

The diversification of the supply of museums and public libraries by the performing arts in Paris and Marseille

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1. Introduction

The Statutes of the International Council of Museums are referring to non-profit organisations only and signal their multi-field output: acquisition, conservation, research, communication and exhibitions of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The museum main goals are education, study and enjoyment (ICOM, 2007: 2). Fernandez-Blanco and Prieto-Rodriguez (2011: 291) distinguish three main groups of museum outputs: collection, exhibition and other services. The central functions of public libraries are also acquiring and preserving cultural collections in order to communicate them to the largest number of visitors.

The “managers era” (Zolberg, 1981) started to spread within the museum community from the 1980’s. When analysing this managerial change, Hutter (1998: 101) divided museum output into three segments: a rather stagnant trend for collection accumulation and preservation; a quick increase for display services in showing and explaining works of art; and a low volume level of paying add-on services with a serious perspective of growth. Commercial values did not alter the corporate culture of public libraries so much. The increasing multicultural society and the digitalization of the access to the collections are now challenging the economic viability of these cultural institutions as public subsidies are more and more related to attendance in France. The diversification of services is therefore crucial for staying attractive.

Digitization is more threatening the public libraries as the potential digital guide on a museum website has an undetermined effect on the willingness to travel (Towse, 2010). Bakhshi and Throsby (2011: 4, 10) analyse museum digitization as a way to broaden the composition of their audience and to draw more interactive links as the online visit is more complementing than substituting the onsite visitⁱ.

However, the digitization of museum objects is more labour-intensive than for library content, which is automatically catalogued upon production (Navarrete, 2013: 331). When

applying a Free Disposal Hull technology on the data of French speaking regions of Belgium from 1995 to 1997, Mairesse and Vanden Eeckaut (2002) pointed out that technical and scale inefficiency is higher when the museum is focused on preservation than when oriented to visitors or external objectives. The number of registered people and borrowers decreased by 4% between 2005 and 2010 in public libraries while their estimated attendance increased by 24% over this period (MCC-SLL, 2010). Visitors have then a plurality of activities in the library like group works; reading newspapers.

The French Ministry of Culture launched a research call around the new economics of public libraries and museums. I proposed a survey with another laboratory on the diversification of supply of museums and public libraries by the performing arts in the metropolis of Paris and Aix-Marseille. The purpose of this grant-aided study is to analyse the weight and the objectives of programming performing arts in the cultural institutions. The pressure to shift into multidisciplinary cultural centres raises economical and aesthetical problems. The economical challenges concern the cultural action strategy to broaden the attendance; the effects on the perceived institutional brand; the allocation of time to attend upon visitors to the detriment of time for conservation and preservation in an environment of decreasing public subsidies; the diversification of earnings for performing arts companies and story tellers. The aesthetical challenges around the forms of dialogue between visual or graphic arts and performing arts may stimulate creativity and have a significant impact on the monetary valuation of these interdisciplinary experiences.

First I present a literature review related to the research question, then the main hypotheses, the methodology of the survey and some questioning results from the qualitative case studies.

2. Literature review

Private demand of public libraries and museum services increases with the level of education and income, and age, except for the pupils who are over represented (Donnat, 2009; Eurostat, 2007). Most studies conclude that demand is price-inelastic (O'Hagan, 1995). However, Prieto-Rodriguez and al. (2005) pointed out that the price elasticity of the global demand for cinema, theatre, concerts, ballets and museum tickets, is more significant. In their literature review on the dispute about admission fees in museum, Fernández-Blanco and Prieto-

Rodríguez (2011: 293) distinguish four types of arguments in favour of free tickets: the positive impact on the attendance of lower socioeconomic classes; the possible compensations with public grants or private donations; the Pareto-optimal equilibrium because marginal costs are close to zero; the positive external benefits for the whole society are justifying public grants. Nevertheless, private benefits may justify some fees. Gombault and al.'s survey (2006) on the experience of free tickets in some French museums understates the importance of the effects on the volume of attendance. The authors highlight the pleasant shifts in the consumption experience as the constraint of productivity during visit is released. Opposite, Eidelmann's study (2009) estimated attendance has increased by 50% from 2007 to 2008 for the 14 museums which experienced free tickets. The DCMS survey pointed out that the policy of free entry increased visits to UK museums and arts galleries from 2001 to 2007. However, Selwood and Davies (2005) identified another factor of attractiveness with the increased facilities offered by the awarded funds from the National Funds. The new buildings and projects could improve the comfort for visitors' receptionⁱⁱ. Therefore, programming choices have an impact on the targeted audience's willingness to pay and to travel. An analysis of the output diversification is therefore relevant to study the relationships of cultural institutions with performing artists and their audience in an environment of substitutable leisure, while uncertainty on the value of the art works is radical (Karpik, 2007).

