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Artist
Rihards Delvers

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

The Editorial Board of the international peer-reviewed scientific journal *Culture Crossroads* is proud to present a particularly rich and wide-ranging volume of scientific papers. With 19 contributions from esteemed scholars and experts, this volume captures a rich tapestry of perspectives, theories, and empirical studies on an array of critical themes.

This edition has been completed entirely within our new open online editing system, and by means of an enhanced peer-review procedure – thus the diversity and quality of the articles surpasses our expectations in both scope and depth. We invite you to be acquainted or re-acquainted with this collection's authors and their latest exciting work on issues as varied as arts consumption, public participation, dark heritage, historic architectural styles, television documentaries and narrating mothering experience on Twitter.

In keeping with the goal of the journal to provide space for original interdisciplinary research on a wide range of cultural and creative issues, we have welcomed an outstandingly diverse set of articles. However, for the sake of clarity and user-friendliness, we have divided these 19 articles into four broad sections.

The first section presents eight articles that address arguably more general issues in the ecosystem of the cultural and creative entities. Can cultural consumption be a source of social solidarity? Can there be better systems of recognition and support for cultural and creative professionals? Can translators and interpreters be considered a creative class? Can municipal cultural centres enhance access to cultural services? This is just a selection of issues that the authors debate in this section. The section includes the articles by Liene Ozoliņa and Anda Laķe, Ieva Zemīte, Anthony Hoyte-West, Agnese Hermane and Ilona Kunda, Līga Vinogradova, Žanete Eglīte, Elza Ēķe and Dita Pfeifere.

The second section of the volume zooms in on specific heritage technologies, architectural styles, and personalities, addressing issues related to dark heritage in Žanis Lipke Memorial, the research at Stāmeriena Palace, the value of Ernests Štālbergs' modernism, and the political activities of the poets Aspazija and Rainis.

The authors showcased in this section are Diāna Popova, Zane Grigoroviča and Kristiāna Paula Lībiete, Signe Grūbe, Karīna Horsta, Anna Freiberga and Ieva Kalniņa.

The third section zooms in even further, and the reader is invited to join the authors in their exploration of intricacies of stylistics of specific artists – visual and cinematic –, and includes the analysis of representation of non-human species in ecotheatre in Latvia in three performances. These studies have been crafted by Zane Balčus, Kitija Balcare, Daniela Zacmane, and Iveta Feldmane.

The final section of the collection takes up the theme of language and narrative. We are pleased to present two scientific explorations: Elza Lāma and Gatis Lāma on narrating mothering experience on Twitter, and Elīna Veinberga on comparing phraseological units in Latvian and English.

As you can see, this year's assembly of articles encompasses a broad spectrum of topics, reflecting the dynamic nature of the cultural, creative, artistic and linguistic fields. From the intersections of technology and artistic expression to the socio-economic impact of cultural initiatives, these contributions promise a captivating and nuanced journey. The depth and breadth of insights presented here serve as a testament to the ever-evolving landscape of culture, art and language, inviting readers to delve into multifaceted discussions that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated authors whose rigorous research and scholarly contributions have enriched this volume.

We trust that this collection will serve as a valuable resource for academics, practitioners, and enthusiasts alike, fostering dialogue, sparking new ideas, and inspiring further exploration into the intricate dynamics of the cultural and creative realms.

Yours sincerely,

Ilona Kunda
Deputy Editor-in-Chief
Culture Crossroads

CULTURAL AND ARTS CONSUMPTION AS A SOURCE OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY: THE CASE OF THE LATVIAN CENTENARY PROGRAMME[1]

PhD **Liene Ozoliņa**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Cultural and Arts Studies
Dr.sc.soc. **Anda Laķe**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Cultural and Arts Studies

Abstract

In 2017–2021, Latvia celebrated its centenary with a wide-ranging cultural programme. The Centenary programme was announced as "the biggest event in the history of modern Latvia" providing 22.3 million euros over three years for more than 800 festive events "to strengthen the spirit of nationhood and a sense of belonging amongst the people of Latvia, and to promote collaboration and self-organization within the community" [Ministry of Culture 2020]. In this paper, we explore the ways in which this cultural policy initiative worked as a form of social solidarity building in the Latvian society, where there is a large Russian-speaking community. We are interested in examining the public's participation and perceptions of the Centenary cultural programme, focusing specifically on the differing patterns and effects in the Latvian and Russian-speaking communities. The analysis draws primarily on a representative survey, designed and conducted in the autumn of 2021 by the authors as part of a larger research project. The survey was designed to

[1] This research was funded by the Latvian Ministry of Culture, project "Cultural Capital as a Resource for Sustainable Development of Latvia", project No. VPP-KM-LKRVA-2020/1-0003, and by the Latvian Science Council, project "Culture and the arts as a source of social resilience in societal crises: The case of cultural industries in Latvia", project No. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/4/20/605.

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enable analysis of the perceptions of the Centenary programme, participation and consumption patterns among different social groups and cultural communities, and experiences and perceptions of social solidarity (or lack thereof) in the context of the Centenary programme. The survey has provided new data on the links between cultural and arts consumption practices in an ethnically diverse society, as well as on the perceptions of effects of arts consumption on social solidarity and sense of belonging. On the basis of quantitative analysis of the survey data, we study the patterns of cultural consumption and its social impact, given the ethnic diversity of the society in question. We explore, firstly, how cultural and arts consumption is influenced by ethnic belonging and, secondly, how the effects of this consumption differ among ethnic groups. Based on this empirical analysis, the paper contributes to the wider, ongoing interdisciplinary debates on cultural and arts consumption, societal diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the paper offers a novel approach to exploring, both theoretically and empirically, the effects of cultural and arts consumption on social solidarity.

Keywords: *cultural participation, arts consumption, social solidarity, social inequality, ethnic groups.*

Introduction

In 2017–2021, Latvia celebrated its centenary with a wide-ranging cultural programme. The Centenary programme was announced as "the biggest event in the history of modern Latvia" providing 22.3 million euros over three years for more than 800 festive events "to strengthen the spirit of nationhood and a sense of belonging amongst the people of Latvia, and to promote collaboration and self-organization within the community" [Ministry of Culture 2020]. In this paper, we explore the ways in which this cultural policy initiative worked as a form of social solidarity building in the Latvian society, where there is a large Russian-speaking community. We are interested in examining the public participation and perceptions of the Centenary cultural programme, focusing specifically on the differing patterns and effects in the Latvian and Russian-speaking communities. The analysis draws primarily on a representative survey, designed and conducted in the autumn of 2021 by the authors as part of a larger research project. The survey was designed to enable analysis of the perceptions of the Centenary programme, participation and consumption patterns among different social groups and cultural communities, and experiences and perceptions of social solidarity (or lack thereof) in the context of the Centenary programme. The survey has provided new data on the links between cultural and arts consumption practices in an ethnically diverse society, as well as on the perceptions of

effects of arts consumption on social solidarity and sense of belonging. On the basis of quantitative analysis of the survey data, we study the patterns of cultural consumption and its social impact, paying particular attention to the ethnic diversity of the Latvian society. We explore, firstly, how cultural and arts consumption is influenced by ethnic belonging and, secondly, how the effects of this consumption differ among ethnic communities. The paper presents an original theoretical and empirical approach developed to study the links between cultural and arts consumption, ethnic diversity and social solidarity. The analysis shows that a cultural policy programme aimed at fostering a sense of belonging and social solidarity was more successful for ethnic Latvians. We argue that cultural and arts consumption can have a positive effect on social solidarity, but that this differs across different ethnic communities and across different types of cultural and arts consumption. Based on this empirical analysis, the paper contributes to the wider, ongoing interdisciplinary debates on cultural and arts consumption, societal diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the paper offers a novel approach to exploring, both theoretically and empirically, the links between cultural and arts consumption and social solidarity.

