

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

**Dr Marcello Carammia
and Dr Marie Briguglio
with Gilmour Camilleri**

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		

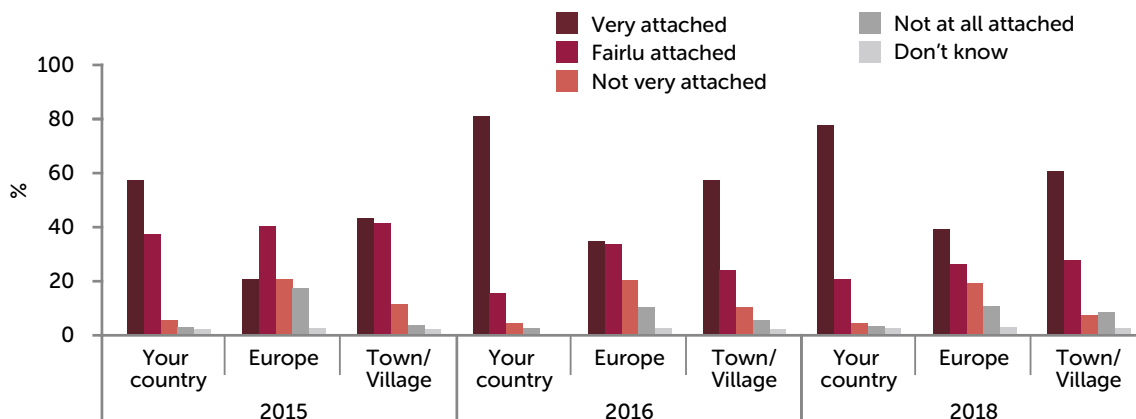
Description of Variables & Value Labels	2016			2018		
	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Some say European unification has already gone too far. Others say it should be strengthened. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a 10-point-scale. On this scale, '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.

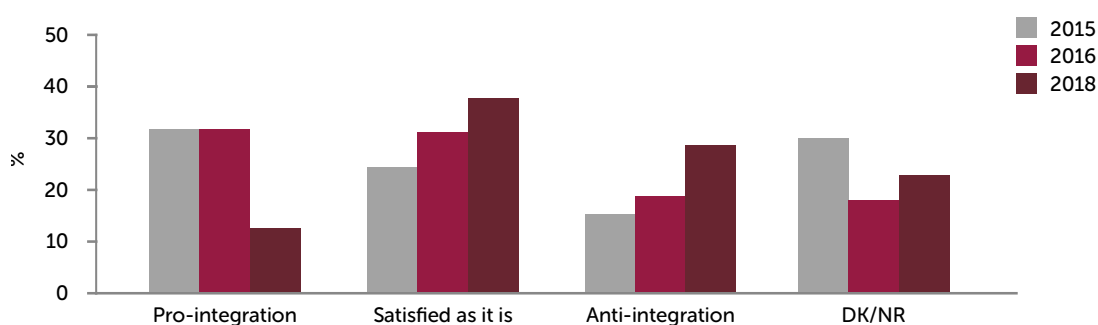
Figure 1-5 illustrate some of the main findings above.

Figure 1: Degree of Attachment to Europe



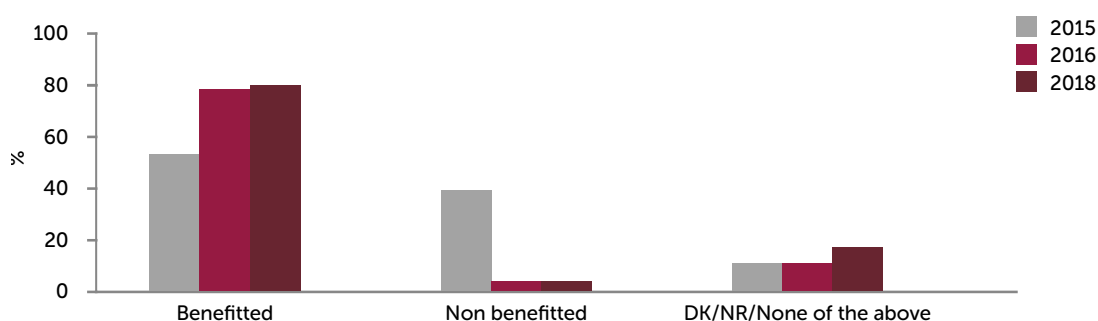
Source: Eurobarometer surveys data (Wave: 27/03/06) & Primary Survey Data

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



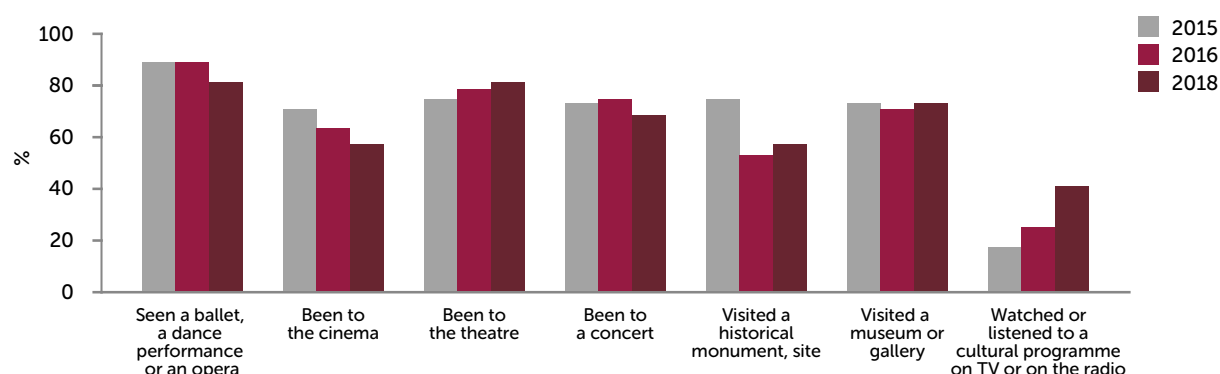
Source: European Elections Study (2009) & Primary Survey Data