The diversification of the main strategic objectives increased. In the 1970s and 1980s; a museum utopia is derived from the doctrine of cultural development to valorise inhabitants' cultural identity. Following his interest for the preservation of cultural diversity; Rivière (1989) formalized the concept of 'ecological museum' which should not be visited but inhabited. Mairesse (2002) indicates that professionals give a priority to education and permanence for the museum missions. Nine other missions are important: tourism; visual image; conservation; cultural identity; exhibitions; prestige; preservation of the collection; research and acquiring. Since the 80s, the strong expansion of contemporary exhibition supervisors is connected with the growing population of visual artists. This trend questioned the leadership positions of museum curators for their ability to discern the relevant new works of art. But their status has not been called into question (Jeanpierre and Sofio, 2009; Benhamou and Moureau, 2006; Tobelem, 2005). The decline in public authorities' support to museums was accompanied by inflation of art exhibitions (Poulard, 2010).

Competition between major museums is more and more based on blockbusters exhibitions. Referring to the under-exploitation of the potential abilities of human brain, Grenier (2013)

proposes an alternative concept of “polymorphic museum”. She identifies the qualities of adaptation and the diversification of tasks which are necessary to ensure the viability of these cultural institutions. Beyond the historical social, memorial, cultural and educational functions, the future of the museum is located in the unitary construction of a cluster of new features, and new audiences. The ideal scheme concerns the formation of a museum art center that would bring the concepts of art museums and museums of civilization or specialized museums. As a producer of research, this kind of museum would engage in innovative devices for education and training. In regards to cultural globalization, it participates in writing a history of more pluralistic art while its local presence is strengthened with new proposals towards the attendance, which are taking into account the current cultural diversity.

Public library staff is thinking also about the diversification and the renewal of their missions. From the 1970s and 1980s, a new model around the modernized concept of library-media was supposed to help overcoming the gap between scholarly and popular libraries (Bertrand, 2009). Rouet (1998) showed also a reconfiguration of public libraries through the diversification of managerial functions and the rise of relational work with the visitors at the cost of internal work for conservation.

Clement (2008) criticized the limitations associated with a Universalist vision of libraries, which could open the field of abilities of the population. Contrary to move towards cultural homogenization, the model of public reading should evolve by taking into account cultural diversity. Calenge (1999) developed a similar critic on the evaluation of information policies. The library criteria are not fitted to take into account the plural modes of appropriation of the library by the neighbourhood. Librarians’ documentary skills are recommended to evolve towards the formation of pluralist cultural centres. Toffler (1990)’s concept of ‘prosumption’ provides a behaviour model for the consumers who are contributing to more personalised process of production. Some users are more autonomous and express their needs to the librarians in the framework of an interpersonal negotiation. Despite staff training to the users’ reception and orientation, the documentary empowerment is still an unequal process, however. Readers’ levels of language and cognitive skills are indeed different. Durand et al. (2006)’s report put into perspective the objectives for cultural action devices. Few librarians claim seeking an expansion of the readers’ socio-demographic composition. According to this report, the main motivations lie in the job satisfaction to let readers know the collections and in the organization of events that elected local authorities could enjoy. The main objective should be strengthening local political legitimacy of the cultural institution organization.

Programming shows and inviting performing artists for the cultural action devices in the museums and public libraries raise the question of the partnerships building. Casual and renewed partner relationships with the cultural institutions are contributing to mutual expected gains in reputation. The integration of shows in the programme of these cultural institutions is part of building a brand identity. The brand strategy is based on spreading a belief in a consumer contract with the promises of satisfaction for buyers through shared values and the continuous innovations to maintain the perception of competitive advantage (Kapferer, 2006).