Researching arts consumption, diversity and inclusion

Arts consumption and social inequality

A prominent line of scholarship in sociology has focused on the ways in which cultural consumption is linked to processes of social exclusion and reproduction of inequality. Bourdieu showed how cultural tastes and practices of cultural consumption served as a hidden form of reproduction of inequality in outwardly meritocratic democratic societies [Bourdieu 1973, 1984]. Rather than treating culture and the arts as an independent reality, Bourdieu's analysis revealed how arts production and consumption was a social practice, shaped by and, in turn, shaping the social structures of a given society. To the extent that individual or group practices of ensuring cultural distinction serve to reproduce a doxa, a symbolic system that normalizes inequality, discrimination, and oppression, arts and cultural practices can act as forms of symbolic violence. Since Bourdieu's writings, social inequality and its links with both cultural production and consumption has become an increasingly popular topic of study by sociologists [Allen et al. 2017]. Bourdieu's analysis has been developed and challenged by Bennett et al. [2009], Friedman, Savage and Hanquinet [2015], Allen et al. [2017], Brook, O'Brien and Taylor [2020], and others. As Brook et al. sum it up in their recent book "Culture is Bad for You", both "[w]ho produces culture" and "[w]ho consumes culture reflects social inequality" [2020: 2]. Social class but also gender, religiosity, and race/ethnicity have been shown to link to different patterns of cultural consumption and participation [Katz-Gerro 2002, Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, Bull and Scharff 2017, Howard 2022].

Arts consumption and race/ethnicity

The role that cultural and arts consumption plays in the production of racial boundaries has lately been examined in a number of contexts. In the UK, Saha [2017] studies "racialized governmentalities", i. e. how cultural production is a form of producing political subjects and creating and sustaining particular racial subjectivities. Saha shows how "cultural industries continue to make race in a remarkably consistent and homogenous fashion, despite the attempts of cultural producers – not least those from minority racial and ethnic backgrounds – to subvert and destabilize the reproduction of racist and Orientalist tropes" [Saha 2017: 113–4]. Similarly, Belfiore [2020] examined how a reality TV show – a product of a thriving creative industry – stigmatized Roma in the UK. In the US, Dorinne Kondo has done ethnographic research of the theatre field to study how race is produced through cultural practice [2018].

The connections of cultural and arts consumption to racial identity construction have also increasingly been gaining attention. In a seminal paper, Lamont and Molnar [2001] have shown how consumption plays a role in producing collective identities, focusing in particular on black Americans. Building on this earlier research, Banks [2010] has studied how elites construct their racial-ethnic identity through practices of cultural consumption and participation. She explored, with the help of in-depth interviews, how middle-class blacks used cultural consumption and participation as a way to "articulate racial unity through the consumption of black visual art" [2010: 273]. Patterson [2020] has examined how arts participation differs among Whites and non-Whites in the USA depending on their education qualifications. He shows, with the help of statistical analysis, that education has less effect on arts participation among non-Whites and seeks to interpret this vis-à-vis the "[c]ultural and structural biases" prevailing in the US society that emerged during the historical monopoly of European Royal Academies in defining high-brow cultural tastes [Patterson 2020: 26].

Studies from other national contexts similarly show that race/ethnicity is a crucial factor of social stratification that affects arts consumption and reflects power relations and social hierarchies. Thus, in the UK, "[t]Those in working-class occupations, ethnic minorities, and those without wealth, have significantly less formal cultural engagement as compared to their wealthy, White counterparts" [Brook, O'Brien and Taylor 2020: 78]. In the case of the Netherlands, Van Wel et al. [2006] found that young people from ethnic minorities had similar levels of "active cultural participation" as Dutch youth but lower levels of "receptive cultural participation", i. e. "going to museums, theatres, and buildings of cultural interest" [2006: 79]. In the case of Israel, Katz-Gerro, Raz and Yaish [2009] find, based on a representative survey data, that Ashkenazi Jews, who have an overall higher social

position in the Israeli society, exhibit higher levels of cultural engagement [2009: 16]. They emphasize the importance of understanding how factors other than social class shape cultural behaviour as societies across the world are becoming increasingly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic [ibid: 15–16].

Cultural and arts consumption has been shown to play a role in fostering social inclusion. Meghji argues that black middle class in various ways "use cultural consumption to contest the racial hierarchy" [2020: 595]. Her interviews with the black middle-class show that arts consumption is used by them as a tool to achieve greater symbolic equity with the Whites. Similarly, Wallace [2017] has done ethnographic research with Black Caribbean middle class in the UK showing how Black Caribbean middle class youth challenge existing assumptions about relation between cultural capital and whiteness. Warren and Jones point to the potential of cultural participation to foster more inclusive and socially cohesive communities, both in terms of ethnicity/multi-culture and class. Focusing on the case of Birmingham, they experimented with organising focus groups for cultural programming in multi-cultural neighbourhoods and observed how such a form of inclusive, participatory cultural governance organised at the neighbourhood level can foster diversity and inclusion within a city. As they put it, "The central contention of this paper is thus, that instead of planning on behalf of local actors, the emphasis should instead lie on enabling local actors in a pluralised cultural governance with distributed and discursive strategies of public decision-making for more effective policy-making" [Warren and Jones 2018: 33].

Diversity, inclusion, and social solidarity

A number of studies have explored the positive social impact of cultural production and consumption, exploring e. g. socially engaged arts projects as a form of caring [Alacovska 2020], as a means to participative/inclusive governance [Warren and Jones 2018], and as a way to achieve greater democratic legitimacy [Wilson, Gross and Bull 2017]. Links between arts consumption and social solidarity have been less explored in literature so far. Solidarity effects are occasionally mentioned in studies of cultural participation, whether with regards to class solidarity [Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012: 170] or racial solidarity [Patterson 2020: 27]. Solidarity is understood here as a sense of belonging and unity and actual practices of creating and maintaining such sense of belonging and unity. Citing Bonilla-Silva, Patterson notes that there is a "white culture of solidarity" among the white Americans in the US and, similarly, black arts consumption practices seek to strengthen a black solidarity. As Patterson writes, "African-American solidarity through arts patronage exemplifies a form of counter-framing that resists the prejudice and discrimination supported by the White racial frame" [Patterson 2020: 27]. Thus, the social construction of racial

difference through cultural practices, including arts consumption and participation, enforces social boundaries and creates/maintains different cultures of solidarity and social belonging.

Effects of identity construction and group belonging and unity have also been highlighted, empirically revealing manifestations of social solidarity without using the concept. E. g., Banks [2010], in a study examining art collection practices among black middle class in the US, emphasizes the "racial unity" that such arts consumption creates among middle-class blacks. In another study, focusing on museum patronage, she shows, how "black museums are a site of social cohesion for the black elite and mainstream museums foster social ties among the white elite" [Banks 2017: 98]. She argues that "growth in African-American museums not only adds diversity to the field of arts institutions, but that it also fosters cohesion within the black middle and upper class" and strengthens "social bonds among the black elite" [Banks 2017: 98]. Warren and Jones also point to effects of cultural participation for social belonging:

> *"empirical research 'from below' with minority groups in this particular neighbourhood reveals the ways in which cultural co-commissioning and delivery is regarded as an important arena in which relationships between different social groups and authority can be renewed. We argue that providing resourcing to enable a more democratically realised culture – avoiding polarising arts and everyday life [Griffiths 1993] – can serve as a conduit for enhancing a sense of belonging in society"* [Warren and Jones 2018: 33].

We are interested in examining connections between art consumption and solidarity building in the case of the Latvian society where the Centenary cultural programme was attempted as a cultural policy tool for strengthening social belonging. In our understanding of the concept of solidarity, we draw on Lynch and Kalaitzake, who define solidarity as "a macro-level expression of collective caring" and a "the commitment and capacity to collectively nurture and contribute to the welfare of others" [2018: 2]. Lynch and Kalaitzake argue that,

> *"As living to be with and for others plays an important role in the structuration of social life [Vandenberghe, 2018], love, care and solidarity are matters of political import. (..) Given its embeddedness in social life, the commitment and capacity to collectively nurture and contribute to the welfare of others, can, however, be both culturally and politico-economically fostered or undermined"* [Lynch and Kalaitzake 2018: 2].

Similarly, Craig Calhoun points to the importance of feelings of solidarity in a democracy, emphasizing that "[w]e are poorly prepared to theorize democracy if we cannot theorize the social solidarity of democratic peoples" [Calhoun 2007: 153].

To think about solidarity in the context of culture and the arts, we are drawing also on Martha Nussbaum's [2013] discussion of the importance of political emotions in a democratic society and on the role that culture and the arts play in this regard. Working in the tradition of normative philosophy, Nussbaum has written about the solidarity effects of culture and the arts at the nation-state level. In her book "Political Emotions", Nussbaum explores "ways in which emotions can support the basic principles of the political culture of an aspiring yet imperfect society"" [Nussbaum 2013: 6]. She argues that various other art forms can play a central role in establishing feelings of closeness, care and compassion towards others. In Nussbaum's words,

> *"If distant people and abstract principles are to get a grip on our emotions, (..) these emotions must somehow position them within our circle of concern, creating a sense of "our" life in which these people and events matter as parts of our "us," our own flourishing. For this movement to take place, symbols and poetry are crucial"* [Nussbaum 2013: 11].

