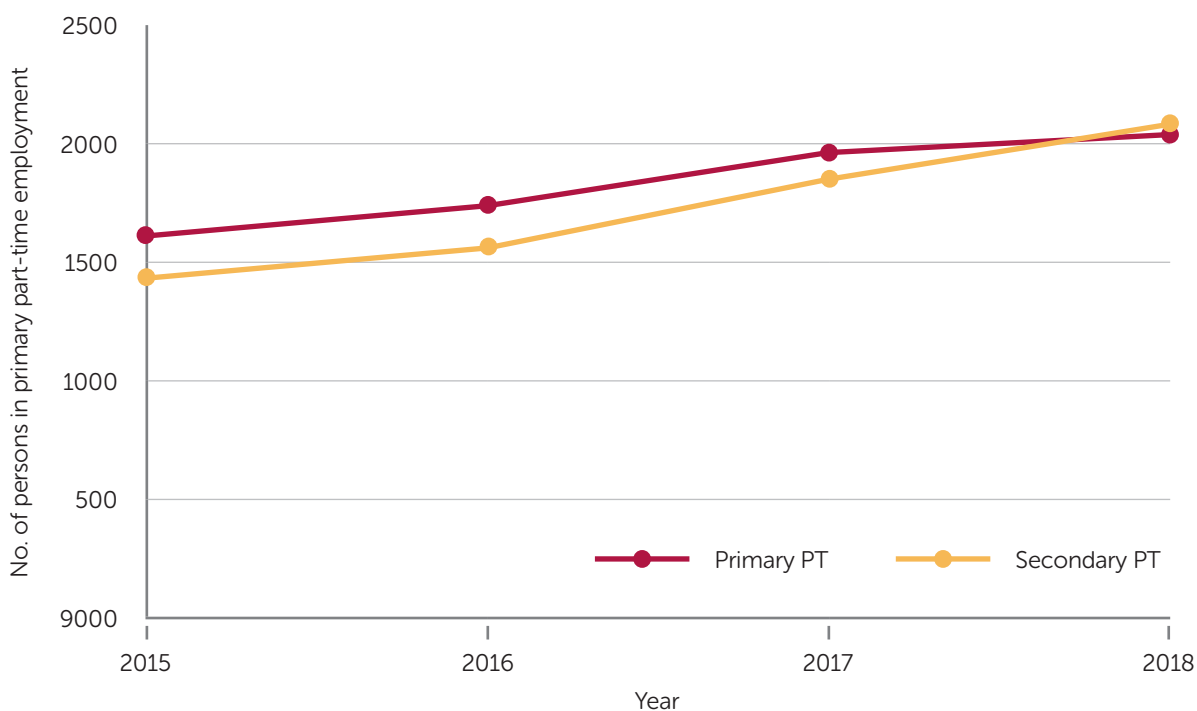
Chart 1: Full-time employment in CCIs



Part-Time Employment in CCIs

Chart 2 displays part-time employment (both part-time employment as a primary job and as a secondary job) in CCIs between 2015 (Q4) and 2018 (Q2). In general, total part-time employment in CCIs increased over the three-year period, from 3,073 as at the end of 2015 to 4,135 as at June of 2018, equivalent to a 34.6% increase in total part-time employment. This increase mainly pertains to secondary part-time employment (i.e. persons working a part-time job in CCIs other than their gainful employment) which nearly doubled during the period under review. When compared to 2015, both the number of males and females in part-time employment as a primary job and as a secondary job increased significantly – with both cohorts increasing more than 34%. Major increases were mainly observed in part-time employment as a secondary job where the number of males in employment rose by approximately 40% compared to 57.6% increase in the number of females. Similarly, the majority of part-time workers were employed in the private sector with only 1.5% employed in the public sector. As at the end of December 2017, foreigners occupied approximately 20% of part-time employment in CCIs of which 94.8% were EU nationals and 5.2% were third country nationals.

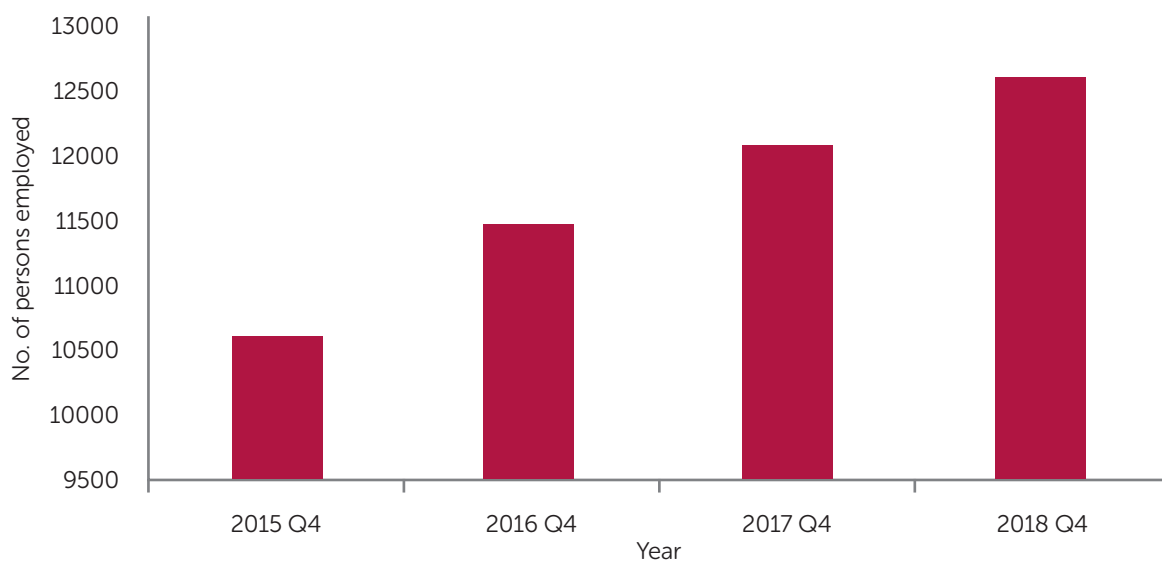
Chart 2: Part-time Employment in CCIs



Total Employment in CCIs

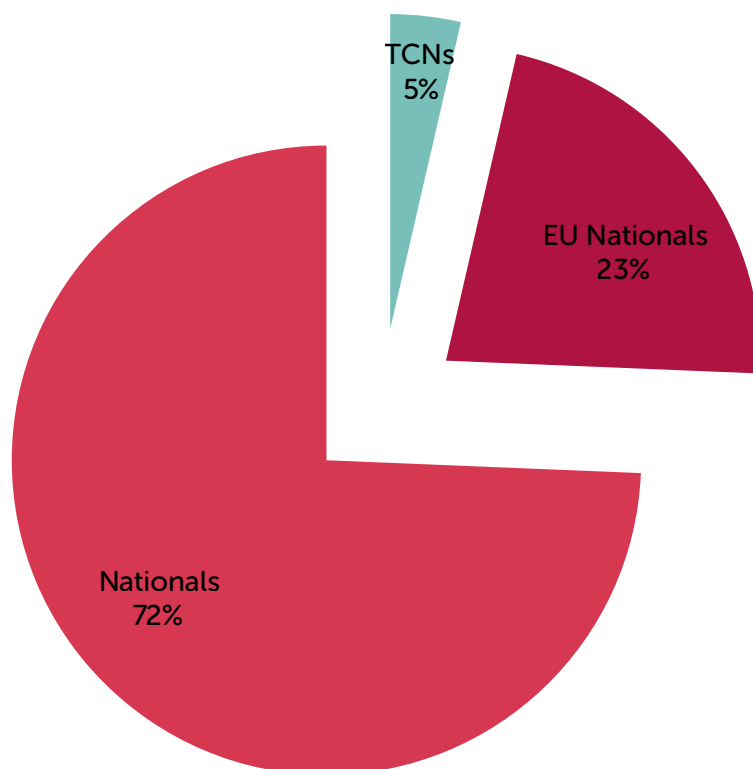
Chart 3 portrays total employment (including full-time + primary part-time employment) in CCIs for the period under review. Total employment in CCIs increased from 10,752 in Q4 of 2015 to 12,686 in Q2 of 2018; equivalent to an 18% increase over the three-year period. Whilst the share of full-time employment in CCIs as a proportion of total full-time employment stood at 5.2% in Q2 of 2018, the share of part-time employment in CCIs stood at 5.7%. Moreover, total employment (full-time + primary part-time employment) in CCIs as at the end of June 2018 amounted to 12,686, approximately 5.3% of employment in the total economy.

Chart 3: Total employment in CCIs



Out of the total number of persons employed (full-time + primary part-time employment) in CCI as at the end of December 2017, 72% were Maltese nationals, 23% were EU nationals and 5% were third country nationals. Moreover, total foreigners employed in CCI (full-time + primary part-time employment) amounted to approximately 7.2% of total foreigners employed in the Maltese labour market of which 61.5% were males whilst 38.5% were females.

Chart 4: Employment in CCI by Nationality



Notified Vacancies to Jobsplus (relating to CCI)

The number of vacancies notified to Jobsplus relating to CCI has also been analysed. Overall, the number of vacancies pertaining to occupations within the culture and creative sector has decreased from 349 in 2015Q1 to 230 in 2018Q3. Notwithstanding this decline, vacancies relating to CCI have been quite unstable over the period under review, as evidenced by fluctuations in Figure 5 with vacancies reaching a peak in 2016Q2 with a total of 527 notified vacancies within the same quarter. On average, between 2015 and 2017, the highest number of notified vacancies during an entire year was registered in 2016 where nearly 7% of all vacancies notified to Jobsplus related to CCI. As at the end of September 2018, the number of vacancies notified to Jobsplus, relating to CCI, accounted for approximately 4% of the total number of vacancies notified to Jobsplus between January and September of 2018.

Chart 5: Notified Vacancies to Jobsplus (relating to CCIs)

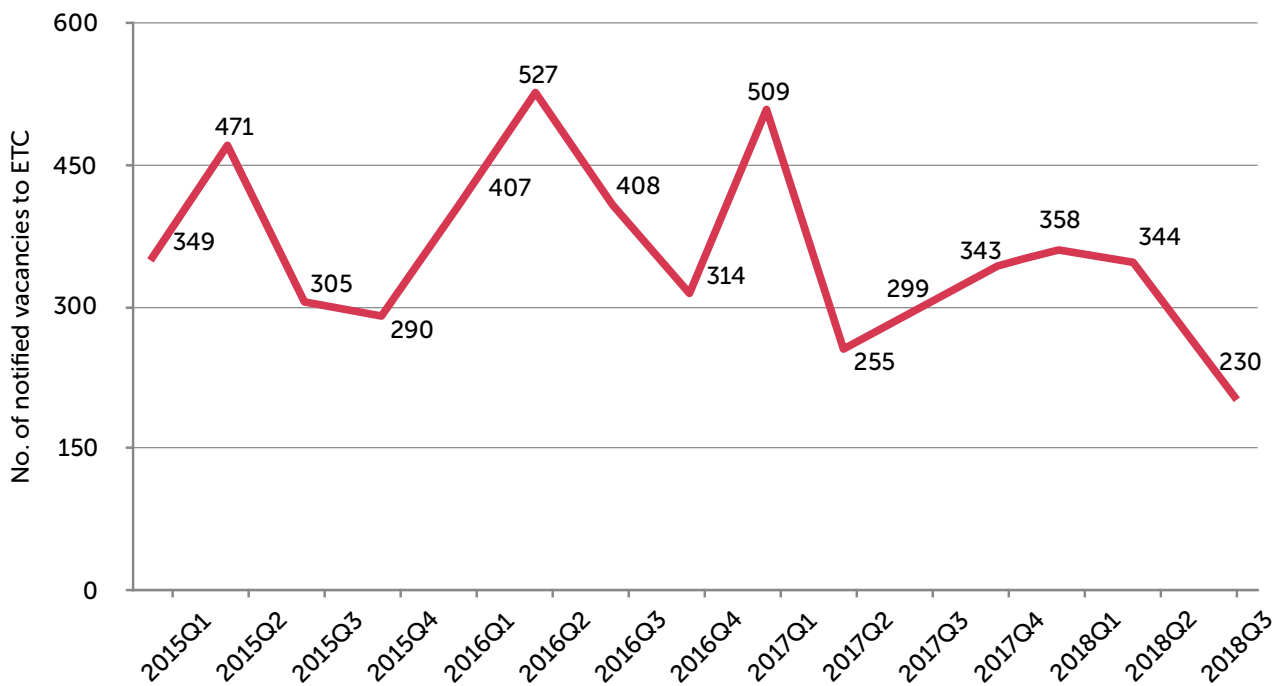
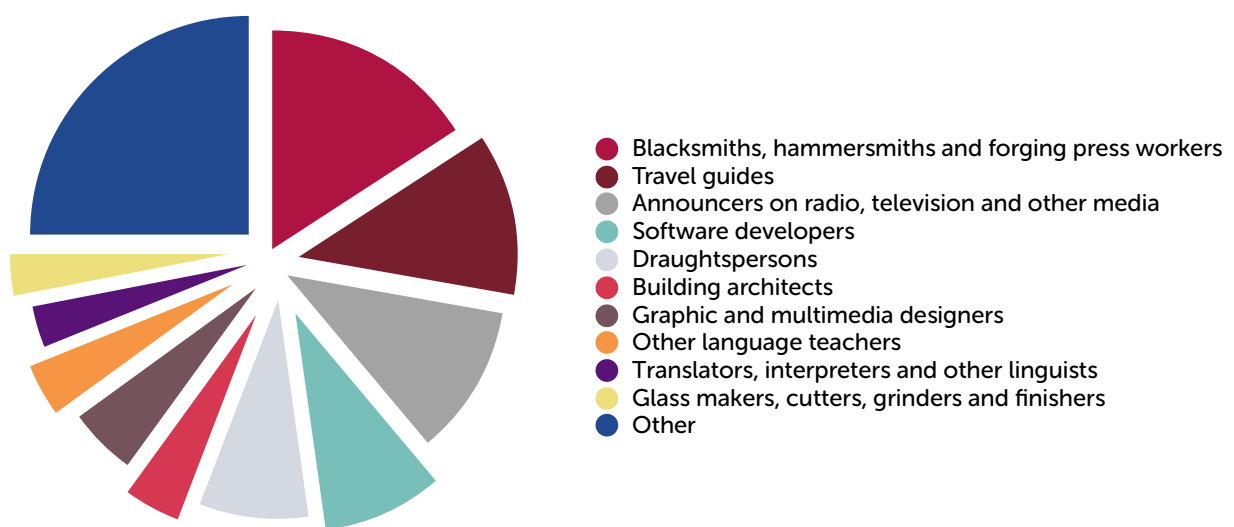


Chart 6 represents the top 10 occupations relating to CCIs which registered the highest number of vacancies during the first three quarters of 2018. The highest number of registered vacancies during 2018 pertained to blacksmiths, hammersmiths and forging press workers, which accounted for 16% of total vacancies, followed by travel guides and announcers on radio, television and other media with 12% and 11% respectively.

Chart 6: Notified vacancies to Jobsplus relating to CCIs - Top 10 occupations



A word of caution is warranted: these statistics emanate from Jobsplus' database which means that the figures do not capture the total vacancies across the Maltese labour market but rather only vacancies notified to Jobsplus which to some degree represent a subset of the former. Furthermore, a double counting problem may also be at work, since if an unfilled vacancy is reissued at a point in time after the initial closing date by the same employer, this is classified as an entirely new vacancy as opposed to a recurrent one.

Registered Jobseekers (searching for jobs relating to CCIs)

In absolute terms, the number of jobseekers looking for employment in the CCIs decreased from 199 in Quarter 1 of 2015 to 146 in Quarter 3 of 2018. During the years under review, one could instantaneously notice an increase in the number of jobseekers seeking employment in CCIs between 2015 Q1 and 2015 Q2 – where the number of jobseekers increased to 483. Thereafter, the number of individuals looking for employment in CCIs decreased gradually throughout the period in question. Notwithstanding, overall unemployment in the Maltese labour market has declined drastically throughout recent years, with the number of registered unemployed persons dropping from 7,789 in January 2014 to 1,813 in September 2018. The significant increases in Q2 and Q4 of 2015 were mainly pertinent to occupation “2654 – Film, stage related directors and producers”, since a number of jobseekers started showing interest in occupations classified under this ISCO code.

The number of registered jobseekers looking for a job in the CCIs, reflects only individuals registering on Part 1 and Part 2 of Jobsplus' unemployment register. Thus, individuals looking for alternative employment or seeking temporary employment are not included in the figures quoted in this section.

Chart 7: Registered Jobseekers (searching for jobs in the CCIs)

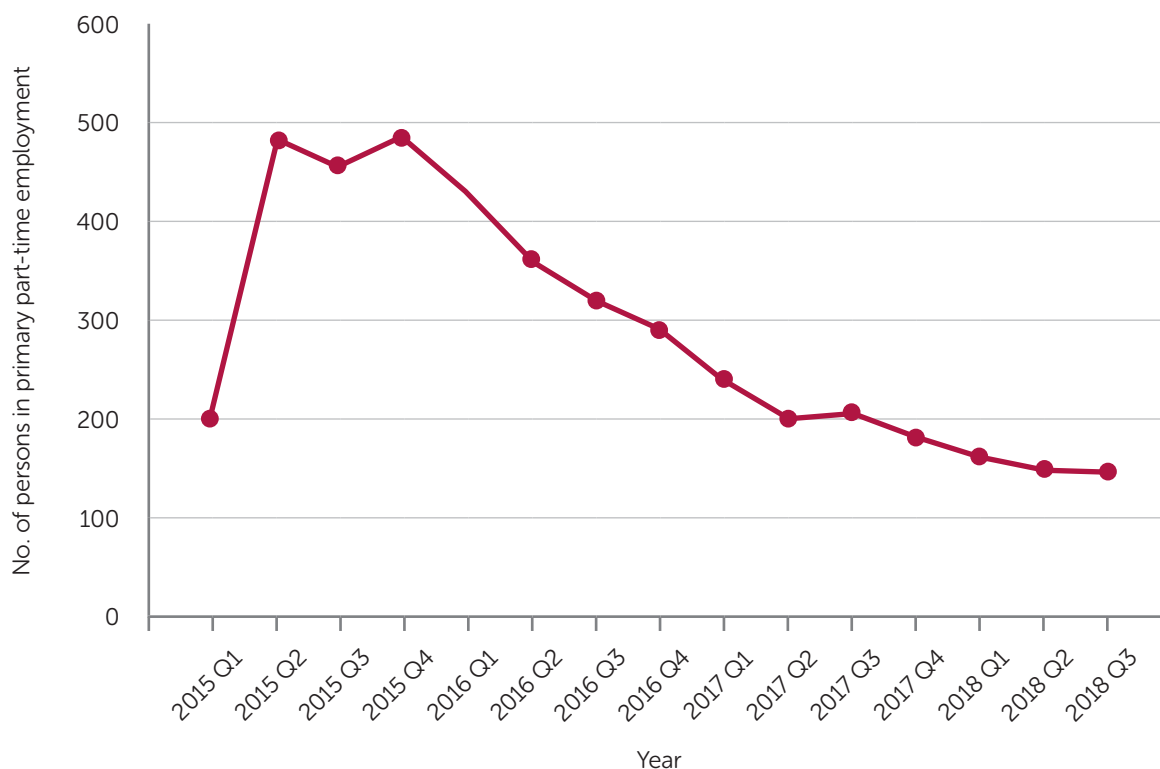
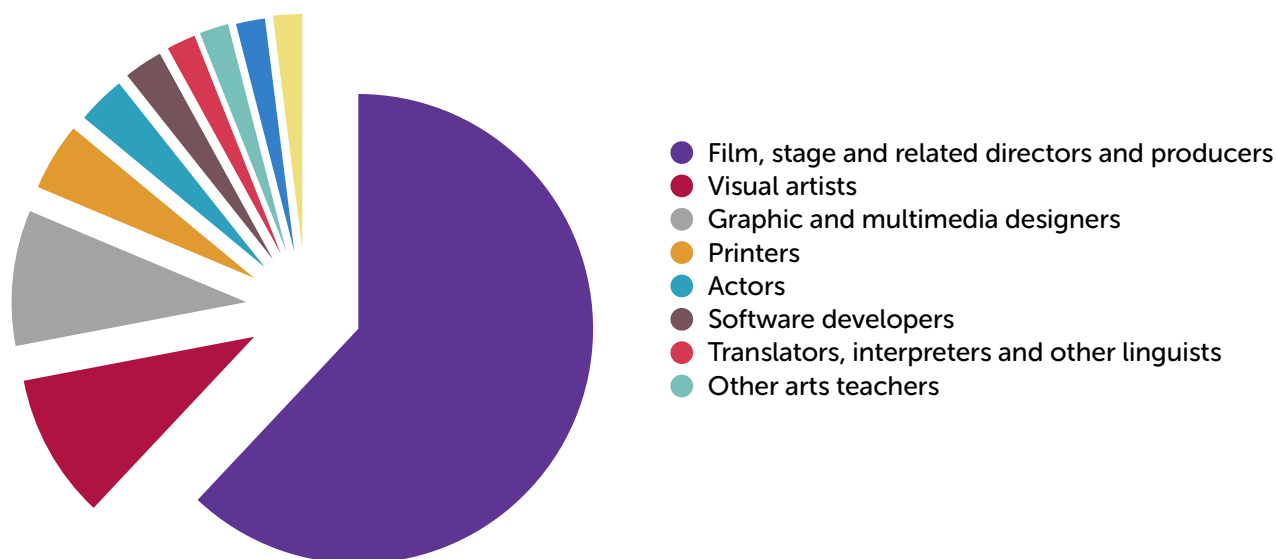


Chart 8 depicts the top 10 occupations (relating to CCIs) which registered jobseekers listed as their first preference of job, as at the end of September 2018. Around 52% of jobseekers revealed that their job preference related to *Film, stage and related directors and producers*, whereas 11% and 7% of jobseekers favoured occupations relating to *Visual Artists* and *Graphic and Multimedia Designers* respectively.

Chart 8: Registered Jobseekers - Top 10 Occupations (relating to CCIs)



CONCLUSIONS

Overall, total employment (full-time employment + part-time as a primary job) in CCIs increased by approximately 18% during the period under review. However, with the research mainly aimed at determining the effects of Valletta as a European Capital of Culture on employment, it is still too early to derive any concrete conclusions. Ideally, the impact is observed over a number of years where one could compare pre- and post- Valletta 2018 periods, to better establish the change (if any) in employment and the type of employment (e.g. short-term nature).

Moreover, ideally such analysis would be linked with concrete measures and initiatives directly related to Valletta 2018 (such as marketing, events, festivals) to determine the actual impact of Valletta 2018 on employment. Changes in employment also need to be viewed through the lens of factors outside Valletta 2018, such as a number of film productions being filmed in Malta during specific periods.



WAY FORWARD

It is suggested that Jobsplus' data is complemented with data relating to CCIs from other sources not incorporated in this analysis (such as vacancies which are not notified to Jobsplus).

The way forward in the analysis from a labour market perspective is to have research beyond the 2018 period, as it is only through such research which covers different periods that an analysis can be conducted.

Following a number of qualitative research studies conducted by entities, including Jobsplus, the Committee should focus on the results and try to gather more specific information on this economic industry.

It is only through the above recommendations that substantial conclusions can be made to complement the results at hand. Following such developments, policymakers can in turn react accordingly in an effort to boost the CCIs.

APPENDIX

NACE	Classification of NACE Codes
18.10	Printing and services activities related to printing
18.11	Printing of newspapers
18.12	Other printing
18.13	Pre-press and pre-media services
18.14	Binding and related services
18.20	Reproduction of recorded media
23.13	Manufacture of hollow glass
23.41	Manufacture of ceramic household & ornamental articles
47.61	Retail sale of books in specialised stores
47.62	Retail sale of newspapers and stationery in specialised stores
47.63	Retail sale of music and video recordings in specialised stores
58.10	Publishing of books, periodicals and other publishing activities
58.11	Book publishing
58.13	Publishing of newspapers
58.14	Publishing of journals and periodicals
58.19	Other publishing activities
58/20	Software publishing
58.21	Publishing of computer games
58.29	Other software publishing
59.00	Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities
59.10	Motion picture, video and television programme activities
59.11	Motion picture, video and television programme production activities

59.12	Motion picture, video and television programme post-production activities
59.13	Motion picture, video and television programme distribution activities
59.14	Motion picture projection activities
59.20	Sound recording and music publishing activities
60.10	Radio broadcasting
60.20	Television programming and broadcasting activities
62.01	Computer programming activities
63.91	News agency activities
71.11	Architectural activities
71.12	Engineering activities and related technical consultancy
73.11	Advertising agencies
73.12	Media representation
74.10	Specialised design activities
74.20	Photographic activities
79.12	Tour operator activities
85.52	Cultural Education
90.00	Creative, arts and entertainment services
90.01	Performing arts
90.02	Support activities to performing arts
90.03	Artistic creation
90.04	Operation of arts facilities
91.00	Library, archive, museum and other cultural services
91.01	Library and archives activities
91.02	Museums activities
91.03	Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions

91.04	Botanical and zoological gardens and nature reserves activities
93.20	Amusement and recreation services
93.21	Activities of amusement parks and theme parks
93.29	Other amusement and recreation activities



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Economic and employment indicators serve as an important benchmark to understand the impact of the European Capital of Culture on the Cultural and Creative Industries, which in return reflect important impacts on the rest of the local economy. The impacts of the ECoC title extend way beyond the Cultural Programme, and the impact of Valletta 2018 shows an important growth in both employment and economic return of investment.

As noted in previous years, the CCIs remain an ever-influential player in the Maltese economic landscape, providing strong results in terms of employment and value added to the economy. Nonetheless, this is a sector that must be nurtured in order to provide further diversity and stability in the post-2018 years.





THEME 03

COMMUNITY INCLUSION & SPACE

Community Inclusion And Accessibility In Valletta 2018 Michael Deguara with Rene Magri and Marguerite Pace Bonello	06
Assessing The Relationship Between Community Inclusion And Space Through Valletta 2018 Cultural Infrastructural Projects Dr Antoine Zammit with Tala Aldeiri	45
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INTRODUCTION

The European Capital of Culture is not only concerned with the development of the cultural sector but, more broadly, with the myriad of ways in which different communities within a city or region participate in culture and interact with one another and their physical environment. The studies within this strand investigate these issues, reflecting upon how inclusive the Valletta 2018 programme is to different community groups within the city, and what impact the infrastructural developments taking place across the city are having on the surrounding communities.

The first of these studies, carried out by Michael Deguara, looks into community inclusion and accessibility, investigating the extent to which various community groups operating within Valletta in some way or other are involved within Valletta 2018. This study examines the factors that may help or hinder participation and involvement within Valletta 2018, including the various obstacles to accessibility, ranging from physical to educational and financial barriers to participation.

A second study by Dr Antoine Zammit takes a closer look at a series of tangible, infrastructural developments being carried out across Valletta, and seeks to understand the spatial and social impact that these developments may have on the communities that interact with them on a regular basis. This study identifies four projects – the Valletta Design Cluster, MUŻA, Strait Street, and Is-Suq tal-Belt – and examines the extent to which these (and similar) developments may lead to a broader process of culture-led regeneration.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN VALLETTA 2018

**Michael Deguara
with Marguerite Pace Bonello
and Rene Magri**

INTRODUCTION

This research project was commissioned by the Valletta 2018 Foundation to assess the social involvement of the local population and the accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme. This report presents the findings of this project spanning a period from 2015 to 2018.

The importance of citizen participation is confirmed by previous research on European Capitals of Culture, such as the Palmer report of 2004 which cited local involvement and the importance of the historical, cultural, social and economic context of the city as two factors that commonly promote success (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004, p. 152). Likewise, the 2013 report by Garcia and Cox notes that not only is “the engagement of local communities and the city’s public” considered important at the bidding stage, but engagement from both stakeholders and the public is an “indicator of potential success in delivery”, and “reflects the concept of ECoC as a catalyst for change beyond the delivery of cultural activity” (Garcia & Cox, 2013, pp. 63-64).

The same literature sheds light on how social questions, nevertheless, tend to be marginal to most European Capitals of Culture, while “profile raising and improving the city’s image” are considered to be more central concerns (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004, p. 136). Furthermore, apart from an increase in audiences and on the engagement of diverse audiences, there is a “significant absence of real evidence relating to the social impact of ECoCs” (Garcia & Cox, 2013, pp. 113). Thus this research project intends to contribute towards addressing this lacuna in the literature.

Throughout the development of this research project, four key themes emerged. The first theme, **Valletta – The city and its accessibility**, deals with generating an in-depth understanding of the social milieu in which the Valletta 2018 project has been implemented. Given that each European Capital of Culture presents a particular social landscape upon which the achievement of established objectives is highly dependent, insight into Valletta’s social context has been deemed to be important from the inception of this research. The picture that emerges is one where Valletta can best be understood as a complex social space encompassing multiple layers of meaning for different community groups and individuals. Accessibility was also found to be an integral aspect of how people experience and engage with the city.

The second theme, **Urban regeneration and its impact on communal life**, explores concerns that first emerged in the 2015 cycle of research, but became more prominent in subsequent cycles where attention was given to how respondents reacted to Valletta’s foreseeable developments, particularly those related to the city as a community space. The Valletta 2018 initiative was widely seen as being a catalyst for urban regeneration, and this naturally raised both hopes and apprehension about the impact on the city’s communal life.

The third theme, **Awareness and accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme**, was strongly present in the research from the start, mapping fluctuations of how knowledgeable respondents were about the cultural programme of Valletta 2018, its objectives and the individual events and projects that comprised it.

The fourth theme, **the legacy of the Valletta 2018 Programme**, emerged in the final cycle of research in 2018. Interviews were held at a point where the cultural programme had been mostly completed, and this allowed respondents to be able to think retrospectively and reflect upon what sort of legacy Valletta 2018 will, or ought to, leave.

This report will present an in-depth discussion of the methodology used, followed by a holistic account of the findings in the past years regarding the key themes emerging from the research. Finally, the report will give its conclusions and will proceed to provide recommendations.

The authors of this report are indebted to Dr Josephine Burden, a Valletta-based author and academic who has generously allowed us to quote extensively from an unpublished paper presented at the “Sharing the Legacy Conference” organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation in October 2018, and to Alfred Camilleri, an artist from Valletta who kindly allowed us to refer to and reproduce one of his artworks from his exhibition “Civitas”, held in the Malta Postal Museum and Arts Hub in Valletta in June 2018.

METHODOLOGY & KEY THEMES

This research project has been commissioned to look at two key factors, namely:

- (a) the social involvement of the local population; and
- (b) the accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme.

These concerns stem from one of two key criteria for cultural programmes of European Capitals of Culture, as expressed in Decision No 1622/2006/EC, namely “City and Citizens”. As per this Decision, cultural programmes of European Capitals of Culture between 2007 and 2019 shall:

- a) foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad;
- b) be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.” (European Parliament, Council of the European Union 2006)

This section explores in detail an elaboration of the two key factors that form the core of the project, and the way in which the methodology for this research project was developed.

The social involvement of the local population

As discussed earlier, the literature supports the notion that the engagement of local communities is a common indicator of the success of the programmes of European Capitals of Culture. The term “local population”, however, calls for some further elaboration and must be understood within the context of Valletta as a contested space at the centre of claims made by various community groups. While this concept will be developed further in the following section, it is essential at this point to note that although residence may constitute an official state-recognised form of assigning individuals to a particular locality, this does not readily capture the culturally nuanced sense of *belonging to* and *being from* Valletta - being *Belti* or *Beltija*.¹ The terms derive from *il-Belt*, “the City”, as Valletta is generally referred to in Maltese, and thus *Belti* (male), *Beltija* (female) and *Beltin* (plural) identify individuals as being *from* Valletta, regardless of residence.²

¹Residence is formally recognised through the identity card as per Cap 258 of the Laws of Malta, Art 5(2)(b) in the case of holders of a Maltese identity card.

²Mitchell (2002) suggests that *Belti* and *Beltija* are roughly translatable as “Vallettan”, but the term is not used in the English form in general practice. Thus, *Belti*, *Beltija* and *Beltin* will be the terms used throughout this report.

Several waves of migration from Valletta to other parts of the island have occurred since the wartime period and these have indeed drastically reduced the resident population in Valletta to just over 6,000 individuals. However, this movement of people also created a significant diaspora of individuals who still consider themselves *Beltin*, an identity most often retained and negotiated through family history and memory, participation in parish feasts, Carnival and other celebrations and, significantly, through support for the Valletta football club.

Living in Valletta is neither a requisite nor a guarantee of *being from* Valletta. The boundaries of Valletta in terms of identity are thus more socially constructed than spatially defined. In this regard, someone with family ties in Valletta may identify as *Belti* or *Beltija* even if they have never actually lived in the city, while Valletta residents may not readily identify as being *from* Valletta unless they have family ties within the city. Nevertheless, this was also found to be somewhat fluid. Indeed, not only is it frequent to find that several *Beltin* come from families that moved into the city a couple of generations back at most, but some of the respondents in this research project identified themselves as *Beltin* despite having moved to the city relatively recently. Thus, although *Belti* identity is often depicted by people from Valletta as something virtually autochthonous, this discourse cannot be taken at face value – this form of identification is naturally always somewhat subjective and contested, but above all dynamic – ultimately a *Belti* can be made, not necessarily born.

Valletta identities are also internally complex. Within the microcosm of *Beltin*, identity may become segmented through the inner faultlines of belonging, such as family histories, socio-economic status, adherence to particular zones in the city, membership of parishes and band clubs and political affiliation. Nevertheless, there are also many instances in which a unified identity as *Beltin* or “*Tfal tal-Belt*” (“Valletta’s children”) is invoked as the card that trumps all segmentary divisions.³

Moving beyond the boundaries of Valletta as a city, it is also important to locate this phenomenon within the regional context which has, in turn, informed the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. In terms of the human geography of the island, Valletta forms part of the Inner Harbour area, which comprises the towns surrounding the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour. This region has recently been referred to as the “Greater Valletta” area, although this is not a term that is free of contention, as it gives priority to actual demographics over culturally-defined discourses of identity. The latter perspective, rather, would create sharp distinctions between localities – for instance, between Valletta and Floriana, which lies just outside Valletta’s city walls. It is noted that the Inner Harbour area comprises the most densely populated area of the island, and has often been further split into “Northern Harbour” and “Southern Harbour” areas, as these tend to be characterised by different socio-economic realities.⁴

Furthermore, on an even wider level, account must be taken of Malta in general, which has been marked as the host region for the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. This becomes more significant when one considers the high level of engagement of Maltese people in general with the capital. Anthropologist Jon Mitchell, in his ethnographic monograph titled “Ambivalent Europeans”, compares Valletta to other European capital cities and concludes that while capital cities are “always important foci for the nation, both as sites for national monuments and as contexts for important state occasions”, they are seldom – if ever – visited by many nationals (Mitchell, 2002, p. 45). However, in the case of Valletta, “the engagement with the capital is less imagined than known” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 45), with the city being an

³This identity comes out strongly in the discussion of *Il-Festa l-Kbira*, a Valletta 2018 event which brought together the four parish feasts of Valletta, and was seen by several respondents to be a message of unity amongst *Beltin*.

⁴ This is the case, for instance, in most of the statistical information produced by the National Statistics Office.

important commercial, administrative and infrastructural centre that is heavily used by Maltese people irrespective of residence. The number of commuters is estimated to be of up to 60,000 daily. Mitchell (2002) argues that “because of this daily engagement, Valletta has adopted a specific position in the national imagination” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 46).

This statement requires some critical interpretation, in that a significant part of the number of daily visitors may be constituted by persons who repeatedly access Valletta for work-related reasons and this would, therefore, limit the notion of daily engagement largely to a specific group of repeat visitors. Furthermore, this would need to be complemented with understanding the way in which Valletta is central to the national memory due to events that are highly significant in the creation of the nation-state as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991), as well as the connection which the city has to figures such as St Paul and Grand Master de Valette, who are considered crucial to the constitution of traditional Maltese identity as European Christians of long-standing (Cassar 2000). What is beyond doubt, however, is Valletta’s importance to the national imagination across the whole population, which is proven time and again through the heated debate raised across the nation regarding any significant change in the architectural, aesthetic, infrastructural or social fabric of the city.

Thus, with the exclusion of tourists, who lie outside the scope of this research, at least five groups emerge on the basis of residence and belonging, all of which have been considered as stakeholders of Valletta 2018 and who have been addressed in this project, namely:

- Persons who identify as being from Valletta (*Beltin*), and who reside in Valletta;
- Persons who identify as being from Valletta (*Beltin*), but do not reside in Valletta;
- Persons who do *not* identify as being from Valletta (*non-Beltin*), but who reside in Valletta (including expatriates);
- Persons who are residents of the Inner Harbour/Greater Valletta area;
- Maltese people in general, who commute to Valletta with different levels of regularity.

A sixth group was added which comprised Maltese persons with a disability, with the available respondents being primarily persons with physical disabilities. This inclusion was considered important for the research project because, although accessibility is not limited to issues related to physical mobility, it soon became clear that the degree of physical accessibility of spaces conditions the degree of social engagement that is possible with those spaces. Furthermore, the richness of the interviews has allowed insights into a wider range of issues than merely physical notions of access and included emotional and socio-environmental concerns. The notion of accessibility was also raised with all the groups so that questions on the subject were asked to all respondents.

At the beginning of this research it was expected that, without prejudice to the exploration of any significant themes that could emerge during the course of research, the issues that arise from the available literature and which would likely prove central to this research project would be the following:

- a. the effects of the monumentalisation and gentrification of Valletta on the various populations, particularly Valletta residents;
- b. the negotiation of the public aspects of Valletta as the capital city of the nation-state against the intimacy of Valletta as a home-town, being a place of everyday life, residence and private memory, particularly for Valletta residents and the Valletta diaspora;

- c. the negotiation of what constitutes “culture” in the implementation of the Valletta 2018 project, particularly with a view to identifying the various notions of culture as understood by the various community groups that were identified.

These concerns eventually fed into the four key thematic areas described earlier. Nevertheless, these themes proved to be incomplete without the integration of the dimension of accessibility. The development of this aspect is discussed in more detail in the following sub-section.

The accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme

Accessibility, as a concept, is distinguished from mobility in that it is not limited to the ability of individuals to move around, but looks at structural factors that influence whether something is “get-at-able”, both in terms of places (i.e. the accessibility of a location), and in terms of people (i.e. their ability to access goods and services) (Knowles et al, 2008, p. 50).

The accessibility of culture in particular is a requirement for the fulfilment of Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which establishes “the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits” (United Nations, 1948, Art. 27).

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the research into this area sought to measure accessibility on several levels, namely:

- i physical;
- ii social;
- iii geographical;
- iv financial;
- v linguistic; and
- vi intellectual accessibility.

Of the forms of accessibility referred to, **physical accessibility** constitutes the category that is most formally defined and regulated, particularly regarding accessibility for persons with a disability. Malta is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007), has legislation protecting the right to accessibility for persons with a disability (which includes elements of social accessibility) (Cap 413 of the Laws of Malta), and has a national Commission dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with a disability and their families, while providing them with the necessary assistance and support. This latter Commission, previously the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD), but which has been reformed as the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), has also issued Accessibility Guidelines aimed at creating a more accessible built environment to ensure a better quality of life not only to persons with a disability, but to everyone (National Commission for Persons with a Disability, 2011). This wider dimension, particularly concerning elderly people, children and their families, is also addressed in the research by mainstreaming accessibility concerns with all of the community groups.

Geographical accessibility is, after physical ability, the next most widely-discussed form of accessibility, with public transport and congestion being matters of especially longstanding concern for the public. Since this research project is limited to the local population, the focus was on geographical accessibility within

the Maltese islands. In this regard, the research takes into consideration the way in which Valletta is easily reachable by public transport, but this occurs in a wider context of a highly car-dependent population.⁵

Financial accessibility required investigation as to whether the financial cost of accessing the Valletta 2018 Programme created any restrictions on participation by the communities involved. However, as the research progressed it became clear that a wider understanding of financial accessibility, also covering the cost of experiencing the city as well as living in it, was needed.

The notion of **linguistic accessibility** covers the ways in which language barriers can have an impact on the accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme. Although Malta has three official languages, namely Maltese, English and Maltese Sign Language, linguistic ability in residents (inclusive of Maltese and expatriate residents) is variable, and attention was given to whether the linguistic needs of diverse audiences are adequately satisfied. Issues related to disabilities are also relevant here, given that impairments can limit access to language.

Intellectual accessibility has been defined as “ensuring that visitors and staff can understand any information which [an] organisation provides” (Museums Galleries Scotland, n.d.).

Finally, because accessibility is a social issue in the broader sense of the term, the category of **social accessibility** includes all the other categories to some extent, which may, in turn, present overlaps between them. Nevertheless, this form of accessibility may cover other aspects which have not been specifically mentioned under the other areas, such as those related to gender and socio-economic status.

The theme of accessibility in general and the various forms of accessibility mentioned above in particular informed the research particularly the thematic areas of the accessibility of Valletta as a city and that of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. However, there was also significant linking with the other two key thematic areas – with urban regeneration being also seen through the lens of Valletta becoming a more accessible space, and with increased accessibility being seen by some respondents as a key part of the legacy of Valletta 2018.

Research choices

This research was carried out through an ethnographic, qualitative approach, based on semi-structured interviews which were intended to provide an in-depth understanding of perspectives from members of the six community groups that were identified, with a view to providing rich descriptive material addressing the concerns, opinions and ideas of the various stakeholders. Ethnographic research aims at *giving an account*, interpreting the meaning of observed behaviour (Agar, 1996, p. 129). The ethnographic approach was selected because it is particularly well-suited to understanding participation and accessibility, given that “it is done in the field and depends upon attentive observation”. Thus, it is “well suited to assisting us in gaining a better understanding of what impacts programs have and what happens when policies are implemented” (Luton, 2010, p. 85).

Since the scope of ethnographic research is not statistical representativeness but contextual description, the study has been based on four in-depth semi-structured interviews from each of the community groups that were identified – a process which was repeated over a period of four years with a mix of

⁵As per the Transport Statistics issued by the National Statistics Office, the number of vehicles per 1,000 total residents went up to 780 from 770 in 2015. (<https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Media/Salient-Points-of-Publications/Pages/Transport-Statistics-2017.aspx>)

new and repeat respondents. This allowed for the collection of comparative data on any changes in perception even on an individual level whilst allowing new perspectives to come forth. The interviews were complemented with participant observation within Valletta and selected events in the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme.

The project was carried out by a team of three researchers, with each individual researcher being assigned two of the community groups. Regular meetings were held for the individual researchers to share findings and provide peer support and advice for further research. All researchers were involved not only in the collection of data but also in the analysis to ensure continuity in the process leading from fieldwork to the presentation and interpretation of results.