The partnerships with the cultural institutions have an economical importance for the performing arts companies. The filler-data of the qualitative sample of the nation-wide survey on their territories and their resources from 2007 to 2009 show 21.5% of the performances are given in the establishments which are not specialised in performing arts (Urrutiaguer, Henry, 2012). The part is the highest for the “regional” companies - which perform quite exclusively in the region where their head office is set up - and the lowest for the “out of region” troupes - which declared the time of diffusion allocated to their region at the last rank or did not even prospect this area (34.7% and 8.3% respectively). Story tellers are dependent from the library networks for running. A key question is the prevalent objective: are the performing artists improving the access to the collections or are they most working for their promotion? For instance, Claude Burgelin, professor in literature at the University of Lyon 2, objects to a lot of regional companies their reading weakness and defends the concept of libraries as ‘book temples’ⁱⁱⁱ.

3. Main hypotheses

A first type of strategy is to rely on the reticular logic of matching performing artists and establishments according to a level of similar reputation to optimize the valuation of their collaborative work (Menger, 2002). Major art museums can open windows for programming renowned performing artists within their blockbuster exhibitions while smaller institutions come into relationship with lower-rated artists. An alternative is to take into account the segmentation of demand, which may justify artists’ choices to touch their micro-public. A common objective is to create events to draw non-goers’ attention, whatever the scale of reputation. The challenge is therefore to stimulate a desire to appraise the collections among

the fans' performing artists. What are the contributions to maintain a regular audience and to attract younger visitors?

In the case of libraries, the most important event is story time (41% of cultural events in 2010 against 14% on average for conferences, meetings, readings for all, MCC-SLL, 2010). It is likely that librarians support frequently reading stories. The question then concerns the choice to outsource the organization of cultural events involving artists, which creates an event in the life of the place.

A second type of choice is coherent with the initiatives facing cultural diversity. The legitimacy of this paradigm of cultural policies has been strengthened in the mid-2000s by the signatures of the "Convention on the protection and the promotion of the diversity" by UNESCO in 2005, the "Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society" in December 2005. Agenda 21 for Culture has been signed in May 2004 by around 300 local authorities. Cultural vitality is promoted as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability (Hawkes, 2001). The main goal is to create spaces for intercultural dialogue and local population's participation.

Promoting the territorial registration of cultural heritage policies for social cohesion tends to value the invention of modalities for patrimonial recognition. The concept of "transverse interventions on heritage" (Suzanne, 2013) is intended to account for the development of combined actions between artistic practices and the recognition of new forms of knowledge, facts, objects into the local cultural heritage. This trend questions the particular cultural and civic project of libraries as a space for creation, access and dissemination of knowledge (Marceteau Paul, 2004) but also in their intercultural role (Bianchi, 2008; Salanouve, 2011). To what extent the partnerships between cultural institutions and performing artists are working for the recognition of a patrimonial interest for non academic popular practices? The professional experts are usually badly appraising the aesthetic value of the performances which integrate volunteers and are based on the perceptions of their environment and their cultural values. To what extent the recognition of a patrimonial value for these intercultural creations may compensate the judgment on their poor aesthetic value?

Bruns (2013) estimates that the concept of 'produsage' is better fitted than 'prosumption' to describe the practices of 'Web 2.0' users. The complex interactions between contributors in the different web communities create fluctuating power relations; the leading positions are changing according the merits of users' latest contributions. To what extent the performing

artists are adapting their practices to the segment of ‘producers’ which are looking for participative experiences? Are the spaces in the cultural institutions for autonomous creative practices serious competitors to performing arts like the “Fab Labs” or “Maker Space” in some US libraries?

4. Methodology

The methodology articulates a questionnaire and case studies. The questionnaire is sent to the museums and public libraries in the metropolis of Paris and Marseille by using the data of the General Direction of Heritage and the Service of Book and Reading. The main purpose of the case studies is to understand the modalities of the actions with performing artists according to managers’ strategies for their cultural action and budgets. The specific weight of the performing arts in the programme of cultural heritage institutions is very few studied in the economic literature while most managers and their service of cultural action are thinking about their potential contributions to attract casual visitors or new users.

The questionnaire is focused on activities related to the performing arts (shows, practice workshops, conferences, meetings, guided tours) in 2013. Data processing ensures respondents’ anonymity. The goal is to collect mainly quantitative data to understand the objectives, the diversity of choices in the allocation of resources and the pursuit of specific funding, partnerships, the degree of involvement of performing artists in the programming of the establishment, the weight of the various selected artistic fields. Some of the questions are ordinal by asking respondents to estimate rankings in their activities.