She argues that "the public culture [in a democracy] needs to be nourished and sustained by something that lies deep in the human heart and taps its most powerful sentiments, including both passion and humour. Without these, the public culture remains wafer-thin and passionless, without the ability to motivate people to make any sacrifice of their personal self-interest for the sake of the common good" [Nussbaum 2013: 43]. She analyses, for example, the power of music to foster such sentiments, essential in a democratic society.

Nussbaum's analysis aligns with the report on cultural democracy by Wilson, Gross and Bull [2017] where they emphasize the potential of cultural participation to strengthen the political legitimacy of a democracy. As Wilson, Gross and Bull note, drawing on an analysis of numerous case studies and best practice examples in the UK, "Promoting cultural capabilities (..) involves providing conditions in which people can exercise their voices – individually and collectively – and do so in a way that is explicitly connected to considerations of place making and local identity" [Wilson, Gross and Bull 2017: 50]. They employ Nussbaum and Sen's concept of "capabilities" to advance the idea of "cultural capability", as opportunities to take part in and co-create versions of culture as a form of "substantive freedom" in a democracy [Wilson, Gross and Bull 2017: 4–5]. Thus, Nussbaum and Wilson et al. highlight the importance of culture and the arts in fostering a democratic public culture. The Latvian Centenary cultural programme can be seen as an example of a state's attempt at using culture and the arts to foster political emotions. But, going back to the earlier studies linking ethnicity/race to cultural consumption, we are interested in asking how different ethnic groups consume art differently and therefore with different effects in terms of social solidarity.

Research assumptions

Based on the research questions and the findings of previous studies, we formulated four assumptions that we set out to test with the help of quantitative empirical data:

I. There are statistical differences (average values differ by at least 5%) in the division of opinions of various ethnic groups on issues of cultural and arts consumption.

II. The participation levels in cultural and arts consumption practices linked to national culture differ among different ethnic groups.

III. The perceptions regarding the solidarity effects of culture and the arts differ among different ethnic groups.

IV. There are different effects among different ethnic groups (1) on a sense of belonging to the Latvian state, and (2) on a sense of solidarity with other members of society.

In order to answer the research questions, we used both primary and secondary quantitative data that were obtained from both cross-sectional and longitudinal empirical studies. First, the differences in cultural and arts consumption between different ethnic groups are analysed with the help of secondary data that were obtained in a series of nation-wide cultural consumption studies, as well as primary data on cultural and arts consumption during the Latvian Centenary programme. We then turn to the links between cultural and arts consumption and a group's sense of solidarity and belonging, which are described on the basis of primary data that were obtained in a longitudinal study on the Latvian Centenary programme, designed and conducted in 2021.

Data on cultural and arts consumption and the methods of data gathering

Patterns of cultural consumption in Latvia have been studied regularly and with similar methodology since 2006.[1] Initially funding had to be secured from various sources but since 2016 nation-wide cultural consumption monitoring every two years has been funded by the Latvian government. The key indicators of cultural consumption that have been used in almost all of the studies are: the attendance of specific cultural and arts events and the frequency of attendance over a 12-month period; satisfaction with cultural events; who a person attends a cultural event with; attitude towards cultural events and factors that influence it; evaluation of cultural events and reasons for it; readiness to spend money on cultural events, etc. In all of the studies, several socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were measured that enabled a comparison of cultural consumption patterns among

[1] Nation-wide quantitative studies on cultural consumption have been conducted in Latvia 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, most of them with the participation of the authors of this paper.

different ethnic groups. Given the historical specificity of the ethnic composition and the formation of the sense of national belonging in the Latvian society, data were gathered not only on one's "ethnicity" but also on "the language used in the household" and "citizenship". These three characteristics were measured with the help of two variables: the characteristics "ethnicity" and "language used in the household" were measured with the help of variables "Latvian/other", while citizenship was measured as "Latvian citizenship/citizenship of another country". The choice of the variables was determined by the ethnic composition of the Latvian society. According to national data from 2021, there were 1 893 223 inhabitants in Latvia in total, of which 62.7% were Latvian while 37.3% belonged to other ethnicities. Russians are a numerous ethnic group in Latvia, constituting 24.5% of the population and 65.7% of those inhabitants that have other ethnic belonging than Latvian.

In this study, to test the first assumption, we mostly use data on cultural consumption from 2018, as well as comparative data. The data from 2020 study are less useful because the Covid-19 pandemic and the related restrictions significantly impacted cultural and arts consumption. The data on cultural consumption in the series of studies were obtained with the help of representative quantitative surveys. In all cases the general population of the survey included all of the permanent inhabitants of Latvia between the ages of 15 and 74. The sample of the survey was selected to ensure representative data for the entire general population. In 2018, the data collection technique was face-to-face interviews in the respondents' homes. The sample was 1040 respondents. The data on cultural consumption are used in this paper to discover lasting trends in cultural and arts consumption among Latvians and other ethnic groups. We place particular emphasis on the differences in patterns that can form a fact-based foundation for interpreting the primary data.

Data on cultural consumption that test Assumption I (There are statistical differences (average values differ by at least 5%) in the division of opinions of various ethnic groups on issues of cultural and arts consumption.)

The 2018 study on cultural consumption reveals that there are no significant differences among ethnic groups regarding 11 of the 22 cultural and art consumption activities that were included in the survey. Differences in opinion division are not observable in the variables regarding attendance of museums, entertainment parks, zoos, watching movies, attending events for children or families with children, attending classical or contemporary music concerts, music festivals, opera or ballet, and reading books. However, an equal number of cultural consumption activities significantly differ among Latvians and other ethnic groups. These are activities related to specific traditional cultural practices and activities related to cultural heritage. These were mostly attended by Latvians (for example, attending a cultural

event in the local cultural centre, a local city or village festival, an event in the local city or village where an amateur cultural group performed, including an amateur theatre group, and attending a traditional ball). Differences were also observable in activities that are linked to language use, such as visiting a library, attending a popular music concert, a circus show, a professional theatre performance, watching a cultural programme on the TV (see Figure 1 below).

Ethnic belonging is linked also to the language that a respondent ordinarily uses at home. Ethnic belonging in many cases indicates also a particular language use, while language proficiency, or lack thereof, can be a significant barrier for accessing and consuming the kinds of cultural products where language is important for perception. Data show that cultural consumption habits for those respondents that use Latvian language at home and those that use another language differ even more. Such differences are observable with regard to 16 (out of 22) cultural and art consumption activities, whereas in the case of 6 forms of activity there is no such difference (these are "visiting a museum", "visiting an entertainment park", "watched a movie", "attended a music festival", "finished reading a book", "visited opera and ballet"). We find it significant also that, among those Latvian inhabitants for whom Latvian language is not their everyday household language, a smaller percentage attend amateur (folk) art performances. While we are not focusing on differences with regard to particular types of cultural products in this paper, it is possible to assume that cultural consumption habits among different ethnic and language groups differ. This brings forward questions not only about accessibility of culture and art but also about differing tastes and cultural needs, which form the basis for the ways that cultural events are experienced, including the values communicated through them.

Even more significant differences are evident in the cultural consumption patterns among those respondents who have a Latvian citizenship compared to those who do not. While the inhabitants without a citizenship constitute a relatively small share of the Latvian society (14.4%), it is remarkable that their cultural consumption is significantly lower than for the rest of the society.[1] 16.9% of respondents without the Latvian citizenship had not attended any cultural activities over the course of the last year (while for the rest this figure stands at 8%). Out of the 22 activities measured, the habits differ in 17 activities (within 6–30% range). The consumption

[1] 85.6% of all the Latvian residents have Latvian citizenship, 9.6% are Latvian non-citizens or aliens and 4.8% have a citizenship of another country (data for January 2022, available: https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/media/8190). The non-citizens are a category of Latvian residents that was created in 1991, when the Soviet Union was dissolved and Latvia declared independence. Citizenship of the Latvian state was then granted to those inhabitants who had been Latvian citizens prior to the Soviet period, or their descendants.