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



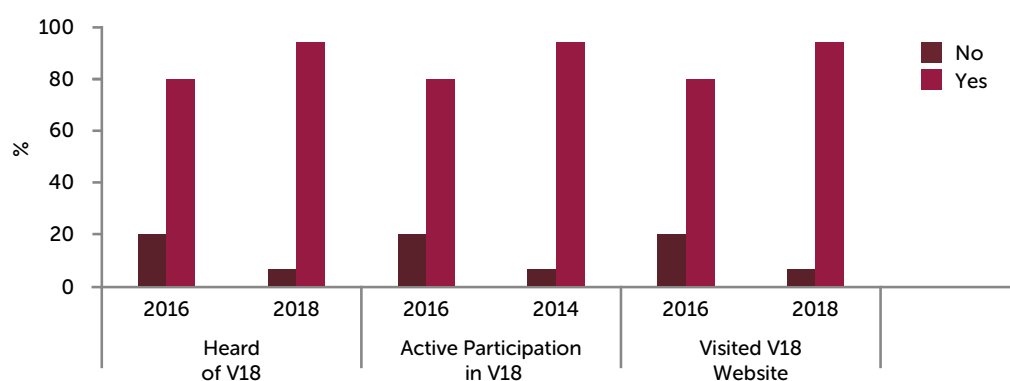
Source: European Elections Study (2009) & Primary Survey Data

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

benefitted 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.

REFERENCES

- Baldacchino, G. (2002). A Nationless State? Malta, National Identity and the EU. *West European Politics*, 25(4), 191-206.
- Briguglio, M., & Sultana, A. (2016) Man Cannot Live by Bread Alone: Cultural Participation and Life Satisfaction in Malta. *Journal of Mediterranean*
- Carammia, M. & Pace, R. (2015). The Anatomy of a Misfit: The 2014 European Election in Malta. *South European Society And Politics*, 20(3), 425-444.
- Cini, M. (2000). The Europeanization of Malta: Adaptation, Identity and Party Politics. *South European Society And Politics*, 5(2), 261-276.
- CRAM, L. (2012). Does the EU Need a Navel? Implicit and Explicit Identification with the European Union*. *JCMS: Journal Of Common Market Studies*, 50(1), 71-86.
- Deutsch, K. (1953). *Nationalism and social communication* (1st ed.). [Cambridge]: Wiley, New York.
- Dragoman, D. (2008). National identity and Europeanization in post-communist Romania. The meaning of citizenship in Sibiu: European Capital of Culture 2007. *Communist And Post-Communist Studies*, 41(1), 63-78.
- Duchesne, S. & Frogner, A. (1995). Is There a European Identity? In O. Niedermayer & R. Sinnott, *Public Opinion and International Governance*, Vol. II (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Fligstein, N. (2008). *Euro-Clash: The EU, European Identity and the Future of Europe* (1st ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- García, B., Cox, T. (2013). *European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-Term Effects*. Directorate General For Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies. Retrieved from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT_ET\(2013\)513985_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT_ET(2013)513985_EN.pdf)
- Lahdesmaki, T. (2012). Discourses of Europeanness in the reception of the European Capital of Culture events: The case of Pecs 2010. *European Urban And Regional Studies*, 21(2), 191-205.
- O'Callaghan, C. & Linehan, D. (2007). Identity, politics and conflict in dockland development in Cork, Ireland: European Capital of Culture 2005. *Cities*, 24(4), 311-323.
- Pace, R. (2011). Malta: Euroscepticism in a Polarised Polity. *South European Society And Politics*, 16(1), 133-157.
- Richards, G. & Wilson, J. (2004). The impact of cultural events on city image: Rotterdam, cultural capital of Europe 2001. *Urban Studies*, 41(10), 1931-1951.
- Richards, G. (2000). The European cultural capital event: Strategic weapon in the cultural arms race? *International Journal Of Cultural Policy*, 6(2), 159-181.

Richards, G. (2015). Evaluating the European capital of culture that never was: the case of BrabantStad 2018. *Journal Of Policy Research In Tourism, Leisure And Events*, 7(2), 118-133.

Sanders, D. & Bellucci, P. (2012). *The Europeanization of national polities? Citizenship and Support in a Post-Enlargement Union* (1st ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA.

Sassatelli, M. (2002). Imagined Europe: The Shaping of a European Cultural Identity Through EU Cultural Policy. *European Journal Of Social Theory*, 5(4), 435-451.

Sassatelli, M. (2009). *Becoming Europeans* (1st ed.). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Steiner, L., Frey, B., & Hotz, S. (2014). European Capitals of Culture and Life Satisfaction. *Urban Studies*, 52(2), 374-394.