The questionnaire is divided into six sections:

- The place of the performing arts in programming with questions about the hierarchy of the time spent on different types of cultural events, the various fields of the performing arts involved in institutional activities, the types of spaces used to host artists
- The available resources with the number of full-time posts and the budget for the institution, the service of public relations, the activities involving performing artists
- The prioritization of partnerships as regards to the financing of activities with performing arts and the pooling of resources for the development of audience, the spaces to host resident artists

- The main objectives related to performing artists' activities in terms of artistic content, impact on the categories of audience and programmed artists' radiation level
- Communication policy around the commonly used channels and the website uses to increase the visibility of the performing arts
- The questioning of prospective developments in the performing arts from 2010 to 2014 and their future with open questions about their causes.

The case studies are designed to deepen the understanding of the strategies implemented by institutions and to examine interactions with artists and attendants-practitioners or users. The monographs of the different cases-institutions with their specific profile will be compared for analysis. The studies should provide many details in relation to information collected in the quantitative survey. This analysis should enlighten the different objectives of the management and the public relations service, the dynamics of collaboration between the mediation team and performing artists, the impact on the behaviours and users' mental representations of the institution.

The guiding principle is to rely on access to activity reports, financial balance over a longer period (2010 to 2012 for example, if the balances are not yet prepared for the year 2013) and interviews with people involved in the design and / or implementation of the institution's activities related to the performing arts in the scientific and cultural project. The request for access to activity reports and financial statements is intended to provide information about the general characteristics of the building, the organizational structure, the overall distribution of different activities with their attendance, expenses and resources and, if it is possible, to have more detailed information on activities involving performing artists. These ones are rarely seen in the activity reports when they are posted.

The main axis of a case study is to understand the strategies for the development and enhancement of educational activities or performances involving performing artists, to interview official's public services on their cognitive and sensory perception interdisciplinary experiments, their impact to the public or targeted categories.

Individual interviews are organized around five main themes:

- The employee's career path before the achievement of the post, his place in the team with the assignments and collaborations with other members of the institution

- The objectives in the programs related to the performing arts according to the philosophy of cultural action, artistic sensibility, and balance sheets from previous experiences
- The use patterns of different areas of the facility to carry out activities related to the performing arts and felt on their potential
- Some examples of the design and implementation of educational projects with performing artists or reception arrangements for scheduled performances
- How to negotiate partnerships for financing activities and sharing media, users' databases to attempt to cross the different public institutions or under the influence of relay

The developments since 2010 will be taken into account, as well as the forward-looking visions on the development proposed for the place and the functions of the programming of the activities related to the performing arts.

Second, we will exchange with some attendants on their perception of the activities with performing artists, the effects on the vision of the cultural institution. Third, we will study the importance of these shows for the performing arts companies or theatres repertory and the effect on the earnings and the degree of their artistic recognition. To what extent and how heritage objects are a source of inspiration for the involved performing artists? In the case of art museums, visual artists practice their own performance; a question on the place and the reasons for these interdisciplinary approaches is part of the analysis of aesthetic value, on the process of seeking institutional and market recognition. When the artistic work is engaged in intercultural dialogue, it is to question the artists involved in their construction of an interactive artistic approach. What tensions do they feel when they come into more symmetrical creative relationship with the users of these facilities? What are their sources of satisfaction?

5. Some observations on strategic choices

The Hunting and Nature Museum in Paris is ruled by François and Jacqueline Sommer's Foundation from 1967. The patrons benefited from the label "Museum of France" as soon as the institution opened. The couple's project was to cross their interest for hunting, ecological preoccupations, and culture. The Board Trust is ruling also a natural park at Bel-Val in the Ardennes Forest and an institute of formation for hunting. The Board members are rather

insensitive to contemporaneous arts and are targeting to improve hunters' image. The museum positioning does not fit with most hunters' expectations as the collections are not mainly dedicated to hunting techniques or a glorification of natural harmony. Following the patrons' reflexivity, the philosophical project is to ask questions about the relationships between humans and wild animals at the different historical periods. Furthermore, most hunters are spontaneously making a mockery of the artists' representations of their cultural practices. They do not like the references to violence with animals' suffering or death. At the same time, a lot of Parisians are influenced by the negative portrayals of hunters' practices and are not giving at all a priority to visit the museum. When the museum closed its doors for renovation in 2002, the attendance was very low.