Given the specific nature of the chosen community groups, respondents were selected through a snowball sampling technique, where the researchers identified persons within the required populations and proceeded to ask the respondents to recommend further possible respondents. While no statistical representativeness is claimed for the sample used, there has been an effort to have a mix of gender and ages in each community group to provide a diversity of responses.

The fact that social phenomena are studied through fieldwork on location enables the ethnographer to frame such phenomena within the conceptual framework of culture, understood here in the wider sense of the term as comprising the whole cluster of socially-constructed meanings in which daily life is embedded. Ethnographic research inherently necessitates a continuous reworking and modification of the project's design, particularly because ethnographic projects need to remain open to the material that emerges from the fieldwork, rather than persist in imposing concerns that have been determined *a priori*. Indeed, throughout the interview process, researchers allowed space for respondents to highlight any other topics that had not been raised by the interviewer, or followed any other emerging lead that may have been of possible interest. This allowed for the consideration of concerns which were raised directly by respondents even if they did not form part of the original set of issues covered by the researchers.

All interviews were held face to face either in the interviewee's residence or in a public place that was convenient to the interviewee, except for some interviews in the case of the disability community group which were conducted via video conferencing or email due to difficulties experienced by the respondent.

Finally, it is noted that this research was emphatically dialogic in nature, in which neither the concerns of the community groups involved nor the aims of the Valletta 2018 project could be taken as existing independently of each other. To do so would have risked either considering local concerns as being mere limitations to the implementation of the project or to view the aims of the project purely as a hegemonic imposition on the city. The research rather was informed by an approach that takes constructive dialogue and mutual understanding of these two poles as essential to the fulfilment of the project's objectives, namely Valletta 2018's intention to foster citizen participation and encourage the sustainable, long-term cultural and social development of the city.

A full list of questions administered to the interviewees may be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

FINDINGS

This section of the report presents the most salient points emerging from the research conducted between 2015 and 2018, primarily stemming from the semi-structured interviews held with the various community groups that were identified, but also from available literature as well as participant observation carried out in Valletta. This report presents a holistic synthesis of the findings throughout the course of this project and aims primarily to explore the four key themes already referred to, namely:

- Issues related to accessibility and day-to-day life in Valletta;
- The role of Valletta 2018 as a catalyst for urban regeneration, and the impact this has on communal life;
- The level of awareness of the Valletta 2018 Programme and its aims, together with the accessibility of the Programme itself;
- The legacy that respondents feel that Valletta 2018 is likely to leave, or ought to leave.

Valletta – The city and its accessibility

One of the consistent findings throughout this research project is that Valletta is a complex, socially-constructed place which fulfils several roles. Valletta is the political, administrative and cultural centre of Malta and increasingly a commercial and entertainment hub, and yet it also retains the intimacy of a hometown to Valletta residents and the communities and individuals that identify themselves as *Beltin*, regardless of whether they reside in Valletta. This subsection will explore these various narratives that Valletta embodies for different individuals and groups and the engagement that communities have with the city. Furthermore, since accessibility in its various forms is intrinsically linked with the level and quality of engagement with the city, this will also be explored in detail.

Narratives of the city – Capital and home

Anthropologist Jon Mitchell, carrying out fieldwork at the beginning of the last decade amongst the parishioners of the St Paul parish in Valletta (known as the *Pawlina*), noted how the city was widely conceived of through a narrative of “glory, decline [and] rehabilitation”, at a time when Malta’s possible accession to the European Union was a principal subject of national debate (Mitchell 2002). Through the lens of the feast of St Paul in Valletta, Mitchell analyses the paradoxes that characterise Maltese society: the tension between the national and the local, as well as that between, on the one hand, embracing a European identity and modernity, and on the other, the assertion of a distinct, Mediterranean and national identity, and a critique of the values that “Europe” represents.

The paradox between the national and the local that Mitchell found in the feast of St Paul’s Shipwreck is representative of Valletta as a whole. The feast celebrates an event ingrained as a defining moment in the national narrative, and is attended by people from all over Malta, notably by politicians from all political parties. However, as with any other parish feast, it is also related to the intimacy of a local community. Likewise, Valletta often lies at the crossroads between the national and the monumental on the one hand, and the local and intimate on the other. Sites which were previously a central, functional aspect of Valletta society, such as the Covered Market (*is-Suq tal-Belt*) become national projects, all buildings including dwellings are scheduled according to their historical value and new monuments, official and spontaneous, are on the increase. Indeed, an expatriate who has lived in Valletta for several years stated in 2017, “It is my home and I love it, but it is also a capital city”, going on to describe the tension often experienced between the two faces of Valletta.

It has already been noted how according to Mitchell, engagement with Valletta as a capital city is not merely symbolic, but actual. This was confirmed by the current research project. Both *Beltin* and non-*Beltin*, regardless of residence, tended to demonstrate a significant degree of engagement with the city. However, while non-*Beltin* tended to emphasise the historical, architectural, administrative and commercial importance of Valletta, *Beltin* more frequently spoke about its intimate aspect as a place of community, local history, personal memory and nostalgia. Significantly, the only cohort to be somewhat disengaged from Valletta in the initial research carried out in 2015 was the group of respondents with a disability, for reasons that will be discussed further.

This research project was carried out at a time when the impact of several rapid changes to the socio-economic fabric of Valletta (also representative of trends around Malta in general) started becoming visible. These changes will be explored in more detail further on in this report, but include increased commercialisation of spaces, changes to legislation resulting in the liberalisation of the private rent sector, as well as demographic changes. Reacting to these changes, as early as 2015, *Beltin* tended to express a concern with the imminent demise of history, memory and continuity in Valletta, as testified by a number of statements that were collected in the initial cycle of this project such as: "In my opinion, history is dying";¹ "Valletta no longer belongs to the *Beltin*";² and "Many young people just love Valletta as long as football is concerned."³ One expatriate resident in Valletta also added to this set of notions by stating: "That the *Beltin* are a 'dying breed' makes me anxious, because I feel that I am part of the group that is pushing the *Beltin* out of their rightful home."

The notion of "home" should not be dismissed simply as a romanticised notion – indeed, the concept of "home" is a central social concept and has been defined in many ways, including as "where one best knows oneself" (Rapport and Dawson 1998) – where "best" means "most", even if not always "happiest" (Rapport and Overing 2000, 158). Thus it is important to understand the ongoing changes in Valletta, especially where significant changes in the social fabric and residence patterns have a direct impact on personal and social well-being. Despite this sense of transience, the use of the term "home" to describe the city remained significant and persistent throughout the lifetime of the research project. In fact, in the whole research period, *Beltin*, both resident and non-resident, tended to describe Valletta as "home";⁴ and as a place which they feel compelled to live in or visit regularly even if they do not have family living within the city. This sentiment was in no way restricted to older *Beltin*, who understandably often display a strong sense of romantic nostalgia. Rather, one *Belti* who is in his thirties and has lived abroad for long stretches, as well as in other towns in Malta, reported that Valletta gives him a unique sense of solidity:

"Valletta is the only place I feel comfortable in. It feels like the most real – concrete, as opposed to transitional – place I have lived in. It exists in so many people's minds. In-betweenness is such a part of my narrative – but Valletta gives me something to hold on to."

Despite the impact of the processes of rapid urban regeneration that have been catalysed by Valletta 2018, as well as by other convergent political and economic processes, Valletta retains this sense of "home" for many *Beltin*, and even to non-*Beltin* who have adopted Valletta as their home.

¹ "Il-history qed naraha tmut."

² "Il-Belt m'ghadhiex tal-Beltin."

³ "Hafna zghazagh il-Belt ihobbuha biss taht il-kappa tal-futbol." – It is important to note that this particular statement was made by a person involved in one of the parish feasts within Valletta and therefore it can also be read as a lamentation about a decline in youth participation in feasts, especially given that other respondents have identified the support for the Valletta Football Club as being one of the binding factors amongst *Beltin*, resident and not.

⁴ Generally the word "home" was used in English, even if the rest of the sentence was in Maltese, e.g. "Il-Belt ghalija hija home." ("Valletta to me is home."); "Inhossni home meta nkun il-Belt." ("I feel at home when I am in Valletta").

An example of how the notion of “home” ties into personal and social well-being comes from one respondent who mentioned how during a difficult period in her life, Valletta remained a touchstone, a place that remained a constant, where she could rely on her family, friends and community network. Others talked about how Valletta is their “life” and explained how community networks have given them support, often allowing them stability in turbulent times, including managing ageing and chronic illness, recovering from addiction and dealing with personal grief. *Beltin* respondents were particularly concerned about elderly people being pushed out of their communities. This relationship between place, community and personal and social well-being, which is concisely expressed in the word “home”, has sadly not been incorporated into policy-making, although it clearly has a direct impact on people’s quality of life and therefore should be integrated into all decisions related to urban regeneration in Valletta and elsewhere.

Geographical accessibility and transportation

As has been discussed earlier in the section on Methodology, the notion of accessibility is not limited to the ability of individuals to move around, but includes structural factors that influence whether something is “get-at-able”, both in terms of places (i.e. the accessibility of a location), and in terms of people (i.e. their ability to access goods and services) (Knowles et al, 2008, p. 50).

There are several levels on which accessibility can be analysed, including physical, social, geographical, financial, linguistic and intellectual accessibility. However, it is typical to find that any form of hindrance to accessibility contributes to another. Thus, obstacles to physical accessibility may hinder a person’s participation in cultural life and thereby contribute to social and intellectual accessibility. They could also present a hurdle to finding gainful employment and therefore place limits on financial accessibility. In the following discussion, therefore, accessibility will be discussed holistically rather than separating it into its separate constituents. However, for ease of discussion, this part will deal specifically with concerns about accessibility in terms of geography and transportation, particularly about how people from outside Valletta can access the city. The following discussion will focus on how issues of accessibility within Valletta can impact one’s engagement with the city and the cultural programme.

Geographically, Valletta was generally seen to be reachable, although certain limitations were noted. As a geographical space, Valletta remains well connected by public transport, being an important hub of the public transportation system and having been given improved connectivity through the ferry service in both the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour following agreements between the Valletta 2018 Foundation and service providers in 2015. Clear information on getting to Valletta is also provided on the Foundation’s website and in the literature that has been distributed to the public. The information screens outside and around Valletta have also been mentioned as a good step, especially by the disability cohort who felt that the provision of clear information was one factor that made the city more accessible.

Despite this, car dependency and demand for parking remain recurrent concerns, especially amongst non-Valletta residents. One of the reasons for this is that public transportation services are often time-bound and this restricts the possibility of participation in evening and night-time events. Respondents mentioned the variability of bus timetables especially to peripheral areas of Malta, as well as the Upper Barrakka lift which closes at 9:00 pm from November to May. The Floriana Park and Ride facility also closes at 9:00 pm. Concerns about public transportation and parking shortages were particularly expressed by respondents with physical mobility limitations and those with young children.

One respondent who is a young mother said: "From my own perspective, parking is the main sore point. There needs to be a place where you can park your car and then catch a shuttle – which needs to be an affordable service - that takes you inside the city. The Park and Ride service finishes at 9:00 pm so evening events are cut short. At least, there is a nice atmosphere now, even in the evening. I no longer feel apprehensive going to Valletta."

Overcoming fear-based exclusion is a theme that will be explored further in the subsection on urban regeneration. However, it is to be noted that according to several respondents, increased commercial activity has made Valletta, especially certain areas such as Strait Street, a safer place to be as respondents no longer feel the need to avoid these places in the evening. In this case, the respondents are deploying a more socially-informed understanding of accessibility. Valletta in general, and certain areas in particular were often stigmatised, and many people perceived these spaces as unsafe especially after dark. Commercialisation, however, has encouraged larger amounts of people to feel safe and access these spaces, even though in terms of perceived safety, some areas were still mentioned as places to be avoided after dark "to avoid problems".⁵

In terms of car-based traffic, respondents residing in Valletta observed how incoming vehicles largely pass through St Paul Street and to a lesser extent through St Mark Street, creating congestion and restricting walkability in these areas. This has also been a concern of business owners, especially those having restaurants and shops in St Paul Street, as they feel that at times the street itself becomes inaccessible and that this has an adverse impact on their enterprise. Likewise, concerns about unrestricted delivery hours in specific areas of the city were expressed by several Valletta residents and business owners.

Accessibility and its impact on engagement with the city

At the beginning of this research project, all the community groups interviewed showed a significant level of engagement with the city, except for the cohort of persons with a disability. Barriers to the various forms of accessibility are strongly interlinked and thus, it was noted that difficulty in accessing Valletta as a physical space, in turn, limited the level of engagement that individuals have with the city as a social place and consequently with the Valletta 2018 Programme. As a result, when this research project started in 2015, the persons with a disability interviewed showed a marked lack of engagement with both the city and the cultural programme that contrasted starkly with all the other cohorts.

In fact, in the baseline study, engagement with Valletta for most respondents with a disability was virtually restricted to the Valletta Waterfront as the city itself was seen as very inaccessible.⁶ Interviewees in this group had little sentimental engagement with the city and rarely visited Valletta for entertainment or for cultural activities. They generally went to the city only to purchase clothes, noting that they would often have to be lifted into the shop and would then choose clothes to try at home because the changing facilities would not be accessible.

Accessibility issues can affect various aspects of a person's social life, including interpersonal relationships, work and cultural participation. This is indicated in the following quotes from 2017.

"We went to eat at a restaurant which was not accessible and I had to just go home and leave my friends for the night." (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

⁵ *"biex tevita l-fastidju"*.

⁶ The Valletta Waterfront is an area which is a commercial and entertainment area alongside the Grand Harbour and very close to Valletta but outside the actual perimeter of the city.

"In my case - I use a catheter so I do not particularly need to use facilities. But what I can tell you is that there are some establishments which, albeit accessible, offered amenities that are not up to par to what we deserve or require." (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

"There are certain places where I feel really included and others where I feel totally left out, literally and metaphorically. What is the message here? Am I not entitled to have fun; to meet people of my own age; maybe to find love?" (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

"At work, the lift was out of order and I had to ask them to relocate the meeting as I could not access the meeting room, and they did. A bit embarrassing." (Respondent with a disability, 48, female)

"To access culture - you have to be in a good financial position to do it. Access requirements incur additional costs and to have these regularly met is next to impossible for most of us." (Respondent with a disability, 48, female)

Restrictions on accessibility generate a sense of detachment with Valletta and the Valletta 2018 Programme. Respondents with a disability often talked about how the lack of accessibility provisions in commercial establishments, for instance, made them feel "unwelcome" in the city. Incidentally, this has an effect also on Valletta residents who have often talked about being "besieged in [their] own homes" because of improper parking practices and noise levels amongst other factors. One respondent, who is a Valletta resident, talked about how when a family member had to move out of Valletta because of mobility issues, she developed a sense of resentment to her home city which had, as it were, excluded a close relative.

Indeed, accessibility is not a concern that affects only persons with a disability and questions about accessibility were raised with all cohorts. Several respondents, for instance, sympathised with elderly people who had to access Valletta. On this score, it was noted that: "There should be lifts or escalators everywhere. I don't know how the aged or persons with disability are supposed to get around the city. And none of us is getting any younger". At times, it was the widespread restoration and construction frenzy within the city that was seen as an obstacle to accessibility. One Valletta resident, for instance, complained particularly about the number of cranes that are allowed, often resulting in the blocking of access.

Most of the built infrastructure of Valletta was put in place before contemporary accessibility standards were in force, and it was widely recognised in each cycle that this creates systemic difficulties to access. As one of the respondents from the group of resident *Beltin* put it, "in Valletta, you are never working with a blank canvas". This respondent had, in fact, been involved in a project related to a building in Valletta. Initially, it did not meet certain accessibility requirements because the building was not wheelchair friendly – but the building itself was located in a narrow street with steps.

Indeed, respondents with a disability found problems because of Valletta's topography, the city having been built on a hill and therefore characterised by steep slopes and steps in many streets. They also noted that most commercial and entertainment establishments are housed in old buildings, with restrooms typically located at the end of a flight of stairs. Although there are inherent difficulties, respondents have consistently voiced a need to push for certain steps to be taken, such as ensuring that accessible public convenience locations are situated around these public spaces. Museums and historical sites,

too, presented a challenge for wheelchair users, with very little information being offered to persons with sensory impairments.

This lack of accessibility invariably has a negative impact on cultural participation. In 2015, most of the respondents in the disability cohort never went to the theatre or any other performance, mostly as it is not physically accessible. At least two areas which are central to the Valletta 2018 Programme, namely Strait Street and the Old Abattoir (*il-Biċċerija*) area, were indicated by respondents as being largely inaccessible to anybody who is not able-bodied and the researchers have observed instances in which even the electric taxis that operate around the city have refused to drive to these areas.⁷ It is also worth noting that at least one of the respondents was not economically active, as her disability is severe and has been an obstacle to her finding employment, thus also creating financial impediments to cultural participation.

Despite the detachment found in the initial year, the research carried out in 2016 and 2017 showed that although persons with a disability were still pointing out how Valletta was very far from being accessible, there was a marked feeling among this cohort that the situation has improved. Valletta 2018 was mentioned as a main contributor to this development. Progress was noted at several cultural venues which have become wheelchair accessible, such as Pjazza Teatru Rjal, a performance venue inaugurated in 2013 on the site of the former Royal Opera House. It was also observed with satisfaction that the Valletta 2018 Foundation commenced a working relationship with the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and that this augured well for making Valletta and the Valletta 2018 Programme more accessible.

In fact, contrary to 2015, respondents from the disability cohort in 2016 said that they would participate more in cultural life if accessibility to cultural spaces became more reliable. Two respondents attended the *Notte Bianca* and said that they enjoyed it greatly, but had to stick to events held in Republic Street itself, as most museums and palaces were not fully accessible. One of these respondents also attended the Valletta Pageant of the Seas and stated that he would consider moving to Valletta if it became more accessible. This sentiment persisted in 2017 when several respondents stated that although more could be done, accessibility within Valletta has come a long way, especially considering that it is somewhat limited by the existing topographical and built fabric of Valletta.

This distinct optimism registered at this phase of research is reflected in the statements below, taken from interviews carried out in 2017 with respondents with a disability.

“I have noticed a societal change in attitude. I would like for disabled people to be seen as ordinary citizens within Valletta, not disabled people who are being included. I would like to see an attitude that is positive and based on acceptance. ... In the last year I have seen a gradual acceptance and more inclusiveness in these events. There is more acceptance that disabled people are included - and they are interested in what they are doing not just because they are disabled. Changes are happening. Disabled people are trying to make more of an effort.” (Respondent with a disability, 48, female)

⁷The Old Abattoir (*il-Biċċerija*) area lies in a part of Valletta which is only accessible through streets that are steep, and as indicated above, it was observed that several electric taxis refuse to drive to the area because of the steep slopes. Regarding Strait Street, reports of the inaccessibility of this area was a commonly reported experience among the cohort of persons with a disability, and this is due to a combination of factors including the fact that the narrowness of the street make it impossible to reach directly by car, and the streets leading to Strait Street can also be quite steep. In addition, the tables and furniture placed outside by entertainment establishments make the street difficult to navigate for people who are in a wheelchair or have other impairments that restrict physical mobility. A fact often mentioned by respondents was also the lack of accessible facilities in most of these catering or entertainment establishments, or even public toilets in the area itself after a specific time.

“Eventually accessibility will be taken care of. Valletta will be for everyone, disabled, old, foreign, local, residents, non-residents. ... Valletta’s dynamism will keep coming to the fore.” (Respondent with a disability, 41, male)

In these years, an increased demand for accessibility as a right was also expressed. For instance, in the 2016 cycle of research, although it was appreciated that many buildings in Valletta are historical edifices and that this poses limitations on what interventions are possible, respondents stated that there are innovative ways to make such spaces accessible, for instance by using chairlifts or temporary ramps. One of the respondents noted that regarding accessibility, Valletta ranked poorly when compared to other European capitals, which displayed creativity in the way that old, historically-sensitive places were made accessible.

“We need to be more creative when we plan, or when we do an uplift or an upgrade. Architecture is an art, and this implies creativity - but I rarely have seen much creativity in making buildings and spaces accessible! ... We need the will, the political and social will, to make this our focus, to make sure that contractors do not just do the bare minimum.” (Respondent with a disability, 41, male)

This opinion persisted in 2017, where some respondents voiced scepticism that there are times in which Valletta’s historical infrastructure is used as an excuse to delay initiatives that can make Valletta more accessible.

“At times this is justified as it is truly difficult to provide accessibility, but more often than not, there is just inertia and lack of initiative to really include us.” (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

“I do understand the challenges of working around a historical city, and to ‘uglify’ the city with certain amendments - but something surely needs to be done.” (Respondent with a disability, 32, male)

In 2018, respondents were even less willing to accept these limitations as intrinsic and insurmountable, pointing to such cases as the Museum of Archaeology, which is fully accessible, as an example of good practice. Such respondents want to see policies being put in place to make Valletta even more universally accessible.

“I do not understand this. The excuse that this is a historical place, and that steps cannot be taken to make them accessible, is total bull. The pavement, in general, is always fixable. Just because a place has historical value, it does not mean you cannot make it accessible. I say that since the place has historical value, we should be all the more intelligent in the way we provide accessibility, as this place ought to be used and enjoyed by all.” (Respondent with a disability, 40, male)

As in previous years, respondents with a disability in 2018 shared anecdotes in which they were excluded from participating in activities, often because public buildings were inaccessible.

“Europe House, the premises of the European Commission Representation in Malta, is another charade. The stairlift does not take all kinds of wheelchairs! My wife had her

graduation there and I had to give it a miss as I did not feel like making a fool of myself. Same with the premises of Identity Malta - it is not accessible.”

The newly opened MUŻA, Malta’s new national-community art museum and one of the flagship projects of Valletta 2018, was seen by many of the respondents as being a test of commitment towards improved accessibility. It is noted that at the time the 2018 interviews were conducted, MUŻA had not yet officially opened, so most respondents with a disability simply limited themselves to expressing their hope that it would be accessible. In a private conversation with Sandro Debono, Senior Curator and MUŻA Project Lead, however, it was established that accessibility has been integral to the museum’s plan. Specifically, the MUŻA Project included a redesign of the premises to introduce ramps and reduce the number of stairs, the inclusion of wheelchair access, lifts, subtitled video productions without audio commentary (intended to neutralise the distinction between persons with and without hearing impairments) and plans to provide staff with training to conduct tours for visually impaired visitors.

Commercial establishments also prove to be difficult for persons with a disability. A report commissioned by the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, which has not yet been published but has been covered by the media, indicates that only 30 out of a sample of 400 commercial establishments in Valletta were considered adequately accessible (Falzon 2018).⁸

These difficulties were also reflected in this research project. On this count, one respondent said: “I remember going to Valletta recently to see the opening of the Triton Fountain, after which I went to a restaurant. However, after all the effort in the world to get there, I realised it was not accessible for wheelchair users. I have no idea why they do not cater to us. All it takes is a ramp, and we are ready to spend money there! CRPD monitors this, but unfortunately, certain pubs and entertainment areas of a certain small size are not obliged to be technically accessible. Local councils and the government should provide incentives to these places to provide ramps. I have never witnessed any normal shopper not venture into a shop just because the shop happens to be tiny. It should be the same for us wheelchair users.” (Respondent with a disability, 40, male)

Nevertheless, the small size of many commercial establishments, as well as the fact that toilet facilities are seldom found on the ground floor, presents obstacles which may be insurmountable for small entrepreneurs in Valletta to resolve in isolation. One respondent who runs a restaurant in a very compact space said: “I would like to make my restaurant more accessible – after all that would bring me more customers, but you’ve seen my restaurant. It’s not only wheelchair inaccessible – it’s even pushchair inaccessible – that’s simply what the space can offer.”

According to some respondents, on certain occasions accessibility was restricted due to aesthetic choices, with a number of respondents pointing to Triton Square as an example of this. While the similarly coloured steps create a sense of open space and visual continuity, it was also very difficult for people with visual impairments to navigate these steps. One of the respondents, who is himself visually impaired, said: “You don’t even need to be blind to trip on those stairs and fall flat on your face.”

Thus, from the responses received from respondents with a disability throughout the cycles of this research, it appears that the situation of accessibility has come full circle. In 2015, most respondents from this cohort expressed feeling excluded and unengaged with both the city and the cultural

⁸ The study in question targeted four areas in Valletta, namely Republic Street, Merchants Street, St John Square and Freedom Square (Falzon 2018).

programme. This was followed in 2016 and 2017 by two years of cautious optimism and increasing engagement, leading to 2018, the final year of the ECoC. Respondents feel disappointed that Valletta is still very inaccessible, in a way reflecting the original concerns of 2015. However, what has changed is that in 2018 this cohort shows itself to be far more strongly engaged with Valletta and willing to demand accessibility as a right. One respondent said that: "There is still a long way to go. We are far from making Valletta truly accessible. However, we have to be the ones to push for this." (Respondent with a disability, 42, male)

Walking the city

One emerging theme in the research was Valletta's walkability. Several respondents mentioned that Valletta is a walkable city, or at least has the potential to be so. There is a certain skill in finding one's way around Valletta. People, especially those living in the city, either have these skills or need to develop them to function well. A resident *Belti* who had spent several years living abroad as well as in other Maltese towns described how living in Valletta, he had to learn to weave his way through tourists and café tables on the streets. Likewise, one of the expatriate respondents who has been living in Valletta for a few months talked about how he is still in the process of making the shift from doing his shopping in supermarkets, as he is used to doing in his home country, to discovering a network of smaller shops around his area through which he can source his needs. The same respondent also wondered who is more frustrated, or who is "braver" – pedestrians or drivers. However, he sees Valletta as essentially a walkable city and anticipates that the problems caused by the mix between vehicles and pedestrians would clear up if all parking is moved outside Valletta, with concessions.

Conceptually, this dynamic recalls the way in which Michel de Certeau describes the city as a set of urban practices and a locus of memory, caught in a dialectic between *strategies* and *tactics*. For de Certeau, *strategies* are the wider systems of organisation created by governments, institutions and centres of power. *Tactics*, on the other hand, are the myriad ways in which the people of the city, the "walkers" or *Wandersmänner*, use and navigate the streets. De Certeau notes that because of the technical and scientific logic deployed when regeneration initiatives are applied to urban spaces, "the restoration economy tends to separate places from their practitioners" (de Certeau et al., 1998:139).

Valletta resident author, Dr Josephine Burden, in her presentation "Process, Outcomes and the City: Reflections of a Valletta Resident" (Burden 2018), given at Sharing the Legacy, the fifth annual conference by Valletta 2018, explored the importance of the tactical use of pathways, public buildings and routes, where she looks at the alternatives for "the flaneur" who "arrives at a jumble of parked cars and motorbikes cluttering the footpath." In the case of MUŻA, Burden expressed a hope that people walking in the city could use this space as an access between two key areas in Valletta, namely Jean de Valette Square and Merchants Street, perhaps stopping for a coffee at the museum itself, making this cultural space part of the living, walking routes that people use.

Burden, who kindly allowed her work to be quoted in this report, relates her joy at finding that the Valletta campus of the University of Malta had restored a connecting passage leading from two main streets, namely Merchants Street to St Paul Street. Particularly, she noted that: "The space became a delightful linking haven away from traffic with occasional exhibitions to raise awareness of the University as a cultural institution engaging with the local community. The University became part of my cultural map and during the week, I walked through with my groceries and greeted the security people on the desk. Here was a cultural and academic institution that was part of the community and part of my life."

However, this was short-lived as the author was told that the site was a “prestigious institution” and that she could not just walk through it and would have to use alternative routes. Burden explained her disappointment at this when she said: “My sadness is about an opportunity missed, a chance lost to create Valletta as a city where cultural institutions work with the local community to develop pedestrian routes that are safe and pleasant and build our social capital. Instead, the privileged world of the academic is separated from the everyday life of a working city. A pity.”

Despite topographical limitations, Valletta still provides an array of services within a contained area of land, has an urban plan that was intended to make the city accessible primarily on foot and has several restrictions on vehicular access. Burden’s reflection could be a provocation for planning initiatives to bridge the gap, following de Certeau (1984), between “strategies” – particularly the control and organisation of space - and “tactics” – the everyday practices of people moving about. This would mean taking steps to encourage the interweaving of the routes that walkers take with the havens and repositories of culture. Such initiatives, as indicated by Burden’s anecdote, may involve infrastructural changes, such as the opening of a passage linking two main streets. However, as also reflected in the experience, making such spaces accessible often requires authorities and institutions to remove social and conceptual barriers.

Local concerns in the national capital

Mention needs to be made of the recurrent concerns noted by respondents, particularly by Valletta residents, which have been voiced throughout the lifetime of the project, and which must conceptually be framed within a situation where issues of national importance all too often overshadow local concerns. The common themes, in this case, are refuse collection and cleanliness, street infrastructure, parking and abandoned buildings.

When it came to **refuse collection**, interviewees took issue with collection times and with the piles of black bags that accumulate at collection points. These were noted even by visitors to Valletta, who found them unsightly and unpleasant. One Valletta resident, originally from the UK, however, remarked that collection in Valletta is actually much more frequent than in her home country, where it is carried out on a weekly basis.

It was also generally felt that there were weaknesses in the **street infrastructure**, particularly with pavements that needed to be fixed, as well as potholes and the occasional issues with the sewage system.

The issue of **parking** is twofold. Whilst commuters find it challenging to find parking every day, for the Valletta residents (*Beltin* and non-*Beltin* alike), the primary problem is lack of access caused by inconsiderate parking, especially if they are using a pushchair, pram or shopping wheellie bag. In one case which was mentioned by a Valletta resident, a neighbour who has an impairment which impacts his ability to walk frequently finds problems entering his home because the entrance is often blocked by a parked car. The same respondent said: “Not only do we have few pavements you can walk on – but the ones we have are used as a parking space for cars.”

The topic of **abandoned buildings** was also a recurrent theme, although this decreased towards the end of the research as many buildings had been bought up, often to be converted into catering establishments or accommodation. *Beltin* in particular, whether residents or not, tended to use the metaphor of the city’s vitality – *il-ħajja tal-Belt* – and saw abandoned buildings as being an affront to

this sense of thriving urban life. Towards the beginning of this research project, investment by foreigners and the restoration of buildings to be used as boutique hotels was, in fact, often seen as a lesser evil, being preferable to leaving buildings in an abandoned state, but causing concern on the long-term effects of such trends. One commuter, who feels very attached to Valletta, stated: "The main problem is what to do with the old buildings, to make the city more liveable. Otherwise, it can end up with lots of empty gaping holes. So how do we bring it back to use without knocking buildings down? How do we make it a living city?"

Finally, *Beltin* and Valletta residents tend to feel that their home city, being the capital city of the nation-state, is particularly prone to all sorts of interventions by the government as well as other authorities and/or entities. They have often voiced resentment at the fact that such changes often take place without adequate **consultation with local communities**. A number of Valletta 2018 initiatives, however, were a stark exception to this rule. These include the MUŻA project which directly involved people from Valletta, in line with its approach of "community curatorship".⁹ This project was also good at breaking barriers of social accessibility, with some of the members of the focus group entering the Museum of Fine Arts for the first time, despite having lived in Valletta all their lives. The strong acceptance of the project shows that consultation is certainly one of the key factors in ensuring a successful engagement of local communities with cultural projects. Other projects which involved local communities directly were two Valletta 2018 projects, namely "*Il-Festa l-Kbira*" and "*Ġewwa Barra*", as well as the renovation of the Old Abattoir and its repurposing as the Valletta Design Cluster, all of which will be discussed in more detail later. Although, as elaborated further, it is felt that Valletta 2018 could have included further community-based projects, through the above-mentioned initiatives, an example has been set which ought to be followed more widely.

Urban regeneration and its impact on communal life

At the beginning of this research in 2015, Valletta had already seen a substantial amount of commercialisation and urban regeneration. This primarily included the opening of an unprecedented number of catering and entertainment establishments and the restoration of buildings, most often for use as tourist accommodation, notably boutique hotels. Respondents at the time showed a general concern with the preservation of the character of Valletta, which was consistent across the community groups. However, the topics of Valletta's emerging nightlife and the proliferation of boutique hotels were subjects on which there was divergence.

In the baseline study of 2015, for instance, *Beltin* respondents saw boutique hotels and entertainment establishments as a factor that contributed to the revival of Valletta by giving it back something of the social importance and glamour that it enjoyed in the past. They also provided significant business opportunities to the owners, a substantial number of whom are themselves from Valletta. Furthermore, some respondents also said that these trends have helped to reduce the number of vacant properties in the city, thereby "giving it more life". However, *Beltin* also complained that these processes have pushed prices up and consequently made it more difficult, if not impossible, for young *Beltin* to buy property in Valletta and live there. This was also being made more complex by other existent factors, such as the fact that many buildings in Valletta require extensive restoration and often do not cater to current homebuyers' requirements.

⁹ The researchers of this report thank Sandro Debono from Heritage Malta and Marcia Grima, then also working with Heritage Malta, who extended an invitation to participate as observers in the sessions being held in relation to the MUŻA project. This invitation made the following observations possible and greatly enriched the findings of this report.

At the time, some *Beltin* voiced concern about nightlife in the area, with their main reason being the loss of the city's character, while others were concerned about possible nuisance to residents. One interviewee criticised the revival of Strait Street as being simply an imposition of the standard nightlife model upon Valletta without regard for context. Specifically, the respondent noted that: "2018 should be all about culture but all we are seeing are new *arriviste* bars and restaurants when the restaurants that promote genuine stuff and the old bars are being forgotten. We're faking Valletta 'as it used to be' and tearing the thin veil of society there. We'll make some money out of it but will it rip the identity of Valletta?"¹⁰

However, these concerns were certainly not unanimous. One of the respondents actively called for a further expansion of the entertainment industry in Valletta, with a view to reaping the economic benefits, but also to "give life" to the city. In particular, the respondent said: "If we want Valletta to be given life, we need to have nightlife and not just fix the streets. The tourists of today are the replacement of yesterday's sailors [who used to patronise Valletta's bars]."¹¹

By 2016 and even more so in 2017, all the community groups appeared to have had an overarching realisation that the fabric of Valletta's communal life was changing at a rapid rate, with more respondents expressing concern about increases in property and rental prices, leading several interviewees to state that Valletta will eventually become a city in which only wealthy foreigners and some well-off Maltese can reasonably afford to live. This opinion was frequently voiced with a sense of helplessness with respect to Valletta's long-term future in the face of market forces. Non-*Beltin* who either lived in Valletta or aspired to do so also echoed the sentiment that Valletta was becoming increasingly difficult to reside in and described how their initial enthusiasm of wanting to live in the city was eroded by the day-to-day inconveniences or overwhelming affordability issues related to doing so.

Respondents who were living in private rental property, or had close relatives who were, were understandably the most concerned. A non-resident *Belti*, for instance, talked about how his elderly mother was informed by her landlord that rent on her Valletta apartment will be increased to an amount which she cannot reasonably afford and how this is likely to result in her eviction from a community she has lived in for decades.

"Unless people live in a government rental, Valletta residents are facing dramatic increases in rent. My late father had never wanted to buy property because, at the time, rents were low. Now they have increased the rents a lot, and they want her to move out because they want the flat to rent out to foreigners."

This situation has arisen because of several factors, including changes in rent laws, increased foreign investment, the regeneration of areas such as Strait Street and the proliferation of boutique hotels and other tourist accommodation, as well as the spotlight cast on the city through the title of the European Capital of Culture. The respondent in question sees this heading towards a peak, after which momentum will be lost and this will be followed by a collapse, which to him will be a final blow to Valletta's resident community.

"When Valletta faced a decline in the past, there were still people living there. This time, the residents will be gone. Few people in Valletta have their own property ... and since government

¹⁰ Most of this quote was said in English, with the exception of the last sentence which was originally "Se *ndahflu sold, imma* will it rip the identity of Valletta?"

¹¹ "Jekk il-Belt *irridu ntuha l-hajja, irid ikollna d-divertiment ta' bil-lejl u mhux sempliciment nirrangaw it-toroq. It-turist illum huwa flok il-bahri tal-bierah."*

has stated that it will not be interfering with the rental market, I can't see a solution. Valletta has been all frills, but her spirit is dying because people are leaving and there are other problems: traffic, pavements in disrepair, parking problems – they are letting Valletta die.”

Property owners in areas that are being considered commercially exploitable were only marginally less worried and reported feeling pressured to sell and move out. In fact, respondents have indicated that it is not only financial considerations that have made living in Valletta difficult. The respondent above talked about how noise pollution and extensions of entertainment facilities have created a disturbance to residents and that in conjunction with other difficulties “one ends up deciding that one might just as well leave Valletta”. A Valletta resident stated:

“Certain areas of Valletta are already dying. Strait Street is killing off the residential area around it. I know of someone who bought two flats between St Albert’s school and the *Tico Tico* area in Strait Street. They are now for sale because he realised that no one can live there any more. In the morning there is noise from the school and delivery vans. In the evening, noise from the entertainment and diners.”

Another respondent has stated that she is afraid of being pushed out of her home because a property tycoon, who has been known to aggressively purchase Valletta property, lives in her neighbourhood. She describes the possible future of Valletta as: “One large boutique hotel if they manage to attract enough *crème de la crème* society members who are willing to pay the price”. This business model, she observes, depends on people coming to see Valletta’s particularities, which they themselves are killing off – “so it is a cannibalistic model that will eat itself. ... Alternatively, if Malta’s reputation deteriorates and foreigners start to leave, Valletta will become a liveable place. But that means that things have to get a lot worse before they get better.”

Another resident, who is also a property owner in an area considered desirable, confirmed that pressure is made on property owners and tenants alike to move out, saying that: “The balance lies always in favour of businesses – there are holiday flats even in the *Biččeriġa* (Old Abattoir) area now!”¹² Like other respondents before him, this person believes that only government can bring significant policy change and disagrees with activists who claim that such change can be carried out solely through civic action. According to this respondent, “we need government policy to be more resident friendly and less aggressively pro-business.”

A young Valletta resident stated that: “If current trends continue, there won’t be any people living in Valletta any more. Up to now, I could only afford to live here because I shared the rent with co-lessees. I fear Valletta 2018 will bring more of the same effects that have already happened: high rents; change of use from residence to commercial, unaffordability for *Beltin* and Maltese. I will probably no longer afford to live in Valletta and that would make me very sad.”

A resident *Belti* respondent who is involved in real estate specializing in Valletta property paradoxically synthesises his personal love for Valletta with his business acumen and ability to appraise Valletta’s property market. Although he is capable of compartmentalizing his sentiments and his eye for profit, he acknowledges that living in Valletta can be difficult.

¹²The Old Abattoir, now being repurposed as the Valletta Design cluster, was the heart of an area which was considered particularly dilapidated.

“Some very well-known families are selling out. They don’t care anymore about Valletta – and I can’t blame them entirely. As a *Belti* I can’t say anything against Valletta but there are problems of (availability of) parking, dilapidated property and (lack of) open spaces.”¹³

This has led to some of the respondents quoted above describing Valletta as “a fragile old lady who needs a lot of TLC” or “a bit like Frankenstein’s monster – being patched here and there but ultimately not having a soul, or at least its soul is dying”. As anthropologist Robert Redfield (1960, 59) said: “As soon as our attention turns from a community as a body of houses and tools and institutions to the states of mind of particular people, we are turning to the exploration of something immensely complex and difficult to know. But it is humanity, in its inner and more private form; it is, in the most demanding sense, the stuff of community.”

Indeed, what these respondents meant by the “soul” or “life” of the city in the above quotations is somewhat different from what had been described using the same terms in 2015, where the concept of the city’s vitality was related principally to commercial activity and to vacant buildings being filled. Following 2016, these concerns were overshadowed by the more pressing issues of Valletta remaining a liveable city and having a sustainable social fabric, which was also reflected in the chosen theme for the Valletta 2018 Fourth International Conference held in 2017, namely that of “Living Cities, Liveable Spaces”. The response of *Beltin* and Valletta residents generally tends to privilege the communal aspects of living in Valletta. Interestingly, as the research progressed, this extended even to non-*Beltin* and expatriate Valletta residents who have said that one of the reasons for living in Valletta is the feeling that there is still a palpable sense of community.

Valorising communal aspects of city life is clearly not reducible to a case of nostalgia nurtured by older persons, as even a sixteen-year-old respondent described how Valletta’s social aspect was something which she felt was central to her life.

“In Valletta, I could call my cousin from across the street – you can’t really do that in other places as people would look at you as if you are doing something wrong. ... Valletta is where I can fully be who I am.”

Another respondent, an expatriate woman married to a Maltese person who has now lived in Valletta for many years and is well integrated into the community said:

“Gentrification is an issue as the sense of community I love can disappear. Foreign and local investors do not become part of the community. They are only in it for profit.”¹⁴ (35, female)

Two resident *Beltin* put it the following way:

“This emphasis on the entertainment industry is symptomatic of a retrograde mentality – regenerating a place doesn’t have to mean pushing people out.” (*Belti* resident, 57, male)

¹³“Laqmijiet kbar qed ibiegħu. They don’t care any more about Valletta – u ma ntihomx tort kompletament. Bħala *Belti* ma nistax ngħid kontra l-Belt imma hemm problemi ta’ parking, dilapidated property, open spaces.”

¹⁴This quote appears to be referring specifically to foreigners who invest in Valletta property. It needs to be borne in mind that the statement quoted was being made by a person who is an expatriate herself. Also, one other respondent stated that: “It is true that some foreigners do not live here for long but others do and try to integrate. I am organising some outings and half of the small group that gathers is made up of foreign residents.”

“There’s a feeling that financial well-being is the only form of well-being, there is no pursuit of beauty or spirituality, but we need to look beyond this amazing economic growth to which we have all submitted.” (*Belti* resident, 35, male)

In 2018, concerns about the lack of affordable housing across the country, together with the need to control irregular and illegal practices related to the rental sector, led the national government to publish a White Paper for public consultation in October 2018, proposing mandatory minimum leases and financial incentives for contracts longer than a year as two possible solutions to the instability of the private rental market (Parliamentary Secretariat for Social Accommodation 2018). It is noted that the proposed reforms exclude leases negotiated prior to 1995 and “luxury properties”.¹⁵

The White Paper seeks to protect the interests of both landlords and tenants and is strongly informed by an economically liberal discourse. Although the explanatory booklet concedes the possibility of rent-capping by government should there be a practice of purposefully unaffordable rises being imposed by landlords (Parliamentary Secretariat for Social Accommodation 2018, 33), the White Paper generally steers away from direct price control, and proposes that “properly informed State intervention in the PRS (private rented sector) should not threaten market confidence, especially as landlords themselves stand to gain with a more stabilised environment” (Parliamentary Secretariat for Social Accommodation 2018, 6).