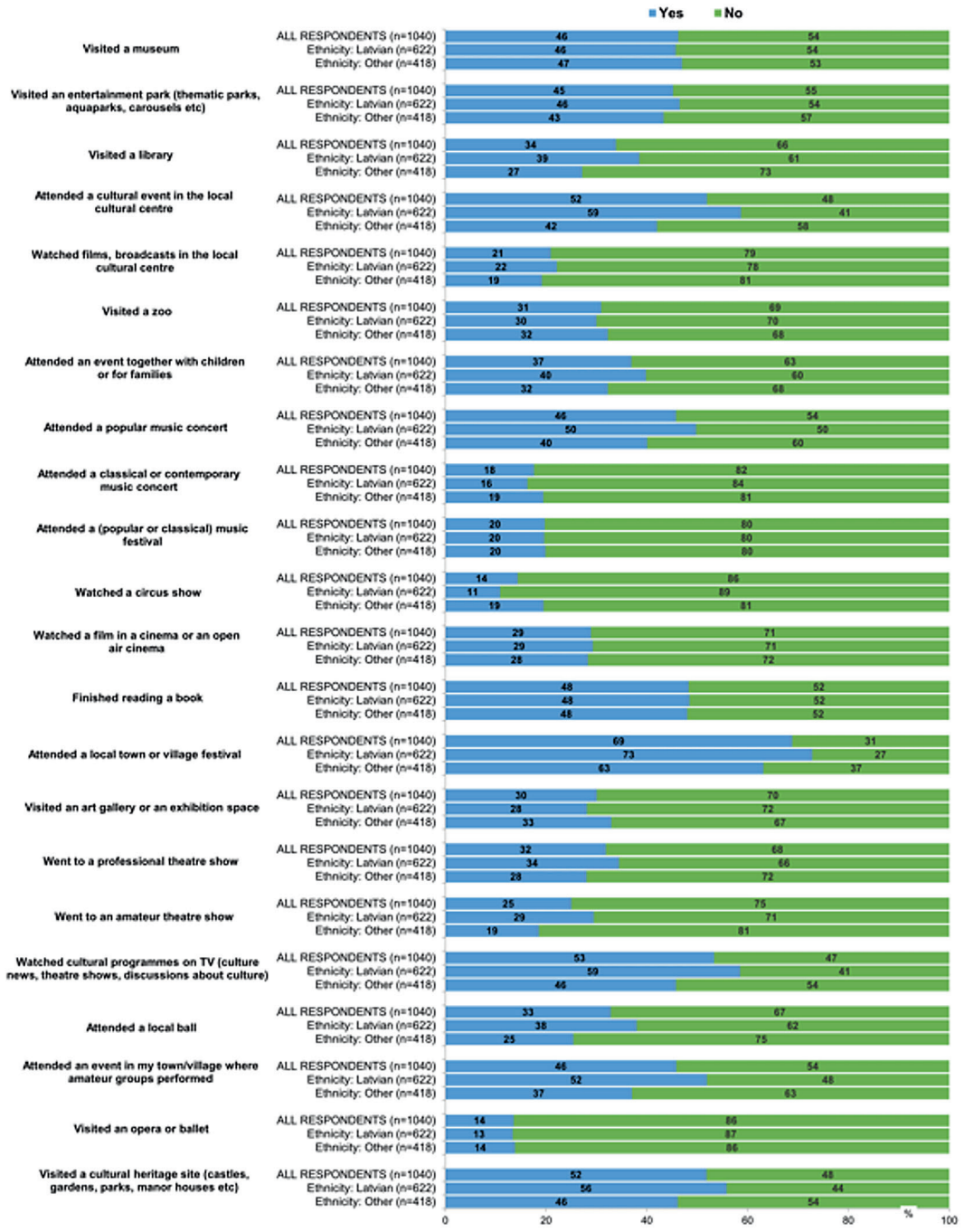

Figure 1. Cultural and arts consumption, 2018.

habits do not differ between these two groups only in 5 types of activities (attending a zoo, a classical or contemporary music concert, a circus show, an art gallery, an opera or ballet).

In conclusion, the cultural consumption data show that the differences among ethnic groups are not universal across all forms of culture and the arts. The differences are evident in particular types of cultural practices, where some are more inclusive and some are less inclusive for different ethnic groups. The trend in these differences is durable and characterizes the entire period under consideration (2016–2020).

Data on participation in the Centenary celebrations that test Assumption II (The participation levels in cultural practices linked to national culture differ among different ethnic groups.)

The fact that the differences in cultural consumption among ethnic groups are linked to the content of cultural products and their symbolic meanings is confirmed also by data on the cultural consumption during the Latvian Centenary celebrations. These data were obtained with the help of a survey and the data collection technique was an internet survey (CAWI). The survey was conducted in 2019 with the help of a nation-wide representative sample, where the general population was all of the Latvian inhabitants aged between 18 and 75. It was a quota sample and the sample size was 1005 respondents. In this study, too, the independent variables were the responses to the characteristics on "ethnicity", "language used in the household" and "citizenship". The focus of this study was the forms of cultural participation and activity during the Latvian Centenary celebrations.

Compared to the surveys on cultural consumption habits, this study was aimed at exploring the participation in cultural and arts activities that were produced as part of the Centenary programme. The aims of these activities were derived from the Centenary programme, i. e. they were related to strengthening Latvian statehood and national cultural values. While the producers of particular events of the Programme had creative freedom, the events and activities were aimed at cultivating patriotism and a feeling of belonging to the Latvian state. In other words, their content was symbolically and ideologically charged. To test whether the participation of different ethnic groups differs with regard to cultural and arts consumption of activities related to manifesting national cultural values, we conducted a comparison of participation and consumption models of various ethnic, language-use and citizenship groups during the Centenary programme. The programme included nearly 300 various events in 2017–2021 but we are focusing on the events with the largest budget and scale (the so-called "Grand events", or *Lielnotikumi* in Latvian).

While the Centenary celebration events, funded by the state, were intended to attract, engage and bring together Latvians home and abroad, various socio-

demographic groups had different levels of engagement and participation in these events. The participation was considerably lower among non-Latvian ethnic groups and among people with lower income. The participation was measured with the help of three variables:

1. This is the first time I hear about such an event.
2. I have heard about such an event but I did not participate myself.
3. I myself participated in this event.

Representatives of non-Latvian ethnic groups had significantly lower participation levels in almost all of the large-budget celebratory events and particularly so in watching films from the Centenary film programme "Latvian films for the Latvian Centenary", Latvian Independence Day celebrations on 4 May, centenary events of key national cultural institutions (theatres, universities, etc). Likewise, views on the lasting effect of the Centenary cultural programme differ among Latvians and other ethnic groups. A smaller number of respondents among the non-Latvian ethnic groups think that there will be a lasting effect when asked about almost all of the major large-budget cultural events of the Centenary. There is one exception – the lasting effect of the exhibition "Latvian century", created by a group of Latvian museums, is positively evaluated by a similar percentage of Latvians and other ethnic groups.

A particularly telling example in terms of the differences in participation among different ethnic, language, or citizenship groups are the films produced as part of the Centenary programme (see Figure 2 below). Whereas 50.2% ethnic Latvians said

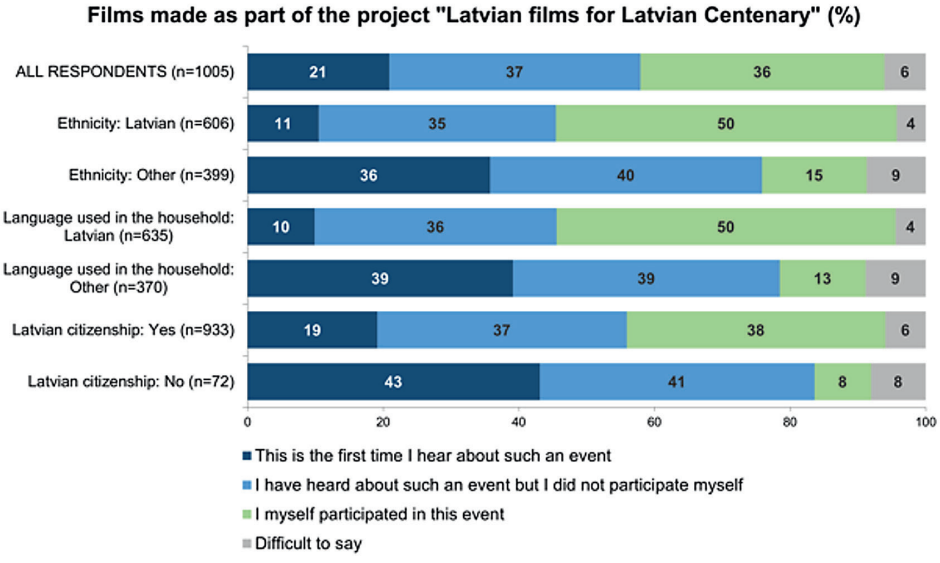

Figure 2. Films made as part of the project "Latvian films for Latvian Centenary".