The economic viability of the museum project depends then on the organisation of artistic events to attract urban people so that they could discover the diversity of the collections. A museum visit may be a support to change their misrepresentations of hunting culture. Since the re-opening in 2007, the programme of performing arts and performances increased. On this year, a theatrical company performed in the different spaces of the museum, an exhibition commissioner organized a cycle of performances and the performer Abraham Poincheval has excelled in staying two weeks in an artificial bear with a continuous video coverage. A full-time position has been created recently for developing younger audience. Generally when covering the performance event, cultural journalists are first reporting about their own initial negative representations of hunting and their good impressions about the collection questioning. Contrary, the coverage is negative in the specialised media for hunting.

The challenge is to give the desire to fans' performances to come back to the museum and appreciate the collections. As the team is narrow, the development of shows and performances to attract national media, younger audience does not let time enough to valorise the scientific thought around the philosophical controversies about the human relationships with wild animals or the ecological debates. The strategic shift of the museum brand identity is now increasing the number of visitors but it may reduce the visibility of the main missions of the Hunter and Nature Trust latter.

Other strategies in some case studies ask this key question. The public libraries or the small museums have not the resources to enter in competition with the establishments which are specialised in performing arts. To what extent programming light shows or involving performing artists in the process of mediation are stimulating the desire to discover the collections? Furthermore, the shift of the missions is destabilizing the working relations and

professional ethics. Some librarians or commissioners can be hostile to reduce the time allocated to conservation in an environment of decreasing subsidies. The managers' philosophy of cultural action determines the specific orientations for the weight of performing arts in the cultural and scientific project. Staffs's working routines and values can be a counterforce for the desired shift in the cultural action process. For instance in the National Archives and the Departmental Archives of *Bouches du Rhône*, the staff for conservation is feeling a depreciation of their tasks as compared to the team which is in charge for receiving the public. In the National Archives, Nicolas Frize's musical project is to valorise the different professions from audio recording of their working atmosphere, interviews. He will use the collected material to design a moving show in the building.

The ecological museum of the Val de Bièvre, at the south of Paris, is based on the participative approaches in the exhibition process. Close to the paradigm of cultural diversity, the main purpose is to give a patrimonial recognition to local cultural practices and objects. Contrary to the cultural contents in the Urban Policy, the museum curator does not want to restrict the collection of testimonies and objects to the local popular classes. His purpose is to initiate collaborative devices to mobilize a collective intelligence. The concept of participation embraces the co-construction process, which is based on sharing individual competences. The curator is aware of the problems in the distribution of power relations in the design and the implement of a device. The objectives may diverge between the museum and some groups as for an ongoing project with young people who are looking for recognition of their artistic competences.

An interesting point concerns the curator's mistrust in story tellers for guiding an exhibition. His historical purpose is to give a 'true' representation of past events even though individual testimonies are reconstructing the path they followed before. Visitors' expectations are to find reliable information on the local history. When the curator introduces a joke about an untrue event in the exhibition, he is usually meeting with misunderstanding or indignation. As story tellers are mixing real facts and fictions in their guidance, the potential cognitive destabilisation is a barrier. The question of collecting personal testimonies to understand the development of the city with the social links is actually raised in a group discussion. Their project is to interview people with different social positions on the formation of the first social links with the city life. During a working session, most members signalled the difficulty to get personal recollections in the interviews. The people are spontaneously developing their social identity and are rather reluctant to highlight their own life.

6. Concluding remarks

As the research report is expected in February of 2015, this paper can only present the methodology of the survey to understand better the plurality of the cultural action strategies as regards to performing arts. The subjects covered by the survey are in touch on many of the economical challenges for the cultural institutions. The choices in the weight of performing arts in the programme and the mediation devices are depending of the brand identity of the cultural institutions, the budget, the opportunities to catch medias' attention, and the evolution in the labour division. To some extent, inter-organizational competition, digitization and the perspectives of decreasing public budgets are threatening the development of the attendance at museums and public libraries.

The interviews on cultural programming strategies in the case studies will be complemented with the data of the questionnaire, which is sent to all museums and public libraries in the metropolis of Paris and Marseille.

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ⁱ Quoted by Navarette (2013: 334).

ⁱⁱ Quoted by Towse (2010: 241).

ⁱⁱⁱ Claude Bergelin, table ronde « Quelle légitimité des arts vivants en bibliothèque ? », journée d'étude « Bibliothèques et arts vivants » de l'ENSSIB, Villeurbanne, TNP, 3 novembre 2011.