In this year, concern about the displacement of Valletta residents who are forced to seek cheaper accommodation in other localities was voiced by respondents from all cohorts. One respondent from the disability cohort, for instance, said: “It is happening. There are people who have lived in Valletta for a long time and cannot buy in the area. Foreigners are coming in and buying up properties. This is bad. It displaces people. The property then sits empty while local families who have lived in Valletta all their lives have to move out – that is terrible. It is sad for Valletta as the prices go up, and the younger generations cannot afford it, it will create a deserted place once again, and the vibrancy will be gone.” (Respondent with a disability, 49, female)

Other respondents emphasised the displacement of residents as part of the loss of character or heritage of the city. In particular, it was noted that: “Development is eroding the historical capital aspect of the city - the *Bicċerija* (the Old Abattoir), the *Suq tal-Belt* (the Covered Market) are all lost. There are some areas of Valletta which need to be taken care of, such as areas near St Elmo. But this need for development must be balanced, managed, so as not to lose the soul of the city, as I believe is happening right now. We do not value history that much, or heritage to be precise. We are more into commercialisation and business. The balance is not on the side of heritage, preservation and history.” (Respondent from the Inner Harbour area, 27, male)

Understandably, these concerns are felt far more strongly by *Beltin* themselves. The respondent whose mother faces possible eviction from her private rental reiterated the situation in 2018, saying that: “What’s happening in Valletta is that it is getting depopulated, while boutique hotels and other commercial enterprises are opening. You need commerce but you also need residents to keep a city alive. A city is made of its people – we are not talking about a necropolis, a tourist resort or an industrial estate.”

One of the respondents who until the previous year lived in Valletta with his parents, but had to move out of the city when making the decision to live with his partner, was more cynical, stating that, “money

¹⁵ 1995 is the year which saw the enactment of Act No. XXXI of 1995, which may be cited as the Housing Laws Amendment Act, and which was effectively a liberalisation of the rent market whereby new leases entered into would be controlled solely by the lease agreement and no further protective laws.

which could have helped people was frittered away, and in effect the lasting legacy has been speeding up the touristification of the city and the expulsion of its people.”

The increase in commercial activity, particularly boutique hotels and tourist accommodation on the one hand, and the proliferation of catering establishments on the other is another topic that was mentioned especially by Valletta residents. In both cases, respondents still tended to be ambivalent, welcoming the increased activity especially if they are themselves business owners, but also lamenting the disturbance that is invariably caused. This was sometimes encapsulated by respondents in the terse Maltese idioms: “*Thobb haġa u tobġhod oħra*” (“You love one thing and hate another”, i.e. there are positive and negative points to everything) and “*Il-progress rigress*” (“Progress is regress”, i.e. progress always has its disadvantages).

In the case of boutique hotels and tourist accommodation especially, apart from the annoyance created by the construction and restructuring works required, respondents in 2018 were more keenly concerned than ever before that these are contributing to the displacement of the resident population. Some responses from Valletta residents and non-resident *Beltin*, showing a variety of reactions to this phenomenon, include the following:

“The creation of boutique hotels means that large buildings, which most people couldn’t afford, are restored and made beautiful – but this does not justify the amount of traffic and garbage that the people of Valletta have to put up with.” (Resident *Beltija*, 41, female, working in the education sector)

“It is not true that boutique hotels are only taking up spaces that are not within the budget of the average person because they are buying up even small spaces and after all, many of the large *palazzi* that are being turned into boutique hotels used to be split up into smaller spaces.” (Non-resident *Belti*, 42, male, working in the education sector)

“In the past, we used to hear a lot of griping (*garr*) about Valletta, but now people who used to find fault with everything in our capital city and those who only used to come here when they had no other choice are buying up every nook and cranny (*jixtru kull toqba*). I don’t mind the boutique hotels, because wealth gets distributed (*tinqasam lira bejn kulhadd*) – as long as people keep coming to Valletta, things are good.” (Resident *Belti*, 45, male, business owner)

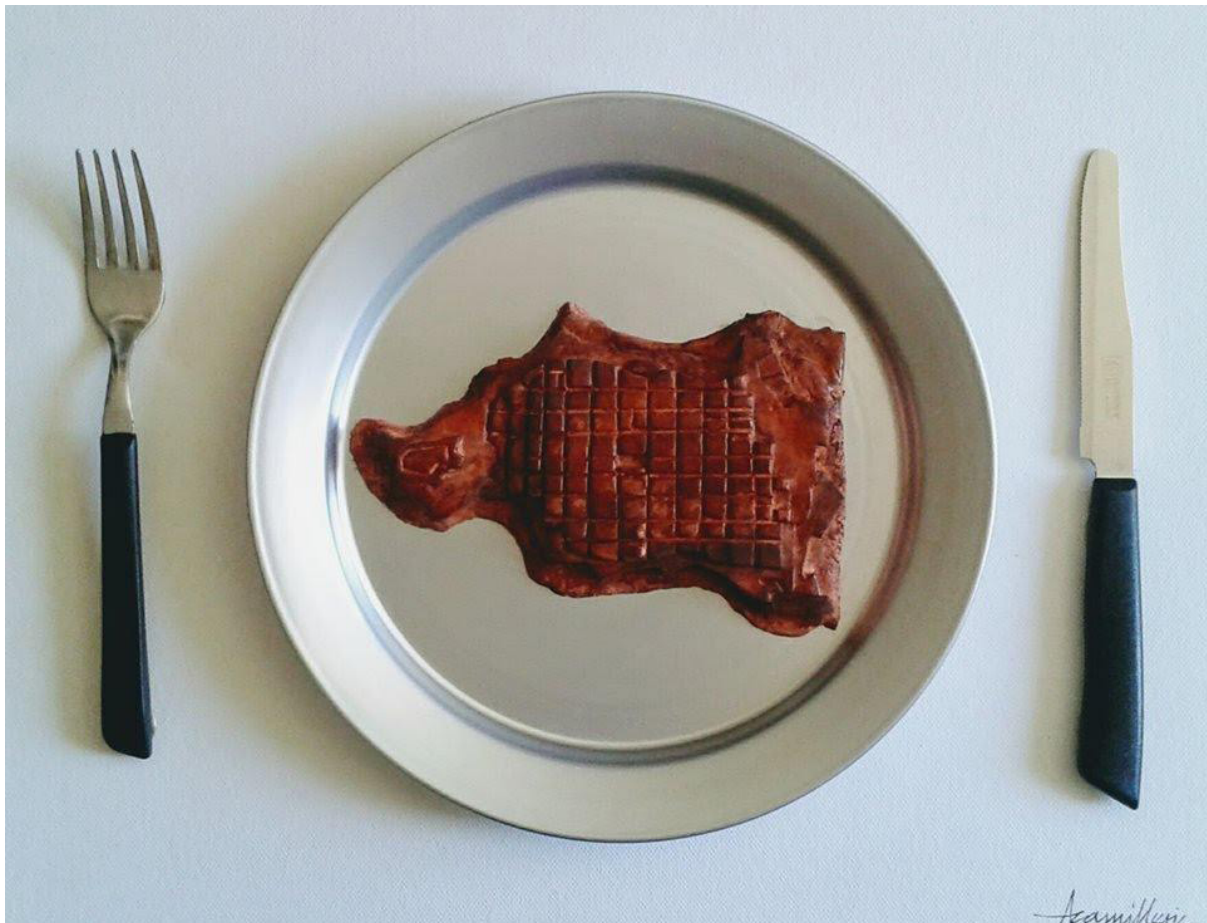
The commercial buzz in the catering and entertainment sector was also welcomed to some degree but was likewise not immune to being linked with the possible displacement of people and disturbing residents. One resident *Beltija* who works in the social sector explained: “I remember Strait Street as a very quiet area. I know elderly people and mentally disabled people who live there and they have had to move because the noise is just too much for them. And it is especially difficult for them to have to move away from the place they live in.”

The same respondent, elaborating on the nature of the disturbance, said: “I used to prefer Valletta when it was quieter. I know it was run-down and shabby, and there wasn’t much to do. Now there has been the regeneration of buildings, people coming in and out, but for residents, it’s a headache. Parking, garbage, a disproportionate number of boutique hotels. There was a time when I couldn’t work from home. Construction, noise, people shouting, broken glass, noise from what I call “the Paceville area”.¹⁶ It comes at a price, especially for people living in areas where catering establishments or weddings take place.”

¹⁶ Paceville is the name of an area in St Julian’s which is widely renowned for its nightlife. In this case, however, the respondent is referring to areas within Valletta such as Strait Street, which have also become nightlife meccas.

Valletta artist Alfred Camilleri also captured this annoyance with the adverse impact of the catering industry in a work titled "Well Done". This artwork was the most critical of several pieces in an exhibition titled "Civitas"¹⁷, which explored the various facets of the capital city. This piece showed a representation of a steak shaped like Valletta's map, served up on a plate with a fork and knife at each side. The caption said, "We don't just meet expectations, we exceed them." In a private conversation, Camilleri elaborated: "Our capital city has been given on a silver platter so that people can eat it up – we see this in the encroachment of catering establishments on pavements, streets and facades. Everybody wants a slice of Valletta."

Figure 1: 'Well done', artwork by Alfred Camilleri, exhibited in 'Civitas', June 2018, Valletta



The contrast registered in the various years between the assertive, positive attitude that welcomes commercial activity and the restoration and reuse of buildings on the one hand, and fatalistic concern about the ultimate future of Valletta as a communal space on the other, presents a puzzling combination that reflects the inherently multifaceted nature of urban regeneration projects and requires further analysis.

In unpacking this ambivalence, it is important to consider the specific context of Valletta and how its social history, even within living memory, has been punctured by displacement. At times, this has been caused by historical forces, particularly the mass emigration to other localities starting with World War II, when Valletta and the area around the Grand Harbour were prime targets for bombing by enemy forces. Other reasons for the displacement of families from Valletta included a blend of social and infrastructural

¹⁷The exhibition was held at the Malta Postal Museum and Arts Hub, Valletta in June 2018. It did not form part of the Valletta 2018 Programme.

factors, such as homeseekers (commonly newly-wed couples) who moved to other localities because of the lack of availability of appropriate and affordable housing within Valletta; families who were compelled to move because their accommodation could not cater to their needs; and elderly people who have had to move out, often reluctantly, because the building infrastructure made it very difficult for them to continue living there.

One respondent in 2018, now a resident *Beltija*, talked about how her parents moved out of Valletta when they got married, noting: "We speak about gentrification nowadays, but really gentrification had already started in the 1980s, which was when my parents married. At the time, couples getting married would look for new accommodation outside Valletta, both because it would have been more accessible and larger, and also because there was value placed on having a dwelling that was a new building."

Another respondent, a non-resident *Belti* who moved out of Valletta when he got married in the late 1970s, confirmed: "They say that it isn't easy to live in Valletta today, but it wasn't easy at the time I got married either, because the available properties were occupied. Other properties belonged to specific families who didn't want to sell. It was far easier to move out and find a new property."

Another factor that colours the narrative which sees Valletta's recent developments as a restoration of former glory is connected to the fact, specifically mentioned by most *Beltin*, that being from Valletta has often been a source of stigma which has only been alleviated in recent years. *Beltin* were stereotypically perceived to be proud, rowdy and aggressive people and the city itself was labelled a "slum area" by outsiders.¹⁸ According to one of the respondents, a *Belti* in his sixties who has lived outside Valletta since he got married, noted that: "It is only now that the city is being recognised for what it really is – and it should have always remained like that."

In light of this, it is being argued that the fact that respondents, including *Beltin*, tended to demonstrate a positive outlook even regarding developments that are unlikely to benefit the Valletta community directly, needs to be seen against this socio-historical backdrop of displacement and stigma. Seen in this light, one reason why *Beltin* may express mixed feelings about gentrification is that significant displacement has in fact *already* occurred several times, and most *Beltin* actually live outside Valletta. Secondly, the upgrading of the building infrastructure and the influx of people are welcomed because they validate the dignity of Valletta in the face of the memory of stigma, and provide vitality to the city in contrast to the longstanding trend towards depopulation.

A concern with "cleanliness", while partly a response to issues mentioned earlier such as delays in garbage collection, also plays into the discourse of gentrification. A respondent who is a second-generation Valletta resident described how, in his opinion, the word "slum" is a label that has been imposed externally, often as a pretext to displace communities. This resonates with the observation of anthropologist Michael Herzfeld that hegemonic ideas of aesthetics and town planning give rise to "spatial cleansing", a term which signifies the "conceptual and physical clarification of boundaries" which replaces "relationships defined in terms of neighborhood" by "abstract description, enumeration and measurement" (Herzfeld, 2006). Through a top-down perspective of urban regeneration, former residents can become redefined as intruders or squatters, for instance.

¹⁸ In a way that is very typical of Valletta society, this prejudice is at times (not without a touch of self-irony) converted to a badge of honour and identity. One example is the fact that Valletta Football Club supporters call themselves "tal-Palestina" (literally "the Palestinians"), which is popularly explained as a reference to their rowdy and aggressive nature, similar to the stereotype which tended to be assigned to Palestinians in the news broadcasts of the 1970s.

In the case of Valletta, this analysis has been applied to the recent history of the Covered Market (*is-Suq tal-Belt*) (Pace Bonello, 2013), the restoration of which was a key Valletta 2018 project.¹⁹ Markets are notoriously resistant to state and administrative control and often come to be considered as “matter out of place” by the authorities (Herzfeld 2006, 129). The classification of the edifice of the Covered Market as a Grade 1 building in 2012, following years of neglect, meant that the shopkeepers who held their stalls within the site found themselves trading inside a national monument, with many voicing the opinion that the government should be making better use of the Nation’s heritage.

In this perspective, Pace Bonello argues, the shopkeepers were at best considered speculators waiting for a hand-out, and at worst they were considered squatters and a threat to national progress. Indeed, no great public uproar followed the closing down of the Covered Market as it was, and the leasing of the building to an important Maltese business group, thereby making this site the locus for renovation. In fact, although respondents questioned the Covered Market’s character and its affordability for locals, the *is-Suq tal-Belt* project was welcomed by many respondents as an upgrade to the erstwhile decadent institution which had occupied such a central place in Valletta and even in Maltese life in general.

This context can explain why trends that create challenges to liveability may be both welcomed in the short term and generate deep concerns in the longer term. However, with the rapid changes to Valletta’s social fabric, it may still come as a surprise that the concept of Valletta as “home”, which was referred to earlier, has proven to be resilient to these processes of commercialisation and displacement.

Various factors have contributed to the way in which the communal aspect of Valletta has managed to outlast so many difficulties, including: the fact that property owners and residents in public-owned rental properties and social housing enjoy more protection from displacement; the symbolic negotiation of identity through social activities such as parish feasts, Carnival and football; the retention of family and communal networks; and memory and nostalgia, which are often deployed to retain a sense of belonging.

This sense of belonging can be particularly strong - one respondent, who lived outside Valletta for a number of years and has since returned, said: “You only make a mistake once – since I returned to live in Valletta, I will only be taken out of here when I’m dead.” The same respondent reflected about how certain projects in Valletta have made the city more liveable, not less. These include the opening up and pedestrianisation of open spaces such as St George Square and Merchants Street.

Another observation was that while respondents conceded that criticism towards projects was often justified, at times the positive points are overlooked. Specifically, it was noted that: “The Covered Market, for instance, opens on Sunday, when most other shops don’t – prices are what they are, but at least there is the option. The old Market, as I remember it, had died – we tend to romanticise it a lot and we use nostalgia in a very shrewd manner. In reality, many *Beltin* had stopped buying from the Market. It couldn’t have remained the way it was – perhaps there have been unwise excesses in the project, but sometimes we also gripe excessively too. Likewise, some people are nostalgic about the *Bičċerija*, where the Valletta Design Cluster is in progress. However, residents were asking for something to be done given that the area had become completely derelict and there were problems with garbage collection, vermin and bugs.” (Resident *Beltija*, 34, female)

Finally, difficulties are offset to some extent at least by the sense of resilience and adaptability that Valletta residents themselves often display:

¹⁹The researcher in question is one of the contributors to this report.

"Valletta is liveable because, at the end of the day people cope, we develop adaptation mechanisms."
(Resident *Beltija*, 41, female)

"You learn to live with the difficulties, especially because there are a lot of things that one can enjoy about living in Valletta. We know how lucky we are to live here, and often we do not admit it and this is because we feel this city belongs to us, so we tend to fear that it is being taken away from us." (Resident *Beltija*, 34, female)

The comments by many of the respondents, particularly those from *Beltin*, voice the need to preserve the social fabric of Valletta. Although often tinged with the rhetoric of nostalgia, these concerns cannot be reduced to mere romanticism when threats to liveability have become tangible. Furthermore, voicing a need to safeguard the communal aspect of Valletta is not an argument against the improvement of the city's infrastructure, and none of the respondents, even those most concerned about the impacts of gentrification and monumentalisation, have been dismissive of regeneration projects in themselves. As per Bauman (2001, 149), "we all need to gain control over the conditions under which we struggle with the challenges of life – but for most of us such control can be gained only *collectively*." What is being proposed, therefore, is that these voices challenge us to make urban regeneration more community-friendly, sustainable and ultimately aimed at making Valletta not just a more culturally and commercially vibrant city, but also a more liveable one.

Valletta resident author Josephine Burden, in the presentation referred to earlier, mentions two practices that "enable the aim of enabling citizens to live well. First, good neighbourliness, the extent to which design and action take account of people. And second, the extent to which public space, the streets, squares, parks, enables human interaction." Particularly in light of the fact that Valletta tends to be seen as caught between the twin cogwheels of monumentalisation by the state on the one hand and real estate speculation by private landowners on the other, it is crucial that any strategic action taken in 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). These, together with the adaptability and pride that *Beltin* and other residents display towards their city, remain a precious, but underutilised resource in making Valletta a more liveable city.

Awareness and accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme

The awareness and accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme was a theme that was an important component of this research project from the start. This subsection details the mapping of fluctuations of respondents' knowledge about the cultural programme of Valletta 2018, its objectives, and the individual events and projects that comprised it throughout the period 2015 to 2018.

In the baseline study conducted in 2015, respondents from across all the community groups showed a very good level of awareness that the title of European Capital of Culture for 2018 had been awarded to Valletta. *Beltin* particularly welcomed this title as international recognition of Valletta's uniqueness. One interviewee mentioned a statement he had seen on a social media platform which, with a touch of hyperbole, expressed this local pride. Particularly, the respondent noted that: "Valletta is now the capital of Europe – bow down your head in respect!"²⁰

²⁰ "Valletta l-Belt Kapitali tal-Ewropa. Baxxi rasek!"

At the time, there was, nevertheless, a poor level of awareness generally speaking of the aims of the European Capital of Culture and what events have been or are being organised. A minority of interviewees were aware that beyond the holding of cultural events culminating in 2018, the ultimate aim was to leave a long-term impact. Many others, however, saw the role of Valletta 2018 primarily as being a means of enhancing the tourism and entertainment offer. However, almost all respondents, including the ones who gave the replies above, said that they were unsure of what the aims really were, or how it is being proposed that these goals are achieved.

Likewise, there was a lack of clarity as to which events formed part of the Valletta 2018 Programme. With the exception of a few interviewees who did not attend any cultural events at all due to lack of interest or accessibility issues, most respondents had attended at least some but were unable to identify whether they were related to Valletta 2018 or not. *Notte Bianca*, an annual night-time arts festival that is an established part of the cultural calendar, was one event that virtually all respondents were familiar with, although not all chose to attend.

Some of the expatriate respondents resident in Valletta stated that they appreciate the synergy created by the mix of Maltese and non-Maltese participants at certain events and that such events allowed them to interact with the local population. The participation of persons with a disability in cultural activities was markedly low, especially those occurring in Valletta. Whilst these respondents often voiced a lack of interest in such activities, it was clear that problems of access, discussed in detail earlier, constituted a barrier to participation in cultural events.

Valletta residents often expressed some hope that Valletta 2018 would create some improvement in city management, in particular with cleanliness (e.g. garbage collection and street cleaning), better parking regulation and the recuperation of old characteristic shops. Residents who are not *Beltin* expressed a fear that the ECoC project may result in the "Disneyfication" (Zukin, 1995) and gentrification of Valletta with the attendant loss of social diversity. The respondents in the Inner Harbour area were also concerned that Valletta and its many economically disadvantaged residents will not be the ultimate beneficiaries of Valletta 2018, and rather that it will be aggressively business oriented, concerns which were also expressed by some *Beltin* and which have been discussed in depth earlier.

In 2016, respondents generally demonstrated an increased awareness of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme throughout the various cohorts interviewed in comparison to the previous year. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that in most cases, respondents were more keenly aware of individual events and less of the Valletta 2018 Programme as a cohesive initiative. In fact, during the semi-structured interviews held in 2016, interviewees were initially asked a general question as to whether they attended any events forming part of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme, followed by prompting if they could identify any specific events themselves. In most cases, it transpired that this prompting was necessary as respondents had generally attended more than one event, but were unsure or unaware that they were part of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. One respondent who is a *Beltija* and lives in Valletta said that she was unaware of what the Cultural Programme entailed, but upon further questioning what emerged was that she had attended a good number of Valletta 2018 events, such as events at Pjazza Teatru Rjal, *Notte Bianca* and *Žiguzajg*, an annual children's festival. Furthermore, she had frequented the establishments in Strait Street and was keenly aware of the Covered Market project.

Initiatives of a more public and collective nature, such as the *Notte Bianca* and the Valletta Green Festival, were understandably more widely known than projects which either had limited visibility, such as the

Valletta Design Cluster project which was still in early stages of development, or those which target a specific audience, such as Orpheus in the Underworld. Indeed, most of the respondents from the various cohorts recounted vivid memories of specific events, such as the *Notte Bianca*, Valletta Pageant of the Seas, Science in the City, the Valletta Film Festival and the Baroque Festival. Other less prominent venues and projects were also mentioned, including Blitz, Fragmenta, *l-Ikla t-Tajba* and *Il-Warda tar-Riĥ*.

The respondents' uncertainty or lack of awareness that these events formed part of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme suggests that although individual events were being well publicised and attended, Valletta 2018 had less visibility as a cohesive project and brand. Indeed, many respondents specifically expressed that they felt the Cultural Programme needed to be more visible, and showed a keen interest in knowing more, with some respondents requesting a copy of the Programme from the interviewers. One respondent, a *Belti* who does not live in Valletta but commutes on a daily basis because of work, was particularly critical of the lack of visibility, stating that: "I might have missed media coverage, but I do not know what the role of the Valletta 2018 Foundation is. Are they publicising enough? Are they getting Maltese people involved? So far all I have seen is a brochure with minimal, generic knowledge, and I have yet to see a programme of events. Somehow, they are not generating enough of a marketing buzz and perception is key. The message is just not getting out there."

In 2016, all cohorts acknowledged that leaving a legacy is one of the main indicators of the success of the Valletta 2018 Programme. In fact, one of the respondents who is a non-resident *Belti* was highly concerned as to what will happen after 2018, asking: "Are the businesses that are being set up in Valletta sustainable? Will the city be left to decay again? If entertainment and nightlife move somewhere else, as has happened in the past, will the government continue to throw money at Valletta?" Other respondents suggested that work with children and the involvement of local communities should be considered as focal points to ensure an organic continuity after the year of the European Capital of Culture.

In 2017, the level of awareness about Valletta 2018 was high. Respondents, particularly *Beltin*, expressed once again a strong sense of pride in general related to Valletta 2018, often mentioning this as an opportunity of increasing tourism and having Valletta showcased across Europe. There was also a stronger than ever sense of anticipation and even enthusiasm, with various respondents stating that they look forward to the opening festivities and to other events in the Programme. One respondent, for instance, said:

"I'm looking forward to ... the opening of Valletta 2018. I am also looking forward to this year's Carnival. Although I am not a Carnival enthusiast, I am planning to attend Carnival after having missed this for about 20 years. I am also looking forward to the Carnival happening in the Cottonera. The Pageant of Seas in June is another event which I am also looking forward to." (Respondent with a disability, 31, male)

Another respondent who is proud of being a *Beltija* from the *Bicċerija* area stated that:

"God willing, I hope to enjoy all the events. I always come for Carnival, when the Valletta Football Team win, *Notte Bianca*. ... I visit museums, Auberge de Castille. When we were children, we didn't used to see these things." (Non-resident *Beltija*, 67, female)

One respondent who is himself involved in the arts scene, however, cautioned about this sense of pride, saying: "Pride is there alright, but culture often gets forgotten." This respondent was particularly

aware of the Programme's contents, but was critical of the fact that many of the events that were scheduled (such as Carnival, the Malta Arts Festival, *Notte Bianca* and the Book Festival) had been going on already, and this to him meant that Valletta 2018 was not being exploited to its maximum potential.

"I expected a year of continuous activity that can mobilise people and allow anybody entering Valletta to find something going on." (Non-resident *Belti*, 38, male)

Respondents who have attained a high level of academic education tended to be critical of initiatives in which culture was perceived as something that is being introduced to the local community from an external source.

"I regret that Valletta 2018 means that culture has to be imposed on Valletta from above as if Valletta doesn't already have its own culture." (expatriate Valletta resident, 33, female)

Another Valletta resident has said that as a resident he feels like a prop ("*qisni pastur*") in a stage set for tourist attention, while another respondent who is an academic, stated that:

"Valletta 2018 could have become a real cultural hub – but I fear there will not be enough legacy, despite numerous activities, because it is not leading towards a cultural foundation." (visitor to Valletta, 60, female)

Another respondent who has a strong academic background felt that the Programme seems to be geared towards putting a gloss over Valletta's wounds (such as poverty, problems faced by the elderly, minorities etc.), but it is better to expose them and start the healing process than to cover them up.

"Projects should be more political in the real sense of the word, even if it could be embarrassing."²¹ (*Belti* resident, 35, male)

Notte Bianca, as in previous years, remained the best-known event, although many respondents were not aware that this had been incorporated into the Valletta 2018 Programme. The Valletta Design Cluster project, on the other hand, was the project that was least well known by respondents. Many, in fact, drew a blank when asked about it, with notable exceptions being, for instance, a respondent involved in the art scene, who said that information has been limited and people in the area are only aware that buildings are being restored, and another respondent who is a resident of the *Bicċerija* area where the project will be based, who was also only aware that building restoration was taking place.

Starting with the official opening on 20 January 2018, the Valletta 2018 Programme included a collection of over 140 projects and 400 events, and all respondents interviewed this year could readily mention at least one or two Valletta 2018 events that they attended. Although often critical, many respondents claimed to find some events to be fun, interesting or even moving.

As expected, the large-scale events such as the Valletta 2018 Opening and *Notte Bianca* were the most frequently mentioned. The Opening was seen by many to be an impressive logistical feat, where about

²¹ As an example, this respondent stated: "To me the most interesting piece of art in Valletta right now is the memorial to Daphne Caruana Galizia", going on to discuss how it would have been difficult for this to be included in a cultural programme such as that pertaining to Valletta 2018 not least because of the strongly polarised views that the issue evokes. The memorial in question is a spontaneous collection of flowers, candles and photographs laid at the foot of the Great Siege monument in memory of slain journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, and has been a matter of controversy being repeatedly removed by individuals and Government authorities and replaced by activists.

110,000 people visited Valletta. The event was largely felt to be good, highly spectacular, inspired pride and was largely accessible, although some said they expected more originality. *Notte Bianca* was also considered primarily an opportunity to explore spaces in Valletta that are not usually open to the public, indicating that Valletta itself as a city is to be considered part of the cultural offer, an idea which will be explored in further detail in the next subsection of this report. On the other hand, smaller events were occasionally mentioned by a few respondents, usually those of a higher educational background who were already frequently attending cultural performances prior to the European Capital of Culture. It is to be said, however, that these events had the possibility of reaching specific audiences and generating dialogue, as in the case of “Tactile”, which presented concealed sculptures “intended to be never seen”, thus neutralising differences between people with visual impairments and those without (Valletta 2018 Foundation 2018). This project was mentioned favourably by some of the respondents with a disability.

This response may indeed be reflective of the content of the Programme in itself, as was observed by a respondent who had followed the cultural offer very thoroughly. Particularly, it was noted that:

“There may have been too much of a focus on visible mega-events – and spectacle is important as it engages people in large numbers, but this is not enough. Then, on the other hand, there were many niche events which attracted the usual audiences who were already engaged with the cultural scene. The marketing of the Programme could have been done in a more targeted manner, and beyond that, there could have also been more involvement of the local community.” (Resident *Beltija*, 34, female)

One related trend in the research carried out in 2017 was the emergence of highly polarised perceptions of the Cultural Programme. Indeed, in that cycle of research, two respondents, both highly educated with a strong engagement in Valletta, gave opposite descriptions of what they expect Valletta 2018 to be. One of these respondents, a professional coming from a lower-middle-class background, who is not *Belti* but works in Valletta and spends much of his leisure time there, said: “There has been too much emphasis on creating a high cultural Valletta 2018 programme. There is too much hype.” On the other hand, a respondent who is a *Belti* coming from a bourgeois background was concerned that the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme may tend towards populism and events that are only catered for the masses, without giving any real options to people who enjoy quality performances.

Whilst noting that it is not being suggested that these polarised views reflect the general outlook of respondents, this extreme difference sheds light on the fact that marketing Valletta 2018 was being done in a context where the public has grown accustomed to being critical of national programmes. Nevertheless, it can also be said to be reflective of the structure of the Programme, which was characterised by mass spectacles on the one hand and niche events on the other.

The potential of community-based projects had been highlighted previously through this research project in 2017, where it was argued that the fact that there was an opportunity for rethinking the several ways in which Valletta 2018 could present itself to the public. Indeed, in 2017, one respondent who participated directly in the *Ġewwa Barra* project was aware, of course, of Valletta 2018 but had little knowledge beyond what she was exposed to through her direct involvement. While this may have been considered a problem from the perspective of branding, there is a sense in which this example shows the power of a community-based project such as *Ġewwa Barra* to have a high degree of social penetration, reaching people who for various reasons may not have found the Programme, in general,

to be accessible or interesting. Such a perspective would have meant that there was room for a more grassroots approach which could be carried out especially through community-based projects.

The direct involvement of Valletta communities, however, was limited primarily to two projects namely *Il-Festa l-Kbira*, which brought together the four parish feasts in Valletta for the first time, and *il-Hasla*, which was the culmination of the Ġewwa Barra project led by Victor Jacono and consisted of “a theatrical performance created and performed by the residents of Valletta, to share what it means to be a “Belti” with the audience” (Valletta 2018 Foundation 2018).

In 2018, a respondent who is a non-resident *Belti* and is involved in the arts explained his disappointment, and that of others in the artistic community, that not many artists from Valletta were involved in the Programme. Regarding *il-Hasla*, this respondent said: “Oh yes! That was certainly an event that gave a voice to Valletta, but it felt like a voice in the wilderness as there were no other similar things going on.”

The underlying notion for *Il-Festa l-Kbira* had been expressed by the same respondent in the baseline study of 2015, where he had noted how *festi* tend to separate, while football tends to unite. This led the respondent at the time to suggest that the four parish feasts in the city are brought together in 2018, since “that would be our greatest victory, as we would have shown everybody that neither feasts nor politics can divide us, but that we are *Beltin* first and foremost.”²²

Il-Festa l-Kbira received some criticism, especially by people who are part of the religious organisations who normally preside over the organisation of the *fešta*. Some of these saw this event as converting religious feasts into a spectacle. One person, who is not a *Belti* but is connected through one of the parishes and was actively participating in this event said:

“I actually don’t like what’s going on. These are feasts that have their place in the Catholic liturgical calendar. To remove them from their rightful place and turn this into a touristic spectacle is wrong – but I am here carrying the statue out of devotion to the saint.”
(Respondent, 35, male)

However, while the core of the *fešta* is tied to religious devotion, these celebrations also have a strong social element, often negotiating the symbolic belonging of people to a locality and forming a strong part of their identity (Boissevain 2013, Mitchell 2002). In fact, this event was largely acclaimed as a successful event and most respondents saw this as an interesting idea and, in the case of respondents who are *Beltin*, a show of civic unity and a celebration of the communities within Valletta. Specifically, the respondent noted that:

“*Il-Festa l-Kbira* is something positive because, for the first time in Malta, feasts which are normally divisive have become a show of unity. The narrative has been changed.” (Non-resident *Belti*, 42, male)

“*Il-Festa l-Kbira* draws on tradition – almost everybody loves feasts, and although a lot of people say we fight over parish rivalries, we proved them wrong and we showed how Valletta can be completely united.” (Resident *Belti*, 45, male)

The Covered Market (*Is-Suq tal-Belt*), discussed in some detail earlier, stands as the single project that triggered the most varied reactions throughout the years. Although most respondents acknowledged

²² “...tkun l-ikbar rebħa li nkunu għamilna għax inkunu urejna lil kulhadd li la l-festi u lanqas il-politika m’ħuma se jifirduna, li aħna Beltin qabel kollox”.

that the Market had been very run-down and largely abandoned and needed regeneration, there was a variety of opinions about the final product. Some looked at it as a tasteful revival of a historical building, while others saw the imposition of a supermarket model and a food court to be stifling and misguided. Others complained about the aesthetics, the take-up of public space, and the disturbance the Market causes to the surrounding areas due to delivery trucks, the generation of garbage and other annoyances.

One other commonly mentioned Valletta 2018 infrastructural project was the regeneration of Strait Street. As discussed earlier, the tables outside created some concerns about reducing physical accessibility in an area where the terrain already poses problems to persons with mobility issues. Likewise, some respondents, generally Valletta residents, expressed concern about the impact of noise on people living in the area, as has been described in the previous subsection. However, on the other hand, several respondents also said that now they feel safe passing through Strait Street, and therefore the regeneration of this street has also made this area more accessible in a social sense.

One response, by Valletta artist Alfred Camilleri, is being quoted at length because of its depth and it provides a challenge to ensure that the Strait Street revival is not only about commercial activity, but that it also regenerates the memory of the social history of the place, especially its contribution to the arts scene in Malta.

“George Cini has documented the collective memory of Strait Street in his excellent books. And yet, although we say we revived this street by promoting new establishments, there is no place that has been dedicated to remembering these memories. After all, what is Strait Street? Who are those spirits that move here? Who used to open and close these doors? This is not artificial nostalgia – it is our cultural identity. Valletta is the stone from which it is built, its people and the souls of those who came before and left something for those who would come after them.”

The least visible of the infrastructural projects related to Valletta 2018 were the Valletta Design Cluster, which is still a work in progress and is furthermore situated in an area that is not frequently visited; and MUŻA, which only opened after the interviews for this research project were conducted. These have been dealt with in some detail in the previous subsection. However, the most salient points regarding MUŻA was that there was a strong hope, especially amongst respondents with a disability, that this project would be a beacon of accessibility. As was described earlier, accessibility was indeed taken into consideration as a primary concern in the design of both the museum space itself as well as the content and its presentation.

Many respondents felt that regeneration of the Old Abattoir area (related to the Valletta Design Cluster) was sorely needed – however, comments were limited because most did not have a clear idea of what this project entailed. In one case, a respondent who was originally from the Old Abattoir area, but has lived outside Valletta for about 40 years, said that the Valletta Design Cluster will be occupying a site that is part of Valletta’s history and that the project has not been planned to contribute anything specifically to Valletta-based organisations. This demonstrates to some extent the tension that may occur between Valletta’s role as a national capital and as a place of local identity and memory. Nevertheless, it is noted that in this case, the Valletta Design Cluster project is designed to be a national project, whilst working “in collaboration with the neighbouring community, by providing a platform for a Local Action agenda that empowers action directly by the community members to improve the quality of life in its shared common spaces” (Valletta 2018 Foundation 2015).

Indeed, in the aforementioned presentation, Josephine Burden selected the Valletta Design Cluster as a good example of both good neighbourliness and taking people into account. Specifically, she noted that: "I also know from my experience of the process that door-knocking, artist and resident workshops, street meetings, site interventions and tours have featured prominently over the years since the project was announced. A genuine effort has been made to resettle the squatters who had set up home in the sometimes precarious building and to counter the inevitable gentrification of the area. Unlike *Is-Suq*, immediate neighbours appear to be on-side and look forward to the proposed open access roof garden and the possibility of finding artists on their doorsteps."

To conclude this subsection, it is important to note that while all respondents attended at least one Valletta 2018 event, only a few participated directly as active participants or through community consultation. In the cases where this occurred, respondents spoke of the Valletta 2018 project with considerably higher enthusiasm and pride. Conversely, when respondents were not involved, this frequently elicited a strong response of disappointment and exclusion. In Burden's words: "I have felt engaged and happy with the process and consider community consultation as one of the legacies along with the establishment of spaces for artists to co-create." The interviews conducted for this report fully support this sentiment and therefore it is strongly recommended that any future cultural initiatives in Valletta or elsewhere consider community involvement not as an afterthought or as a fringe element, but as a touchstone of legacy generation.

The legacy of Valletta 2018

It is perhaps ambitious to look into the future and attempt to anticipate what the legacy of Valletta 2018 will be, especially before the year is over. However, legacy is one of the primary concerns of every European Capital of Culture and was furthermore the theme of the fifth Valletta 2018 Foundation's annual international conference, held in October 2018 with the title of "Sharing the Legacy". In view of this, in the final cycle of research coinciding with the year of the ECoC, respondents were asked what sort of legacy they anticipate, or perhaps even wish for.

It needs to be clarified at the outset that there was no absolute consensus that there will be a legacy at all, or that one is even needed. One respondent from the Inner Harbour replied:

"Let's not get over ourselves here. Valletta 2018 is not like Independence Day or anything similar! There will be some legacy in terms of this year helping Valletta push for more commercial activity - albeit commerce and the uplift that Valletta has experienced did not emanate specifically from Valletta 2018, but from the government's pro-business policies." (Respondent from the Inner Harbour area, 38, male)

Other respondents claimed that in their opinion there will not be a legacy at all, or that they just cannot know if there will be one.

Nevertheless, two major themes were common in respondents' replies, namely the increase in commercial activity and the regeneration of Valletta as a space. In fact, as has been discussed, virtually all respondents readily recognised that Valletta 2018, together with other factors, has generated a significant commercial buzz. However, more than in any other year, there appeared to be a common sentiment amongst most respondents that this business-oriented approach needs to be checked by a concern for local communities and retaining the character and liveability of the city.

The notions of “character” and history in this final year were mostly resorted to by people who are not from Valletta, such as one respondent who said:

“I hope it keeps going on like this, but we should not commercialise the place too much. The historical elements of Valletta must be preserved. There are spaces where these hotels and guesthouses can thrive, but we should steer away from over-commercializing the place.” (Respondent with a disability, 33, male)

Some visitors to Valletta were concerned about overpricing in the city.

“This will impact me negatively. Essentially, with more foot traffic going to Valletta, and more restaurants and bars and cafés opening, and prices going up due to good business periods, this will have a negative impact on me as a frequent visitor of Valletta, as I will have to pay more when I visit.” (Respondent from the Inner Harbour area, 38, male)

Others, however, saw this increased commercial activity as making the city more interesting.

“Basically, Valletta is getting much more foot traffic, and you see a plethora of activity happening in Valletta. Valletta 2018 contributed to making Valletta a place to be. There is more diversity as to where to spend time socially. This is a lasting change for sure that if not brought about wholly by Valletta 2018 was certainly supported by the effort and the events.” (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

Another respondent stated:

“Valletta is buzzing, it is getting more foot-traffic, and more tourists will hit our capital city like never before. It is a capital city with a mix of business, history, culture and entertainment. In such a small place, you get a microcosm of bigger cities so to speak. The dynamics, the layers are there. You get people from every stratum of society, it is quite heterogeneous. You get different hues and diverse backgrounds.” (Respondent with a disability, 42, male)

Valletta residents had mixed views on this intensification of commercial activity. Some, such as one respondent who has close relatives who face having to seek relocation outside Valletta because the increased rent is no longer affordable, were understandably cynical, stating that:

“Valletta has become poorer in terms of demographics, and now we have the boutique hotels. Is this the legacy we want from Valletta 2018?” (Non-resident *Belti*, 42, male)

Others, such as a business owner from Valletta, welcome the activity that Valletta is attracting but are cautious about the long-term future, saying:

“I don’t know what will happen after 2018. I hope things either keep going the way they are or get even better. However, I am concerned about what will happen if tourism slows down drastically and we are stuck with a lot of vacant boutique hotels and tourist accommodation.” (Resident *Belti*, 45, male)

Other respondents have emphasised that continuity must be maintained.

“The promotion of the city needs to keep happening after Valletta 2018 is over. We need to keep pushing so that we get more tourists and promote spaces and places, like MUŻA and Castile Place. We cannot stop - we need to keep riding the wave, building anticipation and making sure we maximise the opportunities that we achieved through Valletta 2018.”

(Respondent with a disability, 33, male)

Regarding the cultural offer, sentiments were generally positive about the possibility that these will maintain the desired continuity. This is illustrated by the following quote from a respondent with a disability.

“Yes, there will be a legacy as most of the activities were a success and I do believe that people will be willing to attend such activities in the future, as has happened with *Notte Bianca*, where people who enjoyed this event kept attending regularly.”

(Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

Valletta residents and non-resident *Beltin* tended to place great value on the concept of legacy and prioritise the impact on urban space more highly than the cultural programme. One respondent from Valletta said:

“While I see many ways in which the Programme could have been better, the way in which Valletta’s spaces have changed is an achievement in itself. For Valletta as a platform, the result was overall positive.”

(Resident *Beltija*, 34, female)

Some other respondents also echoed this sentiment, including a respondent from the Inner Harbour area who said: “The regeneration in itself is part of the legacy. We need to keep taking care of Valletta.” Another respondent who visits Valletta said that people are more prone to remember the projects related to restoration “simply for the beauty of the restoration rather than for its inclusion in the Valletta 2018 Programme, which I do not believe had any impact on the cultural mentality of the population.”

Two respondents, both non-resident *Beltin*, individually used the same metaphor drawn from the context of the Maltese traditional *festi* to explain this need to prioritise the city infrastructure. The analogy invoked was that of the bandstand or *pjanċier*. In Maltese *festi*, local brass bands give concerts on bandstands that are elaborate works of art, often including sculpture, metalwork and painting. Prior to sitting down for the band’s repertoire, it is common for people to take time to also appreciate the beauty of the *pjanċier* as a work of art in itself. Both respondents felt that the city, in its role as the platform for a cultural offer, requires more investment so that much like the *pjanċier*, it could provide an enduring legacy that goes beyond the ephemerality of a programme of events.

Respondents with a disability almost unanimously expressed that their hopes that Valletta 2018 would make the city more accessible have not been fulfilled. Despite proving to be highly optimistic in previous years, the fact that most commercial establishments and many public buildings remain inaccessible has proven to be disappointing.