they had seen at least one of these films, only 15.2% respondents from other ethnic groups, 12.6% of non-Latvian language users and 8.3% of respondents without Latvian citizenship did. Furthermore, 35–40% of respondents from these groups said they heard of these films for the first time. Notably, the cultural consumption survey data showed that there were no significant differences among these groups with regard to watching films. In both segments, about 30% of respondents said they had seen a movie over the course of the last 12 months. This shows that consumption differences are to be analysed not so much in terms of interest in the particular type of cultural activity (in this case, films), but rather in relation to the authorship of the cultural product and its symbolic content.

Similar differences can be observed also with regard to other "Grand events" of the Centenary programme. Belonging to a Latvian or other ethnic group significantly impacts not only the patterns of cultural consumption but also different participation forms in cultural practices linked to the national culture and its symbolic content. Non-ethnic Latvians were more critical of the ability of the Programme to "reach, engage and bring together a large number of Latvian inhabitants and Latvians abroad". We can conclude that the value framing of certain cultural and arts products has a significant impact on the cultural consumption patterns of different ethnic groups. This is particularly the case where this value framing has to do with national culture. This can create barriers for consuming particular cultural and arts products or even exclude certain ethnic, language-use or citizenship groups from cultural experiences.

Data on cultural and arts consumption and social solidarity – testing Assumptions III and IV (The perceptions regarding the solidarity effects of the arts differ among different ethnic groups; There are different effects among different ethnic groups (1) on a sense of belonging to the Latvian state and (2) on a sense of solidarity with other members of society.)

Data on the differing cultural experiences among different ethnic groups due to the symbolic content of the cultural and arts products enabled us to formulate a new assumption, namely, that the cultural experiences that enable (1) a feeling of belonging to the state, and (2) a feeling of solidarity with other members of society are different for various ethnic groups. To develop an instrument (survey) for testing this assumption, we selected indicators that would allow assessing the links between a sense of belonging and solidarity, cultural consumption experiences and different ethnic groups' cultural experiences. Data were collected with the help of face-to-face interviews in respondents' homes. The general population of the survey were Latvian residents aged 18–75. The stratified random sampling was applied, where the stratification indicator was territorial belonging. The sample was 1015 respondents. In this survey, the ethnic belonging was measured with the help of three

variables: Latvian (58.9% respondents), Russian (32.4% respondents) and other ethnicity (8.7% respondents). The data allow a comparative analysis of the three ethnic groups' opinions regarding cultural consumption, belonging and solidarity. We pay particular attention to the comparison of responses between Latvian and Russian ethnic groups. We chose several dependent variables. To test Assumption III, we focus on the following dependent variables: (1) assessment of the solidarity of the Latvian society, (2) a sense of belonging in society, in Centenary celebrations, in cultural and arts events in Latvia, (3) attitude towards statements that cultural and arts events have a power to bring society together, (4) factors that have made a respondent feel solidarity with those different from him/her, (5) whether they have or have not been part of a cultural event that has made them feel a sense of belonging to Latvian state or society, (6) an opinion on whether a film made in Latvia can help bring Latvian society together.

Data show that the overall "temperature" of the Latvian society with regard to a sense of belonging and solidarity is low. 60% of respondents believe that the society is split. Rural inhabitants are more critical than average (68%). Furthermore, more Russian respondents believe that ethnic belonging is a reason for this split (24%). In response to another question, only 30% of the respondents believe that Latvian society is characterized by a sense of solidarity and unity. Although the assessment of social solidarity is low, different opinions emerge when certain features are measured that touch more upon personal, individual sense of belonging and solidarity. Here a relatively large share of the population believe that they personally feel a sense of belonging to the Latvian social and cultural environment. 72% Latvian residents say they feel (quite or fully) that they belong in the Latvian society. 61% say they feel (quite or fully) that they belong in national celebrations and 54% feel (quite or fully) that they belong in cultural and arts events. These average figures, however, do not allow reaching compelling conclusions because indicators of belonging differ significantly between Latvian and Russian ethnic groups. 85% Latvians and only 51% Russians feel (quite or fully) that they belong in the Latvian society; 76% Latvians and 38% Russians feel (quite or fully) that they belong in Latvian national celebrations. 69% Latvians and only 31% Russians feel (quite or fully) that they belong in cultural and arts events that take place in Latvia. So, the share of the ethnic Russian respondents that feel they belong to the Latvian society and cultural environment is about 30% lower than that of ethnic Latvians. Less than a third of all ethnic Russians express a sense of belonging to the Latvian cultural environment.

These data only indirectly point to the fact that a lack of supply of certain cultural and arts consumption and participation forms can cause a sense of not belonging not only to the cultural environment but to society at large. A more precise argument regarding the correlation between cultural and arts consumption

and differences among ethnic groups with regard to social solidarity can be made when looking at a statement "Cultural and art events have a great power to bring people together". 80% Latvians and only 59% Russians agree with this statement. Although both groups show high support for the statement, the difference between the two ethnicities is significant. Such statistical evidence shows that there are beliefs of different intensity among Latvians and Russians with regard to the role of culture and the arts for creating an inclusive society. In this study we tried to measure even more precisely the role of personal cultural experiences in strengthening the sense of belonging and solidarity. We studied whether respondents had experienced a cultural event in Latvia that had made them feel personally belong to the Latvian state and to other members of society. Data show that 78% Latvians and only 37% Russians believe they have had a cultural experience that had strengthened their belonging to the Latvian state while 73% Latvians and 41% Russians say they have been part of an event that has strengthened their sense of belonging to other members of society (see Figures 3 and 4).

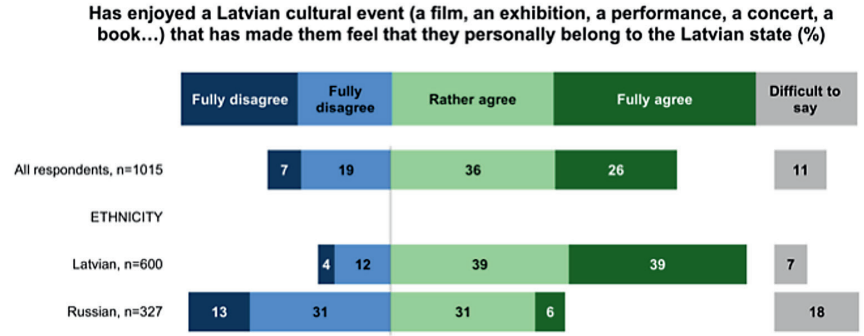

Figure 3. Attending a cultural event that made the respondent feel that they personally belong to the Latvian state.

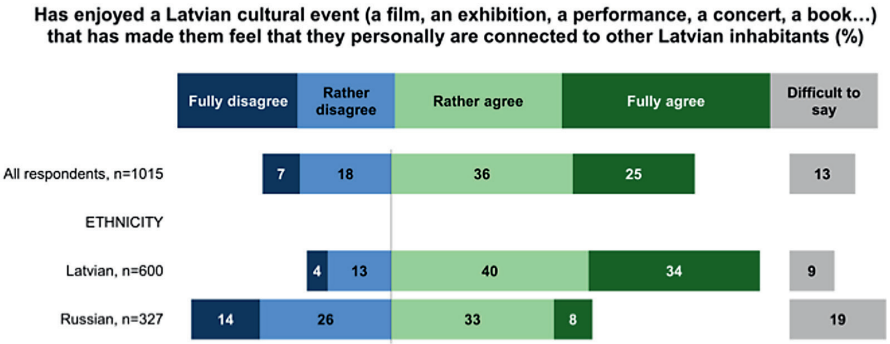

Figure 4. Attending a cultural event that made the respondent feel personally connected to other Latvians.