“Most activities were not accessible. Accessibility was not taken seriously enough. The activities that were indeed accessible were so just because they happened to be

outside. Very little effort was made to ensure that these events, with all the programme brimming with activities, would in effect be available for people like me.” (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

Respondents with a disability also stated the following:

“They did not pay attention to the feedback we gave them through the channel of CRPD, or perhaps they did not give it too much weight. Of course, this is only my opinion, and it could be that attempts were made to make the events accessible. However, the end result is that most of the activities that were held indoors, as well as activities in Strait Street, were not accessible.” (Respondent with a disability, 28, male)

“There is still a lot that needs to be done. We get resistance when we ask for buildings to be made accessible - which is utter nonsense. We all ought to have equal opportunities to enjoy Valletta. Museums should all be equipped with scale models and replicas for us to be able to have a tactile experience. Also, information should be made accessible to all forms of disability, including simplified information for those who are intellectually challenged.” (Respondent with a disability, 42, male)

Finally, respondents have demonstrated hope that a newly set up foundation which intends to continue the work of the Valletta 2018 Foundation can help to maintain a legacy and cultivate the networks that have been formed.

“The Foundation that is being set up is a good thing for continuity because there will be no gap for another couple of years. ... I don’t think the current vibe will die down over the next year or two, but it all depends on the activity of the new foundation. If things are all left to the private sector, it will be more difficult.” (Visitor to Valletta, 42, male)

“I also hope that the agency that is being set up to take over from Valletta 2018 will maintain and nourish the networks that have been developed with the cultural sector and also that they will continue to involve people.” (Expatriate Valletta resident, 71, female)

One respondent who attended some of the workshops organised by the Monitoring and Evaluation Team also emphasised the importance of consultation and involvement, saying:

“At workshops held earlier this year we discussed several important topics, and we also all agreed that what happens beyond 2018 is important. How are we going to keep the momentum? How can we keep promoting such a dynamic place and all that Valletta has come to signify? We have to keep promoting innovation and accessibility.” (Respondent with a disability, 42, male)

To conclude this reflection upon the legacy that Valletta 2018 may have, it is being emphasised that this moment needs to be seen as an opportunity. As one respondent put it: “The seed has been sown” (*iż-żerriegħa nżerghat*). To nurture it means to keep momentum, enhancing Valletta not only as a platform for both cultural and commercial activity but also ensuring that the capital remains both a liveable and lived-in city and fostering networking, research, consultation and dialogue.

CONCLUSIONS & WAY FORWARD

This research project has opted to take a polyvocal approach, allowing the voices of respondents to be heard and speak for themselves. The use of qualitative, semi-structured interviews not only allows for but actively encourages openness and enables a wide variety of perspectives, perceptions and opinions to be documented and compared. That there is such a diversity of views and experiences, however, including the sheer amount of criticism that has been encountered, can be welcomed as a sign of engagement or, at the very least, interest in Valletta and in Valletta 2018.

Valletta is a socially-constructed place that is rich with meaning and memory, ranging from the national to the personal. Although all too often, the national, monumental aspects of Valletta have been privileged by policy, many concerns were in fact local, ranging from everyday issues such as garbage collection and street maintenance, to more complex social issues such as community involvement and rapid changes to the social fabric of the city.

One of the overarching concerns of this research project was the accessibility of Valletta as a space. At the beginning of this study, of the people interviewed, those with a disability were the only ones to be disengaged from Valletta. The direct and indirect impacts of Valletta 2018 were seen to have encouraged a higher degree of involvement with the city and the programme, and indeed there was significant optimism displayed by this group. Nevertheless, Valletta remains largely inaccessible to people with a disability, especially those with mobility issues, and more needs to be done to ensure that the city is a welcoming place for everybody. The recently opened MUŻA can be seen as setting a new standard in ensuring not only that physical infrastructure is accessible, but also that the cultural offer is presented in a way that is inclusive for a diverse audience.

The commercial activity which has been catalysed, at least in part, by Valletta 2018 has been largely welcomed, especially by small business owners in Valletta. However, this has created a disturbance to Valletta residents. Another concern for residents, especially those in private rental accommodation, is the pressure to move out of the city. The newly launched White Paper on the rental market brings some hope to addressing this situation, but may not prevent people being uprooted from their own communities. If residents are being forced to move out, this has a negative impact on their personal lives and on the vibrancy and social fabric of the city.

Programming has received largely positive reviews, but the amount of community-based events was limited. It is hoped that the success of the projects that directly involved the Valletta community, namely *il-Festa l-Kbira* and *Gewwa Barra*, as well as MUŻA which included in-depth consultation as part of its preparatory process, should prove encouraging to stronger investment in similar initiatives.

Finally, there is potential for Valletta 2018 to leave an enduring legacy. However, a focus on programming alone cannot achieve this and an important part of creating such a legacy needs to be fulfilled by enhancing urban infrastructure and liveability, as well as fostering networking, research, consultation and dialogue.

WAY FORWARD

The closing of the European Capital of Culture year brings with it the question of what policy actions need to be in place to ensure that the best possible impact is left on Valletta and maintain the momentum of actions that make the city a more vibrant cultural space, but also a liveable and lived-in city. This section will deal with a number of policy considerations which it is recommended may foster a legacy that supports Valletta as a thriving city.

It is being proposed that the concept of “home”, so often invoked by *Beltin* and Valletta residents to express the intrinsic linkages between place, community and personal and social well-being, is to be a concept that is taken seriously and incorporated in any policy dealing with urban regeneration, not least the policies that directly affect liveability of the city. In tangible terms, means need to be found to ensure that reasonable checks are made to minimise and mitigate the negative impact of commercial activity on the social continuity of Valletta communities as well as the quality of life of its individual residents.

This would include, amongst other things:

- Improved consultation with local communities regarding any policies affecting Valletta and its liveability;
- Improved regulation of construction work to minimise disturbance to residents;
- Improved regulation of parking, especially in areas in which parked vehicles may obstruct access for residents;
- Addressing local concerns, particularly delays in refuse collection, maintenance needs regarding street infrastructure and facilitating the maintenance and restoration of dwellings;
- Encouraging affordability in housing especially amongst the existing resident population;
- Encouraging people-based policies in urban planning, including fostering walking routes around Valletta, such as those that pass through public buildings which connect different areas of the city, as has been done in MUŽA;
- Encouraging the use of public spaces in the city and safeguarding these against occupation by private enterprise, especially when this creates an obstacle to accessibility;
- Monitoring the demand for tourist accommodation in Valletta to ensure that this is sustainable and ensuring there are contingency plans in case there is a significant drop in demand;
- Improved traffic control, especially of delivery trucks in all areas within Valletta;
- Improved regulation of noise pollution and the disturbance caused to residents.

Another aspect which has been shown by the findings of this research to be one in which further action is needed is that of enhancing the accessibility of Valletta. This includes, amongst other things:

- Rekindling and fostering the working relationship with the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD);
- Empowering persons with a disability and people in general to be engaged with Valletta and express their views regarding accessibility;
- Actions to make the city more friendly to people with mobility issues including persons with a disability, elderly persons and also parents of young children;

- Ensuring that public convenience locations are made available to compensate for the inaccessibility of facilities in most catering and entertainment establishments;
- Ensuring adequate transportation to and from Valletta, especially in the evenings. This is an important point as it encourages participation and attendance in evening and night-time events;
- Enhancing information given to prospective visitors to Valletta, allowing them to make informed choices regarding the accessibility of venues and services;
- Encouraging museums and historical sites to make their premises, as well as their collections, accessible to persons with mobility issues and sensory impairments;
- Facilitating initiatives by public and private establishments to make their premises more accessible;
- Ensuring that aesthetic choices in projects do not impinge on accessibility.

This report is also providing a number of recommendations regarding the cultural offer and infrastructure in Valletta and beyond. The point that emerges most strongly from this research is that the future cultural offer should avail itself more of the opportunities provided by community-based projects. Where these projects have been part of the programme, not only have they been very successful, but they also enrich the programme itself and its legacy through their wide participatory nature. Indeed it was noted that where people were active participants, and not only spectators, the level of satisfaction and engagement was much higher. There is also room for enhancing networking both between artists and between artists and local communities.

Given the above recommendations, it is noted that one of the challenges ahead for Valletta is to reconcile a current polarised situation, where on the one hand many developments in Valletta are primarily fuelled by the private sector and require governmental intervention to ensure that these are more resident-friendly, while the cultural offer is primarily developed through a top-down process and would be improved through more involvement by communities. The Foundation that will be entrusted with continuing the momentum set by Valletta 2018 has the potential of encouraging a more balanced approach in both cases.

In conclusion, one essential part of the legacy of Valletta 2018 is the networks, research capabilities and the dialogue that it has generated and fostered. These are invaluable resources that could only be built over time and at great cost and are vital to keeping the momentum set by the European Capital of Culture – to nurture, as one of the respondents put it, the seed that has been sown.

APPENDIX – THE QUESTIONNAIRE

As explained in the section on Methodology, while the researchers followed a set of questions, these were never set in a rigid form and were mostly used as a guideline to ensure that all the necessary ground was covered. Furthermore, space was allowed for respondents to highlight any other topics that had not been raised by the researchers, and any other emerging lead that may have been of possible interest was followed up. This allowed for the consideration of concerns which were raised directly by respondents even if they did not form part of the original set of issues covered by the researchers.

The questions asked throughout the years include the following:

- **Demographic data**
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Marital Status
 - Progeny
 - Socio-economic Status
 - Residence
 - Self-identification as Belti

- **Valletta participation**
 - Reasons for visiting Valletta
 - Frequency of visits

- **Cultural interests**
 - Festa
 - Theatre
 - Museums and exhibitions
 - TV
 - Food
 - Clubbing
 - Sport
 - Others

- **Knowledge of Valletta 2018**
 - Awareness of Valletta 2018
 - Awareness of aims of Valletta 2018
 - Awareness of Valletta 2018 events
 - Experience of Valletta 2018 events
 - Access to Valletta 2018 events

- **Personal views on Valletta and Valletta 2018:**
 - What does Valletta mean to you?
 - What is your experience of Valletta?
 - What do you like about Valletta?

- What are Valletta's problems as you see them?
- How do you see Valletta's future developing?
- How do you think Valletta 2018 will impact Valletta or Malta in general?
- How - if in any way - do you think Valletta 2018 will impact you and your community (i.e. family, people you know etc.?)

In 2016, the questionnaire was enlarged to include questions on the liveability of Valletta and opinions on Valletta 2018's flagship projects.

The question of legacy was taken into consideration from the first year but was framed differently as the Cultural Year approached. In 2015 three questions were asked:

- How do you see Valletta's future developing?
- How do you think Valletta 2018 will impact Valletta or Malta in general?
- How - if in any way - do you think Valletta 2018 will impact you and your community (i.e. family, people you know etc.?)

In 2016 and 2017 a supplementary question was added:

- What changes would you like to see?

In 2018, the questions about legacy became more specific:

- Do you think that Valletta 2018 will leave a legacy?
 - If YES, what kind of legacy (details)?
 - If NO, why not?

These questionnaires were complemented by internal Valletta 2018 meetings with programme coordinators and participant observation in some Valletta 2018 activities.



ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND SPACE THROUGH VALLETTA 2018 CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

**Dr Antoine Zammit
with Tala Aldeiri**

INTRODUCTION

The main research question of this study is – *What role can cultural infrastructure play in the achievement of culture-led regeneration?* The question is answered through the assessment of the potential impact of cultural infrastructure within the place from a socio-spatial point of view – requiring the study of the interface/overlap between the social and spatial perspectives through ‘on the ground’ investigation of the urban fabric and close monitoring of any change therein, and the manner in which culture-led regeneration may affect the use of the surrounding urban spaces of the place. The research objectives centre primarily on the physical urban space/built environment, in terms of establishing important spatial parameters and qualities that, in turn, have direct and indirect social implications.

Place-making, sense of place, identity, and meaning

Central to the discussion on the relationship between urban space and people is the concept of ‘place-making’, or the creation of meaningful places, an important prerequisite for broader urban regeneration objectives.

‘Space’ is a term describing a physical area composed of physical elements. The philosophical study and explanation of space depend on experiences and feelings. By giving meaning, a space is transformed into a place (Carmona and Tiesdell 2007); it is a result of how people perceive and behave in the space. Therefore, places contain “physical, spiritual and social dimensions” (Aravot 2002, 207). They have physical attributes that act as a forum for human interaction. Other terms that relate closely to place-making are ‘sense of place’, or ‘spirit of place’. The activities that happen within a place give it importance, meaning, and identity, a dynamic component of culture that changes with circumstances and attitudes (discussed amply by Relph (1976) and Montgomery (1998)). Cultural characteristics affect the way people perceive and use space, influencing place identity.

A Good Urban Place

Montgomery states that a good place addresses physical, functional, environmental, social, and perceptual dimensions – all aspects which ultimately contribute to the quality of life. William H. Whyte observed that a good place must encourage interaction that may cater to both active and passive participation within the urban space (Whyte 1980). Following on Whyte’s key research, the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) describes successful places using four key qualities: sociability, uses and activities, access and linkage, and comfort and image. A high-quality physical setting attracts more people through the number of social interactions occurring within it. Principles of good design may be used to address the physical and functional qualities of space, and how this may improve and increase the amount (and types) of activities, which in turn influence sociability and interaction.

In line with the above discussion, three main research themes have characterised this research:

Theme 1: Cultural infrastructure as an urban intervention in its own right, which examined whether the studied interventions are adaptable and resilient to change, and whether they may be exploited as a means to link different parts of the urban fabric and its diverse communities together.

Theme 2: Cultural infrastructure as an urban catalyst, which investigated whether the interventions have initiated further-reaching positive change, wider urban design, and socio-cultural processes.

Theme 3: Cultural infrastructure as a vehicle for urban regeneration/renewal, which tried to understand the role of the interventions for broader urban regeneration (whether it is reflected in the cultural infrastructure) and their effect on the local community. In turn, this important theme briefly explored two relevant sub-themes:

- *Sub-Theme 1: Accessibility to cultural infrastructure*, where in addition to the physical considerations on site, the research questioned whether (and to what degree) the process was bottom-up, inclusive, or participatory.
- *Sub-Theme 2: Overarching considerations in relation to 'quality', 'amenity', and 'value'*, where to place-making and signs of gentrification were discussed.

METHODOLOGY

The research deals with product — the physical (design) interventions on the ground — and process — notably planning and socio-cultural processes that manifest themselves in physical (product) terms. In line with this duality, the research methodology comprised a mixed methods approach that included the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed methods approach is particularly relevant in this type of study that is concerned with the interfaces between the built environment and its social implications.

Being longitudinal research, most of the empirical work included repeated observations of set parameters taken over the research timeframe. This included monitoring physical change to the urban spaces due to urban interventions, or due to the proximity to such interventions (that thus defined the neighbourhood area under study for each of the four sites), and the monitoring of changes in the community behaviour in the neighbourhood under study. The mixed research methodology comprised both deductive (formal) and inductive (informal) approaches in the following key stages:

Stages 1 and 2 | Baseline data (desktop) and literature review, theoretical framework

This stage included the collation of baseline data (in relation to the urban environment within the four case study areas) and the initial literature review using secondary sources, as well as the evaluation and continuation of critical baseline data collected by the NSO. The literature review includes the formulation of theoretical principles and hypotheses, the definition of the initial 'product', and the 'process' frameworks (following a deductive and formal approach).

Stages 3 and 4 | Baseline data (on the ground), analytical framework

A current spatial quality assessment based on analysis of existing built fabric and the compilation of baseline data was carried out, along with the piloting of the theoretical framework within the chosen case study areas to develop it into an analytical framework.

Stage 5 | Empirical work within each of the four chosen sites (primary data collection and analysis) — socio-spatial analysis

This stage included an on the ground analysis of the key urban spaces within each of the four case study areas under assessment. The analysis included a quantitative (scoring) mechanism carried out by different stakeholders.

Stage 6 | Key stakeholder interviews

Followed up by textual analysis, this analysis was useful in understanding the different agendas that each of the project leaders had, which enabled the researchers to tie this in with the urban interventions carried out and their impact on the urban space and the people. While it was clear that some projects were based on a very open, community-oriented approach that considered the bigger picture beyond the intervention itself (notably the Biččerija and MUŽA projects), others were based on objectives that more often than not, did not consider at all the local community and were primarily targeted at commercial gain (such as Is-Suq tal-Belt) and artistic/commercial endeavours (Strait Street). In the case of Is-Suq tal-Belt, the interview indeed revealed a very limited and incorrect understanding of the Valletta resident.

Stage 7 | Behavioural analysis following an inductive approach

This stage dealt with participant observation and engagement in order to assess the relationship and engagement of individuals with their urban environments and to understand the different influences on behaviour. This was supplemented by informal participant engagement through discourse/dialogue, storytelling, and anecdotes in relation to the local community's experience of the urban space, intended to enrich the analysis developed through the more formal research structure. Different patterns were recorded and collated, after which a process of categorisation established the different categories of behavioural influences, which were compared for each of the four case study areas.

Stage 8 | Development planning application and permit assessment

This stage was added midway through 2016, in order to better understand the physical phenomena that were happening on the ground. Development planning applications submitted to the Planning Authority, and permits issued were assessed for the four case study areas over the 1993–2018 period, with focus on the 2012–2018 period, to coincide with the announcement of the ECoC. Increasingly, this research became limited to change of use applications, that could subsequently be assessed in terms of their potential impact (current and potential future impact) that would be created on the urban space and residential amenity (in both positive and negative terms), in view of wider liveability considerations.

Stages 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 comprised the formal data gathering and analysis process. Stages 3, 5, and 7 were repeated as a method of monitoring the urban and social transformation of Valletta in preparation for and during the European Capital of Culture year. The knowledge from the above stages fed into the pilot PPGIS workshop (Stage 9) in order to provide the study with a bottom-up perspective that could be matched up with the results emanating from the other research stages.

Stage 9 | Participatory Planning GIS workshops

Informed by the results from the previous research stages and the themes emanating from the Design4DCity¹ initiative that was being carried out in parallel, a PPGIS workshop was first piloted in 2016 and subsequently carried out at a larger scale in 2017, in order to develop spatial and visual (GIS) outputs with the local community and outsiders. The results were collated and subsequently categorised in order to understand whether there were any important parallels between the data and observations carried out through the previous research stages and those coming out of the PPGIS.

¹ The Design4DCity is an initiative of Valletta Design Cluster and Valletta2018 Cultural Capital of Europe in close collaboration with 72Hrs Urban Action and different departments of University of Malta. Its objective has been "to co-design the experience of common and shared spaces in Valletta, by building meaningful bridges with the community of residents and regular users of such spaces, [...] and secondly, by partnering with organisations and individuals that can provide a challenging and practical creative input towards this process" (<https://design4dcityblog.wordpress.com/>).

The Biččerija Neighbourhood Unconference, held in June 2016, yielded important results that fed into a multidisciplinary four-day workshop held between 28 September and 01 October 2016, resulting in the extraction of six themes that have been taken forward in the PPGIS.

METHODOLOGY EVALUATION

As previously discussed, the methodology was based on a mixed methods approach that included the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and both deductive (formal) and inductive (informal) approaches. The mixed methods approach is particularly relevant in this type of study that is concerned with the interfaces between the built environment and its social implications. Most of the experimental work included repeated observations of set parameters taken over the research timeframe. This included monitoring physical change to the urban spaces due to urban interventions, and the monitoring of changes in the community behaviour in the neighbourhoods under study. All concepts revolved around the inner manner with which principles of good design may be used to address the physical and functional qualities of space, and how this may improve and increase the amount (and types) of activities, which in turn influence sociability and interaction.

When re-evaluating the success and drawbacks of the methodology, four main categories were broken down and reflected upon: the design, the sampling process, the data collection, and the data analysis.

Design

Design refers to the general framework of the methodology with its parallel timeline. It specifies the target audience, and when the data will be collected. The research has a clear main problematic that is supported by a process aimed to find an answer or a set of answers to back up a theory. The strength of a design, and the possible biases, depend on the type of questions being addressed in the research. Since several concepts of evaluating urban space and quality by various authors were used to build the foundation of the research, the orientation of the problematic and questions are in a specific and focused track. It clearly articulates the reasons why this particular design/procedure for the research was chosen and developed.

The methodology framework was created on the design of two interlinked strategies: the macro design of the whole study and the micro step-by-step methodology for each stage. The study was first looked at from a wide standpoint, and then each stage considered individually in order to obtain the best results efficiently. The macro and micro frameworks, with both qualitative and quantitative data, aim to provide a comprehensive approach to socio-spatial research. The results of qualitative and quantitative analysis have successfully shown that they support each other, thereby solidifying the methodology. The chronological order of the process, starting from the spatial analysis and social observations, and the accumulation of raw data with respect to the built fabric, enabled a cumulative build-up of the argument. A theory for each of the four case studies was formulated, relating specifically to the built environment under discussion and reviewed according to general patterns of interaction in public spaces, with respect to socio-cultural and political influences.

The rationale of the methodology began with the collation of baseline data from literature and the National Statistics Office. This allowed the formulation of theoretical principles and hypotheses, which was to be tested during the data collection on-site. Two simultaneous processes, the ethnographic research and the spatial quality evaluation, are methods of extracting new and relevant data by interacting with the site users. Data collection was repeated in 2016 and 2018 in order to allow for a time period of both physical and social change (if it were to happen). Having two sets of new data endorsed the comparative study on which the research argument is built.

In order to make the study more inclusive, stakeholders' interviews were carried out and analysed profoundly in order to consider the planned agenda for each neighbourhood. The main ideas and vocabulary used in the interviews can explain some trends from the previously collected on-site results. The same logic was applied to the Participatory Public GIS workshops; each workshop was held to add qualitative information to the quantitative study in order to explain and clarify previous findings. Finally, all the new data was collected to be compared with the preliminary hypotheses established during the first stages. This process therefore went from building a research basis to the collection of quantitative and qualitative information from various stakeholders, so as to ensure a comprehensive approach in the methodology, permitting community participation in planning concepts.

Readers need to know how the data was obtained because the method chosen affects the results, and by extension, the interpretation of their significance. Therefore, step-by-step clarification of each stage is available, and correlations are made to be able to move on to the next stage. It is important to always provide sufficient information to allow other researchers to adopt or replicate the methodology, particularly when a new method has been developed or readapted. The methodology, however, could discuss the problems that might be anticipated and how to prevent them from occurring. This will allow future researchers carrying out the study to be aware of any problems that may arise, so that these are anticipated earlier and minimised. Marginal errors should be discussed and explained in terms of how they do not impact the interpretation of the findings in any meaningful way. This can be reflected in a separate stage or as an extension of the preliminary two stages that define the research framework.

Furthermore, there should be a last stage for a third round of data collection post-2018. As the period of European Capital of Culture ends for Valletta, the significance of its physical and social impact should be monitored. Therefore, it would be interesting to repeat the same process of data collection in 2020, in order to compare the results with the findings of 2016 and 2018. Since two of the four projects are not yet open, the effects have not completely taken place. Although the projects have been a missed opportunity for 2018, they are yet to contribute to the urban fabric of Valletta and will need to be studied. This added stage will contribute to the inclusivity of the study. Additionally, organising a workshop between representatives of the local community, the private sector, and governmental authorities could create an interesting discussion that can also answer questions in the research.

Sampling

The methodology used sampling as a means to reduce the time required to do the research, which also improves the quality of information by allowing more intensive data collection than would otherwise be possible. For the built analysis and land use assessment, a specific sample of the buildings was studied within the set site limit (planned at the beginning of the research process). For the social study of the research, the quantitative research used inferential statistics that required random sampling of the 'general' population, while the qualitative research used both random and non-random procedures — directly involved stakeholders. This ensured the revision of bottom-up and top-down approaches.

However, the sampling done could have been subject to exterior influences. The researcher may instinctively choose participants for biased (intentional or unintentional) reasons. Furthermore, there might be an unequal distribution of different locations where the sample of the population is selected within the sites. Consequently, it is often difficult to judge the adequacy of sampling in research. Nevertheless, enough samples were collected to be able to generalise, simplify, and make proposals based on the findings (in all stages including the PPGIS workshop).

The on-site sampling of the study was carried out during specific months in both 2016 and 2018. This limited timeframe limits the spatial and social assessments to activities occurring within that period. The research should be distributed throughout the year to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the community's behaviours during different seasons. In addition, summer is the peak of the tourism season and therefore, unintentionally most of the survey participants were tourists. Repeating the surveys throughout the year would accommodate a wider range of users and include a more impartial spatial analysis result that encompasses physical changes within different terms of the year. For example, more outdoor seating and space is appropriated by catering establishments to accommodate the larger number of visitors, therefore interfering with the accessibility and permeability of the site.

Data collection

The data was collected and generated in a way that is consistent with accepted practice in the field of study. For example, the multiple choice questionnaire offered respondents a reasonable range of answers to choose from. The merger of the various tools evaluated in the methodology enabled the successful execution of noting down social and physical traits within the sites, and ultimately documenting and representing them in an analytical framework. The use of both digital and manual documentation in the data collection process was an advantage as it contributed to the success of gathering information. During the PPGIS workshop, some challenges were solved using internet connection, so having the option of hand mapping was a big contributor to the success of the initiative. Most of the questions for the spatial assessment questionnaire were designed very specifically before the study, so there was no opportunity to address new questions that may have risen from the early data collection. Qualitative research allowed the use of early findings to generate new questions that were examined in the later stages of data collection.

The results obtained corresponded directly to the research questions. However, drawbacks or margins of error were inevitable due to the context of the study. In the cases when people were orally asked the questions instead of having them fill them out physically, some answers may have been influenced by the researcher's presence. In addition, the presence of the researcher on site might have affected the behaviour of the participants during the observation period. However, the vantage points chosen for observations were appropriate for attaining a full view of each site. Secondly, the time of research was limited to a certain period of the year which would depict different results from a yearlong study. The observation of social behaviour at different times throughout the day, on both weekdays and weekends, allowed broader and more thorough observations that fed into the impact of the study. Increasing the duration of the study yielded a more comprehensive conclusion.

The process for the survey data collection was less efficient due to two main challenges. The first was a language barrier between the researcher on site and the targeted participants. Having an Italian and a Maltese version of the questionnaire would have facilitated and widened the selection of people to answer the spatial quality assessment. Secondly, the questions were sometimes misunderstood. Therefore, simpler terminology and shorter questions would have yielded to a larger number of samples being answered and more precise responses. The collection was more efficient with the researcher asking the participants the questions of the survey, as the participants were more enthusiastic to collaborate, and they answered more attentively. Questions requiring a longer response were often skipped or hastily answered.

The on-site surveys and physical assessments were carried out in 2016 and again repeated in 2018, each time by different researchers. This brought about an element of subjectivity, which could be minimised by having clear criteria for numerical scores. For example, when mapping land use, there should be clear guidelines for

the differences between the typologies, such as warehouses and garages. These differences were difficult to comprehend on site when carrying out the study, which caused the mapping process to be re-done several times in order to get statistics that were logically related to the previous mapping in 2016. The element of subjectivity could have been steering the results towards a specific direction. This could have been avoided by having more than one researcher, perhaps of different professions, carrying out the same study in order to get a more accurate and well-rounded understanding of the site elements. The use of multiple researchers would have provided an average which would have offered a more precise evaluation of both physical and behavioural elements. Another solution would have been to have the same researcher carry out the same procedures if possible, to eliminate errors that could result from outlook differences.

Data analysis/interpretation

When quantitative methods are used alone, they do not acquire depth and are therefore not sufficient. To get a complete picture, it is important to understand and be able to conduct qualitative research. The 'deeper data' that was tapped into using qualitative methods became increasingly valuable throughout the interpretation of the quantitative data, because it provided explanations and justifications.

However, the qualitative data collected in the PPGIS was challenging to analyse. The participant's observations were studied thoroughly in order to understand their perceptions of each site's spatial qualities and characteristics. Some remarks were vague and unclear, posing a problem to the analyser. In some cases, unclear observations were dismissed, or just keywords were taken into account so as not to misinterpret any information.

During the interpretation of the data, three methods were used to clarify important concepts related to the research question: the categorisation of themes, the identification of keywords, and the use of graphics. Broad and repetitive social observations were categorised into themes as a manner of simplifying collected data and extracting key notions of social behaviour within the four neighbourhoods. The results were further elaborated with visual representations and graphs that highlight a dominant theme. The use of Voyant-tools aided in the extraction of keywords in the stakeholder interviews and the PPGIS workshop. The words provided an orientation of the stakeholders' interests and the participants' concerns and remarks.

Survey results were documented in separate Excel sheets for every site. Each answer was given a numerical score in order to be able to quantify the answers and give a total score for each of the four sites. This method of quantification allowed for the concise comparative analysis between the various physical spatial elements of each site. The division of questions into themes such as accessibility, comfort, and image allowed for a more concise comparison which could point to specific needs and improvements to be made in the future development of each neighbourhood. The land use assessment was interpreted through mapping and consequently through statistics extracted from the surface areas calculated on the maps. Being able to read individual columns for each neighbourhood with the corresponding land use percentages clearly allows the reader to compare the differences between 2016 and 2018.

Conclusion

The inductive approach proved to be a suitable model for answering the research questions and the amount of qualitative data gathered ensured the credibility and reliability of the research. All the tools worked together successfully and were equally useful in portraying the true character of the sites. This also allowed for triangulation between the data to further enforce and supplement the results from each stage of the process as gathered by the various tools used.

FINDINGS

The research findings have been documented extensively within each of the Interim Evaluation Reports prepared throughout the course of the research's lifetime.

Research findings – 2016

Physical analysis – spatial and building analyses

The spatial quality analysis based on the analytical framework using criteria for accessibility and permeability, perception and comfort, and vitality provides the highest overall score for MUŽA (3.61) followed by Is-Suq tal-Belt (3.30), Strait Street (3.18, although note that repeating this exercise specifically for the intersection with Old Theatre Street provides the highest score of 3.71), and the Biċċerija (2.75).

Building assessment

The physical analysis of the neighbourhoods based on the observations on the ground related to the state of repair of the built fabric provided the highest impression score for the Biċċerija neighbourhood (3.37), followed by Is-Suq tal-Belt (3.36), the MUŽA neighbourhood (3.26), and Strait Street (3.14). Comparing this to the Census' state of repair (as reported by homeowners and translated into measurable scores) yields different results – the MUŽA neighbourhood (4.60), followed by Is-Suq tal-Belt (4.20), Strait Street (4.10), and the Biċċerija neighbourhood (3.90).

Land use analysis

The land use analysis, based on observations taken on the ground for the four neighbourhoods, was carried out specifically for the ground floor and then repeated for the entire floor space.

- **Ground floor use:** This analysis was useful since it enabled us to understand the degree of active frontage that may be present within the neighbourhoods, as a central contributor to vitality and natural surveillance (eyes on the street), which in turn results in a greater degree of safety. The highest presence of active frontages occurs in the MUŽA neighbourhood (89%), followed by Strait Street (67%), Is-Suq tal-Belt (57%) and the Biċċerija neighbourhood (56%). Conversely, the highest proportion of dead frontage is in Strait Street (32%), followed by the Biċċerija neighbourhood (27%), Is-Suq tal-Belt (25%), and the MUŽA neighbourhood (7%). These results again illustrate that the MUŽA neighbourhood has the highest degree of vitality, an important contributor to spatial quality, again correlating perfectly with the results in Section 8.1.1.
- **Predominant land use:** This analysis illustrates the state of affairs with land use correct as of 2016. The predominant land use in the Biċċerija neighbourhood, Strait Street, and Is-Suq tal-Belt is residential (54%, 63%, and 43% respectively), whereas offices prevail mostly in the MUŽA neighbourhood (34%), almost at par with administrative (government-related) uses (33%).

Analysis of development planning applications with regard to change of use and impact on the four neighbourhoods

Five categories of potential impact due to the change of use were singled out and scored on a scale of 0 to 3:

- generation of people (and people movement);
- visual implications;

- aural implications;
- olfactory implications; and
- litter generation.

This study revealed that the place which was affected the most due to the change of use for all categories throughout the period 1993–2016, was within the Biċċerija neighbourhood, and least within the MUŻA neighbourhood. The exercise was specifically repeated for the period 2012 (the year Valletta was announced as 2018 European Capital of Culture), and in 2016, where one could note the same trend, but with a higher degree of impact on all categories. Post- 2012, the amount of development planning applications for change of use increased significantly.

Within the period 2012–2016, the highest impact is again in the Biċċerija neighbourhood, followed by Strait Street. In order to understand why these two neighbourhoods were affected so significantly, we sought to analyse the nature of the change of use in more depth. In terms of scale of impact of commercial uses, for instance, hotels and catering establishments with on-site cooking would have a higher impact than retail or service-oriented commercial uses, or catering uses without on-site cooking, and even more than offices – resulting in generating more people, greater aural and olfactory implications, and more littering. It becomes clear that in the Biċċerija neighbourhood, along with Strait Street, the majority of the premises are changing their uses into commercial uses (from residential or vacant premises), or into a higher level of commercial use (for instance, from office to retail, or from retail to catering).

All the premises located in the Biċċerija neighbourhood that have applied for a change of use, post-2012, are changing into a higher level of commercial use. In contrast, within the neighbourhoods surrounding MUŻA and Is-Suq tal-Belt, change of use here is not of a commercial nature (for instance from warehousing to residential), or it remains within the same level of commercial use (for instance different typologies of retail).

Research findings – 2017–8

Physical analysis – spatial and building analyses

The project with the highest score for spatial quality was MUŻA (3.85), followed by Is-Suq tal-Belt (3.80), and Strait Street (3.53). The Biċċerija scored the lowest (2.65). The scoring hierarchy represents the existing conditions and concerns.

MUŻA has the highest score as it is the site with the best overall physical state. It is located in a strategic area at the entrance of Valletta, and therefore, the surrounding context is mostly in excellent condition. Even with ongoing construction works, the Jean de la Valette square is open and unobstructed for pedestrians to access. The biggest concern is not having any seating or any shading elements, which was reflected in the low score for the comfort and image category. This noticeably affected the overall use of the space, which is used as an intersecting zone rather than as a public square that gathers people.

Is-Suq tal-Belt's high score is correlated to the appeal of the front façade overlooking Merchants Street. It is the busiest zone where it was easier to find participants for surveys. The relation of the market with the pedestrian street created a pleasant space with an interesting and diverse context, with a large built-in seating bench for passers-by to enjoy the space. However, the side streets that encircle the structure are used for litter and delivery vans, which disrupt the movement of pedestrians, although this was not flagged by many respondents when the surveys were carried out.

However, a month after the conduction of the surveys, outdoor furniture was laid out in front of the market. This changed the dynamics of the space and obstructed the pedestrian flow. In addition, parking spaces were allocated for electric taxi carts, which also majorly limited the accessibility and comfort of the space. Therefore, it was felt that the surveys had to be repeated to address these new phenomena, and care was taken to also approach respondents within St Paul's Street rather than being limited to Merchants Street. This provided a much lower overall score of 2.97. One may note that the key contributor to this low overall score was due to the issue of accessibility and permeability, which scored even lower than the Biċċerija. The low scoring from 2016 had been due to the ongoing construction in rehabilitating the market structure, which had negatively influenced people's perception of the space. Factors that affect people's perception of space (including non-physical aspects such as negative press and pressures from residents or NGOs) are unpredictable, so the results of the study are relative to the specific period during which it was conducted. It is nonetheless interesting to see how scoring has been affected by these different parameters. It also points to the fact that the over-appropriation of the public space (in terms of outdoor catering areas and servicing/litter in the case of the side streets) can be considered to be a missed opportunity of this project, as it could have been used to enhance, rather than detract from the nature of the public space even further.

Strait Street has a long and varied configuration, so different sections have different conditions. However, the overall result is an indication of the commercial takeover that is currently taking place. The street is already narrow, so catering establishments that extend their perimeter outwards into the street make it less walkable, but more lively. Construction work also impedes the flow of pedestrians. Other concerns were the long stairs, inclined and uneven ground level, the presence of service vans, and litter. The site is generally considered safe except for some sections with vehicles and others that are less lively.

The Biċċerija is one of the most dilapidated neighbourhoods in Valletta, but is undergoing slow progression. The inclined nature of the site creates safety and accessibility issues. Secondly, as the Civil Abattoir structure is still undergoing renovation, construction is influencing the present character of the site. Construction material and machinery obstruct the encircling streets, making accessibility and permeability very low. There are also bad odours and no outdoor furniture, thus contributing to overall low image and comfort. The spatial quality of the site requires major efforts to improve its scoring, and can be seen as a missed opportunity for the European Capital of Culture.

Building assessment

The majority of the buildings in Valletta are considered to be in 'Fair' condition. In comparison with 2016, there are a decent number of buildings which have been restored to excellent condition (specifically tourist accommodations), and hardly any residential buildings.

MUŻA in general has the highest ratio of buildings in 'good' and 'excellent' condition. This fact is predictable as the area is located at the entrance of Valletta and has had an increase in leisure and commercial land use. The actual building of the museum will have the biggest visual impact when the construction is finished. The immediate area around the Biċċerija, which is still undergoing construction, has remained more or less the same. However, the perimeters of the site boundaries are undergoing renovation, probably due to their location next to main streets and their proximity to the waterfront (mostly boutique hotel establishments).

The Is-Suq tal-Belt area has had a fair number of renovated buildings, probably as a complement to the increase in touristic and leisure activity. Most of the buildings which have been renovated into excellent

conditions are boutique hotels, which highlights the role of tourists in the area and how it is losing its residential feel.

In Strait Street, the intersection with Old Theatre Street was previously active, but there are efforts to liven the entire strip, with the most evident number of renovations taking place at its edges. Both segments have been transformed with bars and restaurants, which feature music performances during weekends.

Land use-analysis

There is a noticeable increase in the number of PA development applications in Valletta, as seen from the analysis of development permits issued over the past years, as well as the ongoing construction works within Valletta. The change of predominant use of buildings is less evident than the change of ground floor use, which is at the interactive level with the users of the site. For the sake of the research, a site undergoing construction will be considered as a vacant building, so as to truly represent the present-day character of the site.

Ground floor use in MUŻA was predominantly retail in 2016. Its usage within this sector managed to increase slightly. There is an increase in leisure activities as new cafes and restaurants have been opening in the area. The vacant percentage has increased due to the undergoing works in Auberge d'Italie which will be hosting MUŻA. It has decreased its administrative activity, and will eventually replace it with cultural activity.

The Is-Suq tal-Belt site has had a sharp increase in the number of hotels, jumping from none to 5% in two years. This statistic is confirmed by the high number of tourists observed around the site during the analyses. Predictably, leisure activities significantly increased from 6% to 9%, which can be noted in the neighbourhood as it has many busy cafes and restaurants. The market has attracted establishments to open nearby and is transforming the surrounding context to a dining and shopping area.

The Biċċerija maintains a stable land use in the neighbourhood, with another similar notable increase in the number of touristic accommodations. These are located at the edges of the site's parameters, which is attracting tourists. However, these users do not remain in the area, and instead solely pass through. This fact is reflected in the minor increase in leisure and retail activities.

Strait Street is being transformed into a wining and dining destination in Valletta. Therefore, the number of retail and leisure activities has increased, and the number of empty warehouses has decreased significantly. While there were already a significant number of existing offices, more new offices have also been opened, thereby marking administration as the primary activity.

The four sites have given an overall indication of the changing character of Valletta – one wherein more external visitors are being accommodated, and one that is becoming a prime catering destination.

Analysis of development planning applications with regard to change of use and impact on the four neighbourhoods (updated to 2018)

Most trends observed in 2016 remained valid, albeit with a few differences, namely that data from 1993–2017 shows that the greatest potential impact of the development planning applications due to litter can be found within Strait Street. The scale of potential impact in the 2012–2017 period is more significant than that for the 1993–2011 period in all categories and for all four sites. Again, all change of use applications in the Biċċerija area are for a higher commercial order, similar to the results achieved in 2016.

Stakeholder semi-structured interviews – textual analysis

An in-depth textual analysis was carried out for the key stakeholders of each of the four projects under study, together with the Planning Authority. Four deliverables were obtained – term frequencies; distinctive terms used within the interviews; relative frequency of the most distinctive terms used within the interviews; and categorisation of key themes, in order to understand the different interests/agendas of each stakeholder.

The results from this analysis comprise an important component that enriches the data obtained from previous analyses and informs a broader understanding of process-related considerations that are further explored through the PPGIS Workshop held later on in the year. Clearly, the agendas of the individual key stakeholders are very diverse. As expected, the PA respondents were more concerned with strategic planning issues, with constant references to more comprehensive issues characterising their interview. More interestingly, there is a sharp contrast in the approach to the four individual sites – at the extreme ends, a community-driven and community-focused approach in the case of the Biččerija project, to a market-led and thematic-based approach in the case of Is-Suq tal-Belt. In between, the MUŽA project is also partly community-focused, although on an equal footing with the artistic credentials of the project, while the Strait Street project is driven mostly by artistic outcome and individual achievement.

Behavioural (observational) analysis

One of the research objectives was to gain an informed understanding of how people behaved in and made use of the sites under study through behavioural patterns and other influences contributing to the vitality of the spaces. Hours of observation data were collected for an in-depth comprehension of people's behaviour, both throughout 2015/2016 and 2018. The behaviour ranged from casual conversations to how people interacted with the built environment. Observed patterns were then collated into distinct categories to serve as a base for quantification.

In 2016, the following categories of influences were observed:

1. **Aural:** The aural category encapsulates all sensorial experiences relating to sound.
2. **Vehicular and Pedestrian Interface:** This category reflects the presence of moving vehicles, the interface between pedestrians and vehicles, as well as parked vehicles which restrict access, or block views.
3. **User Categories:** This category sheds light on the types of users within the space, age, gender, ethnicity, and profession amongst others.
4. **Thermal Comfort:** Thermal comfort refers to the level of comfort of the user due to environmental influences and weather conditions.
5. **Relating to Cleanliness:** This category relates to all the factors which reflect the condition of the space, state of cleanliness, or absence thereof.
6. **Actual Use of Space:** This category reflects types of user experiences and activity relating to the use of the space and vice versa, how the space and the land uses set within the space induce human activity.
7. **Perceptual Influences and Use of Space:** This category includes abstract and intangible notions relating to the use of space, which also include the observer's perception of the atmosphere at the time.
8. **Human Interaction:** Human interaction encapsulates the interface between two humans or more.
9. **Olfactory:** The olfactory category encapsulates all sensorial experiences relating to smell.