Thus, it is possible to observe not only different cultural experiences among different ethnic groups but also different beliefs with regard to the links between one's personal experiences of culture and a sense of solidarity with others. To reduce the level of generalization, we studied respondents' subjective beliefs regarding the impact of specific types of cultural consumption – watching films made in Latvia – on the sense of belonging and solidarity, i. e. the experiences of solidarity. Whereas about 46% of all respondents say that they can think of a film that makes people feel more united and solidary, the figures differ in different ethnic groups. 60% ethnic Latvians can think of a such a movie while only 22% Russians can.

Respondents from different ethnic groups not only have different cultural consumption habits but also construct differing views on the role of culture and the arts in creating a sense of belonging and solidarity in society. Here we can speak of a certain "self-exclusion" syndrome among the ethnic Russian population group with regard to both the cultural and arts market and practices but also with regard to the potential effects of belonging and solidarity that the cultural experiences create. Cultural and arts practices are a significant source of a sense of solidarity, belonging, unity and inclusion, provided that these practices contain a symbolic content that is important for a particular group. As the data show, there is a part of the population that recognizes the power of culture and the arts to create these political emotions. Yet, it is problematic that respondents of different ethnic groups experience these emotional effects differently and cultural experiences can thus work as both a tool for inclusion as well as exclusion.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper has been to chart a theoretical and empirical approach for examining how different ethnic groups consume culture and the arts differently and how these different consumption practices are linked to differing social solidarity effects. If solidarity – understood as a sense of "collective caring" for fellow members of one's society – is a key political emotion in a democracy, as Lynch and Kalaitzake, Nussbaum, Calhoun and others argue, it is important to probe in more empirical detail how cultural and arts consumption is linked to solidarity effects in contemporary societies. In this paper, we have brought together existing research on cultural and arts consumption with sociological and philosophical studies regarding the role of feelings of solidarity and belonging in a democratic society. To test four assumptions about cultural and arts consumption, ethnic diversity, and solidarity and belonging, we drew on quantitative data from several representative surveys. Primary data were collected with the help of a survey designed to study cultural and arts consumption in the context of the Latvian Centenary cultural programme, while secondary data were used from earlier studies on cultural and arts consumption in

Latvia more generally. Based on analysing these data, this paper has shown, firstly, that cultural and arts consumption plays a role in the creation of feelings of solidarity within ethnic groups, thus contributing to a line of scholarship that investigates links between racial/ethnic diversity and the social effects of arts consumption [Banks 2010, 2017; Meghji 2020; Patterson 2020]. As a range of primary quantitative data reveal, the different cultural and art consumption practices are linked to different perspectives on the role of culture and the arts to create feelings of solidarity and belonging. Comparable to Patterson's [2020] discussion of different "cultures of solidarity" in different racial-ethnic segments of society, we find that culture and arts consumption creates differing cultures of solidarity in the ethnically diverse Latvian society. Secondly, we find that it is specific types of cultural and arts consumption that create particular effects with regards to social solidarity and that these differ between different ethnic groups. While for the majority group, the ethnic Latvians, a cultural policy like the four-year Centenary celebration programme can stir political emotions [Nussbaum 2013] of belonging and solidarity (e. g., when watching a locally made film), for other ethnic groups such effects were less apparent. Thus, different cultural and arts consumption experiences likely further enforce symbolic boundaries in an ethnically diverse society.

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INVISIBLE ARTISTS: RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS IN THE BALTICS

Dr.oec. **Ieva Zemīte**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies

Mg.art. **Kristīne Freiberga**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Mg.art. **Nadīna Medne**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies

Abstract

The aim of this research is to define what kind of key challenges and implemented solutions regarding the artist status are common in Europe, and how to develop a systematic approach for artist recognition and support in the Baltic context. Using qualitative research methodology (desk research, qualitative interviews, focus group discussions) the authors analyse the current theoretical and empirical discussion in the European Union member states and especially in the Baltic countries, highlighting different practices and experiences in defining the status and recognition of the artist, and support systems that adjust for specific needs in different countries. Based on international experience, the authors develop suggestions relevant for forthcoming and long-awaited changes in different laws regarding the status of creative persons or professional creative organisations in several countries (Latvia, Estonia etc.).

Keywords: *the status of creative persons, the recognition of artists, support for arts, fair pay in culture, cultural policy.*

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

Introduction

The issue of the employment and social protection of creative persons has currently become topical on the level of the European Union. Meetings and discussions of member state working groups are convened to improve the situation of creative persons by means of amendments to normative acts; Estonia and Latvia envisage considerable changes in their laws regulating the status of creative persons (*The Law on the Status of Creative Persons and Professional Creative Organisations, entered into force in 2018* [Saeima 2018]). In addition, in the several last years an unprecedented crisis in support mechanisms for creative persons was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to take fast decisions on public support for the workers of various sectors (including the cultural and creative sector, henceforth the CCS), whose active employment was severely limited when the level of the disease spread was the highest.

For instance, in Latvia during the first crisis of Covid-19 global pandemic in the spring of 2020, when specific financial support grant programs for freelance workers were created, it turned out that part of the creatives could not qualify for them. The two main reasons for not being able to qualify for the support were (1) the special tax regime that is used for specific groups of creatives (e. g., photographers, videographers) where the State Revenue Service data do not show the real income of these artists, or (2) the portfolio careers, meaning that artists receive salary from mixed sources for their creative, pedagogical work or even the work that is not related to the cultural and creative sector. This caused confusion when support was supposed only to cover the decrease for freelance (e. g., artistic) work, not the work that remained state- or municipality-subsidized (e. g., pedagogical work), although the percentage of total income of an artist decreased radically [Fotokvartāls 2020]. This brought into sharp focus one of the ways in which the artist in the contemporary society can become *invisible* **from the point of view of tax policy and public support instruments.**

On the one hand, the "creative turn" and the instantly growing market with the rise of the digital market for arts, music, theatre and other cultural sectors has led to more opportunities to generate income than ever before. However, the fact that the market is growing does not mean that more artists are better off for it [Janssens 2018; De Wit 2018]. For some, streaming platforms have generated breakthroughs, but for most, it has become all the more difficult to earn anything through music [Janssens 2018]. On the other hand, this fast-growing market has shown another issue for (in)equality – that artists have to invest increasing time and energy in production, networking, administration and coordination – a multiplicity of individual initiatives. Flexibility, individual initiative and mobility between diverse clients have become core principles of the artists' work [Forrier 2007]. Philosopher and writer

Dieter Lesage in his essay *Portrait of the Artist as a Worker* stresses the multiple activities that contemporary artists do – organisation, production, dissemination, networking, the presentation of the artwork and the artist him-/herself – besides the creation process of the artwork. In this way the difference between *artistic work* and *the artist's work* is emphasized [Lesage 2005].

Even taking into account the different roles an artist would take it still does not solve the problem with the precarious situation of artists. The artist's working territory and broad context does not necessarily lead to an improvement of their socio-economic position. Artists and creative persons are holding multiple jobs at the same time [Van Assche & Laermans 2015; Van Assche 2018]. Besides that, even by being virtuoso and managing multiple jobs as well as different roles of an artist, there is still a preconception in the society that creative work means "pure creation". "*Artistic work is at the core of the twisted ideological relationship between work and freedom; cynically, the work that comes across as the freest is the work that is completely fused with life. The work considered free is the kind whose level of dedication and intensity leaves no further room for life*" [Kunst 2015: 190]. This enforces the argument that **artists are more than ever before becoming *invisible* by the means of the (non) appreciation of their workload, diversity of the skills needed and fair pay.**

This has led to policy renewal on the working conditions and social welfare of artists and cultural professionals by the EU countries. The European Commission is currently increasing its focus on the topic *of the status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals*. A wide variety of studies has been carried out [Voices of Culture 2021; European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education 2021; Damaso and Culture Action Europe Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021], stressing characteristics of employment of artists and cultural and creative professionals in the EU Member States with regard to: artist status and entitlements, social security, self-employment, support ecosystems and alternative financing, artistic freedom, career development and measures countering the Covid-19 crisis. Despite a lot of examples and practical advice concerning artists' working conditions, there is still a lack of a systematic approach which would allow identifying creative persons and setting a framework for criteria of recognition, sustainable coverage of social security and a better targeted support system. This leads to the **research questions** of this paper: (1) what kind of key challenges and applied solutions regarding the artist status are common issues in Europe? (2) how to develop a systematic approach for artist recognition and support in the Baltic context?