In 2018, similar categories were defined, as follows:

1. **Aural:** encapsulates all sensorial experiences relating to sound.
2. **Vehicular and Pedestrian conflict:** the presence of moving vehicles, the interface between pedestrians and vehicles, as well as parked vehicles which restrict access or block views.
3. **User Categories:** the types of users within the space, such as tourists or residents.
4. **Leisure activity:** the level of leisure occurring in the space (whether busy or slow).
5. **Visual pollution:** blocked views, litter, and waste. Also strongly related to the current construction activity since it is at a peak stage in Valletta.
6. **Interaction with Space:** the use of the space, and how the space and the land uses set within the space induce human activity.
7. **Safety:** related to incidences of pedestrian safety, such as slippery pavements, interference from outdoor furniture, passing by construction sites, and avoiding vehicles.
8. **Human Interaction:** encapsulates the interface between two individuals or more, ranging from an intimate scale to a larger scale (such as a group of tourists).
9. **Olfactory:** all sensorial experiences relating to smell.
10. **Movement:** primarily focusing on pedestrian flow.

Behavioural mapping revealed the following predominant groups of patterns:

- *Strait Street* – Aural and Vehicular/Pedestrian Interface influences; very much influenced by the configuration of the urban space and the tight height-to-width ratio that characterises the street and which amplifies sounds emanating from the buildings that align its edges. Moreover, conflicts arise when vehicles access the narrow portions of this street to the detriment of the pedestrian experience.
- *Is-Suq tal-Belt* – Aural and actual use of space influences; very much influenced by the nature of the land uses surrounding and defining the urban space (the presence of retail outlets is second highest after MUŻA at 24%).
- *Biċċerija* – Actual use of space and aural influences; primarily due to the interaction between resident and visitor, the observed and the observer, the fine balance that occurs between privacy, natural surveillance, and visual permeability. It is a neighbourhood wherein the indoor spills out into the semi-private (such as the balcony spaces) and the semi-public spaces (wherein space is often claimed in an informal manner).
- *Pjazza Jean De Valette (MUŻA)* – Human interaction and actual use of space influences; particularly due to the lines of flow that characterise the urban space from multiple directions and that increase the chances of encounter. This is also very much in line with the high degree of vitality and presence of active frontages, which characterise this neighbourhood.

This implies that Strait Street, the Biċċerija, and Is-Suq tal-Belt neighbourhoods are dominated by sensorial/environmental influences, whereas Pjazza Jean De Valette (MUŻA neighbourhood) is dominated by people/users and their interaction. Indeed MUŻA and Jean de la Valette square demonstrate the highest interaction with the surrounding space, as visitors interact with the sculpture therein, take photos of the churches, and often look into or sit around the Royal Opera house site if there is an event. Its central location and proximity

to the main bus terminal and Republic Street results in a large flow of pedestrians. This flow creates chance encounters and interaction among individuals. Even though pedestrian flow is transversal the majority of the time, there are often events and street performers that attract crowds and initiate human interaction. This creates a dominant aural effect of music and theatre. Governmental vehicles do access the space, however, this is rarely problematic and they do not create significant conflict with the pedestrian users. The square serves as a 'connecting corridor' to all the immediate land marks. These influences are evidence of the liveliness present and the active frontages.

The Biččerija neighbourhood has the lowest level of human interaction from the four sites, as it is primarily residential in nature and the opportunities for interaction are limited to streets and alleys. However, interactions do occur – between residents, workers, and visitors. Residents frequently interact in alleys and from balconies. There is a blur of limits as residents use the outdoor space as an extension of their home 'territory'. The site is characterised by residential sounds such as loud televisions, birds, individuals arguing, infants crying, etc. There is an evident impact of construction works on the behaviour of users. Machinery and vans block access in streets and result in high visual pollution. There is the constant presence of strong odours, due to the cat sanctuary adjacent to the site and neglected litter. Tourists have expressed that they feel like intruders as the residents are not very approachable and give off the feeling of territoriality.

Is-Suq tal-Belt area is a destination for visitors to have a shopping and dining experience. Therefore, there is a high level of human interaction and leisure activity such as carrying bags, dining, looking at shops, etc., as there is a strong retail presence. There is a high flow of movement due to its location in one of the busiest streets of Valletta, Merchants Street. On the sides of the Market building, there are significant olfactory issues due to the litter that is left there for pickup. There is also a notable disturbance between the pedestrians and the users of the space with the service vehicles. The highest influences of human interaction, interaction with the space, high level of leisure activity, and aural influences, all serve as an indication of the liveliness of the area. However, influences such as pedestrian and vehicular conflict are also present, and should be addressed so as to further contribute to vitality and comfort within the site.

Strait Street is characterised by its primary function as a narrow street, which evidently influences the users' behaviour. Since it is a long stretch, different behaviour patterns occur in different sections. The intersection with Old Theatre Street is the liveliest, as it is where the commercial activity is mainly concentrated. New beverage and catering establishments have been opening towards the edges of the street. This almost creates an alternating pattern along the stretch between busy, commercial activity and a quiet, residential feel, resulting in high interaction with space, olfactory (due to food and litter) and aural influences. As Strait Street is recreating itself as an entertainment destination, there are a number of user categories from residents, to workers, and tourists. However, conflicts still arise when vehicles access narrow portions of this street, which causes the loss of pedestrian experience. Space appropriation due to outdoor catering areas (and the abuse of the approved limitations by some establishments) creates further impediment to the pedestrian flow and compromises the pedestrian experience.

PPGIS workshops

The PPGIS workshop was organised to identify concerns and discussions of possible alternative approaches to physical interventions. PPGIS gave residents an opportunity to submit their own views on the issues in a bottom-up manner, both in collaboration with other members of the community, or otherwise.

Pilot workshop 2016

The first PPGIS pilot workshop was held on 6th December 2016 in Valletta. The session was organised by the University of Malta in collaboration with the Valletta 2018 Foundation. It centred on the key themes emanating from the Design4DCity workshop held some months earlier, these topics being:

1. the surrounding area;
2. services and public spaces;
3. the future of the site;
4. cleanliness and quality of life;
5. accessibility; and
6. heritage.

The purpose of the PPGIS session was to test the 'community maps' interface, which was adapted for use in the Maltese Islands by Mapping for Change – a social enterprise within University College London. A group of ten people gathered to participate in the session. By discussing the digitisation of aspects relating to the first four themes of Design4DCity, a physical mapping session was implemented. The objective was for participants to appreciate that digital mapping can be more useful when preceded by a face-to-face communal discussion whilst mapping elements of the discussion on a physical map. The method used for this part of the pilot was the MAP-it Toolkit, during which two teams discussed the pedestrian and vehicular accessibility of the site. As a follow-up to the pilot session, the results of the physical mapping session were digitised onto the 'community maps' interface using a purposely set up Design4DCity account. Participants were encouraged to continue using the interface in their own time to validate the digitised results as well as to continue populating the map with a rich array of data related to the Design4DCity themes of interest to them.

Participatory Mapping Walkabout 2017

The second Participatory Mapping Walkabout was held during the annual Valletta 2018 Capital of Culture conference entitled 'Liveable Cities – Liveable Spaces', held from 22nd November to 24th November 2017. The Mapping for Change platform of 2016 was used once again, in order to continue building upon the existing database of information. The walkabout was organised jointly by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, studjurban, and Mapping for Change, with around sixty participants. Once on the site of the cultural infrastructure, participants were encouraged to use the online platform to map their contributions, with a paper map option also available.

Results Analysis Methodology

Following the PPGIS walkabout, there was a required process of technologically archiving collected information. Therefore, one method of archiving was on the online platform, and the other was through using a more encapsulated archive on an Excel sheet. This was done to extract the main repetitive remarks in a clear, outlined table for the four sites, which consequently permitted further extraction of themes from participant responses to create specific categories for numerical evaluation. Additionally, the online engine 'Voyant-tools' was used to provide word count frequencies from the participants' texts. The resulting words were added to the analysis table to give an indication of the participants' most noted observations and concerns.

Since the study encompasses both qualitative and quantitative methods, the next step was the numerical input of data according to the created categories, based on the repetitiveness of comments throughout the participants' responses and information. The numerical data was used to create radar graphs as an output of the results for each site, which allowed us to visualise which categories were prominent, and which are

therefore important to take note of for future policies. Consequently, the radar graphs of the four sites were overlaid for comparative analysis. Each site had a graph peak that represented the category most noted by the participants, which permitted us to understand the primary concerns for each site. Graphical results facilitated the deduction of final conclusions.

As previously mentioned in the methodology, there was a numerical input of data based on the repetitiveness of comments throughout the participants' responses and information. According to the numerical values and the radar graphs, the following categories were the most mentioned for each of the sites:

Bićerija - Existing physical state, streetscape qualities, and accessibility

Words such as 'degraded', 'shabby', and 'need of upkeep' were repeatedly present in the participants' remarks about the surrounding area of the design cluster, and the need for its restoration to mask the efforts of the project. Similarly, streetscape elements such as poor levelling, tiling, and stairs were linked with low accessibility to the site.

Is-Suq tal-Belt - Accessibility, commercial activity, current/future opportunity

The commercial function of the market was regularly acknowledged. Many remarked about the accessibility of the market site and noted its strategic location and good entrance, but only from one side of the building, as not all the streets are easily accessible. The fact that such a historic market was privatised and made an 'upmarket' was also repeatedly noted.

MUŽA - Value of historic elements, commercial presence, and link to context

Many participants commented on the strong historic feel of the MUŽA and its context area. The presence of historic elements mixed simultaneously with commercial activity, was mostly noted as positive. However, the square was repeatedly noted as a potential extended public space for MUŽA, and attracting the public as an outdoor exhibition space.

Strait Street - Accessibility and presence of vehicular traffic

The majority of observations remarked on the narrowness of the street and the low quality of walkability due to vehicular circulation alongside pedestrians. Expectedly, many suggested the idea of making it more pedestrian-friendly to reach its full potential.

It is crucial to see if the qualitative and quantitative study results overlap, thus giving a cohesive result. The table of preliminary qualitative analysis indicated the following main remarks:

- Bićerija - *Surroundings: need for contextual integration with residential neighbourhood;*
- Is-Suq tal-Belt - *Concern with loss of local feel: local community support;*
- MUŽA - *Potential to expand MUŽA to public space outside; and*
- Strait Street - *Concerns with streetscape quality and accessibility.*

Thus, we can clearly observe that the main ideas extracted from the qualitative text are also present in the quantitative study.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall results reveal that Valletta 2018 has had a positive outcome on its physical fabric. Spatial assessments indicate a general improvement from 2016, except for the Biċċerija, which is undergoing construction that is heavily obstructive in the area. Even though the covered market scored high in accessibility, there are still several factors needing consideration. Changes are constantly taking place, so it is important to consider constant assessment for well-encompassed research. Land use changes and architectural interventions have indicated predominant activities for each neighbourhood. Since Valletta obtained the ECoC title, applications of PA developments have increased, and most have changed use from residential towards leisure or commercial, and a significant increase in hotels is evident from the increased touristic feel in Valletta generally. This is strong proof that Valletta is transforming from a residential to a catering destination.

Qualitative data obtained from the PPGIS workshop and patterns from the behavioural analysis further underline this point. The results obtained highlight the lack of an all-inclusive vision with respect to planning for cultural infrastructure within Valletta, outlining the physical disconnection between the four projects. Therefore, the current Valletta strategy is a short-sighted view of the future of the city that's more about generating investment, while acting against Valletta's long-term liveability. There need to be new strategies focusing on the social aspect in order to ensure an increase in local residents and therefore, to enhance the sustainability of the regeneration process.

Neighbourhood renewal should be based on local empowerment to make sure that communities are equipped to respond to economic, social, and cultural challenges. The community core is also established and developed through the creation of a sense of place within the space. The built environment has a direct impact on the quality of life of every citizen and the enhancement of design will directly affect the well-being of the community. Regeneration is a process which demands the engagement of multiple actors in the creation and activation of urban spaces. Local development initiatives should not serve as a substitute for top-down approaches, which are needed for structural changes and planning of investment. Therefore, a practical and efficient policy should focus on the formation of a mutually beneficial interaction between top-down policies and bottom-up initiatives.

The evidence suggests that most regeneration schemes do not have explicit policies on community participation, nor do they incorporate it into their strategic planning. The Valletta research reveals a number of lost opportunities, and the decline of involvement due to policies which integrate it. Overall, the impression is that community involvement is often assumed to be taking place, and is approved of in principle, but is marginal in practice, with much loss of effectiveness in regeneration schemes. It makes a major difference in planning and practice if governments, planning agencies, stakeholders, and the community are equally involved in the process. The research's approach in community participation resulted in better quality information on local issues and challenges, thus a deeper insight into people's daily living problems, which could greatly benefit future planning policies, was obtained.

Urban Public Space: An entitlement or a commodity?

According to Alvarez and Barbosa (2018), it is important to reveal an understanding of urban public spaces that recognises and values the multiple forms of exclusions in the city, which are indicators of the level of citizen participation in modern cities. The goal, as in this research methodology, is to question the social relations, organisations, concepts, and practices that contribute either to a city where all differences are embraced, or

emphasise segregation, which therefore produces conflict or cooperation. It is in daily indicators of conflicts that our societies form and recreate the public sphere, and also where the social dynamics of urban open spaces take place. Hannah Arendt (1991) refers to the public sphere, the *vita activa*, as a domain of 'political actions involving cultural production and citizen construction as fundamental parts of our social narrative'.

The urban crisis today entails the transformation of the city into a business space, leaning towards economic profits rather than the social needs that make up urban life, thereby proving the dominance of the top-down approach. Ouriques (2005) states that "leisure should be studied in the context of progressive commodification of all aspects of life, of control and appropriation of all possible spaces by capital". It remains disputed as to what degree public spaces can be non-commodified spaces for local leisure and serve as a source of capital. Tourism and the attraction of big events have become important strategies for the attraction of visitors and capital, which have consequently significantly commodified public spaces to create places of display rather than spaces of quality.

Local and national governments have set up areas of historical and cultural value for the occupation and consumption of tourists, presenting a conflict between the interests of local residents and of globalised capital. Tourism has also become an important factor in the representation and appropriation of public open spaces; it generates great infrastructure, but on the other hand can cause the breaking down of the social fabric, the marginalisation of communities, and weak urban identities. Holder (in Ruschmann 1997) argues that the degradation of space that leads to economic decline, abandoned facilities, and a culturally uprooted population begins with small, exclusive tourist movements in attractive places that transform into mass tourism.

Citizen Participation in Planning Public Policy

Alvarez and Barbosa (2018) go on to validate that the concept of urban public spaces is a transdisciplinary domain based on joined physical, environmental, and social practices. In urban planning, 'public spaces' are considered as open spaces free of buildings, while in the social sciences, the term refers to meeting places and sites of individual and collective interaction. Physical and environmental practices refer to complex systems, including circulation, infrastructure, socioeconomic, etc. Society develops in the physical unity that constitutes urban public spaces, hence, it is a socio-spatial process. Citizen participation creates a new way of life which brings together economic, environmental, and social aims through the community's exclusive perception.

Healey asserts for a process of "inclusionary argumentation", in which "participants come together, build understanding and trust among themselves, and develop ownership of the strategy" (Healey, 1997:249). Article 2 - Active involvement by local residents in urban regeneration plans increases the effectiveness of the existing strategies. Secondly, it brings attention to new issues previously not visible in the regeneration discussion, which may point to different needs and solutions. The benefits of community involvement can include: providing job training for underprivileged people; assisting local small business development; assisting with the renovation of housing; supporting the socialisation of youth; helping to protect or enhance the local environment; improving the status of women; improving public services, and making them more consultative and inclusive.

Citizen participation can contribute to the improvement of existing policies, resulting in strengthening local democracy, and therefore, developing a new relationship between public services and users. However, there should be a balance between public-private collaboration. David Harvey (1989) believed that cities need to "keep ahead of the game by engendering leap-frogging innovations in lifestyles, cultural forms, products,

and service mixes...if they are to survive.” The following case studies demonstrate different approaches of community involvement in city planning in Jeonju, South Korea, which is similar to the case of Valletta, and Fort Point District in Boston, USA.

Case Study 1: Jeonju Hanok village – Jeonju, South Korea

The government of Jeonju city developed a project of a traditional cultural-oriented village from 1999–2010, known as ‘The Hanok village’, in reference to the traditional type of Korean housing. It is located at the centre of Jeonju city, and encompasses many historic and cultural resources. Designated as a preservation area in 1977, the village had since deteriorated due to a shortage of supports and subsidies for housing repairs, losing many of its residents. In 1999, the local government of Jeonju city approached the residents by holding public open debates for the village’s regeneration, based on planning between public officials and residents. The plan consisted of restoration, fostering cultural tourism, and improvement of the infrastructure. The project was carried out from 1999–2010, and resulted in 7 million tourist visits in 2012.

The preliminary success of this regeneration resulted from community involvement in policy implementation, beyond the usual top-down approach. However, the regeneration has faced limits and challenges with the constant rise in tourism destroying traditional culture. With millions visiting, the number of commercial facilities in Jeonju Hanok Village has increased sharply over the years. The village turned into a big food court with an obscure identity, which contradicted the idea of a slow, traditional Korean village lifestyle. The number of eateries in 2010 was only 36, increasing to 64 in 2014. Simultaneously, the number of traditional tea houses has decreased from 10 to 6, and many professional handicraft workshops have been replaced by modern souvenir shops. The high volume of tourists has led to an increase in the cost of food and rent. As a consequence, Jeonju Hanok Village had 1,000 families in 2012, but today only half remain.

Case study 2: Fort Point District - Boston, USA

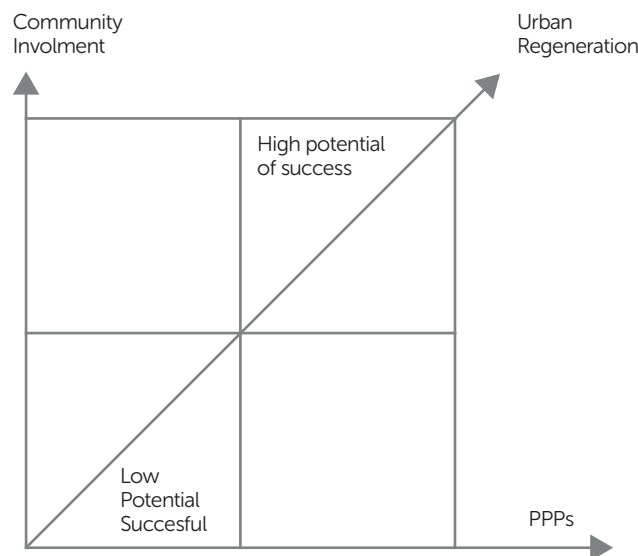
Fort Point district, a historically industrial region along the Fort Point Channel in South Boston, is today a vibrant, mixed use area. It has a strategic position within the city, thus attracting enterprises and markets from the entire region, and has gained a reputation as the entertainment hub of one of America’s oldest cities. The centre of the regeneration strategy is a public-private partnership that considers all social, economic, and environmental factors. It involves job creations, tax revenues, and property values alongside affordable housing and 45,000 m² of an open spaces network. The public management of private money contributes to benefits for the whole community.

Hence, the Fort Point regeneration goal was to reach public benefits through private investments. It is important to note the participatory planning process for the entire duration of the project, with workshops and meetings regularly taking place in order to emphasise a common, shared vision with the local community and all the main stakeholders. The initiative was realised with people, companies, and government making up the core strategy. People, cultural, and artistic associations created a sense of belonging; companies held the expertise and financial capability; and public authorities gave the legal framework with short and long-term vision for the entire city.

WAY FORWARD

The comparison shows that in urban regeneration projects, the involvement of the community has been crucial for the final outcome. It provides the means to support community leaders to work together on common goals, with the challenge of creating new opportunities and functions. It also brings new economic opportunities, thus improving the quality of lifestyle by creating liveable neighbourhoods with improved healthy and safe community environments. The people are the essence of the place, so if they leave, the physical urban setting will lose life, driving away both residents and tourists. A city will fail to grow sustainably without merging culture-led urban regeneration with its identity. The Valletta research affirms that spatial transformations inevitably affect social behaviours and cultural values, drawing from evidences of demographic decline and low presence of locals. As suggested by McCann (2001) the lack of responsibility of planning services is encouraged by the increase in privatisation, due to the limited economic resources along with a critical view of bottom-up policy making, so that “urban policy is increasingly left in the hands of corporate-supported organisations”.

Figure 1: Bevilacqua, Calabrò, and Maione (2013): Community involvement and Public-Private Partnerships relations in implementing successful urban regeneration initiatives



Bevilacqua, Calabrò, and Maione (2013) state that enhancing a mix of functions that target various users will improve the balance in urban contexts, and that “involving private actors within the planning process shifts toward a decentralised planning system in which local actors and stakeholders play a crucial role” (Figure 1). Usually, in order to create and manage the future development of cities, private organisations and planning consultants are engaged from public–private partnerships, and work towards a consensus-based approach (McCann, 2001). Community involvement is a method to strengthen a sense of “belonging to” that has to be preserved and improved, because “the sense of community is formed and sustained over shared resources” (Perdikogianni, 2007). Community involvement is about inclusiveness, and building a relationship of trust between planners and citizens, so as to cope with socio-economic inequality and advance sustainable planning.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

European Capitals of Culture inevitably bring about significant changes to the city's social and urban fabric, often helping to shape the direction of the city for years to come. The case of Valletta is no different, with the city having changed face drastically in the years leading up to the title.

The studies in this report trace these changes, commenting foremost upon the changes in the city's urban landscape, with particular emphasis on the four infrastructural projects spearheaded by the Valletta 2018 Foundation. These projects are analysed critically, not only for their immediate impact on the city, but more specifically in terms of how they have shaped life for the surrounding neighbourhoods.

These impacts are ever more apparent when working closely with different communities that define the city. The issues that are highlighted in the anthropological study on community impacts of Valletta 2018 shed new light on this, highlighting the day-to-day challenges faced by many participants and their hopes, aspirations and concerns for the future development of the city.





THEME 04

THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE

The Impact Of Valletta 2018 On The Tourism Sector
Malta Tourism Authority

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Concluding Remarks

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INTRODUCTION

The impact of the European Capital of Culture title on the tourism industry cannot be understated. Although an increase in tourist arrival figures is not necessarily perceived to be a primary goal of the ECoC title, this has often proven to be a strong secondary effect of the title in many cities that have held the title over the years. Various evaluation studies have shown that the ECoC title can have a significant short and long-term impact on incoming tourism.

This theme looks into the impact of Valletta 2018 on incoming tourism, seeking to understand the degree to which the European Capital of Culture title is affecting the local tourism product, including visitors' decision to visit Malta, as well as the extent of their participation in Valletta 2018-related activities and events once they are in Malta. This report consists of data obtained from research carried out by the Malta Tourism Authority.

THE IMPACT OF VALLETTA 2018 ON THE TOURISM SECTOR

MALTA TOURISM AUTHORITY

Tania Sultana with Ramona Saliba

INTRODUCTION

This research study attempts to measure the impact of Valletta 2018 on the tourism sector in Malta. This report is divided into four sections.

Part 1 focuses on Malta's tourism performance covering the period 2015 to 2018. The figures are based on the latest available official statistics as at 7th November 2018.

Part 2 provides a detailed explanation of the impact of Valletta 2018 on tourism performance. The impact assessment primarily looks at tourists' awareness levels of the event followed by tourism activity generated directly by Valletta 2018, i.e., the number of tourists attracted to Malta and the resulting guest nights and tourist expenditure generated. The estimates are mainly based on indicators originating from continuous surveys carried out by the MTA, namely the Traveller Survey and the Heritage Locality Survey.

Part 3 looks at the relevance of 'culture' as a pull factor for tourists visiting Malta. The methodology adopted allows for the differentiation between tourists who are 'greatly motivated' by culture and those who are only 'motivated in part'.

Part 4 focuses on tourism activity in Valletta namely visitor flows, sites and attractions visited and visitor impressions of Valletta. This section also looks at the profile of tourists who opt to stay in accommodation establishments in Valletta.

The concluding remarks at the end of the report provide a short synthesis of the main findings.

FINDINGS

Overview of Tourism Performance

A buoyant inbound tourism performance was recorded during the period 2015 to 2018 where all the main indicators – inbound tourists, tourist guest nights and tourist expenditure – recorded significant growth rates. The year 2018 is expected to mark the eighth consecutive year of growth in inbound tourism, where a new record high was reached. The number of total inbound tourists to Malta is expected to reach 2.6 million, recording a significant increase of 14.3%. This achievement is even more remarkable as it comes on top of the significant increases achieved in the previous years.

Within an international context, throughout the period 2015 to 2018, Malta's inbound tourism growth rates surpassed those for the World, Europe and the Southern Mediterranean European region. This success is mainly attributed to the efforts of the relevant authorities in securing and expanding air connectivity, along with the strengthening of brand Malta in the origin markets overseas.

The positive tourism performance during the period 2015 to 2018 is mainly the result of the significant increase in air connectivity, where the total number of routes increased from 94 in 2015 to 109 in 2018.

Table 1: Inbound Tourism Indicators Jan to Dec 2015-2018

	2015	2016	2017	2018 Forecast	% change 2018/2017
Inbound Tourists	1,783,366	1,965,928	2,273,837	2,600,000	+14.3%
Tourist Guest nights	14,151,599	14,961,366	16,509,141	18,720,000	+13.4%
Tourist Expenditure (€'000s)	1,639,067	1,708,952	1,946,894	2,111,200	+8.4%
Tourist Expenditure per capita (€)	919	869	856	812	-5.1%
Average length of stay (nights)	7.9	7.6	7.3	7.2	

Source: NSO

Table 2: Air Connectivity 2015-2018 Jan to Dec (both way)

	2015	2016	2017	2018 Forecast	% change 2018/2017
Passenger Movements	4,618,580	5,072,605	6,007,129	6,770,000	+12.7%

Source: MIA

Impact of Valletta 2018 on the Tourism Sector

The estimate of the impact of Valletta 2018 on tourism is based on indicators originating from the MTA's Heritage Locality Survey. The Heritage Locality Survey is a voluntary postal survey distributed to tourists of any nationality who are residing or visiting the localities of Valletta, Mdina and Birgu. The main objective of this survey is to gauge tourist experience in these localities. Specifically to Valletta 2018, tourists were asked about their awareness of this event and whether the title of European Capital of Culture was a main motivation for visiting Malta.

Table 3: Tourist Awareness of Valletta 2018 – Jan to Dec

	2015	2016	2017	2018 Forecast
Prior to visiting Malta	25.4%	28.8%	38.5%	60.0%
During Visit	43.3%	47.9%	46.2%	35.0%
Not aware	31.3%	23.3%	15.3%	5.0%

Source: MTA Heritage Locality Survey

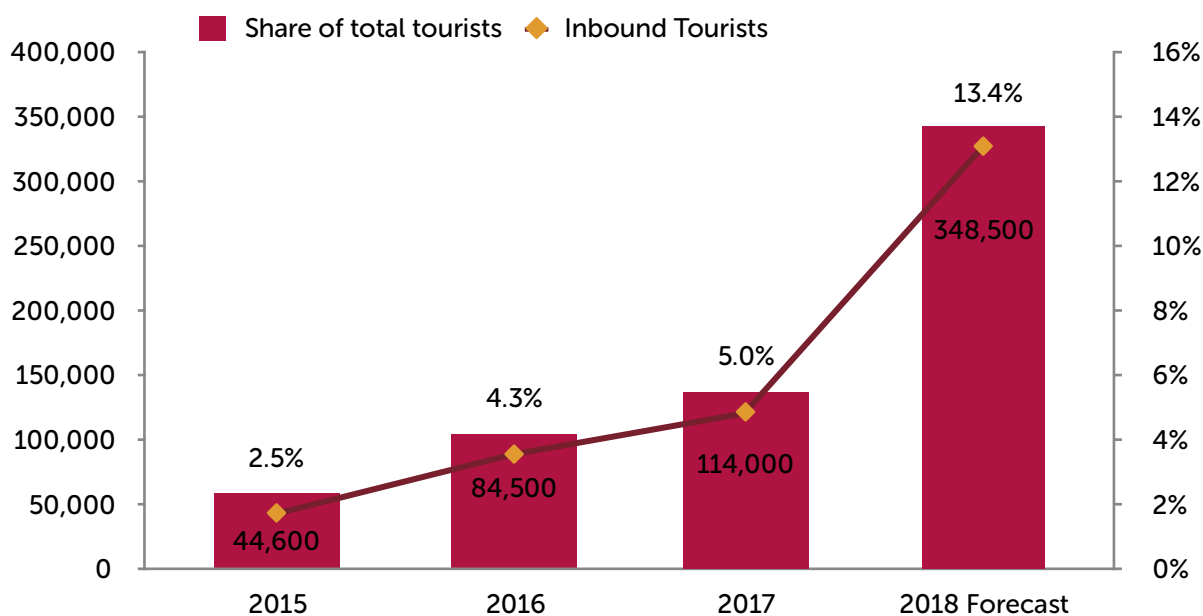
The share of total inbound tourists aware of Valletta 2018 event prior to visiting Malta increased on a year-on-year basis during the period 2015 to 2018. The year 2018 registered the highest increase over the previous year where the share of tourists aware of the event prior to visiting Malta increased from 38.5% in 2017 to 60.0% in 2018 (+21.5% pts).

During the period 2015 to 2017, the largest share of tourists learnt about Valletta 2018 during their stay. Alternatively, during the year of the event, the share of tourist getting to know about the event during

their stay declined to 35.0% reflecting the significant increase in tourists' awareness prior to their arrival in Malta.

It is worth noting that the share of tourists remaining unaware of Valletta 2018 even after having experienced the destination, declined radically from 31.3% in 2015 to 5.0% in 2018.

Chart 1: Valletta 2018 as a Main Motivation for Tourists to Visit Malta



Source: MTA Estimate based on MTA Heritage Locality Survey

Research findings show year-on-year growth in the share of inbound tourists motivated to visit Malta by Valletta 2018, where, as expected, the peak was reached in 2018, with a share of 13.4% accounting for around 348,500 tourists.

Table 4: Estimate Impact of Valletta 2018 on Inbound Tourists, Guest Nights and Tourist Expenditure – Jan to Dec 2015-2018

	2015	2016	2017	2018 Forecast
Inbound Tourists	44,600	84,500	114,000	348,500
Tourist Guest nights	325,600	574,600	741,000	2,265,000
Tourist Expenditure (€'000s)	53,100	95,500	126,000	376,000
Tourist Expenditure per Capita (€)	1,190	1,130	1,104	1,080
Average Length of Stay (nights)	7.3	6.8	6.5	6.5

Source: MTA Estimate

During the period 2015 to 2018, the number of tourists directly generated by Valletta 2018, together with the resulting guest nights and expenditure show year-on-year increases, with the greatest impact achieved in 2018 with over 2.2 million guest nights accounting for €376 million worth of expenditure. In 2018, the tourist expenditure attributed to Valletta 2018 event is expected to account for around 18% of total tourist expenditure.

Culture as a Main Tourist Motivation

On a more generic level, in 2016 and 2017, the share of tourists choosing Malta for culture remained relatively constant. This applies to both tourists who were 'greatly motivated' by culture during the decision-making stage and also to those where culture was a main motivation together with other pull factors such as sun and leisure. Alternatively, in 2018, the share of tourists 'primarily' motivated by culture (10.5%) recorded an increase when compared to the previous two years.

Table 5: Share of Tourists Choosing Malta for Culture - Jan to Dec 2016-2018

Share of Total Tourists	2016	2017	2018 Forecast	% change pts 2018/2017
Greatly Motivated	9.0%	9.0%	10.5%	+1.5% pts.
Motivated in Part	54.8%	54.4%	54.6%	+0.2% pts.

Source: MTA Traveller Survey

Table 6: Number of Tourists Choosing Malta for Culture - Jan to Dec 2016-2018

Estimate number of Tourists	2016	2017	2018 Forecast	% change pts 2018/2017
Greatly Motivated	177,000	204,500	273,000	+33.5%
Motivated in Part	1,077,300	1,236,700	1,420,000	+14.8%

Source: MTA Traveller Survey

The number of tourists 'greatly motivated by culture' and 'motivated in part' increased significantly during the period 2016 to 2018.

Tourism in Valletta

During the period 2015 to 2018, the share of tourists visiting Valletta has remained relatively constant. In contrast, the share of travellers opting to stay in accommodation establishment in the Valletta area¹ registered increases in 2017 and 2018. This trend is in line with the increase in the availability of small scale accommodation establishments located in the capital city over recent years. Findings for the year 2018 show that the share of tourists booking accommodation on the Airbnb platform is higher for those staying in the capital city (8.4%) compared to the overall average for Malta of 4.8%. Self-catering apartments, followed by lower category accommodation establishments (3*, guest houses/hostels, 2*) are predominantly used by tourists staying in the city.

Table 7: Share of Tourist Visits and Stays in Valletta – Jan to Dec 2015-2018

Share of Total Tourists	2015	2016	2017	2018 Forecast
Tourists Visiting Valletta	90.4%	88.9%	89.5%	91.3%
Tourists Staying in Valletta Area ¹	7.7%	7.3%	9.2%	10.0%

Source: MTA Traveller Survey

Table 8: Number of Tourist Visits and Stays in Valletta – Jan to Dec 2015-2018

Estimate Number of Tourists	2015	2016	2017	2018 Forecast	% change pts 2018/2017
Tourists Visiting Valletta	1,612,100	1,747,700	2,035,000	2,373,800	+16.6%
Tourists Staying in Valletta Area ¹	137,300	143,500	209,200	260,000	+24.3%

Source: MTA Traveller Survey

During the period 2015 to 2018, both the number of tourists visiting Valletta and those staying in the Valletta area¹ increased significantly over the past three years. The latter group reflect the increase in the supply of registered tourist beds (including hotels and similar establishments and self-catering accommodation) in the Valletta area¹ from 1,662 in 2015 to 2,266 in 2018.

Table 9: Share of Tourists Motivated by Culture in Choice of Destination: Staying in Valletta vs Staying in Other Parts of Malta – Jan to Dec 2016-2018

	Tourists staying in Valletta			Tourists staying in other parts of Malta		
	2016	2017	2018 Forecast	2016	2017	2018 Forecast
Greatly Motivated	20.7%	16.5%	20.0%	8.1%	8.3%	9.1%
Motivated in Part	59.9%	59.1%	58.6%	55.0%	54.8%	55.0%

Source: MTA Traveller Survey

Research findings over the past three years indicate that the share of tourists 'greatly motivated' by Malta's cultural offer during the choice of destination is higher for those who stay in accommodation establishments within the confines of the Valletta area.¹

Table 10: Tourists Visiting Valletta – Top 5 Sites and Attractions Visited

2015	2016	2017	2018
Upper Barrakka Gardens	Upper Barrakka Gardens	Upper Barrakka Gardens	Upper Barrakka Gardens
St John's Co-Cathedral	St John's Co-Cathedral	St John's Co-Cathedral	St John's Co-Cathedral
Lower Barrakka Gardens	Lower Barrakka Gardens	Lower Barrakka Gardens	Lower Barrakka Gardens
Saluting Battery	Saluting Battery	Saluting Battery	Saluting Battery
Hastings Gardens	National War Museum	Hastings Gardens	Hastings Gardens

Source: MTA Heritage Locality Survey

Upper Barrakka Gardens and St John's Co-Cathedral & Museum feature as the top sites visited by tourists in Valletta throughout the period 2015 to 2018. It is interesting to note that the gardens in Valletta feature in the top five sites/attractions visited by tourists whilst in Valletta.

¹ Valletta area refers to Valletta and Floriana

Table 11: Tourist Impressions of Valletta – Jan to Dec – Tourists’ Top 5 Likes

2015	2016	2017	2018
Culture	Culture	Culture	Culture
Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture
Views	Ambiance	Ambiance	Ambiance
Gardens	Views	Views	Views
Ambiance	Hospitality	Churches	Hospitality

Source: MTA Heritage Locality Survey

The top three aspects of the city appreciated mostly by tourists include the cultural offer, the architecture and ambience. On the other hand, lack of cleanliness, overdevelopment and traffic spoil the experience of tourists in the city. Furthermore, tourists are also not satisfied with the services offered by public transport and site/attraction providers.

Table 12: Tourist Impressions of Valletta – Jan to Dec – Tourists’ Top 5 Dislikes

2015	2016	2017	2018
Public transport	Lack of cleanliness	Overdevelopment	Lack of cleanliness
Overdevelopment	Public transport	Service offer in sites & attractions	Overdevelopment
Lack of cleanliness	Service offer in sites and attractions	Lack of cleanliness	Vehicles & Traffic
Service offer in sites & attractions	Vehicles & Traffic	Vehicles & Traffic	Public Transport
Vehicles & Traffic	Overdevelopment	Public transport	Service offer in sites & attractions

Table 13: Overall Enjoyment of Visit

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Very good	51.5%	48.8%	49.1%	52.8%
Good	42.2%	46.8%	44.2%	40.3%
Average	5.5%	3.8%	6.4%	5.9%
Poor	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%
Very poor	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%

Source: MTA Heritage Locality Survey

During the period 2015 to 2018, the large majority of tourists enjoyed their visit in Valletta, with around half of the visitors giving a rating of ‘very good’.

Table 14: Likelihood to Recommend Valletta to Friends/Relatives

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Very likely	61.5%	58.7%	58.2%	60.2%
Likely	27.0%	30.3%	30.0%	32.1%
Possibly	9.4%	9.2%	11.1%	5.6%
Unlikely	1.6%	1.4%	0.7%	1.2%
Very unlikely	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.9%

Source: MTA Heritage Locality Survey

The likelihood of recommending the capital city to friends and relatives is high amongst visitors. In fact, during the period 2015 to 2018, around 3 out of every 5 Valletta visitors stated that it is 'very likely' that they would recommend it to friends and relatives.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, research findings show that Valletta 2018 has had a significant impact on the tourism sector both at a direct and indirect level. As expected, the impact on the number of tourists and the resulting guest nights and expenditure peaked in 2018, registering remarkable growth rates. However, the build-up towards this prestigious event is clearly reflected by the volumes and wealth generated in the preceding years. In this respect, research evidence shows that the marketing initiatives undertaken by the Malta Tourism Authority and Valletta 2018 in particular have been successful in raising Malta's cultural image overseas during these past four years. Furthermore, the benefits of raising Malta's cultural identity overseas are expected to extend to the coming years.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The data in this report shows the significant impact of Valletta 2018 on Malta's tourism sector, not only throughout 2018 itself, but also in the run-up to the ECoC year. Incoming tourist figures grew consistently over the years, with visitors displaying an ever-growing interest in Valletta 2018 and related activities as the year approach. This increased significantly throughout 2018, as expected. The impact of Valletta 2018 on the three main tourism performance indicators (inbound tourists, guest nights and expenditure) has been remarkable over the past three years with all indicators recording double digit growth rates.

Other indicators, such as the portion of tourists who choose to visit Valletta when in Malta and who list culture as a main factor behind their decision to travel to Malta have remained consistently high throughout the period under review.

These increases are to be taken within the context of the growing Maltese economy, one of the cornerstones of which is the tourism industry. Changes to the economic and urban landscape of the country also shape these statistics, as reflected in the ever-increasing share of visitors who choose to reside in Valletta throughout the stay - likely to be a reflection of the changing landscape of the city, which has come to offer more tourist accommodation over the past years.





THEME 05

THE VALLETTA BRAND

Audiences' Experiences Of The Valletta 2018 Brand

Dr Emanuel Said

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Media Analytics

Maria Mizzi, Valletta 2018 Foundation

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Concluding Remarks

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INTRODUCTION

Branding and communication forms a crucial aspect of any European Capital of Culture, to the extent that in many cases the brand of the respective ECoC becomes synonymous with the sweeping social, cultural and infrastructural changes which the city has undergone. As in any organisational setting, having a clear brand identity allows an organisation to strategise and communicate its goals and engage with diverse communities in a more efficient and cohesive manner not only during the ECoC year itself, but also in the aftermath of the title.

This theme focuses on this issue, analysing the extent to which the Valletta 2018 Foundation has succeeded in communicating its brand, and the degree of engagement with the Valletta 2018 communications strategy. The research study within this theme, conducted by Dr Emanuel Said, tracks user engagement with the Valletta 2018 brand through a process of real-time experience tracking, whereby participants are monitored periodically for their engagement with Valletta 2018 and its various activities throughout the year.

This study is accompanied by an extensive analysis of the online and print visibility of Valletta 2018 and related activities. This study, carried out internally by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, examines the degree to which Valletta 2018 was present on various online and social media channels, as well as local print media.

AUDIENCES' EXPERIENCES OF THE VALLETTA 2018 BRAND

Dr Emanuel Said

INTRODUCTION

The project studies how audiences engage with the different forms of communication that the Valletta 2018 communications programme transmitted throughout the run-up to and during the manifestation of the European Capital of Culture programme. Longitudinal in nature, this study adopted an innovative data gathering approach involving real-time experience tracking, seeking to determine the effects each type of communications transmitted by Valletta 2018 purport on the different audiences as reflected in individuals' attitudes and behaviour.

This study builds on the quantitative initiatives the Evaluation and Monitoring committee undertook in the form of periodic CATI Valletta Participation Survey, and investigates how audiences engaged with the Valletta 2018 brand by:

- exploring the touchpoints¹ that feature in individuals' engagement with the Valletta 2018 brand;
- determining the sequences of encounters that individuals experience in their engagement with the Valletta 2018 brand; and
- assessing the effects that such encounters produce on individuals experiencing the Valletta 2018 brand.

KEY OUTCOMES AND FIGURES

- Longitudinal study employing a novel app enabled data collection method (real-time experience tracking).
- Mixed methods study studying sensory, affective and intellectual brand experience, perceived value of encounters and types of personality across variety of events and types of encounters.
- 920 participants.
- 1,317 encounters with Valletta 2018 touchpoints captured by real-time experience tracking app.
- Identified 3 key types of personalities that characterise the sample of participants in accordance with international established methods.
- Shift in types of encounters from before to during the full implementation of Valletta 2018 ECoC programme – from a prevalence of indirect encounters like internet browsing or TV watching before the implementation of the ECoC programme, to TV watching and direct participation in events during Valletta 2018 ECoC.
- Brand experience shifted across the three years of study. While interest and intellectual engagement in Valletta 2018 ECoC increased over the two key phases of research (before vs during ECoC),

¹ A touchpoint is an episode where an individual (part of an audience) has a direct or indirect contact with a (cultural) brand (after Baxendale et al., 2015).

sensory and affective engagement declined, potentially as a result of saturation of awareness following maximised communications implemented by Valletta 2018 Foundation to market ECoC events. Shifts were most prominent among participants with resilient personalities.

- Most frequently reported events included 'Pageant of the Seas', 'Valletta Film Festival' and 'Malta Fashion Week and Awards'. 'Strada Stretta (Events)', 'Malta International Arts Festival' and the 'Malta Robotics Olympiad' ranked as the most perceived important events, whereas 'il-Festa l-Kbira', 'Valletta Green Festival' and 'Star of Strait Street' ranked as the more satisfying events.
- Overall, perceived importance, satisfaction and effect improved as the Valletta 2018 ECoC unfolded between 2016 and 2018. Encounters perceived as most important and satisfying were those that involved direct participation in events. Participants quoted the Valletta 2018 app as the second most satisfying type of encounter during 2018 – replacing face-to-face chatting with friends (that was the second most satisfying type of encounter prior to 2018).
- From a qualitative perspective, 19 different themes dominated the participants' reflections on their experiences and encounters with Valletta 2018 ECoC touchpoints. Themes like "anticipation", "standard of experience" and "access" were most common in participants' discourse throughout the study. However, the study revealed shifts in these themes as the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme unfolded. Themes like "word-of-mouth", "access" and "fun" became less relatively positive whereas themes like "out of the ordinary/unique", "relevance to one's own interests" and "anticipation" became more relatively positive during the administration of ECoC events during 2018. Undercontrolled personalities tended to be more critical during the administration of ECoC events in 2018 (than during 2016 and 2017), whereas resilient and overcontrolled participants tended to be more positive during the administration of such events in 2018 (when compared to 2016 and 2017).
- In participants' reflections, themes like "anticipation", "standard of experience" and "access" were relatively more common in encounters involving internet browsing and TV watching, whereas themes like "standard of experience", "uniqueness" and "loyalty or repeated participation or engagement" were relatively more common in encounters involving participation in events.
- Participants' reflections also suggest that themes like "social", "loyalty or repeated participation or engagement" and "access" are linked with higher relative levels of perceived value, whereas themes like "word-of-mouth" are linked with the least relative levels of perceived value.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Longitudinal in nature, this project investigates how audiences engage with cultural brands by taking a processual, longitudinal view employing real-time experience tracking (RET) and other qualitative (focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews) data collection approaches. The use of RET is an innovative aspect in studying cultural brands, moving away from the exclusive focus on influences that impact audience engagement (as in past studies) to the actual process of engagement and value co-creation along multiple touchpoints that constitute the Valletta 2018 brand.

Results emerging from RET approaches suggest that individuals co-create distinct levels of value when engaging with direct vs indirect encounters. Further insight emerges when these results are evaluated from a qualitative perspective through the analysis of interviews and focus-group discussions, suggesting nineteen themes where value is co-created. Of these, three themes dominated the participants' discourse: "anticipation", "standard of experience" and "access". These themes were relatively more common when participants encountered the Valletta 2018 brand during internet browsing and watching TV, along with themes like "relevance to own interest" (in case of internet browsing) and "national pride" (in case of TV encounters). By contrast, during their direct participation in Valletta 2018 events, themes like "standard of experience", "uniqueness" and "loyalty or repeated participation or engagement" dominated participants' discourse. An analysis of the perceived value across these value themes also suggests that the highest levels of perceived value featured in the same interactions where participants' discourse featured themes like "social", "loyalty, repeated participation or engagement" and "access". Contrastingly, relatively lower levels of perceived value featured in interactions where participants' discourse included themes like "word-of-mouth".

METHODOLOGY

This study looks at the *process* of engagement rather than at the influences or outcomes of audience engagement with cultural events within the Valletta 2018 programme. It is this process that lies at the basis of audience (behavioural) segmentation that can help producers or creators plan in a better manner those initiatives that target specific audience segments more effectively in future initiatives both locally and overseas. As an ultimate objective, this study is intended to evaluate the outcomes of the Valletta 2018 communications strategy.

This study focuses on the individuals' experiences (of the cultural brand) as the unit of analysis, with analysis levelled to the individuals (as audience members) and their experiences, differing from earlier cultural participation research projects that focus on either the producers/creators' views or the participants' post-hoc perceptions about experienced events.

Individuals experience and engage with the Valletta 2018 brand in two key ways: by experiencing communications transmitted directly by the Valletta 2018 Foundation or by engaging/experiencing indirect communications like word of mouth and social media exchanges. Audiences (and stakeholders) experience a holistic engagement with a cultural brand across multiple points of contact (Grewal, Levy, & Kumar, 2009), touchpoints (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007) or discrete encounters (Meyer & Schwager, 2007) as audiences (and stakeholders) progress in their journey with the brand (Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008).

This study recognises brands (particularly cultural ones) as dynamic, continuous social processes (Muñiz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). Individuals (audiences), production actors (performers, producers, creators) as well as other stakeholders constitute a network of resources (rather than dyadic relationships²) who co-create brand value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Brand value emerges from stakeholders' experiences³ with the

² After Ballantyne and Aitken (2007); Ind and Bjerke (2007); Jones (2005); McAlexander et al. (2002) and Muñiz Jr. and Schau (2005)

³ Or the subjective response to the holistic direct and indirect encounter with the brand after Lemke et al. (2011).

brand and because of sustained negotiations and symbolic interpretations of brand-related information. Brand value also emerges from personal narratives based on personal or impersonal experiences with brands (Muñiz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). Brand value is located in the minds of audiences and stakeholders (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007) who form brand *communities* – or specialised non-geographically bound *communities* – based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand (Muñiz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001).

Audiences' engagement with cultural brands exhibits community-like qualities as understood in sociology, and addresses identity-, meaning- and status-related concerns for all network participants above. There are 12 value-creating practices in brand communities, organised in four thematic categories (after Schau et al., 2009). Of these, *community engagement*, *impression management* and *social networking* are most relevant to cultural brands.

Brand resonance involves relationships that are described in four dimensions (Keller, 2001). On top of loyalty and attachment, *community and engagement* dimensions are most relevant to cultural brands as is Valletta 2018. The *community* dimension relates to that broader meaning to audiences who identify themselves with a brand community and sense affiliation (if not kinship) with other individuals associated with the brand (such as fellow audience members experiencing the brand, performers, producers and creators among others). Active *engagement*, by contrast, is where audiences assert loyalty to a brand. Within this dimension, audiences invest time, energy, money and other resources into the cultural brand beyond those explained during the purchase or consumption of cultural events (after Keller, 2001).

This rationale suggests five important considerations that the methodology employed entertains. First, rather than considering the Valletta 2018 as a static property, this study looks at the process through which audiences engage with the Valletta 2018 brand. Second, this process involves a network of actors (audiences, performers, producers and creators) using operant and operand resources⁴. Third, audiences engaged in this process experience multiple touchpoints. Fourth, a variety of individuals are involved in audience and performer/provider spheres. Fifth, individuals experience cultural brands in a collective consumption context, highlighting the multitude of touchpoints that audiences encounter in their participation in cultural events and associated co-creation of value (after Kelleher et al., 2015).

In response to these five considerations, the study's methodology acknowledges that audiences engage with the Valletta 2018 brand through a multitude of encounters that range from direct instances (like advertising or actual participation in an event) to other indirect experiences (like word of mouth or third-party contributions on social media). These encounters impact individuals' attitudes towards the Valletta 2018 brand.

Traditional survey methods can capture and measure such impacts but rely on individuals' memories of encounters with the Valletta 2018 brand after that such events occur. Memories fade rapidly and are often biased by whether or not participation actually happened (Bryman, 2012; Malhotra & Birks, 2007; McGivern, 2013). A richer account of the total effect of the different encounters an individual makes with a brand can be constructed through ethnographic approaches that require observers participating in the experiences with observed individuals. Ethnographic methods are limited as individual observers

⁴ Audiences use knowledge and skills (operant resources) to engage with cultural brands and transform physical or experience (operand resources) into meaning, experiential benefits and value.

can only shadow a limited number of individuals for a restricted period of time (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; van Maanen, 2011). Moreover, individuals' behaviours tend to change as a result of the individuals' own social desirability – or the unconscious desire to “please” the observer (Adler & Adler, 1987; Bryman, 2012; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Patton, 1980; Paulhus, 1991).

An alternative approach involves engaging research participants to interact with the researcher using the participants' own mobile phone. Data is collected in real time (hence the term “real-time experience tracking” or RET) (Baxendale, Macdonald, & Wilson, 2015; Macdonald, Wilson, & Konus, 2012) and mitigates the challenges of traditional ethnography in two ways. First, whereas a researcher/observer cannot easily track audiences for 24 hours daily, participants' mobile phones can. Second, unlike human observers, participants' mobile phones do not influence participants' perceptions of encounters and experiences.

A process view to audiences' brand engagement is drawn from four essential steps, where research participants:

1. fill out an online questionnaire about their personality as well as their sensory, affective and intellectual dimensions of the Valletta 2018 brand experience;
2. answer a short questionnaire whenever they encounter Valletta 2018 by way of noting Valletta 2018 communications or participating in events or experiencing the brand in other direct or indirect ways;
3. fill in an online diary in which they corroborate/reflect on their encounters with Valletta 2018; and
4. complete an online questionnaire (modified version of (1) above) to assess any change in attitudes and views about their Valletta 2018 experience.

Established RET methods rely on two types of data collection channels: text (SMS) messaging and online (involving pre-RET and post-RET surveys as well as an online diary) (Macdonald et al., 2012). In these studies, participant contributions through an online diary are not obligatory and result in poorly capturing participants' reflections about their experience with brands. The method employed for researching the Valletta 2018 brand moves from utilising traditional mobile phones to using participants' smartphones that are in widespread use among Maltese (and foreign) consumers⁵. The use of smartphones enables observers to use a purposively developed app that captures the relevant data in steps (2) and (3) above in one stage.

Table 1: Fieldwork and data collected in this study

Period	Data collection method	Participants	Data collected
May – July 2016	RET	62 participants	367 encounter responses
	Focus group discussions	30 participants	5 focus group discussions, recordings and transcripts
	Face-to-face in-depth interviews	5 participants (all performing artists or producers)	5 interview recordings and associated transcripts
July – August 2017 and October – November 2017	RET	36 participants (18 for each wave of data collection)	121 encounter responses
May – July 2018	RET	787 participants	829 encounter responses

⁵ In 2014, 42% of mobile phone users made use of a smartphone – up from 37% in 2013. A prevailing majority of smartphone users are younger than 34 years, with proportions of smartphone users (over total mobile phone users) declining with ages older than 35. These proportions are expected to increase drastically during 2015 and 2016. Source: Malta Communications Authority, 2014.

This study involved the design, production and piloting of the new RET app. Just Some Coding Ltd were sub-contracted late in October 2015 to develop the app that was subsequently piloted in February 2016. Following observations emerging from the use of the app during the piloting stage, a new, improved app was launched for larger scale field efforts. Data collection waves were administered in May 2016, July through August 2017, October through November 2017 as well as a final wave between May and July 2018. Overall, the RET app captured 1,317 responses from 885 participants. A summary of all field efforts is set out in Table 1. Further face-to-face and focus group discussions were conducted during 2016.

From a methodological perspective, there are four key limitations that impact the study's validity and reliability. First, participants may have reported experiences well after the encounter happening, if at all – and is a common aspect manifest in indirect methods of data collection (such as self-completion surveys). The capture of GIS data remains a valid opportunity and can be captured only if research participants consent, albeit associated with ethical and GDPR reservations.

Second, as with survey methods, researchers' questions (as an intervention) may influence participants' attitudes towards a brand. Third, there is a possibility that specific types of encounters remain only sparsely represented, as reported in earlier studies even when large numbers of participants are engaged in RET studies. This study tried to mitigate this challenge by administering more than one wave of participation (for each participant) following the suggestions of Baxendale et al., (2015) and Macdonald et al. (2012). Asking participants to keep engaged with RET for longer periods than one week was ineffective and is consistent with earlier experience (as well as published studies) where high participant dropout rates in longitudinal investigations are reported (McGivern, 2013).

Fourth, RET participants may fail to report all encounters with the Valletta 2018 brand for various reasons. This study aimed to alleviate the effect of these challenges by administering incentives that help individuals remain committed to their participation in the study. Incentives involved free (or sponsored) access to various events within the Valletta 2018 programme of events, but could not effectively alleviate challenges emerging from diminishing participant engagement with RET.

FINDINGS

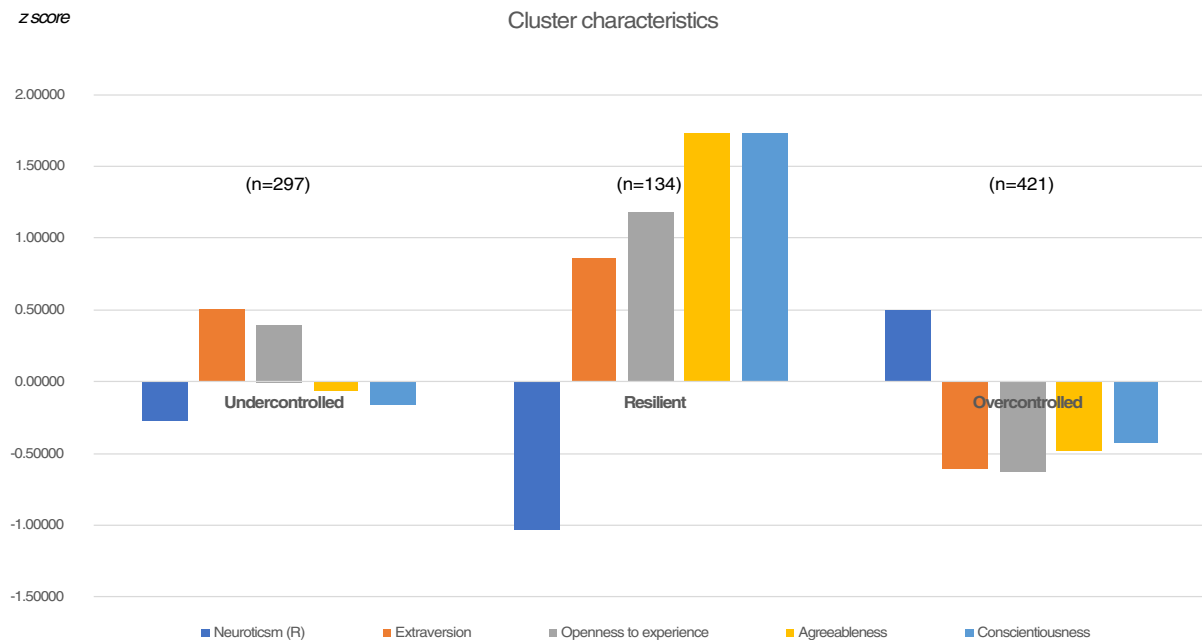
Sample description

Over the three years' administration of RET data collection, we collected the views of a total of 885 participants. A total of 472 participants were female, 354 had completed up to secondary schooling (while a further 190 had completed a university degree), and 417 participants were married (while a further 335 were single). 278 participants lived in the Northern Harbour region, while a further 155 lived in the Western region. Overall, the participants' average age stood at 43 years (median age 42 years), featuring a relatively normal distribution of ages that ranged from 15 years old up to 88 years old.

A total of 852 participants could be categorised in three personality types: *overcontrolled* (n = 421), *undercontrolled* (n=297) and *resilient* (n=134) (after Asendorpf, Borkenau, Ostendorf, & Van Aken, 2001; Rammstedt, Riemann, Angleitner, & Borkenau, 2004). The remaining participants could not be categorised because their responses (relating to the Big Five personality items) lied well outside the z = ± 3 range.

A resilient personality is one where the individual manifests the least neuroticism among all other personality types but has an above average manifestation of all other four personality dimensions. By contrast, the overcontrolled personality is one where the individual manifests the highest levels of neuroticism (compared to peer participants) but the least levels of manifestation of the other four personality dimensions. The undercontrolled personality manifests around average levels of neuroticism, openness to experience and agreeableness (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Cluster membership (Source: Author)



An analysis of the clusters revealed no significant differences in region or gender. However, clusters featured distinctive characteristics in terms of the marital status of composing members or their level of education. Whereas overcontrolled cluster members seemed to be prevalingly composed of members living with partners or divorced, the resilient cluster members tended to be either married or single (see Table 2). In addition, resilient cluster members featured an average age of 38.3 years (median = 39), whereas overcontrolled and undercontrolled cluster members featured an older average age of 44.8 and 41.0 years respectively (median ages standing at 44 and 40 years respectively).

Table 2: Composition of clusters (by member region of residence, gender, education achieved and marital status)

		Cluster Number of Case			Cluster Number of Case			Pearson Chi-Square Tests		
		Undercontrolled	Resilient	Overcontrolled	Undercontrolled	Resilient	Overcontrolled	Chi-square	df	Sig.
		Count	Count	Count	Row%	Row%	Row%			
Gender	Male	132	61	206	33.1%	15.3%	51.6%	1.517	2	0.468
	Female	165	73	215	36.4%	16.1%	47.5%			
Education	Did not finish any school	1	1	5	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	63.671	12	0.000
	Primary schooling	17	2	24	39.5%	4.7%	55.8%			
	Secondary schooling	124	34	172	37.6%	10.3%	52.1%			
	Trade college	80	22	89	41.9%	11.5%	46.6%			
	University degree	49	44	93	26.3%	23.7%	50.0%			
	Post-graduate degree	19	29	24	26.4%	40.3%	33.3%			
	Other	7	2	14	30.4%	8.7%	60.9%			
Marital Status	Single	126	58	140	38.9%	17.9%	43.2%	20.032	8	0.010
	Living Together	10	6	33	20.4%	12.2%	67.3%			
	Married	143	55	197	36.2%	13.9%	49.9%			
	Divorced	10	9	25	22.7%	20.5%	56.8%			
	Other	8	6	26	20.0%	15.0%	65.0%			
Region	Southern Harbour	56	18	66	40.0%	12.9%	47.1%	13.317	10	0.206
	Northern Harbour	88	52	128	32.8%	19.4%	47.8%			
	South Eastern	51	14	66	38.9%	10.7%	50.4%			
	Western	50	17	83	33.3%	11.3%	55.3%			
	Northern	41	26	59	32.5%	20.6%	46.8%			
	Gozo & Comino	11	7	19	29.7%	18.9%	51.4%			

Brand experience

As for brand experience (after Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009), this study finds that participants express no discernible change in their impressions of their Valletta 2018 experience (from the start to the end of the RET data collection in all waves). All paired t-test comparisons suggest no significant difference in sensory, affective and intellectual dimensions in responses at the start and at the end of the fieldwork participation). However, when comparing results across waves, this study finds marked differences in participants' impressions across those waves of data collection happening before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (see Table 3). Indeed, participants had a relatively reduced response about Valletta 2018's impression on their senses, reduced appeal to participants' senses, reduced strength of emotions, increased thinking about Valletta 2018 and reduced curiosity. A key interpretation of these observations relates to saturation of awareness about the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme events as 2018 saw a maximised communications campaign that is a stark contrast when compared with earlier communications efforts in 2016 and 2017. This saturation of awareness led primarily to increased intellectual engagement among study participants with events within the Valletta 2018 brand overall as well as eased sensory/affective perceptions about their experiences as Valletta 2018 became a more familiar phenomenon.

Table 3: Net change in participants' impression of their Valletta 2018 experience before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Valletta 2018 Experience		Phase of project	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
								F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	
Sensory / Affective	Valletta 2018 makes a strong impression on my senses	Before	97	6.39	2.365	.240	a	9.503	.002	2.109	882	.035	.632	
		During	787	5.76	2.831	.101	b			2.426	132.388	.017	.632	
	I find Valletta 2018 interesting in a sensory way	Before	97	6.54	2.011	.204	a	18.628	.000	-1.080	882	.280	-.309	
		During	787	6.84	2.726	.097	b			-1.366	143.526	.174	-.309	
	Valletta 2018 does not appeal to my senses	Before	97	3.10	2.514	.255	a	3.975	.046	-3.467	882	.001	-1.043	
		During	787	4.15	2.828	.101	b			-3.800	127.888	.000	-1.043	
	Valletta 2018 induces feelings and sentiments	Before	97	6.06	2.309	.234	a	17.101	.000	.794	882	.427	.245	
		During	787	5.82	2.924	.104	b			.954	137.073	.342	.245	
	I do not have strong emotions for Valletta 2018	Before	97	3.69	2.591	.263	a	4.339	.038	-2.918	882	.004	-.932	
		During	787	4.62	3.011	.107	b			-3.279	130.158	.001	-.932	
	Intellectual	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter Valletta 2018	Before	97	5.40	2.206	.224	a	19.247	.000	-.593	882	.554	-.184
			During	787	5.59	2.953	.105	b			-.742	142.217	.459	-.184
Valletta 2018 does not make me think		Before	97	3.56	2.504	.254	a	6.395	.012	-3.359	882	.001	-1.082	
		During	787	4.64	3.049	.109	b			-3.915	133.738	.000	-1.082	
Valletta 2018 stimulates my curiosity		Before	97	7.32	2.211	.224	a	20.411	.000	3.989	882	.000	1.220	
		During	787	6.10	2.911	.104	b			4.936	140.638	.000	1.220	

a equal variances assumed

b equal variances not assumed

A further look into these perceptions suggests that while there were no significant differences across the waves among participants within the undercontrolled personality cluster, there was a significant increase in perceived sensory engagement ("I find Valletta 2018 interesting in a sensory way") among participants within the overcontrolled personality cluster. The larger shifts in perceptions towards experiences of Valletta 2018 featured among participants with a resilient personality where a marked decline in sensory/affective perceptions as well as a marked increase in intellectual perceptions were observed.

Encounters and events

Across all waves of research, most reported encounters related to Pageant of the Seas (312 encounters in 2018 and 93 encounters in 2016), Valletta Film Festival (a total of 127 encounters across all waves) and Malta Fashion Week and Awards (114 encounters across all waves) (see Table 4).

Unlike earlier waves in this study, encounters in 2018 most often involved television viewership (31.8% of encounters from 12.9% in earlier waves) followed by participation in events (19.7% of encounters, up from 9.6% in earlier waves). Internet browsing encounters were the third most common type of encounter in 2018 (19.4% of encounters, down from 29.5% in earlier waves) (see Table 5). These differences are significant at up to 95% confidence interval.

Table 4: Events encountered by participants in 2018 wave (Source: Author)

Event	RET Responses (Frequencies)		
	2016	2017	2018
Pageant of the Seas	93		312
Valletta Film Festival	57	18	52
Malta Fashion Week	23		91
Valletta Green Festival	28		55
Earth Garden Festival 2018			80
Rockastra 2018			71
Il-Festa l-Kbira			45
Ghanafest	36	5	
Malta World Music Festival			37
Malta International Arts Festival	25	8	
Malta Jazz Festival	19	13	
Strada Stretta (Events)	22		
L-Ghanja tal-Poplu - Festival	13	7	
Notte Bianca		19	
Science in the City		16	
Star of Strait Street			16
Subjective Maps Malta			13
Design & Technology Expo@ The Malta Robotics Olympiad			10
Forza Malta... Short Films		7	
Other	51	28	47

This study measured the perceived value of the events by asking participants to rate how important and how satisfying the encounter was for them (in all three waves of data collection). A further question was introduced in the 2017 field waves asking participants to express how they felt about their encounter (whether better or worse). Ratings were measured on a five-point scale⁶. Table 6 sets out a summary of these responses obtained in 2018.

Observations suggest that the event that ranked highest in terms of perceived importance (value) across all waves of research was Strada Stretta (Events) (mean = 3.32) followed by the Malta International Arts Festival and The Malta Robotics Olympiad (both with a mean = 3.21 and 3.20 respectively). As for more satisfying experiences, participants rated Il-Festa l-Kbira (mean = 4.13) followed by Valletta Green Festival and Star of Strait Street (mean = 4.08 and 4.06 respectively). On the effect felt, participants rated The Malta Robotics Olympiad as that event with the largest effect (mean = 4.00) followed by il-Festa l-Kbira (mean = 3.98).

Table 5: Participants' experience of events before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

		Phase of project			
		Before		During	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
How did you experience the event?	Internet browsing	144	29.5%	161	19.4%
	Saw on TV	63	12.9%	264	31.8%
	Heard on radio	41	8.4%	17	2.1%
	Read on newspapers/magazines	31	6.4%	32	3.9%
	Posted on social media myself	39	8.0%	19	2.3%
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	51	10.5%	79	9.5%
	Overheard a conversation	18	3.7%	19	2.3%
	Participated in the event	47	9.6%	163	19.7%
	Other	53	10.9%	64	7.7%
	Used Valletta 2018 App	1	0.2%	11	1.3%

⁶ In the case of perceived importance, the scale meant 1 = "Not important at all" and 5 = "Very important indeed". In the case of perceived satisfaction, the scale meant 1 = "Highly dissatisfied" and 5 = "Very satisfied". In the case of resulting feeling, the scale meant 1 = "Really worse" and 5 = "Really better".

Table 6: Perceived value and satisfaction with encounters across different events between 2015 and 2018 (Source: Author)

Which event did you encounter?	How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pageant of the Seas	3.058	312	1.144	4.071	312	0.838	3.712	312	0.726
Malta Fashion Week & Awards	2.396	91	1.201	3.593	91	0.802	3.495	91	0.794
Earth Garden Festival 2018	2.500	80	1.212	3.763	80	0.830	3.350	80	0.797
Rockastra 2018	2.887	71	1.178	4.014	71	0.837	3.887	71	0.803
Valletta Green Festival	3.291	55	0.956	4.255	55	0.799	3.873	55	0.795
Valletta Film Festival	2.615	52	1.286	3.769	52	0.757	3.577	52	0.776
Il-Festa l-Kbira	3.200	45	1.455	4.133	45	0.757	3.978	45	0.812
Malta World Music Festival	2.865	37	1.251	4.027	37	0.928	3.919	37	0.829
Star of Strait Street	2.375	16	1.147	4.063	16	1.124	3.625	16	0.719
Subjective Maps Malta	2.231	13	1.301	3.308	13	0.751	3.615	13	0.961
Design & Technology Expo@ The Malta Robotics Olympiad	3.200	10	1.033	4.000	10	0.943	4.000	10	0.816
Rock the South 2018	3.000	6	0.894	4.000	6	0.894	4.000	6	0.894
Amalgama	3.000	6	0.000	3.333	6	0.516	3.500	6	0.548
Cantina	3.600	5	0.894	4.200	5	0.447	4.200	5	0.837
12th Mechanised Ground Fireworks Festival	3.000	5	1.000	5.000	5	0.000	3.800	5	0.837
2018 Accordion Festival	4.250	4	0.957	5.000	4	0.000	4.250	4	0.957
Solar Cinema	3.750	4	0.957	4.500	4	0.577	4.250	4	0.500
Map of the Mediterranean	2.750	4	0.957	4.750	4	0.500	3.500	4	0.577
Modern Music Days: Transition	2.667	3	0.577	4.667	3	0.577	4.000	3	0.000
The Island is what the sea surrounds	4.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
European Eyes on Japan	3.000	1		3.000	1		3.000	1	
Rulina	4.000	1		5.000	1		4.000	1	
Altofest Malta	4.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
A Tale of Two Cities: Broken Dreams	2.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
Apocalypse Trio - Vincenzo Deluci	4.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
Fragmenta: Malta Muses: Goddess, Madonna, Witch	3.000	1		3.000	1		4.000	1	
Modern Music Days: Tehilim	3.000	1		5.000	1		4.000	1	
Total	2.890	827	1.202	3.977	827	0.850	3.705	827	0.783

An analysis of the encounters by type across all three waves suggests some statistically significant shifts in satisfaction and perceived effect of encounters (but not in perceived importance). For instance, whereas participation in events remained as the most satisfying experience (both before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events), participants perceived the Valletta 2018 App as the second most satisfying encounter (albeit among a relatively small number of users) as observed during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme, while chatting with friends, face-to-face was the second most satisfying encounter before the start of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme. Participation in events also remained the most impacting encounter, both before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events). However, the next most impacting encounters during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events were TV encounters, contrasting with "posting in social media" encounters before the start of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme in earlier fieldwork.

As in earlier waves of research, direct encounters remain the most important, satisfying and impacting encounters reported by participants in 2018. However, significant shifts in satisfaction and perceived effect are evident when responses are compared across field waves before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (see Table 8). Indeed, reported satisfaction and perceived effect improved in general over all types of encounters from before to during the administration of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events.

Table 7: Perceived value, satisfaction and feeling with different types of encounters across all waves of data collection (Source: Author)

Phase of project		How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Before	Internet browsing	2.68	144	1.035	3.58	144	.714	3.60	35	.847
	Saw on TV	2.81	63	.998	3.59	63	.816	3.55	20	.686
	Heard on radio	2.85	41	.691	3.63	41	.623	3.36	14	.633
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.58	31	.923	3.55	31	.810	3.41	17	.795
	Posted on social media myself	2.90	39	.968	3.41	39	.993	3.80	5	1.304
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.02	51	1.086	3.90	51	.781	3.75	8	.463
	Overheard a conversation	2.56	18	.922	3.39	18	.502	3.50	6	.548
	Participated in the event	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	.996	3.82	11	.405
	Other	2.94	53	1.064	3.74	53	.944	3.75	4	.500
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00	1		3.00	1		3.00	1	
	Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	.825	3.57	121	.728
During	Internet browsing	2.68	161	1.092	3.69	161	.768	3.54	161	.671
	Saw on TV	2.94	264	1.191	4.08	264	.766	3.79	264	.764
	Heard on radio	2.47	17	1.281	3.65	17	.702	3.65	17	.862
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.44	32	1.190	3.75	32	.880	3.56	32	.948
	Posted on social media myself	2.37	19	1.257	3.32	19	.946	3.42	19	.902
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.61	79	1.203	3.72	79	.733	3.47	79	.676
	Overheard a conversation	2.95	19	1.026	3.89	19	1.049	3.32	19	.820
	Participated in the event	3.40	163	1.063	4.47	163	.678	3.98	163	.753
	Other	2.80	64	1.449	3.75	64	1.127	3.67	64	.927
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.55	11	1.128	4.18	11	.874	3.64	11	.674
	Total	2.89	829	1.201	3.98	829	.849	3.71	829	.782
Total	Internet browsing	2.68	305	1.064	3.64	305	.744	3.55	196	.703
	Saw on TV	2.91	327	1.156	3.98	327	.799	3.77	284	.760
	Heard on radio	2.74	58	.909	3.64	58	.641	3.52	31	.769
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.51	63	1.061	3.65	63	.845	3.51	49	.893
	Posted on social media myself	2.72	58	1.089	3.38	58	.970	3.50	24	.978
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.77	130	1.172	3.79	130	.754	3.49	87	.663
	Overheard a conversation	2.76	37	.983	3.65	37	.857	3.36	25	.757
	Participated in the event	3.38	210	1.084	4.38	210	.775	3.97	174	.736
	Other	2.86	117	1.286	3.74	117	1.043	3.68	68	.905
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.50	12	1.087	4.08	12	.900	3.58	12	.669
	Total	2.87	1317	1.139	3.86	1317	.853	3.69	950	.776

Table 8: Perceived value, satisfaction and feeling across types of encounters across all waves of data collection (Source: Author)

			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?			
			Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	
Phase of project	Before	Type of experience	Indirect	2.77	387	0.987	3.60	387	0.770	3.54	105	0.760
		Direct	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	0.996	3.82	11	0.405	
		Other	2.93	54	1.061	3.72	54	0.940	3.60	5	0.548	
		Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	0.825	3.57	121	0.728	
	During	Type of experience	Indirect	2.77	591	1.174	3.86	591	0.807	3.64	591	0.760
		Direct	3.40	163	1.063	4.47	163	0.678	3.98	163	0.753	
		Other	2.76	75	1.403	3.81	75	1.099	3.67	75	0.890	
		Total	2.89	829	1.201	3.98	829	0.849	3.71	829	0.782	
	Total	Type of experience	Indirect	2.77	978	1.104	3.76	978	0.802	3.62	696	0.760
		Direct	3.38	210	1.084	4.38	210	0.775	3.97	174	0.736	
		Other	2.83	129	1.269	3.78	129	1.033	3.66	80	0.871	
		Total	2.87	1317	1.139	3.86	1317	0.853	3.69	950	0.776	

An analysis of the encounters experienced across the different participant personality types suggests a relatively stronger incidence of online engagement among resilient personality types than the other types of personalities. By contrast, TV viewership dominates the encounters experienced by undercontrolled personality participants, whereas TV and direct participation are the key types of encounters experienced by overcontrolled participants (see Table 9). An analysis of these experiences and perceptions at the level of personality type (Table 10 above) across phases of data collection (both before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events) reveals that there are no significant differences in perceptions across the three types of personalities. Nor does this analysis reveal significant shifts in perceptions across the phases (before vs during Valletta 2018) except for the perceived importance and effect of indirect vs direct encounters among overcontrolled participants. Indeed, this analysis shows that such participants shifted to perceived direct encounters as more important and more impacting than indirect encounters in 2018 (whereas previously, these participants would perceive indirect encounters as more important and more impacting over direct encounters).

Table 9: Relative incidence of encounters by type across different personality types (Source: Author)

		Cluster membership			Cluster membership		
		Undercontrolled	Resilient	Overcontrolled	Undercontrolled	Resilient	Overcontrolled
		Count	Count	Count	Column %	Column %	Column %
How did you experience the event?	Internet browsing	51	169	82	17.1%	33.0%	17.4%
	Saw on TV	120	68	125	40.1%	13.3%	26.5%
	Heard on radio	10	34	13	3.3%	6.6%	2.8%
	Read on newspapers/magazines	17	22	19	5.7%	4.3%	4.0%
	Posted on social media myself	3	35	20	1.0%	6.8%	4.2%
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	19	67	43	6.4%	13.1%	9.1%
	Overheard a conversation	6	14	17	2.0%	2.7%	3.6%
	Participated in the event	52	44	105	17.4%	8.6%	22.2%
	Used Valletta 2018 App	1	5	6	0.3%	1.0%	1.3%
	Other	20	54	42	6.7%	10.5%	8.9%

Table 10: Perceived importance and satisfaction of direct and indirect experiences across the different personality types of participants, before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Undercontrolled	Before	Indirect	2.76	25	.779	3.56	25	.507	3.79	24	.415
		Direct	3.00	2	0.000	3.00	2	1.414	4.00	2	0.000
		Total	2.78	27	.751	3.52	27	.580	3.81	26	.402
	During	Indirect	2.59	201	1.146	3.86	201	.788	3.55	201	.706
		Direct	3.14	50	1.050	4.34	50	.772	3.82	50	.774
		Other	2.86	21	1.389	3.38	21	1.322	3.43	21	.978
		Total	2.71	272	1.165	3.91	272	.867	3.59	272	.749
	Total	Indirect	2.61	226	1.111	3.83	226	.767	3.57	225	.685
		Direct	3.13	52	1.030	4.29	52	.825	3.83	52	.760
		Other	2.86	21	1.389	3.38	21	1.322	3.43	21	.978
		Total	2.72	299	1.133	3.88	299	.852	3.61	298	.727
	Resilient	Before	Indirect	2.75	324	1.021	3.61	324	.796	3.46	76
Direct			3.40	40	1.172	4.15	40	1.001	4.00	5	0.000
Other			2.96	50	1.087	3.80	50	.904	3.75	4	.500
Total			2.84	414	1.060	3.69	414	.845	3.51	85	.811
During		Indirect	2.78	85	1.016	3.71	85	.737	3.73	85	.777
		Direct	3.50	4	1.291	4.75	4	.500	4.25	4	.500
		Other	3.11	9	1.167	4.11	9	.928	4.00	9	1.000
		Total	2.84	98	1.042	3.79	98	.777	3.78	98	.793
Total		Indirect	2.76	409	1.019	3.63	409	.784	3.60	161	.816
		Direct	3.41	44	1.168	4.20	44	.978	4.11	9	.333
		Other	2.98	59	1.091	3.85	59	.906	3.92	13	.862
		Total	2.84	512	1.056	3.71	512	.832	3.65	183	.811
Overcontrolled	Before	Indirect	2.97	38	.788	3.53	38	.687	3.60	5	.548
		Direct	2.80	5	1.304	4.00	5	.707	3.50	4	.577
		Other	2.50	4	.577	2.75	4	.957	3.00	1	
		Total	2.91	47	.830	3.51	47	.748	3.50	10	.527
	During	Indirect	2.89	281	1.225	3.91	281	.847	3.67	281	.793
		Direct	3.53	100	1.058	4.54	100	.626	4.06	100	.736
		Other	2.59	44	1.436	3.93	44	.974	3.68	44	.800
		Total	3.01	425	1.247	4.06	425	.856	3.76	425	.797
	Total	Indirect	2.90	319	1.181	3.87	319	.838	3.67	286	.789
		Direct	3.50	105	1.075	4.51	105	.637	4.04	104	.736
		Other	2.58	48	1.381	3.83	48	1.018	3.67	45	.798
		Total	3.00	472	1.211	4.01	472	.861	3.76	435	.792
Total	Before	Indirect	2.77	387	.987	3.60	387	.770	3.54	105	.760
		Direct	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	.996	3.82	11	.405
		Other	2.93	54	1.061	3.72	54	.940	3.60	5	.548
		Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	.825	3.57	121	.728
	During	Indirect	2.77	567	1.174	3.86	567	.812	3.63	567	.763
		Direct	3.40	154	1.070	4.48	154	.679	3.99	154	.750
		Other	2.73	74	1.388	3.80	74	1.098	3.65	74	.883
		Total	2.89	795	1.202	3.98	795	.855	3.70	795	.784
	Total	Indirect	2.77	954	1.101	3.76	954	.805	3.62	672	.763
		Direct	3.38	201	1.090	4.39	201	.780	3.98	165	.732
		Other	2.81	128	1.260	3.77	128	1.031	3.65	79	.863
		Total	2.87	1283	1.137	3.86	1283	.857	3.69	916	.777

At a more detailed level of analysis (see Table 11) the more important and satisfying type of experiences involved participants participating in Valletta 2018 events – especially among resilient personality

participants – consistently before and during the administration of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme. Undercontrolled participants’ perception of the most important type of encounter shifted from internet browsing (before Valletta 2018 ECoC programme) to participation in events (during Valletta 2018 ECoC programme). The same holds for overcontrolled participants’ perception of the most important type of encounters – from media encounters (like radio and newspapers) before Valletta 2018 ECoC programme to participation in events during Valletta 2018 ECoC programme administration.