Theoretical framework

The first topic of the literature review concerns the understanding of the key challenges for an invisibility of artists and cultural and creative professionals. **The**

first challenge concerns the status and definition of the artist: whom should the policies address? Who is an active professional? Which fields of culture should be addressed? The title of an "artist" is given to workers who see themselves, and are seen by others, as producers of artistic objects and ideas. The inclination to treat the category as an occupation or profession has led some scholars to apply the same methods of definition and analysis as they would with doctors, lawyers, and other professionals [Lena, Lindemann 2014].

The artist as a professional has shifted from the artist as a creator to every person being creative in every position – embracing creativity in their everyday professional practices. They have the skills and competencies that could be embedded in a range of contexts in the corporate sector to yield significant benefits and value [Kouzmine-Karavaïeff, Hameed 2022]. It leads to the discussion whether a certain number of hours is dedicated to an artistic practice within a paid time framework excluding those who create or perform during their non-work time [Lena, Lindemann 2014].

The next issue concerns the status of "the professional" – the "professional artists" might be seen as the outcome of an identity process, rendering it the dependent rather than the independent variable [Lena, Lindemann 2014]. Scholars Andrea Baldin and Trine Bille in the study *Who is an artist? Heterogeneity and professionalism among visual artists* define an artist as follows: he/she is a person who meets at least one of the three criteria – possessing a professional qualification, being a member of an arts' organisation or the status being granted by the state. The researchers emphasise that a professional artist is recognized by income, by working full time in arts practice and by being able to earn a sustainable income [Baldin, Bille 2021].

Thus, an artist, as a participant in the art market has an opportunity to gain higher status and prestige by exhibiting their artwork in recognized galleries in order to improve recognition, increase the value of works and increase their income [Mačianskaitė 2017]. The quality measurement is determined by three groups – the market (simple evaluation of quality, aesthetics and technique), recognition of contemporaries (evaluation and opinion of other artists) and experts (seeking for artistic innovations and trends and themselves being trendsetters) [Moureau, Sagot-Duvauroux 2012]. Samuel Fraiberger stresses that institutional recognition or prestige is a subjective evaluation due to determination of such factors as history, management, resources and geographical location [Fraiberger et al. 2018].

The issue of the status of artists and cultural and creative professionals has been part of the EU agenda for a long time. Already in 1980 UNESCO [*The 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist*; UNESCO 1980] called upon its member states to improve the working conditions and welfare of artists, implementing measures that support artists' training, social protection, employment, tax system, mobility and others, as well as their right to create organisations and to get involved

in trade unions or professional arts organisations for advocacy and protection of their interests. In the Recommendation UNESCO suggests a formal definition for all artists. [Snijders et al. 2020: 44–45]. However, in numerous EU member states, the definition of an artist is framed internally, leading to a lack of uniformity in the European definition of an artist. In 2013 the study by *Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity* identified and described five common and most widely-spread types of definitions used by the EU member states: **by membership, by committee, by authority, by output and by nature of activity** [Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity 2013: 72–73]. The **definition by membership** acknowledges the person as an artist if he/she belongs to a professional arts organisation [Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity 2013: 72]. Although the definition is easily applied in practice, it is still criticised: considering the diversity of the CCS, it is necessary to develop criteria for the characterisation of membership by artists of all branches, consequently, this makes the system considerably complex. A very similar definition is the **definition by committee,** which envisages that the artist is considered a professional and receives a status by a committee of experts of the branch of art. For instance, in the Netherlands the decisions on the conferral of the artist status are taken by an independent advisory body [Snijders et al. 2020: 45]. Definition **by authority** is a more formal approach, as the artist status is linked to the system of tax rebates, and it is conferred by the state authority in charge of the tax policy. Mostly it is the State Revenue Service, which receives an application for the tax rebates due to artists, to assess whether or not the person fits the status of the artist. Thus, a challenge faced by users of this definition is ensuring fairness in the decision-making process. Public servants have to be able to discern if the person is indeed considered a professional artist and fits the status. The definition **by artistic output** envisages that the artist is a person who produces and creates art/artworks. This definition is criticised on the grounds of the discussion of what is and is not art/artwork, thus they are often very extensive and descriptive. In addition, they are more focussed on the new art created which is protected by copyright, thus giving preference to artists who create new art rather than interpreting already existing one. This approach is used by the United Kingdom, and has been in force in France since 1936. Both artists and technicians there receive state benefits during unemployment, provided they have done creative work for 507 hours within 10 months. During Covid-19 pandemic from May 2020 to August 2021, unemployment benefits were conferred also on the CCS workers who did not achieve the specified number of hours [Snijders et al. 2020: 45–50]. Another way of defining the artist is **by nature of arts activity.** The definition acknowledges the artist as a professional if the artwork creation is a primary source of their income (from created artworks) [Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity 2013: 73]. Although each of the above definitions emphasises one feature/criterion for the recognition of the artist, they can also be combined.

Despite the fast-growing market, where art has been seen as a luxury good, an object of asset and investments, several studies show that the income of artists' professional activity remains low and can be termed problematic [Snijders et al. 2020; Doeser 2018; IAA 2018]. This leads to **the second challenge for an invisibility of artists and cultural and creative professionals which is the lack of an advanced support system.** On the one hand, being an artist means having the courage to take on financial risks [Hesters 2017a]. On the other hand, works of art are created without the artists being structurally engaged with the producers (or managers, curators, communication managers etc.) for any significant length of time. Just an insubstantial part of artists is involved in long-term engagements in order to create continuity and stability in their mutual relationships. Scholars confirm that a narrow part amongst the artists can earn a living from the diverse kinds of work available within the artistic sector [Snijders et al. 2020]. The worst scenario is that even successful and recognized artists still find themselves below the poverty level [Hesters 2017b]. It highlights an important issue, that there is a lack of systematic approach of working, collaborating, recognizing and providing social protection to artists and cultural and creative professionals.

Besides the effort of the public sector and government institutions to understand the need for a sustainable and effective support system for the artists and creatives, all the stakeholders involved in creating, supporting and consuming artistic products should be aware of the need for equal and fair pay for the artists [EUNIC 2022]. The topic has become a relevant discussion in the field of arts and culture in the EU. One of the main questions is the availability of the social guarantees for the irregularly employed or freelancers with irregular income: accessibility of healthcare, risk of retirement-poverty and risks of tax-optimization. Growing from equal pay where "*employers must not pay an employee less, or give them terms and conditions that put them at a disadvantage, because of their disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or another 'protected characteristic'*" [Arts Council England 2022], fair pay deepens the discussion, especially in arts covering the topic of underrated value of the input in creating artistic work. "*When employing someone on a contract or freelance basis, you should agree on the number of hours necessary to complete the relevant activity, which should include research, development and planning as well as delivery. Fees and salaries for those aged 23 or over should match the National Living Wage as an absolute minimum*" [Arts Council England 2022]. Additionally in visual arts, the discussion about a remuneration for presenting artistic works in exhibitions, museums or events is arising marking the change in the system [Artists' Association of Finland 2021].

Primary research shows that key challenges covered in the EU are similarly topical in all the Baltic States, although at least in Latvia the discussion regarding the status of the artists mostly remains at the level of policy makers, field professionals

and practitioners rather than academics. The last all-encompassing study regarding the situation and status of creative persons was carried out more than 10 years ago [LAC 2012].

Research methodology

The empirical part of the study uses a qualitative research strategy. The authors collected and analysed both primary and secondary data. To find out the key challenges and problems that are characteristic of the EU member states in the context of the artist and the CCS professional status, employment and social welfare, the authors conducted desk research of prior EU level studies and working group reports, as well as normative acts of all the three Baltic states.

For a deeper analysis of the Latvian case, the authors conducted two in-depth semi-structured interviews with senior public servants of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, that is, the Deputy State Secretary for Cultural Policy and the Implementation of Cultural Policy Advisor to the Minister for Culture on the issues of cultural policy implementation. Both interviews tackled the issues of the status of creative persons and topical challenges of Latvia. For the deeper analysis of the situation in Estonia and Lithuania authors have used an Estonian report "Freelance creatives, their economic models and access to social guarantees" by Koppel, Masso, Arrak and Michelson [2021], a presentation "Creative workers, artists and freelance professionals: practices and challenges in Estonia" by Heili Jõe Maria-Kristiina Soomre from Estonian Ministry of Culture [2021] and Lithuanian artists' association National Annual reports.