Table 11: Perceived importance, satisfaction and effect of different types of experiences across the different personality types of participants for field waves before and during Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?				
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation		
Undercontrolled	Before	Internet browsing	3.25	4	1.500	3.75	4	0.500	3.67	3	0.577		
		Saw on TV	2.33	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577	4.00	3	0.000		
		Heard on radio	2.67	6	0.516	3.50	6	0.548	3.83	6	0.408		
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.33	6	0.516	3.33	6	0.516	3.83	6	0.408		
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.00	1		4.00	1		4.00	1			
		Overheard a conversation	3.20	5	0.447	3.60	5	0.548	3.60	5	0.548		
		Participated in the event	3.00	2	0.000	3.00	2	1.414	4.00	2	0.000		
		Total	2.78	27	0.751	3.52	27	0.580	3.81	26	0.402		
	During	Internet browsing	2.28	47	0.949	3.53	47	0.620	3.32	47	0.471		
		Saw on TV	2.84	117	1.122	4.02	117	0.809	3.68	117	0.764		
		Heard on radio	2.75	4	1.500	4.25	4	0.500	3.75	4	0.957		
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.45	11	1.572	3.82	11	0.874	3.55	11	0.820		
		Posted on social media myself	1.67	3	1.155	3.67	3	1.155	3.00	3	0.000		
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.00	18	1.085	3.61	18	0.698	3.33	18	0.594		
		Overheard a conversation	3.00	1		5.00	1		4.00	1			
		Participated in the event	3.14	50	1.050	4.34	50	0.772	3.82	50	0.774		
		Other	2.90	20	1.410	3.35	20	1.348	3.40	20	0.995		
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00	1		4.00	1		4.00	1			
		Total	2.71	272	1.165	3.91	272	0.867	3.59	272	0.749		
	Total	Internet browsing	2.35	51	1.016	3.55	51	0.610	3.34	50	0.479		
		Saw on TV	2.83	120	1.113	4.01	120	0.804	3.68	120	0.756		
		Heard on radio	2.70	10	0.949	3.80	10	0.632	3.80	10	0.632		
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.41	17	1.278	3.65	17	0.786	3.65	17	0.702		
		Posted on social media myself	1.67	3	1.155	3.67	3	1.155	3.00	3	0.000		
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.05	19	1.079	3.63	19	0.684	3.37	19	0.597		
		Overheard a conversation	3.17	6	0.408	3.83	6	0.753	3.67	6	0.516		
		Participated in the event	3.13	52	1.030	4.29	52	0.825	3.83	52	0.760		
		Other	2.90	20	1.410	3.35	20	1.348	3.40	20	0.995		
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00	1		4.00	1		4.00	1			
		Total	2.72	299	1.133	3.88	299	0.852	3.61	298	0.727		
		Resilient	Before	Internet browsing	2.64	132	1.027	3.58	132	0.731	3.60	30	0.894
				Saw on TV	2.82	55	1.038	3.62	55	0.850	3.47	17	0.717
				Heard on radio	2.84	32	0.723	3.66	32	0.653	3.00	7	0.577
Read on newspapers/magazines	2.55			22	1.011	3.59	22	0.908	3.10	10	0.876		
Posted on social media myself	2.91			32	0.995	3.44	32	1.014	3.80	5	1.304		
Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.05			40	1.154	3.90	40	0.810	3.67	6	0.516		
Overheard a conversation	2.27			11	1.009	3.36	11	0.505	3.00	1			
Participated in the event	3.40			40	1.172	4.15	40	1.001	4.00	5	0.000		
Other	2.98			49	1.090	3.82	49	0.905	4.00	3	0.000		
Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00			1		3.00	1		3.00	1			
Total	2.84			414	1.060	3.69	414	0.845	3.51	85	0.811		

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Resilient	During	Internet browsing	3.03	37	0.928	3.86	37	0.713	3.92	37	0.795
		Saw on TV	2.54	13	1.198	3.77	13	0.832	3.85	13	0.801
		Heard on radio	2.00	2	0.000	3.00	2	0.000	5.00	2	0.000
		Posted on social media myself	2.00	3	1.732	3.00	3	0.000	3.00	3	0.000
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.67	27	0.961	3.59	27	0.747	3.41	27	0.636
		Overheard a conversation	3.00	3	1.000	3.67	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577
		Participated in the event	3.50	4	1.291	4.75	4	0.500	4.25	4	0.500
		Other	3.00	5	1.225	4.40	5	0.894	4.40	5	0.894
		Used Valletta 2018 App	3.25	4	1.258	3.75	4	0.957	3.50	4	1.000
		Total	2.84	98	1.042	3.79	98	0.777	3.78	98	0.793
	Total	Internet browsing	2.73	169	1.016	3.64	169	0.735	3.78	67	0.850
		Saw on TV	2.76	68	1.067	3.65	68	0.842	3.63	30	0.765
		Heard on radio	2.79	34	0.729	3.62	34	0.652	3.44	9	1.014
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.55	22	1.011	3.59	22	0.908	3.10	10	0.876
		Posted on social media myself	2.83	35	1.071	3.40	35	0.976	3.50	8	1.069
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.90	67	1.089	3.78	67	0.794	3.45	33	0.617
		Overheard a conversation	2.43	14	1.016	3.43	14	0.514	3.50	4	0.577
		Participated in the event	3.41	44	1.168	4.20	44	0.978	4.11	9	0.333
		Other	2.98	54	1.090	3.87	54	0.912	4.25	8	0.707
		Used Valletta 2018 App	3.00	5	1.225	3.60	5	0.894	3.40	5	0.894
	Total	2.84	512	1.056	3.71	512	0.832	3.65	183	0.811	
	Before	Internet browsing	3.00	8	0.926	3.50	8	0.535	3.50	2	0.707
		Saw on TV	3.00	5	0.707	3.20	5	0.447			
		Heard on radio	3.33	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577	3.00	1	
		Read on newspapers/magazines	3.33	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577	4.00	1	
		Posted on social media myself	2.86	7	0.900	3.29	7	0.951			
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.90	10	0.876	3.90	10	0.738	4.00	1	
		Overheard a conversation	2.50	2	0.707	3.00	2	0.000			
		Participated in the event	2.80	5	1.304	4.00	5	0.707	3.50	4	0.577
		Other	2.50	4	0.577	2.75	4	0.957	3.00	1	
Total		2.91	47	0.830	3.51	47	0.748	3.50	10	0.527	
Overcontrolled	During	Internet browsing	2.81	74	1.167	3.72	74	0.868	3.51	74	0.646
		Saw on TV	3.04	120	1.246	4.16	120	0.722	3.89	120	0.754
		Heard on radio	2.50	10	1.434	3.60	10	0.699	3.40	10	0.699
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.56	16	1.094	3.75	16	1.000	3.56	16	1.153
		Posted on social media myself	2.62	13	1.193	3.31	13	1.032	3.62	13	1.044
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.85	33	1.349	3.88	33	0.740	3.58	33	0.751
		Overheard a conversation	2.93	15	1.100	3.87	15	1.125	3.20	15	0.862
		Participated in the event	3.53	100	1.058	4.54	100	0.626	4.06	100	0.736
		Other	2.66	38	1.494	3.84	38	0.973	3.68	38	0.842
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.17	6	0.983	4.50	6	0.837	3.67	6	0.516
	Total	3.01	425	1.247	4.06	425	0.856	3.76	425	0.797	
	Total	Internet browsing	2.83	82	1.142	3.70	82	0.842	3.51	76	0.643
		Saw on TV	3.04	125	1.227	4.12	125	0.736	3.89	120	0.754
		Heard on radio	2.69	13	1.316	3.62	13	0.650	3.36	11	0.674
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.68	19	1.057	3.74	19	0.933	3.59	17	1.121
		Posted on social media myself	2.70	20	1.081	3.30	20	0.979	3.62	13	1.044
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.86	43	1.246	3.88	43	0.731	3.59	34	0.743
		Overheard a conversation	2.88	17	1.054	3.76	17	1.091	3.20	15	0.862
		Participated in the event	3.50	105	1.075	4.51	105	0.637	4.04	104	0.736
		Other	2.64	42	1.428	3.74	42	1.014	3.67	39	0.838
Used Valletta 2018 App		2.17	6	0.983	4.50	6	0.837	3.67	6	0.516	
Total	3.00	472	1.211	4.01	472	0.861	3.76	435	0.792		

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Total	Before	Internet browsing	2.68	144	1.035	3.58	144	0.714	3.60	35	0.847
		Saw on TV	2.81	63	0.998	3.59	63	0.816	3.55	20	0.686
		Heard on radio	2.85	41	0.691	3.63	41	0.623	3.36	14	0.633
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.58	31	0.923	3.55	31	0.810	3.41	17	0.795
		Posted on social media myself	2.90	39	0.968	3.41	39	0.993	3.80	5	1.304
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.02	51	1.086	3.90	51	0.781	3.75	8	0.463
		Overheard a conversation	2.56	18	0.922	3.39	18	0.502	3.50	6	0.548
		Participated in the event	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	0.996	3.82	11	0.405
		Other	2.94	53	1.064	3.74	53	0.944	3.75	4	0.500
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00	1		3.00	1		3.00	1	
		Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	0.825	3.57	121	0.728
	During	Internet browsing	2.70	158	1.086	3.70	158	0.771	3.55	158	0.673
		Saw on TV	2.92	250	1.190	4.07	250	0.773	3.79	250	0.765
		Heard on radio	2.50	16	1.317	3.69	16	0.704	3.69	16	0.873
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.52	27	1.282	3.78	27	0.934	3.56	27	1.013
		Posted on social media myself	2.37	19	1.257	3.32	19	0.946	3.42	19	0.902
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.59	78	1.200	3.72	78	0.737	3.46	78	0.678
		Overheard a conversation	2.95	19	1.026	3.89	19	1.049	3.32	19	0.820
		Participated in the event	3.40	154	1.070	4.48	154	0.679	3.99	154	0.750
		Other	2.76	63	1.434	3.73	63	1.125	3.65	63	0.919
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.55	11	1.128	4.18	11	0.874	3.64	11	0.674
		Total	2.89	795	1.202	3.98	795	0.855	3.70	795	0.784
	Total	Internet browsing	2.69	302	1.060	3.64	302	0.746	3.56	193	0.706
		Saw on TV	2.90	313	1.153	3.97	313	0.804	3.77	270	0.761
		Heard on radio	2.75	57	0.912	3.65	57	0.641	3.53	30	0.776
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.55	58	1.095	3.66	58	0.870	3.50	44	0.928
		Posted on social media myself	2.72	58	1.089	3.38	58	0.970	3.50	24	0.978
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.76	129	1.171	3.79	129	0.757	3.49	86	0.664
		Overheard a conversation	2.76	37	0.983	3.65	37	0.857	3.36	25	0.757
		Participated in the event	3.38	201	1.090	4.39	201	0.780	3.98	165	0.732
		Other	2.84	116	1.276	3.73	116	1.041	3.66	67	0.897
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.50	12	1.087	4.08	12	0.900	3.58	12	0.669
		Total	2.87	1283	1.137	3.86	1283	0.857	3.69	916	0.777

Of the total 1,317 experiences that this study captured during all the field waves, 499 responses offered relevant reflections about the specific encounters. Of these, 67 lamented their experiences (or offered reflections with a negative tone). This study analyses these reflections and observes 19 different themes related to value emerging from reported experiences. A summary of these themes is set out in Table 12, showing how themes like anticipation, standard of experience and access dominated the comments offered by participants.

Table 12: Summary of value dimensions observed in reflections by RET participants (with valence observed as positive or negative comments)

	Negative		Positive	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Social	2	4.1%	47	95.9%
Educational	3	10.0%	27	90.0%
Word-of-mouth / Pride	9	11.8%	67	88.2%
Relevance to own interests	11	16.9%	54	83.1%
Access	40	43.5%	52	56.5%
Fun, excitement	3	5.2%	55	94.8%
Standard of experience	23	22.8%	78	77.2%
Versatility, varied, interactive	4	12.1%	29	87.9%
Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices)	3	33.3%	6	66.7%
Curiosity	0	0.0%	22	100.0%
Anticipation	3	2.6%	113	97.4%
Think (future, country)	2	20.0%	8	80.0%
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	3	5.1%	56	94.9%
Ancillary services (quality)	5	83.3%	1	16.7%
Nostalgia	0	0.0%	6	100.0%
Atmosphere	3	8.6%	32	91.4%
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	0	0.0%	47	100.0%
Multicultural	2	9.1%	20	90.9%
National pride	1	1.5%	64	98.5%

The following paragraphs define and describe these themes⁷.

- a) **Social:** or experiences that help participants engage with other individuals in a temporary or longer-term rapport

"...appreciate meeting people from different cultures, backgrounds and social classes."

(R017, F, Undercontrolled)

"Enjoyed it with the family." (R072, Resilient)

"I told my colleagues that there is Ghanafest this weekend, and I encouraged them to attend as it is a very enjoyable event in a very picturesque setting." (R251, Resilient)

"It brought really different people together. Good experience." (R604, Overcontrolled)

"...you go out as a family." (FGP41, F)

- b) **Educational:** or experiences that participants see as opportunities for learning or enrichment

"Came up on social media feed... Was explicit... Gave all information and more. Was highly satisfactory and informative." (R064, Resilient)

"It was a wonderful and informative experience, and it opened my eyes to interesting aspects of culture." (R396, Resilient)

"It helps people to get to know and visit more interesting places." (R432, Overcontrolled)

"Mod sabih sabieh titghallem." (R477, Overcontrolled)

"...a way of educating people in different sectors" (FGP04, M)

"...attract them to participate ... educating them." (FGP11, M)

⁷ In setting out quotes from reflections this report also indicates the source of the quote and uses a framework in such descriptions: R = RET Participant, FGP = Focus Group Participant, INT = Face-to-face interview. The number that follows these codes either suggests the response number (in RET data) or participant (in focus group and interview data). The last word indicates participant's cluster membership or gender (M = Male, F = Female). An asterisk * indicate negative comment

- c) **Word-of-mouth and popular:** or experiences encouraged as a result of or lead to the propagation of positive word-of-mouth
- "I heard a lot of positive comments about it." (R004, Resilient)*
- "People are anxiously waiting for the event. There are very positive comments from different people." (R172, Resilient)*
- "...I think it is going to put a mark, more recognised sort of, the usual, Europeans will know more about our culture..." (FGP11, M)*
- d) **Relevance to one's interests:** or experiences that are suited to the target audience (emerging largely from negative comments)
- "Aim of it as indicated on website is quite relevant but, in my opinion, current activities won't adequately reach the aim." (R028, Resilient)*
- "Not really my thing." (R042, Resilient)*
- "Looked interesting made me look into it further" (R098, Resilient)*
- "...not something that interests me." (R142, Resilient)*
- "It was very interesting." (R878, Overcontrolled)*
- "... I think something like Notte Bianca is something which everyone is interested in, everyone knows about it..." (FGP01, M)*
- e) **Access:** or aspects of access to participants from a logistical, time, language or economic perspective impacting on the experience
- "...difficult to park at Fort St Angelo ... not very accessible" (R011, Resilient)*
- "...Only drawback I saw last year (which didn't affect me personally) was lack of transport available at night after screenings/events..." (R057, Resilient)*
- "Enjoyed what I saw but it was difficult to find a viewpoint." (R252, Resilient)*
- "...sadly couldn't attend due to the wrong timing of the festival..." (R291, Undercontrolled)*
- "I am looking forward to attending this one especially now that exams are finally over and we are freer to attend." (R317, F, Resilient)*
- "I watch their events on the TV and I see anything that comes up." (R795, Undercontrolled)*
- "I think this Valletta 2018 sort of helps people ... it is open to everyone, everyone can enjoy cultural events." (FGP02, F)*
- "..it would be an idea like... to reach the people by going more into their towns as well." (FGP01, M)*
- "...On every pavement there is a crane..." (FGP22, M)*
- f) **Fun, excitement:** or experiences that participants mark with an element of excitement or fun
- "It was fun." (R109, Resilient)*
- "It is an amazing experience for both tourists and Maltese citizens who get to encounter Valletta." (R439, Overcontrolled)*
- "It was spectacular." (R753, Overcontrolled)*

- g) **Standard of experience:** or elements of quality characterising the experiences
"The event was professionally organised." (R003, Resilient)
"Some talented individuals. Some good venues..." (R058, Resilient)
"Festival impekkabbli organizzat b'l-aqwa mod u ħsieb u stimulant i ħafna." (R424, Resilient)
"It was very well organised." (R626, Overcontrolled)
"It shows the great talent that is found in such a small country..." (R792, Overcontrolled)
- h) **Versatility, varied, interactive:** or experiences that participants value as a result of the events' nature being interactive or varied
"An enjoyable, versatile experience." (R005, Resilient)
"...Choice and quality of films are quite high..." (R057, Resilient)
"...the diversification in the event and it seems to be improving year after year." (R106, Resilient)
"...opportunita unika sabiex żżur postijiet u tesperjenza affarijiet differenti." (R478, Resilient)
- i) **Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices):** or experiences where participants appraise value in terms of the benefits earned in return for sacrifices paid (whether monetary, effort or other)
"A worthwhile annual event" (R007, Resilient)
"...Worth it in terms of pricing..." (R057, Resilient)
"So much to see..." (R486, Undercontrolled)
- j) **Curiosity:** or experiences that attracted participants in response to a sense of curiosity
"I think that it was well thought out and was intriguing at times." (R015, Resilient)
"...It made me curious to find out more about the event, to see..." (R136, Resilient)
"...overheard a conversation which stimulated my curiosity and I'm going tonight." (R316, Resilient)
- k) **Anticipation:** or experiences that participants awaited to feel or undergo
"Look forward to it every year." (R013, Resilient)
"...everyone is looking forward to this event..." (R074, Resilient)
"I hope next year this event will be there again." (R314, Resilient)
"Looking forward to something similar." (R761, Undercontrolled)
"I am going to experience it for the first time; I hope I enjoy it." (R941, Undercontrolled)
- l) **Think (future, country):** or experiences that push participants to think about futures (related to personal, social or country dimensions)
"...makes me think about sustainability since our country has limited water supply." (R021, Resilient)
"If this is about being green, how about actual demonstrations on how to recycle - practical hints and tips promoting sustainable organisations ..." (R205, Resilient)
"...I believe that we bring more tourists to Malta too." (R692, Undercontrolled)
- m) **Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual:** or experiences that participants felt were unique or unusual
"...the event is unusual and makes me curious..." (R160, Resilient)
"...for me it puts Valletta in a totally different perspective." (R227, Resilient)
"Wow, what an event ... original items." (R243, Resilient)

- n) **Ancillary services (quality):** or participants' reflections relating to experienced ancillary services
*"...the personnel in the stands could have been friendlier..." (R040, Resilient)**
*"...Dedicated organisers. Worth it in terms of pricing, choice and quality of films are quite high. Only drawback I saw last year (which didn't affect me personally) was lack of transport available at night after screenings/events..." (R057, Resilient)**
- o) **Nostalgia:** or experiences that relate to participants' sentiments to past cultural occurrences
"I attended a few years ago. An enjoyable, versatile experience." (R005, Resilient)
"...good to maintain traditions." (R143, Resilient)
"...past experience of it left me with pleasant memories!" (R182, Resilient)
"It felt very nostalgic." (R610, Undercontrolled)
- p) **Atmosphere:** or experiences marked by their unique ambiance, mood or tone
"Great Festival; Superb atmosphere." (R057, Resilient)
"Great installations and experiences. Wonderful venues." (R521, Overcontrolled)
"Valletta came alive..." (R989, Overcontrolled)
- q) **Loyalty:** or experiences where participants would look forward to a repeat occurrence
"A worthwhile annual event." (R007, Resilient)
"Good. Looking forward to it again." (R342, Resilient)
"I would like it to be more frequent." (R575, Undercontrolled)
"Should be more frequent." (R646, Undercontrolled)
"It is important for this event to take place every year." (R927, Overcontrolled)
- r) **Multicultural:** or experiences marked with a multicultural element valued by participants
"...appreciate meeting people from different cultures, backgrounds and social classes." (R017, Resilient)
"It was great how international folk music was also incorporated in the event." (R132, Resilient)
"...it was so interesting and nice. We share languages and emotions." (R199, Resilient)
"It brought really different people together. Good experience." (R604, Overcontrolled)
- s) **National pride:** or experiences where participants felt proud to be Maltese or be linked with Malta
"Very proud having been a key part in restarting the Festival." (R047, Resilient)
"I think Malta is reaching very high levels in organising this event." (R195, Resilient)
*"A sense of national pride needs to be instilled in people to attend these events." (R204, Resilient)**
"...makes you feel part of an important event to promote Malta." (R457, Overcontrolled)
"It makes you proud to be Maltese." (R624, Overcontrolled)
"It was a marvellous experience and it promotes tourism in Malta and shows what the Maltese are able to do." (R836, Overcontrolled)
"I love the fact that Malta is coming together to do all of this and it really gives Malta a chance to shine and be original in its ideas." (R962, Overcontrolled)
"...it is a wonderful thing that it is known not just in Europe but around the world ... we are all proud of it." (FGP21, M)
"...it was a privilege, a small City was elected to be the European Capital of Culture." (FGP31, M)
"...Valletta; no longer a dirty word, there is a new sense of pride – there is a sense of nostalgia as well." (INT01, M)

An analysis of the incidence of these themes (positive vs negative) across the different phases of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme finds that three themes evolve during the course of the cultural programme (see Table 13). “Word-of-mouth”, “access” and “fun” themes overall diminished in the incidence of positive reflections during the administration of ECoC events in 2018. By contrast, themes like “out of the ordinary/unique”, “relevance to one’s own interests” and “anticipation” became more relatively positive during the administration of ECoC events during 2018. The incidence of laments (or negative comments, as a proportion of all the comments contributed by participants) was observed to increase from 2016 throughout the unfolding of the ECoC programme, particularly during the height of ECoC events in 2018. An analysis of these trends across different participants’ personality types (see Table 14) suggests that:

- a) undercontrolled personalities tended to be more critical during the administration of the ECoC programme (when compared with their comments before the start of the ECoC programme in 2018),
- b) resilient and overcontrolled RET participants tended to be more positive in their comments during the administration of the ECoC programme of events (when compared with their comments before the start of the programme).

Table 13: Comparison of themes’ incidence in RET participants’ comments before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events

	Phase of project				Phase of project			
	Before		During		Before		During	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Social	2	36	-	11	5.3%	94.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Educational	3	24	-	3	11.1%	88.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Word-of-mouth / Pride	3	61	6	6	4.7%	95.3%	50.0%	50.0%
Relevance to own interests	9	42	2	12	17.6%	82.4%	14.3%	85.7%
Access	16	46	24	6	25.8%	74.2%	80.0%	20.0%
Fun, excitement	1	45	2	10	2.2%	97.8%	16.7%	83.3%
Standard of experience	11	37	12	41	22.9%	77.1%	22.6%	77.4%
Versatility, varied, interactive	3	25	1	4	10.7%	89.3%	20.0%	80.0%
Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices)	3	6	-	-	33.3%	66.7%		
Curiosity	-	22	-	-	0.0%	100.0%		
Anticipation	3	88	-	25	3.3%	96.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Think (future, country)	1	3	1	5	25.0%	75.0%	16.7%	83.3%
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	2	27	1	29	6.9%	93.1%	3.3%	96.7%
Ancillary services (quality)	5	1	-	-	83.3%	16.7%		
Nostalgia	-	5	-	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Atmosphere	2	27	1	5	6.9%	93.1%	16.7%	83.3%
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	-	18	-	29	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Multicultural	2	18	-	2	10.0%	90.0%	0.0%	100.0%
National pride	-	39	1	25	0.0%	100.0%	3.8%	96.2%

Table 14: Comparison of valence of reflections of RET participants before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events, across types of personalities

				Phase of project		Phase of project	
				Before	During	Before	During
				Count	Count	Row %	Row %
Valence	Negative	Cluster membership	Undercontrolled	0	16	0.0%	100.0%
			Resilient	25	1	96.2%	3.8%
			Overcontrolled	6	18	25.0%	75.0%
	Positive	Cluster membership	Undercontrolled	16	39	29.1%	70.9%
			Resilient	249	16	94.0%	6.0%
			Overcontrolled	26	83	23.9%	76.1%

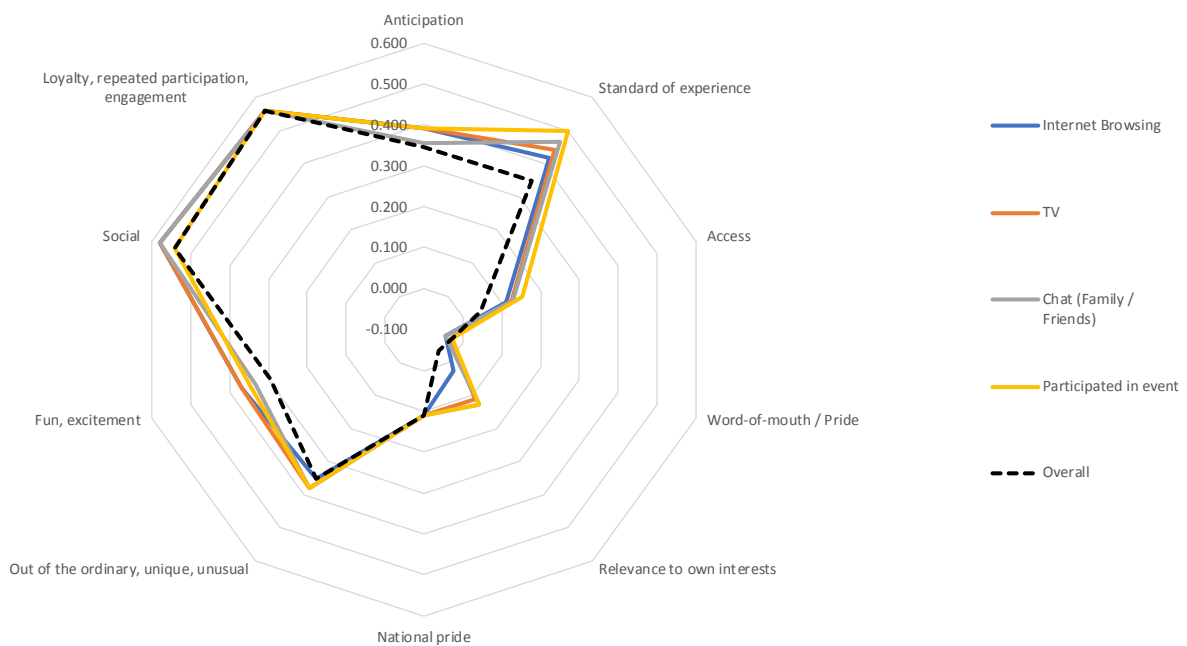
An analysis of the themes that participants mentioned across different types of encounters revealed that some themes dominated in the participants' reflections relating to specific types of encounters (see Table 15). For instance, "anticipation", "standard of experience" and "access" were themes that were relatively more common in encounters like internet browsing and TV. Internet browsing encounters also featured a relatively more common reference to "relevance to own interests", while TV encounters featured relatively more common mentions referring to "national pride". Themes dominating comments when individuals participated directly in events related to the "standard of experience", "uniqueness" and "repeated participation or engagement". Themes dominating comments when participants chatted with friends or family, face-to-face related to "anticipation", "word-of-mouth or a sense of pride" and "social".

Table 15: Incidence of themes across brand encounters (Source: Author)

Counts / Incidence	How did you experience the event?									
	Internet browsing	Saw on TV	Heard on radio	Read on newspapers/ magazines	Posted on social media myself	Chat with friends/ family face-to-face	Overheard a conversation	Participated in the event	Other	Used Valletta 2018 App
Anticipation	31	17	16	2	5	18	4	14	9	0
Standard of experience	21	18	3	3	8	6	4	28	10	0
Access	19	17	8	6	2	7	3	16	14	0
Word-of-mouth / Pride	15	13	10	2	7	9	5	8	7	0
Relevance to own interests	22	13	5	3	3	5	1	8	5	0
National pride	7	19	1	3	7	4	1	16	6	1
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	13	12	2	2	1	6	2	18	3	0
Fun, excitement	14	7	2	3	4	4	1	17	6	0
Social	8	7	4	1	2	8	0	15	4	0
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	10	8	3	0	1	3	0	18	4	0
TOTAL	160	131	54	25	40	70	21	158	68	1

Relative incidence (column %)	How did you experience the event?									
	Internet browsing	Saw on TV	Heard on radio	Read on newspapers/magazines	Posted on social media myself	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	Overheard a conversation	Participated in the event	Other	Used Valletta 2018 App
Anticipation	19.4%	13.0%	29.6%	8.0%	12.5%	25.7%	19.0%	8.9%	13.2%	0.0%
Standard of experience	13.1%	13.7%	5.6%	12.0%	20.0%	8.6%	19.0%	17.7%	14.7%	0.0%
Access	11.9%	13.0%	14.8%	24.0%	5.0%	10.0%	14.3%	10.1%	20.6%	0.0%
Word-of-mouth / Pride	9.4%	9.9%	18.5%	8.0%	17.5%	12.9%	23.8%	5.1%	10.3%	0.0%
Relevance to own interests	13.8%	9.9%	9.3%	12.0%	7.5%	7.1%	4.8%	5.1%	7.4%	0.0%
National pride	4.4%	14.5%	1.9%	12.0%	17.5%	5.7%	4.8%	10.1%	8.8%	100.0%
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	8.1%	9.2%	3.7%	8.0%	2.5%	8.6%	9.5%	11.4%	4.4%	0.0%
Fun, excitement	8.8%	5.3%	3.7%	12.0%	10.0%	5.7%	4.8%	10.8%	8.8%	0.0%
Social	5.0%	5.3%	7.4%	4.0%	5.0%	11.4%	0.0%	9.5%	5.9%	0.0%
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	6.3%	6.1%	5.6%	0.0%	2.5%	4.3%	0.0%	11.4%	5.9%	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chart 2: Perceived value (standardised) across value themes and encounter types (Source: Author)



A further analysis seeks to explore the level of value perceived by participants across such themes and specific types of encounters. The standardised perceived value score (across internet, tv, chat and event participation encounters as well as the more frequent themes) is summarised in the graphic set out in Chart 2, suggesting how themes like “social”, “loyalty, repeated participation, engagement” and “access” are linked with higher relative levels of perceived value, whereas themes like “word-of-mouth” are linked with the least relative levels of perceived value. A more detailed summary of (standardised) perceived value across the different types of encounters and more frequent themes is set out in Table 16.

Table 16: Perceived value across value themes and encounter types (Source: Author)

Value Theme	Mean perceived value										
	Overall Mean	Internet Browsing	TV	Radio	Newspapers/ Magazines	Posted on social media	Chat (Family / Friends)	Overheard conversation	Participated in event	Other	Used V2018 App
Anticipation	3.27	3.32	3.32	3.32	3.32	3.32	3.28	3.31	3.32	3.32	3.32
Standard of experience	3.27	3.35	3.38	3.41	3.41	3.37	3.41	3.41	3.44	3.34	3.41
Access	2.92	3.00	3.02	3.02	3.02	3.02	3.02	3.00	3.05	3.02	3.04
Word-of-mouth / Pride	2.84	2.82	2.84	2.82	2.82	2.81	2.82	2.81	2.84	2.83	2.82
Relevance to own interests	2.83	2.90	3.00	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.02	3.04	3.02	3.02	3.04
National pride	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	3.27	3.27	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
Fun, excitement	3.21	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.25	3.29	3.27	3.27	3.29
Social	3.49	3.53	3.53	3.53	3.53	3.53	3.53	3.53	3.49	3.53	3.53
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.51

Value Theme	Standardized perceived value										
	Overall	Internet Browsing	TV	Radio	Newspapers/ Magazines	Posted on social media	Chat (Family / Friends)	Overheard conversation	Participated in event	Other	Used V2018 App
Anticipation	0.347	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.356	0.382	0.392	0.392	0.392
Standard of experience	0.347	0.419	0.444	0.472	0.472	0.437	0.468	0.472	0.499	0.412	0.472
Access	0.045	0.112	0.127	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.129	0.112	0.153	0.128	0.146
Word-of-mouth / Pride	-0.027	-0.045	-0.030	-0.045	-0.045	-0.053	-0.045	-0.056	-0.026	-0.041	-0.045
Relevance to own interests	-0.037	0.024	0.112	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.128	0.145	0.128	0.128	0.145
National pride	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	0.350	0.350	0.379	0.379	0.379	0.379	0.379	0.379	0.379	0.379	0.379
Fun, excitement	0.294	0.367	0.368	0.367	0.367	0.367	0.332	0.367	0.347	0.347	0.367
Social	0.542	0.579	0.579	0.579	0.579	0.579	0.579	0.579	0.542	0.579	0.579
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560

Table 17: Incidence of themes in participants' reflections across participants' personality types (Source: Author)

Themes	Cluster membership			Cluster membership		
	Undercontrolled	Resilient	Overcontrolled	Undercontrolled	Resilient	Overcontrolled
	Count	Count	Count	Column %	Column %	Column %
Social	1	37	11	1.1%	6.6%	5.9%
Educational	5	20	5	5.4%	3.6%	2.7%
Word-of-mouth / Pride	5	65	6	5.4%	11.6%	3.2%
Relevance to own interests	0	8	3	0.0%	1.4%	1.6%
Access	13	57	20	14.0%	10.1%	10.6%
Fun, excitement	4	44	10	4.3%	7.8%	5.3%
Standard of experience	23	45	33	24.7%	8.0%	17.6%
Versatility, varied, interactive	2	26	5	2.2%	4.6%	2.7%
Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices)	2	7	0	2.2%	1.2%	0.0%
Curiosity	0	22	0	0.0%	3.9%	0.0%
Anticipation	8	83	25	8.6%	14.8%	13.3%
Think (future, country)	2	4	4	2.2%	0.7%	2.1%
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	10	30	18	10.8%	5.3%	9.6%
Ancillary services (quality)	0	6	0	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Nostalgia	1	5	0	1.1%	0.9%	0.0%
Atmosphere	1	28	6	1.1%	5.0%	3.2%
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	10	20	16	10.8%	3.6%	8.5%
Multicultural	0	19	3	0.0%	3.4%	1.6%
National pride	6	36	23	6.5%	6.4%	12.2%

An analysis of the incidence of the analysis of themes across participant personality types (see Table 17) suggests that undercontrolled personality participants most often mentioned themes like "standard of experience", "access" and "out of the ordinary or unique or unusual" as well as "loyalty or repeated participation or engagement" in declining order of incidence. By contrast, "standard of experience" was also the most commonly mentioned theme by participants with an overcontrolled personality, along with themes like "anticipation" and "national pride". Participants with a resilient personality mentioned themes like "anticipation", "word-of-mouth or pride" and "access" most often in their reflections.

Media engagement

Although audiences and study participants consider online and print media as opportunities for interacting with the brand at yet lesser perceived value, a question remains relating to how such experiences unfold. Indeed, this study considers participants' experiences by looking at statistics compiled separately (through www.mention.com real time media monitoring service).

The study observes how audience interactions with valletta2018.org surged during the launch of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme in January 2018 – up from an average of around 38,760 page views monthly between January and November 2017 to 365,080 page views in January 2018, plateauing down to an average of 159,160 page views monthly from March 2018 to October 2018 (see Figure 3). These trends correlate with the number of new users visiting www.valletta2018.org and the number of sessions. However, despite the plateauing of these indicators after March 2018, the number of pages per session continued to rise from an average of around 2.5 pages per session up to May 2018, to over 4.7 pages per session in July and September 2018, suggesting that during each session, users view more content, indicating higher levels of engagement.

On an annual basis, the statistics offer sharper observations. Annual page views rose from 186,782 in 2015 to over 1,787,300 during the first ten months of 2018 (see Table 18). Users engaging with the same website grew from just over 60,000 in 2015 to almost 397,000 in the first ten months of 2018, whereas new visitors accessing the website augmented from 4,227 in 2015 to 346,417 in the first ten months of 2018 (or 146% over 2017).

Similar observations relating to the three social media channels used by the Valletta 2018 Foundation (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) note amplified social media engagement across all media, particularly (as expected) during 2018. Online mentions of the term "Valletta 2018" increased three-fold during 2018 over 2017 (up from 7,931 in 2017 to 34,320 during the first ten months of 2018). The Chart 4 shows how these mentions surged with the launch of Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events in January 2018.

Chart 3: valletta2018.org online website interactions (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

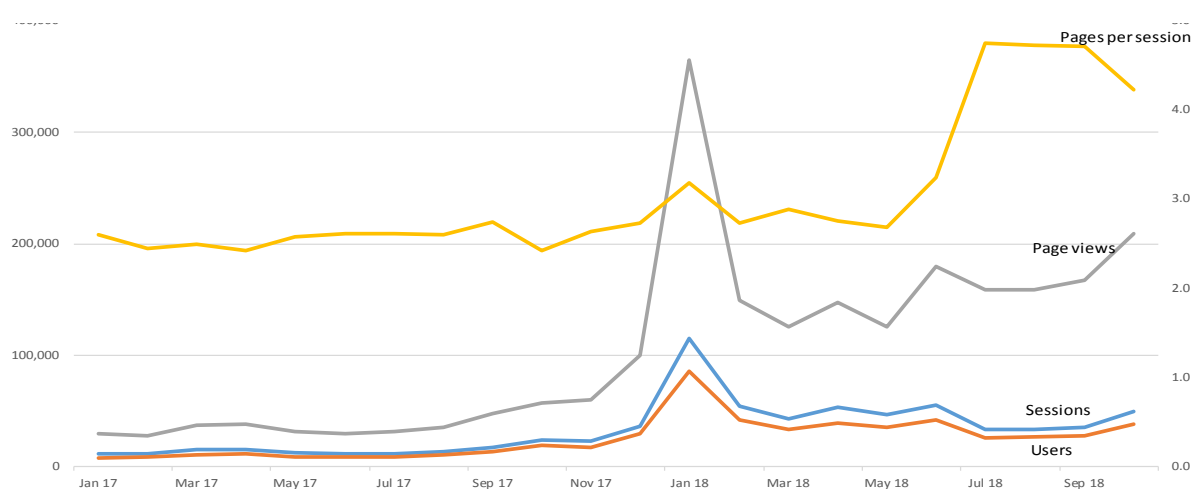
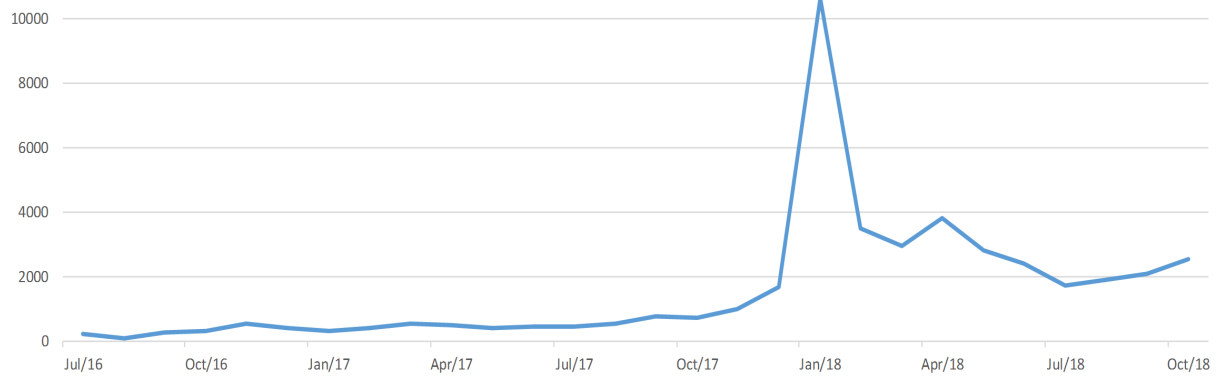


Table 18: valletta2018.org online website interactions (annually) (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sessions	82,169	110,670	203,053	520,647
Page views	186,782	261,928	478,769	1,787,301
Pages per session (average)	2.27	2.37	2.58	3.59
Users	60,034	75,941	156,303	396,956
New visitor	4227	75119	140,337	346,417
Returning visitor	1295	35551	53,012	101,872

Chart 4: “Valletta 2018” mentions in social media up to October 2018 (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)



Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feed engagement also exhibits similar growth trends. Facebook likes contributed by audiences on Valletta 2018 Facebook account posts rose from 6,373 in January 2015 to 19,743 in December 2017 and surged to 35,207 by the end of January 2018 to continue rising to 40,229 by the end of October 2018 (Chart 5). Twitter followers rose from 5,340 in June 2016 to 7,498 in October 2018 (Chart 6), whereas Instagram followers grew from 2,064 in January 2017 to 6,051 by the end of October 2018 (Chart 7).

Local print media mentions (Chart 8) also exhibit upward trends that are consistent with audience engagement with social media. Mentions grew from a mere 7 mentions in December 2010, to a surge of 167 mentions in January 2018 to plateau down to 88 mentions in September 2018 and 29 mentions in October 2018 (Chart 8). An analysis on a month-by-month basis suggests a seasonal pattern with highest mentions typically happening during the months between April and June from 2015 onwards (except for January 2018).

Chart 5: “Valletta 2018” Facebook feed likes (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

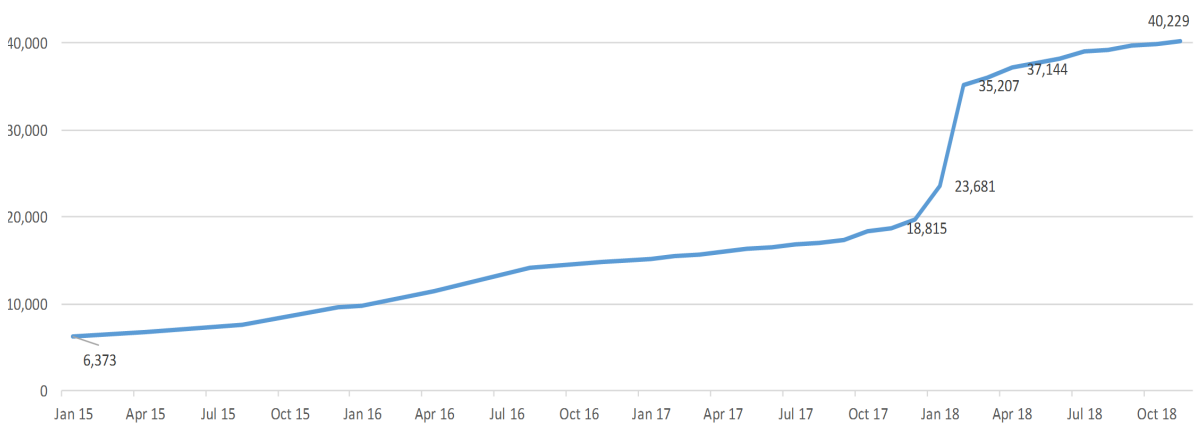


Chart 6: "Valletta 2018" Twitter feed followers (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

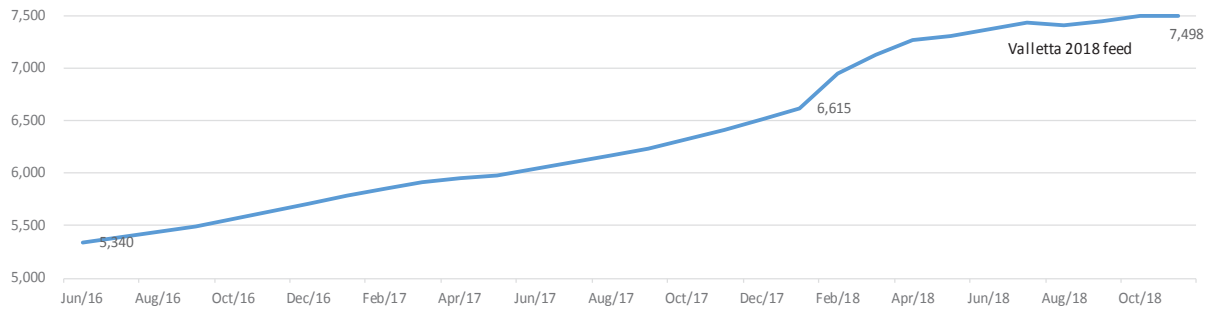


Chart 7: "Valletta 2018" Instagram feed (followers and likes) (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

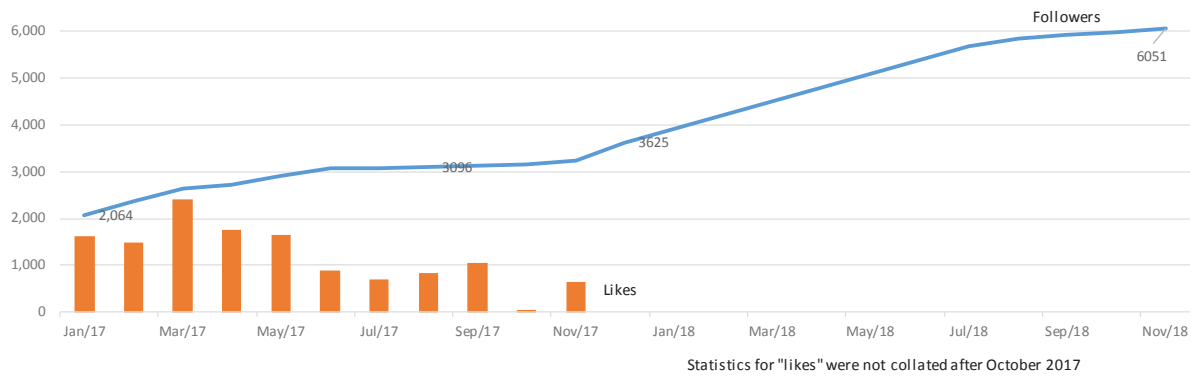


Chart 8: Valletta 2018 print media mentions (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)



CONCLUSIONS

The study employed an innovative approach that looks at cultural brands and audience engagement from a processual, longitudinal viewpoint. This methodology relies on the employment of a custom-built smartphone app that enabled the capture of an insight into how participants co-create value in their engagement with cultural brands across the different touchpoints that constitute the totality of a brand experience.

The findings suggest that engagement with the Valletta 2018 ECoC events involved different types of encounters, with those encounters involving direct engagement/participation in events constituting the best opportunities for value co-creation. This co-creation is directed towards nineteen dimensions of value, of which, themes like "anticipation", "standard of experience" and "access" dominated the participants' thoughts.

Besides the direct participation in events, the study finds that audiences co-create value by engaging with communications transmitted by the Valletta 2018 Foundation across different media. Audience engagement was observed to culminate during January 2018 when the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events was formally initiated. Growing levels of engagement among different audiences could be observed across all social and print media as a result of increased awareness, interest and anticipation of unique experiences offered by cultural events within the ECoC programme.

WAY FORWARD

This study offers an insight into how audiences engage with cultural programmes from two perspectives. From a practical perspective, the study shows that engaging audiences with cultural programmes is a complex phenomenon that requires an acute approach in the management of communications intended to create awareness and instil interest in events. This study shows that whereas excessive communications help build awareness rapidly, this tends to saturate and impact adversely the target audience's interest in cultural events. The use of a diversity of media should be monitored very closely to ensure that extreme exposure of audiences is avoided while keeping messages consistent across all media. More importantly, communications need to be composed to target effectively different personality types. Whereas resilient personalities tend to be sensitive towards messages relating to access, anticipation and fun transmitted over internet as well as TV or face-to-face channels involving acquaintances, overcontrolled personalities tend to respond better to messages that relate to the standard of experience, anticipation and national pride, transmitted over TV or during the participation of events. Undercontrolled personalities tend to be best targeted using TV and online channels, using messages containing themes like standard of experience, access, out of the ordinary/unique and periodic nature of event.

From an academic perspective, this study offers a contribution by proposing real-time experience tracking as a method that helps understand how audiences engage with cultural brands and associated events. The method uncovers trends in perceived value and associated dimensions longitudinally as

a programme of events unfolds. More importantly, the study demonstrates the complex nature of a temporal brand as is the European Capital of Culture programme as a city (Valletta) transits from anticipation to actual realisation of a multifaceted programme of cultural episodes. The study also offers scope for additional research that can investigate the longevity of the effects or “legacy” in terms of perceived value after the conclusion of the European Capital of Culture programme. Furthermore, this study offers scope for additional exploration on the influence of national culture and the associated manifestation of value themes across participants engaged in European Capital of Culture programmes implemented in the coming years in different countries.

CONCLUDING NOTE

This longitudinal study adopted a novel approach to shed light from a new perspective on how audiences engage with cultural brands and investigated a complex phenomenon as is exemplified by a temporal brand like the European Capital of Culture. The study finds that personality of audience members has a role that influences audience engagement with a diversity of cultural brand touchpoints. These differences are further reflected in the choices audiences make in adopting behaviours to co-create value.

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SOCIAL MEDIA FINAL REPORT

Maria Mizzi
Valletta 2018 Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Social Media Final Report

As a cultural entity for a major year-long event that was the European Capital of Culture, the Valletta 2018 Foundation needed to reach many diverse audiences. This meant that various Social Media and digital channels were established in order to create a dialogue between the audience and the Foundation in terms of advertising for events and special events, as well as sharing progress of the years leading up to the main event and also the whole ECoC year itself. What will follow is a brief overview of all the channels used within the Foundation with a more detailed discussion following in the sections to follow.

The most prolific and accessible channel was the Valletta 2018 Facebook page which since its initial 6,373 followers has grown progressively ending the year with 40,553 followers at the end of December 2018. The page has seen a growth of 34,180 followers over the course of three years, with 2018, understandably, showing the most drastic jump in the number of people following, clicking, interacting and viewing the page.

The Foundation's Instagram account was used throughout a range of events; large-scale events, music performances, and other visual or performative activities. Throughout this, both profile grid and Insta Stories were used in the process. Instagram was first used in August of 2014 and accumulated 3,959 followers by January of 2017. The growth on this medium was more constant, with the medium gathering a further 2,279 followers between January 2017 and the end of the ECoC year. The numbers here do not take into account followers we lost along the way.

Twitter was a lesser used medium compared to the previous two. Between June 2016 and end of December of 2018, the followers amounted to a total of 7,511, also not taking into account unfollows on the medium from one month to the next. Most of the followers here were international, given that statistically Twitter is believed to be less used overall across the Maltese islands. In line with this, Twitter was mostly used for the duration of the Annual International Conferences, showing a surge of followers and interactions concentrated around the 3 days of the event.

In reference to the Valletta 2018 website and its users, a separate chapter will outline data such as demographics, nationalities and other matters directly linking to our website.

The chart below displays a very quick overview of the progression of followers on various channels.

Facebook

Throughout the time leading up to the ECoC year and during the Valletta 2018 Cultural programme run, Facebook was regarded as the Foundation's most flexible and best medium to reach the majority of our audiences.

As discussed previously, the progression of followers on this particular medium showed a remarkable difference at the beginning of 2018 when there was an increase of 3,938 followers between December 2017 and January 2019. The bulk of the followers happened around the build up to the Valletta 2019 Opening Spectacle. Facebook was used as both an advertising platform and a tool to keep audiences updated and involved in the preparations.

As of January 2015, the follower's growth had been of an average of 5.8K per year, between 2015 and 2017. This saw a drastic change in 2018, when during the first month of the year, there was a 3,938 increase which continued until the February of the same year, taking the previous 20K followers to 35,995 as of the beginning of March with a 15,464 increase in just over a month.

The chart below displays the progression of followers Facebook.

Chart 1: Facebook followers 2015-2018

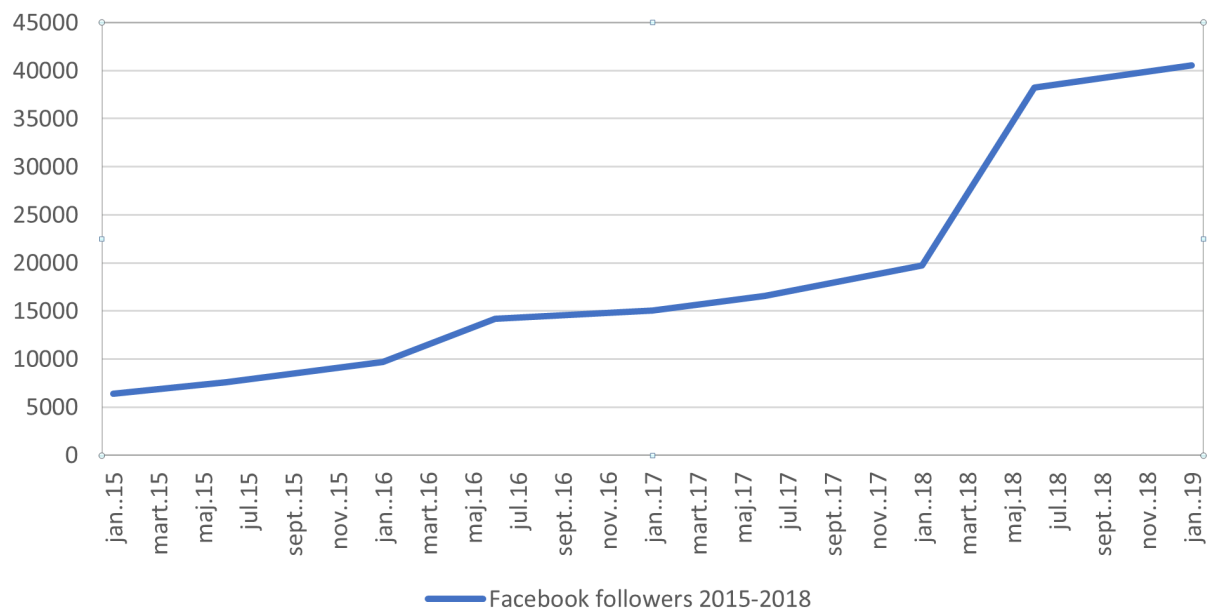
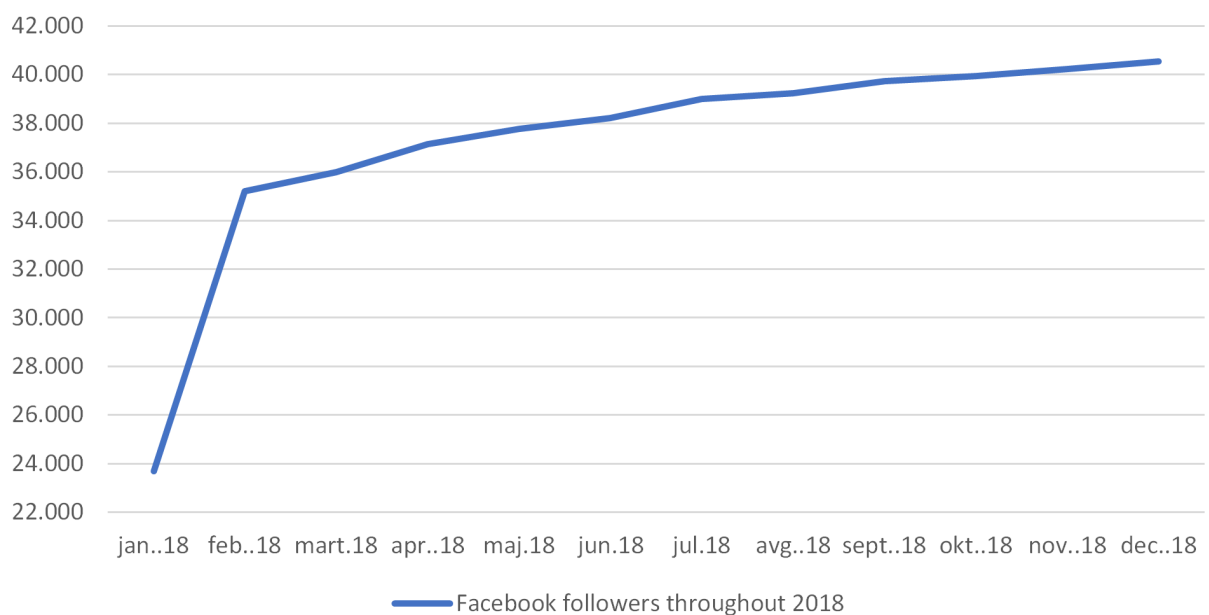


Chart 2: Facebook followers throughout 2018



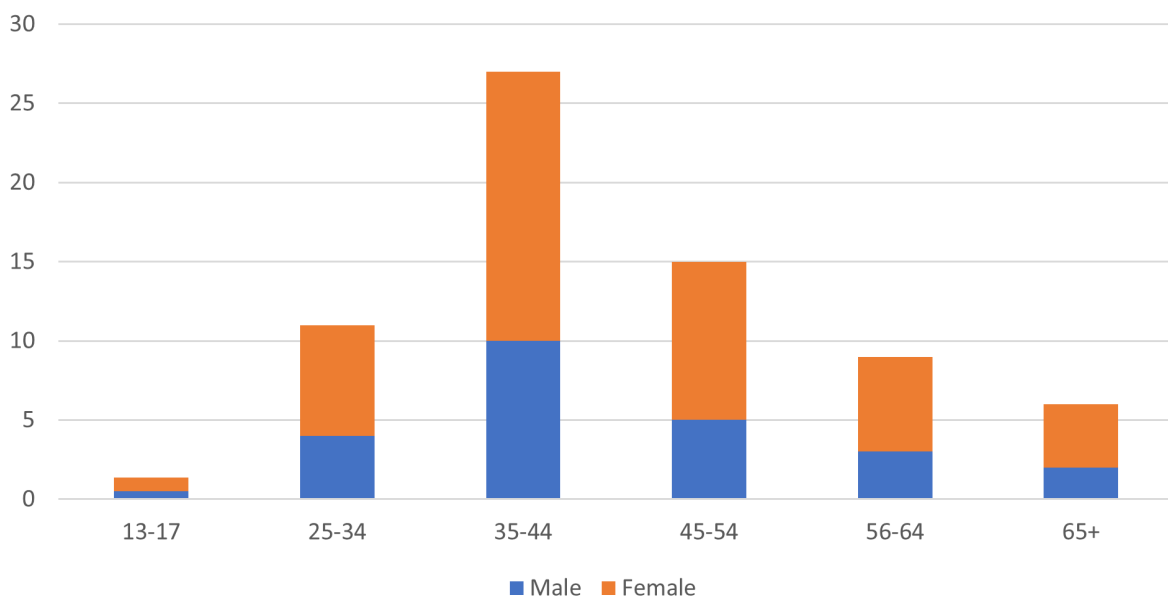
This pattern was very predictable due to the pending Opening Spectacle taking place mid-January which encouraged people to join the rest of the community on Facebook to be up to date on what promised to be a memorable night. The announcement that the whole spectacle would be broadcast live aided this. An international audience was added to the already growing community due to Maltese expats abroad tuning in to follow the proceedings.

In terms of followers on Facebook, if one looks at the highest following, it seems that followers identifying as female were generally easier to reach. On the whole, female followers have in the past years been consistently around 20–25% higher than audience members who identify as male. This puts a female following also 7% higher in the most reached age brackets on Facebook.

Female users have been higher in the 25-34 and 35-44 age bracket, the two age brackets with the highest percentages of overall users at 30% and 27% respectively. The least reachable audience proved to be the 13-17 age bracket, where both male and female users were less than 1% each on average throughout the years. The 65+ age bracket reached up to 7% overall audience members, with a majority of female users here as well.

The chart below shows a breakdown of Facebook followers by age and gender.

Chart 3: Facebook followers by age & gender (%)



Special, bigger events throughout the year also made a significant impact on audience interactions on Facebook. The special events which will be briefly analysed here are (i) The Official Valletta 2018 Opening; (ii) Il-Festa l-Kbira; (iii) The Valletta Pageant of the Seas; (iv) Orfeo & Majnun – Sflata fil-Kapitali; and (v) The Valletta 2018 Official Closing – L-Aħħar Festa. All listed events, except The Valletta Pageant of the Seas, were family oriented and had multiple vents happening simultaneously all over Valletta, inviting people to walk about and experience different performances and happened in the order listed.

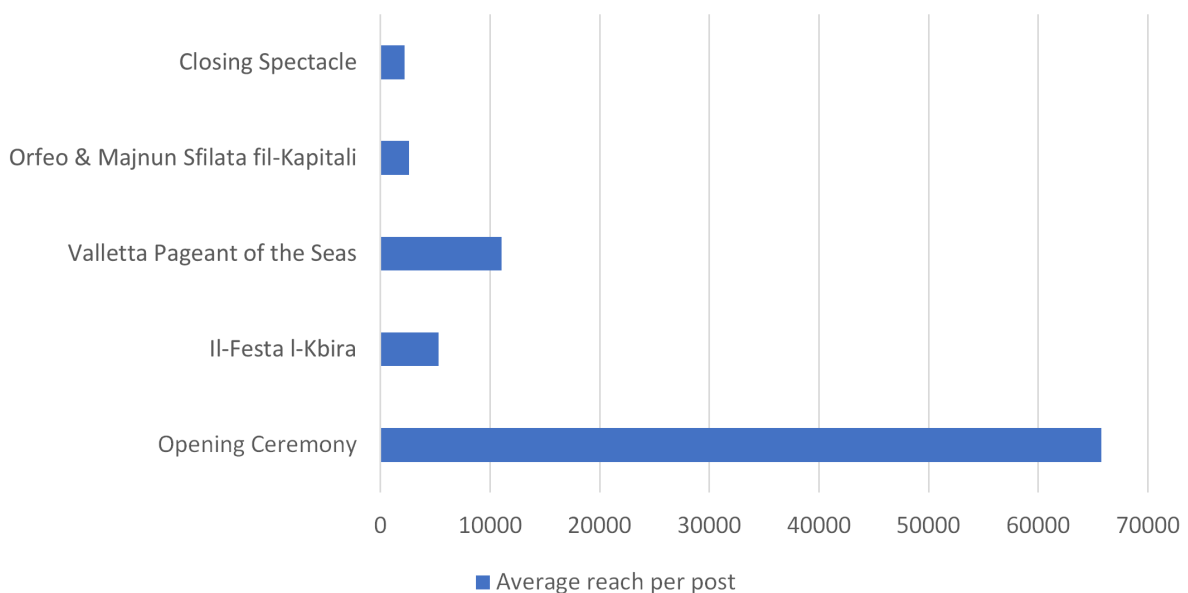
- *The Official Valletta 2018 Opening* – During The Official Valletta 2018 Opening, the Valletta 2018 Facebook page saw its highest influx of posts; both image-based and videos, including live broadcasting of the spectacle. These totalled 41 separate posts over the course of the day. The

average reach for the day was 65,781 and interactions (including reactions, comments and shares) averaged 1,106 per post.

- *Il-Festa L-Kbira* – Il-Festa l-Kbira was a two-day event, although it is the second night which will be analysed in this context. This activity consisted of where the 4 parishes of Valletta came together for one night only. With 22 videos and images posted, there was an average of 5,279 reach and 90 average interactions on each post.
- *The Valletta Pageant of the Seas* – The Valletta Pageant of the Seas was a bi-yearly event that took place in the Grand Harbour, consisting of an evening-long series of activities on the water. With a total of 22 posts, the average reach for the day was 11,059 and 320 average interactions per post.
- *Orfeo & Majnun – Sfilata fil-Kapitali* – Orfeo & Majnun was a two-night spectacle, consisting of an opera performance on the first night and a large, city-wide parade on the second day. For the purposes of this analysis, we are taking the parade (Sfilata fil-Kapitali) as the major event. In total 21 posts were published on the day with an average reach 2,608 and average of 33 interactions per post.
- *The Valletta 2018 Official Closing – L-Aħħar Festa* – For The Valletta 2018 Official Closing, a total of 26 posts were uploaded, consisting of both images and videos. The average reach for posts during this particular event was of 2,210, while there was an average of 25 interactions on each post, putting both reach interaction at a much lower standard than that of The Official Valletta 2018 Opening.

The bar chart below displays the average reach and for all 5 events.

Chart 4: Average reach per post



Facebook also served as the main advertising tool as it was considered the most flexible and easiest way to reach a more targeted audience. Given that Instagram is owned by Facebook, the latter social network also served as a secondary digital advertising platform helping the Foundation possibly reach an audience less accessible on other networks.

Instagram

Much like Facebook, Instagram was mostly used during events and activities leading up to the ECoC year as well as throughout the year to give people an extra special look into behind the scenes footage.

The formula was that for minor events, it would have the same coverage as Facebook; three images or videos, with up to three Insta Stories, directly live from events. During bigger events, it would be used for behind the scenes images and footage with the bulk of the posts being posted on Facebook due to the high concentration of material.

The inception of Insta Stories and the Highlights bar, launched around mid-2018 proved to be an ideal tool for advertising and alleviating from too many profile posts, allowing the Foundation's page to create ad-hoc videos as well as go live directly to all Facebook users to follow during events.

The progression here was slightly different because, as a platform, Instagram is more dynamic than many other platforms. The increase of followers grew by 1,210 between January 2017 and the end of the same year while in 2018 the recorded growth slowed slightly, totalling 1,069, for a total of 6,238 followers. It is believed that being such a dynamic platform, people follow and unfollow pages more easily than they would on Facebook, where users maintain a more stable link to the pages they follow. Other reasons for this slowdown in follower growth could be multiple; too many adverts on the feed, material which does not interest the user personally, or even too many posts at one go.

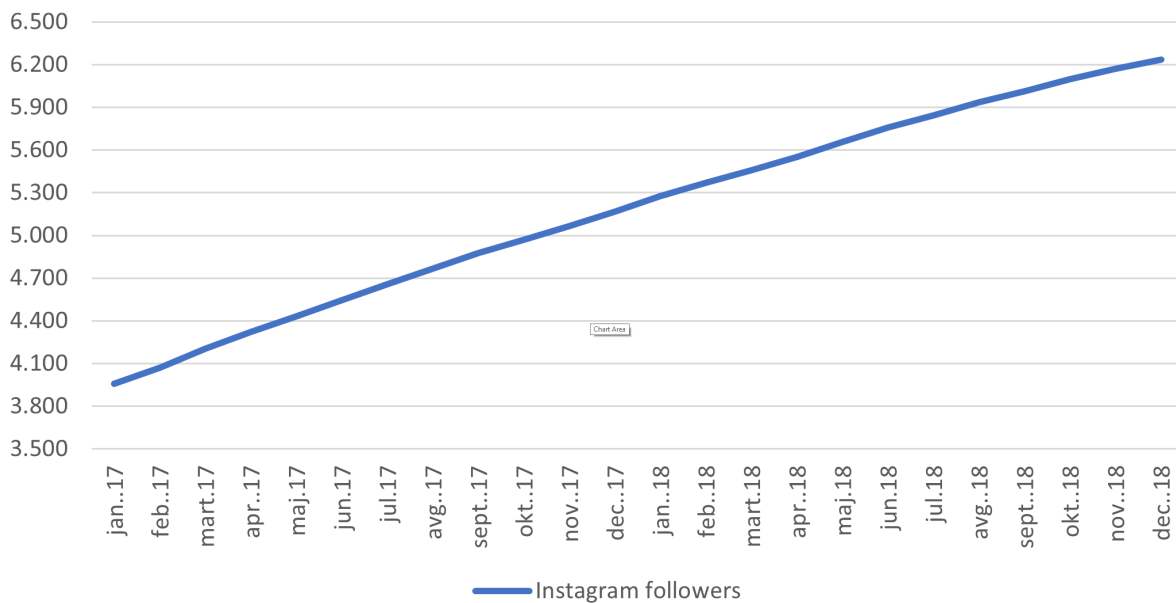
Unlike Facebook, there was also no exceptional growth recorded in Instagram followers with only 109 new follows in the month of January 2018. It may seem that here, the Official Valletta Opening and other major events presented in the previous section, did not have the same impact on page interactions as they did on Facebook. Again, reasons for this could be multiple. However, having said that, the month of January recorded the highest influx of likes for the year with 2,645 and the highest amount of comments with a total of 30 over the 13 posts in that one month.

Larger special events, namely The Official Valletta 2018 Opening, Il-Festa L-Kbira, The Valletta Pageant of the Seas, Orfeo & Majnun – Sfilata fil-Kapitali and The Valletta 2018 Official Closing – L-Aħħar Festa, did not have adverse following differences from other events that happened throughout the year, unlike what was seen with Facebook.

Follower demographics on Instagram are very similar to the Facebook data above. Once again there were 12% more female followers compared to male (56% vs 44%). The most accessible age brackets are also very similar with the most popular ones being 25-34 and 35-44 with 41% and 23% respectively.

The chart below shows an overview of the growth in followers on Instagram.

Chart 5: Instagram followers



Lastly, a word about Instagram advertising. Even though there is a function to create advertising directly through Instagram for Instagram, Valletta 2018's advertising on the platform has always gone through Facebook Ads, meaning the total monetary sum would be divided non-equally between the two platforms and placed according to audience following and even content created.

Although the overall trend is that as a rule of thumb Facebook gets higher reach and is more cost-effective in most cases, a deeper look into around 125 ad campaigns cross-promoted to Instagram during 2018 only, reveals that there were cases when due to either high text content of the video or image or a more active presence on the particular platform, adverts on Instagram became doubly effective on Instagram yielding a higher reach and more cost-effectiveness in terms of reach and interactions per post¹. Instagram performed better in cases where Facebook content regulations hindered optimum advertising conditions.

Twitter

Twitter is a lesser used social network in Malta making it more difficult to establish a local audience, which was the primary target audience throughout Valletta 2018. For this reason, it was decided to use Twitter in cases when there was a further need to engage with international audiences, particularly during the Annual International Conferences that happened during the last quarter of each year. Other singular items were placed on the feed such as, videos from The Official Valletta 2018 Opening, certain bi-monthly event information videos (more commonly referred to as the What's On videos) and advertising leading up to the aforementioned Annual Conference.

The other uses for Twitter include retweets concerning the Foundation from partner entities or individuals. This usually happened close to and around high-profile events, particularly where other public entities were involved.

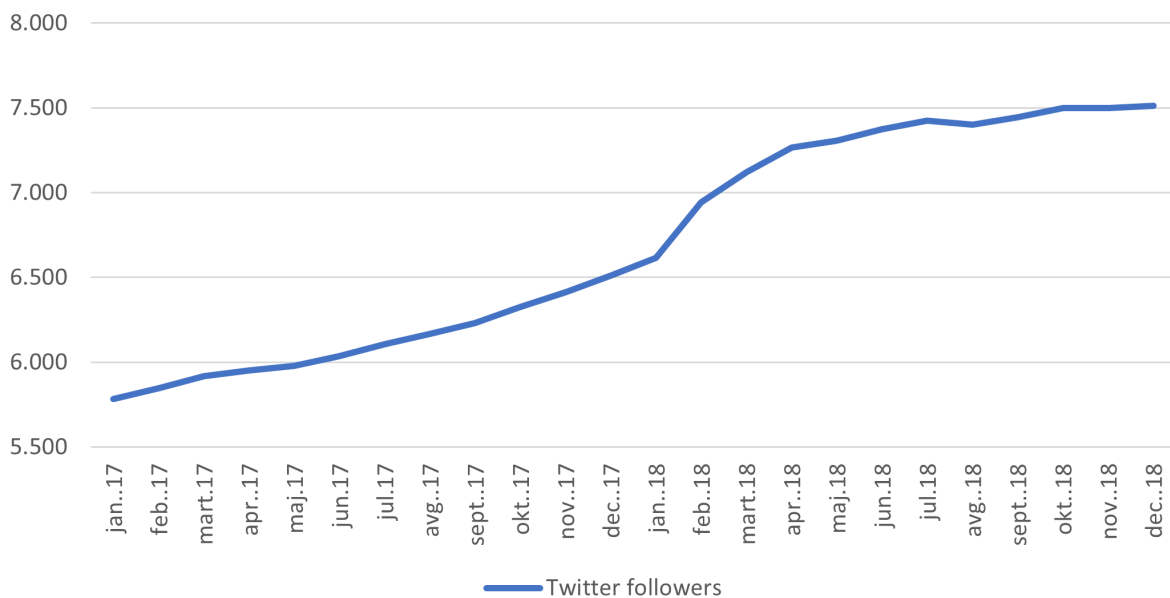
¹ The particular advert campaigns are listed as follows: Años Luz adverts in February (consisting of 2 images and 1 video), Sharing The Legacy image advert in March, U-19 video advert in April, Curatorial School adverts (consisting of 1 image and 1 video), Manchester Reds Game video advert in September, Nisga Exhibition image advert in September, Sharing the Legacy adverts in September (consisting of two videos), RIMA: to be defined exhibition in November, Magna Żmien image advert in November, Constellations video advert in November.

Much like other social networks, Twitter gains and loses followers regularly (weekly, monthly etc.) allowing for a high turnover of audiences. The progression here was more uniform between end of 2016 and end of 2018, with an 807-follower growth by end of 2017 and 1,000 by end 2018. This allows for the assumption that the audience turnover has been fairly regular and balanced between losses and gains.

The follower demographic on the Foundation’s Twitter is where there is a slight difference from the other platforms discussed. Male followers on this platform surpass female ones by 4%, totalling 52% and 48% respectively. As discussed in previous sections, the female demographic normally has the higher following. It would be difficult to speculate as to why this could be without an in-depth study of the specific platform.

The chart below illustrates the progression of followers on Twitter.

Chart 6: Twitter followers



If we had to look at 2018 as a whole year on Twitter, we see that out of 42 Tweets throughout the year, there was an average of 29 likes on each post, with 11.3 retweets and 28.3 link clicks on both images and videos. The highest concentration of these were during the three days of the Sharing the Legacy – Annual International Conference which, as identified in previous years, is the event in the year where we gain the most followers and interactions on that particular platform.

During the 2018 conference there were a total of 34 posts with 39 link clicks, 46 retweets and 106 likes. With over 40K impressions over the course of the conference there were an average of 1,198 impressions and 14.5 engagement on each separate post. Most of the audience here, we find, is non-Maltese, reflective of the participation of which also depends on the University, Faculty and country of origin of the keynote speakers. One of the best performing tweets this year was during the ECoC Panel where we had a group of speakers from various past, present and future ECoC cities and the various outlets were retweeting, answering and liking the post.

The chart below illustrates the following during the Sharing The Legacy Conference between 24 and 26 October 2018.

One observation shared across all three social networks is that they each experience strong activity at the beginning of the year.; Twitter started in January with an overall of 32,957 impressions and 462 engagements, however this dwindled in the passing of months.

YouTube

The Valletta 2018 YouTube channel was mostly used as an archive for videos and visual productions in the run up to and during the year of Valletta 2018. These included videos from upcoming projects, running projects as well as audio visual projects throughout the year.

With 165 videos uploaded there have been a total of 1,696,061 views, with an average of 10.3K views per video. After the Opening Ceremony in January 2018, many of these views were aided through Google Ads and YouTube Ads (more data to follow in the next section).

The most watched Valletta 2018 video since 2014 was *Colour The City: Celebrating Our City, Celebrating our Culture* with 542, 023 views. 99% of views were through YouTube Advertising with 0.4% from external sources, which originated from various media outlets sharing the video as part of a nationwide campaign. 20% came through Valletta 2018 Facebook Ads Manager where the video was being advertised in tandem with the other Social Media platforms.

During *The Official Valletta 2018 Opening* advertising campaign, a number of videos were being advertised through multiple channels working in tandem. These videos garnered a total viewership of 110,164 views with an average of 13,770 views per video. In this case Facebook was not engaged directly with YouTube and all Facebook advertising was being done natively on that platform. Throughout the campaign there was an average of 92% traffic from YouTube Ads, while YouTube Search yielded 21%. The most effective external resources that yielded the most traffic was Google Search with 31%, while Facebook Advertising showed 28% traffic.

The Opening Ceremony on 20th January 2018 was livestreamed, garnering 21,046 views on its own for over 8 hours of streaming while two other shorter livestreams yielded 1,287 and 2,557 views respectively.

Another notable campaign on YouTube was the *Dal-Baħar Madwarha* campaign with two videos, that advertised the first major Valletta 2018 visual arts exhibition and garnered close to 39K views. An average of 97% of traffic came from YouTube advertising, while an average of 49% of external traffic was diverted through the Valletta 2018 website.

Later in the year a campaign ran for *Aħna Refuġjati*, a Maltese-language opera that took place during the last week of August and the beginning of September. This saw the publication of six videos on YouTube with a total 82,594 views, which equates to an average of 13,766 views per video over the period of just over one month. Like other YouTube campaigns, the highest number of views were driven through YouTube Ads which amounted to an average of 98% per videos advertised (three out of the six videos), with Facebook being the source for an average of 40% of views. YouTube Search yielded 31% views, while Google Search contributed 24% of total views.

As one can see, this YouTube traffic information only concentrated on four sources in particular (YouTube Ads, YouTube Search, Google Search and Facebook) as they were the most uniform throughout all the stats recorded as well as the most effective sources.

Other Advertising

The AdWords platform was used for other advertising such as Google Ads and YouTube Ads and includes other placements. Throughout Valletta 2018 there were approximately 46 advertising campaigns that garnered close to 17M impressions and 24K clicks.

One of the bigger campaigns through AdWords for *The Official Valletta 2018 Opening*, ran for a month starting on the 20th December 2017 until 20th January 2018. The overall campaign had 2.01M impressions and 4,540 clicks. This campaign was placed and done by a private entity.

For the Google Display Campaign for the same run accumulated 1.89M impressions with approximately 4,280 clicks. The audience demographics here were very similar to other social media platforms; the most popular age brackets being 25-34 and 35-44, with the latter having the highest audience. In the statistics there were also a high number of Unknown Age present. No gender information was present. Here, as well, mobile phones and devices were the most popular in delivering adverts to the audience.

The Google Video Campaign for the same event had 2 videos in one advert group and garnered a total of 34,000 views and 122,000 impressions. The demographics were more pronounced here with the 25-34 to 35-44 age-brackets being the most pronounced, while Unknown and other ages were much lower. No information about audience genders was present here either. For this particular campaign, mobile phones and tablet devices came very close in advert delivery, with mobile phones still being the most popular.

The rest of the campaigns for 2018 (44 in total) were all created in house, also through AdWords by the Valletta 2018 Marketing team, so the information available is less detailed and GoogleAds and YouTube Video Campaigns are grouped under the same numbers, which added up to 14,537,962 impressions and 19,178 clicks.

The top-performing campaign was the Curatorial School Ad 1 Campaign with 6,996,603 impressions with Dal-Baħar Madwarha at 958,276 in second and Nisġa with 827,192 impressions in third. However in terms of clicks, the top performing ad campaign was the Sharing The Legacy Annual Conference campaign with 5,584 clicks and 293,403 impressions, giving it one of the best CPC (cost per click) for the whole year.

Online Mentions

A real-time brand-monitoring online tool was used throughout the years to keep track of the Valletta 2018 brand exposure through online mentions on certain social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, online blogs, and other channels. This allowed for a more holistic view of the different audiences interacting with Valletta 2018 on their respective social profiles.

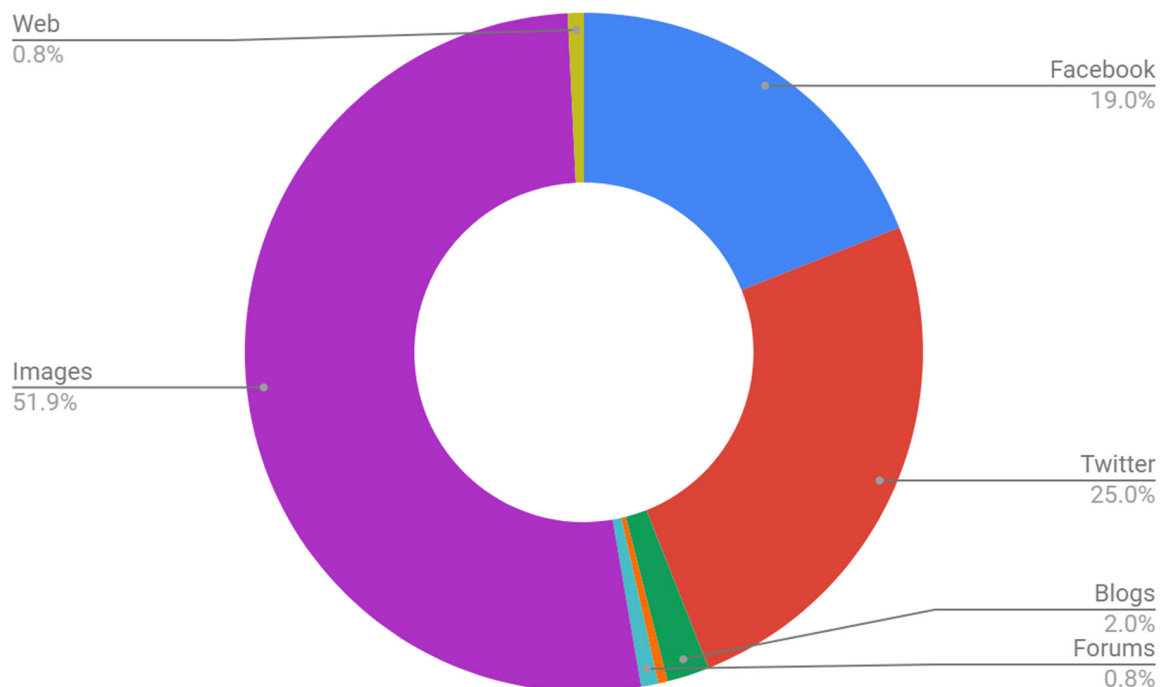
During the first recorded year in 2016, there was a total of 1,893 mentions of the term "Valletta 2018". This grew to 7,931 by the end of 2017 with a concentration of 1,700 in December alone. This also reflected in data recorded during 2018, which grew to 37,734 mentions by the end of the year.

The greatest concentration of mentions took place in January of 2018 which showed 10,579 mentions in total. This goes in line with data for other social media channels, as discussed earlier in this report, where an exponential growth was seen in the immediate run up to the *The Official Valletta 2018 Opening* as well as in the aftermath.

The total mentions during 2018 came from various sources. Facebook yielded 6,791 mentions², while Twitter garnered 8,927 mentions in just one year. News portals and blogs were captured separately and these accumulated 2,011 and 722 mentions respectively based on news articles, press releases, and other material about the Valletta 2018 Foundation or its events. Videos brought about 160 mentions, with Forums and Web garnering 295 and 274 mentions respectively.

The highest yielding source of mentions was in the Images category which yielded 18,554 mentions. The Image category could refer entirely to Instagram posts and the #valletta2018 #valletta and @valletta2018 tags on the platform. These were not necessarily all Valletta 2018-centric posts; many posts recorded under this category related broadly to the city of Valletta, rather than specific Valletta 2018 events, however would contain hashtags or tags related to Valletta 2018.

The table below gives a better idea of the sources of mentions related to Valletta 2018 during the ECoC year.



The Valletta 2018 Website

The Valletta 2018 website served to inform users about events taking place during the European Capital of Culture year as part of the Cultural Programme. Apart from having a vast events calendar, the website also provided users with news, an informative blog, information about the Foundation and various resources.

During 2017, the year during which Valletta was preparing its Cultural Programme for 2018, the website was visited by a total of 141,241 users. A significant spike in page visits is noticed on September 27th, 2017, when the Valletta 2018 Foundation launched its Cultural Programme (1529 users). Another significant spike can be noticed on December 31st, 2017, when the Foundation held its annual New Year's Eve event; this time ushering in the European Capital of Culture year 2018 (2768 users).

² Although the brand monitoring utilised tracks Facebook mentions that are made through publicly-accessible Facebook pages, it does not track mentions on private profiles. Therefore, it is estimated there may be a higher incidence of Facebook mentions than those which are recorded in this data.

During 2018, the Valletta 2018 website reached a total of 397,747 users, with 578,310 sessions and 2,020,364 page views in total. The majority of users hailed from Malta (53.91%), however users also hailed from the United Kingdom (10.17%), Germany (5.19%), the United States (4.11%), Italy (3.67%) and France (1.89%), amongst others.

The age range of the majority of users was between 25-34 (28.57%), while the rest of the age groups ranked as follows: 35-44 (17.2%); 65+ (15.62%); 55-64 (15.01%); 45-54 (14.95%); 18-24 (8.65%). The website was visited by a majority of females, totalling 60.79%, while males ranked at 39.21%.

Most users viewed the Valletta 2018 website via the Google Chrome browser (47%), while Safari ranked second (22.38%) and Android Webview ranked third (8.64%). The most popular method of accessing the website was through mobile (47.7%), while desktop ranked at a close 41.55% and tablet ranked at 10.75%.

The highest number of users ever registered on the website in one single day was during the Valletta 2018 Opening Ceremony event – amounting to 11,213 unique users on the day. The Opening was preceded by a week of fringe activities around Valletta – this also generated the public's interest. One can note a surge of activity starting from the 13th January 2018 (2987 users) going up to 3856 users on the 15th January 2018 and 5965 users on the 17th January 2018.

Other noteworthy mentions for 2018 include: the 7th April 2018 (Il-Festa l-Kbira event – 2935 users); the 7th June 2018 (Valletta Pageant of the Seas event – 6589 users); 27th October 2018 (Sfilata fil-Kapitali event as part of Orfeo & Majnun – 2081 users); 15th December 2018 (The Valletta 2018 Closing event – 2728 users).

The Valletta 2018 App

The Valletta 2018 App functioned in tandem with the Valletta 2018 website, meaning information stored in the Valletta 2018 website was automatically added to the App in the form of an events calendar. The App was also used to purchase tickets to events. Users could login either through Facebook or by creating an account through the App itself.

The App allowed users to select categories they were interested in, select events by browsing a map, add events as favourites, sign up for the Tal-Kultura volunteer programme, change language (App was available in English and Maltese) and give feedback, amongst others.

The App was downloaded by a total of 4656 users throughout 2018. The most popular language version used was English (this was the default language when downloaded). Amongst the most popular events marked as favourites, one can find the Valletta Pageant of the Seas, Carnival 2018, the Malta Jazz Festival 2018, Solar Cinema, Erba' Pjazez (the Valletta 2018 Opening), Earth Garden Festival 2018, Notte Bianca 2018, Science in the City and the Valletta Green Festival 2018.

Concluding Remarks

While Social Media was a big part of the Valletta 2018 Foundation's advertising and visibility, there is still much work to be done in reaching certain audiences, and in utilising some social networks to their full potential.

While older audiences were targeted through outdoor visibility, traditional media (television, radio, newspapers) and face to face interaction, the younger audience, particularly those in the 13-17 bracket

were significantly less engaged. More innovative and dynamic means need to be adopted to engage with this demographic.

With the range of social networks that were used, Facebook and Instagram may have been overused during 2018, causing a saturation and, in some cases, losses of followers and likes due to a large output of advertising material over a short period of time. A significant decrease in follows and interactions was observed as the year progressed, which may be an indication of an oversaturation of the target audiences.

Twitter on the other hand, was fiercely underused throughout the year – although less popular in the local context, it could have been very useful in interacting with international operators, academics and media houses, as well as other ECoCs and international cultural entities. Doing so would have enabled Valletta 2018 to engaged with completely new audiences. The success of Twitter engagement during the annual conferences can be taken as an indication that this channel could have been used in a more productive manner.

As indicated by the data related to AdWords, YouTube advertising and GoogleAds, these channels should continue to be utilised as they proved to be very useful in delivering content, images and videos to a wide audience. The cost per advert may also be more cost-effective than Facebook because even though Facebook is popular and more widely used, the change in algorithms could mean an increase in pricing with diminished performance overall.

So looking forward, one may look into targeting different age groups separately and engaging them differently to ensure a better reach for all audiences, and also better use of more social media networks without the specific and heavy use of Facebook and Instagram to ensure better and more efficient use of various networks to target a variety of audiences.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

European Capitals of Culture have often been perceived as unique opportunities for the rebranding of a city. This goes hand-in-hand with the branding of the ECoC title itself, and the ways in which the ECoC programme engages with its diverse audiences. The studies in this theme shed further light on this engagement strategy and the degrees to which the Valletta 2018 programme has succeeded in capturing the attention of different audiences.

The data within these theme provides valuable insight into how large-scale public initiatives - in particular those within the cultural sector - can nurture and maintain an audience over an extended period of time. The different marketing strategies adopted throughout the run-up to 2018 and, more pertinently, throughout the year itself have yielded successful engagement with some sectors of society, although not necessarily with others. The findings within this report enable stakeholders to explore these issues in more detail and trace a comprehensive engagement strategy for their own future initiatives.





CONCLUDING REMARKS

Each of the studies presented throughout this report outline key aspects of what the ECoC title represented for Malta. Although different drastically in scope, methodology and topic, these studies provide a unique insight into how the ECoC title influenced social and cultural activity in Malta throughout 2018 and in the years preceding the title.

A number of studies, such as those within Themes 2 and 4 (Governance & Finance and The Tourist Experience, respectively) are to be taken within the proper context, as they relate more directly to developments within the broader Maltese economy. Although still strongly influenced by outside factors, other studies, such as those in Themes 1, 3, and 5 (Cultural & Territorial Vibrancy; Community Inclusion & Space; and The Valletta Brand) deal more directly with the immediate impacts of the activities that took place throughout the ECoC year.

As these studies evolved over the years, and as the researchers discussed and debated their findings throughout the quarterly meetings held by the Evaluation & Monitoring Steering Committee, it became increasingly apparent that this research represents only the tip of the iceberg.

Throughout these meetings discussions on various topics arose - from wellbeing to transportation, passing through sustainable development, the diversity of labour within the creative industries, and the particularities of the governance structures within the cultural sector. Each of these, along with many more, merits further investigation and would contribute immeasurably to the understanding of the true impacts of Valletta 2018 on Maltese society.

Furthermore, these studies proved to be a valuable exercise in self-reflection for the research team responsible for their implementation. They allowed the team to step away from any platitudes and critique, and adopt a more critical and holistic approach towards the true impacts of the ECoC title.

It is hoped that these studies will provide a springboard, inspiring researchers and practitioners to adopt these concerns within their practice, maintaining the same critical and reflexive approach within their own work.





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Final Research Report
Valletta 2018 Foundation
www.valletta2018.org