To obtain a comparative overview of the status of artists and their current situation in the EU member states, as well as the artists' employment-related challenges in each of the countries, the authors conducted a focus group discussion with representatives of EU member states delegated by Administration Générale de la Culture. The discussion took place on 3 May 2022, in the MS Teams online platform. Eight EU countries and organisations were represented in the discussion: Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (Belgium), Latvian Academy of Culture (Latvia), Cabinet of Minister of Culture and Media (Croatia), Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (Slovak), Ministry of Culture (Lithuania), Arts Council Malta (Malta), Ministry of Culture (Bulgaria), and Ministry of Culture (Greece).

After the qualitative research authors have produced the recommendations for the Baltic States which will be presented in a line with the dissemination roadmap of the report prepared and edited for the Publications Office of the European Union on behalf of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on the status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals (2023).

Research results

The empirical part of the research focuses on the analysis and comparison of the status of artists and creative persons and the related issues and challenges in the Baltic States, and the results are examined in the context of the ongoing discussion in the EU. This chapter has three thematic strands: (1) the existence of a formal status of artists and cultural and creative professionals, (2) the means and criteria of status recognition, (3) the system and instruments of public support.

1. Existence of a formal status of artists and cultural and creative professionals

Since the early 21st century, the EU member states have increasingly chosen to introduce a law determining the status of artists and cultural/creative persons, with the aim of defining what persons are to be considered professional artists, and recognising their distinctive employment models, as well as creating a registration system of such persons. Alongside with the conditions of obtaining the status of creative persons, such laws often specify the support measures available to artists [Neil 2019: 16].

The issue of an official status of artists became especially pertinent during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the epidemiological restrictions meant that a part of those employed in the CCS had only limited opportunities for working and earning. For instance, in 2020 the EU lost a total of about 31% of the income of the cultural and creative economy [EY Consulting 2021: 6]. The crisis caused by the pandemic re-ascertained that artists and creative professionals, as compared with those employed in other sectors, are often socially and economically unprotected. On the EU level it has already caused concern over the preservation of the diversity of the CCS and its sustainability, since it is foreseen that in response to lack of stability, a part of CCS workers might decide to leave the sector [Voices of Culture 2021: 4; European Parliament 2021: 4].

To guarantee social protection and access to social benefits for artists and CCS professionals, many EU states have defined an official status of the artist. However, as demonstrated by studies in the last years, the status of artists and CCS professionals is identified by law only in some of the member states. Thus, artists often have to adjust to other legal statuses existing in the state, and these are not suitable for their diversified model of employment, being attuned to long-term employment [Voices of Culture 2021: 9]. In addition, the situation is exacerbated by the fact that in the states where such a status exists, it is considerably differing. These differences hinder the creation and introduction of a joint and suitable-for-all support system and its application, as well as it limits the employment opportunities for CCS professionals in the EU as a whole, for example, with regard to artists' mobility [Slovak Coalition for Cultural

Diversity 2013: 72–73; De Voldere et al. 2021: 66]. The focus group discussion confirmed that, showing that of the eight states represented, an official artists' status has been introduced in three states (Latvia, Lithuania and Croatia), while in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta and Slovakia such status does not exist; however, most states are planning to introduce it shortly [Focus group discussion 2022].

The Baltic States are among the EU states where an official artists' status has been introduced. In Latvia the status was legally acknowledged in 2018, by the *Law of Creative Persons and Professional Creative Organisations* [Saeima 2018]. In Lithuania a similar law was introduced and came into force much earlier – in 1994 (*Law on Artistic Creators and their Organisations* [Seimas 1994]), while in Estonia – in 2005 (*Creative Persons and Artistic Associations Act* [Riigikogu 2005]). In Latvia the Law was adopted with the goal of promoting and strengthening the professional artistic and scientific creative work, as well as legal determination of the status of creative persons, its criteria and the right to support measures [Saeima 2018].

2. Recognition and criteria for the status of artist or creative person

So far, a common and all-encompassing artists' definition on the EU level has not been introduced; however, the discussion on the development of a shared umbrella definition and its inclusion in the EU cultural policy documents continues to be active [Damaso and Culture Action Europe Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021: 2]. In 2021, The European Commission, in the framework of the *Open Method of Coordination*, established a working group for the exchange of experiences and sharing best practices of the member states regarding the status of artists and their working conditions, as well as for overseeing the course and progress of this process [*Cultural policy cooperation at the EU level*, European Commission 2021; Damaso and Culture Action Europe Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021: 2], as the European Commission believes that the strengthening of that status in legislation can provide a greater weight for the status, as well as resolve several problems related to the recognition of the artists' non-typical work manner, working conditions, and strengthen the system of their social protection [Snijders et al. 2020: 45].

As noted by the *Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity*, in most states the status of artist/ creative person is granted by applying two criteria – professional education and assessment of peers, who deem the artist to be a professional – in the manner it is implemented in, for example, Austria, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania and other states. In some states, for example, Finland, Sweden and Estonia, the recognition depends only on peer evaluation. In specific cases, for example, in Germany and France, the recognition is based on peer evaluation and an administrative decision, while in the Netherlands and Belgium – only on an administrative decision [Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity 2013: 38].

Diverse approaches to the defining of the status of artists and creative persons are also confirmed by the participants of the focus group discussion [Focus group discussion 2022]. Most often (in Belgium, Croatia, Malta and Slovakia) the artists and the creative professionals are defined by nature of arts activity – they are regarded as a natural person involved in the creation, implementation and/or interpretation of artworks in one of the CCS branches. Several states demonstrate a wish to include in the definition the aspect of education. For instance, in Slovakia, professional artists are also the persons who have received education in the arts branches; Bulgaria wishes to introduce a similar approach, suggesting that professional experience might be an alternative to education. Thus, the definition would not exclude professionals who have not received academic education in the branches of arts, yet have been working in that branch for a considerable time [Focus group discussion 2022]. Additionally, most of the states participating in the discussion recognise creative professionals through membership in professional creative organisations or by authority (national-level arts councils, arts commissions) which evaluate applications by creative professionals for receiving the status of the artist. Such an approach is used in Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and in the case of freelancers without contractual relations – in Belgium [Focus group discussion 2022].

The normative act regulation on defining the status of creative persons in the Baltic States, declare that the artist is defined by combining the definition by nature of arts activity and the definition by membership. Until currently, for example, in Latvia the creative person is the author or performer (a natural person) who in the understanding of the Copyright Law creates or performs an interpretation of an artwork in the creative branches, and their artworks in the previous three years have been publicly accessible for audiences, as well as that person is a member of a professional creative organisation and provides contribution to the development of professional art and culture, which is evidenced by that professional creative organisation in the manner stipulated by the Law [Saeima 2018]. The Lithuanian and Estonian definitions are very similar, with the key difference in the CCS branches they include. In Latvia the Law acknowledges professional artistic and scientific work in the creative branches of architecture, design, theatre, music, visual art, dance, literature and film, excluding amateur art and crafts. In the Lithuanian case the law also includes journalism, circus, interdisciplinary arts, photography, ethnic art and crafts (*Law on Artistic Creators and their Organisations* [Seimas 1994]). In Estonia, the law includes sound art (*Creative Persons and Artistic Associations Act* [Riigikogu 2005]). In other EU states, the status mostly refers to audio-visual art, architecture, literature, performing art, music, visual art, design, and photography; however, different other branches may appear as well. The regulation in Belgium and Slovakia includes the following professions: creators, technicians, sound mixer,

agent, while the law in Malta includes cultural heritage and media [Focus group discussion 2022].

On the Latvian and Estonian cultural policy level, in the previous year there has been a discussion on the expanding of the definition of the creative person, as the implementation of the law has demonstrated several practical boundary cases on recognising who could be considered creative persons [Matulis 2022; Joe and Soomre 2022]. In Latvia several groups of CCS representatives currently encounter challenges in receiving the status of the creative person, namely workers in advertising, science, journalism, circus and theatre art (illusionists), and interdisciplinary creative persons [Matulis 2022].

Differences in the diversity of arts branches and professions correspond to the joint EU discussion on the expanding of the artists' definition. EU reports call on member states to create the sorts of definitions that reflect the diversity of the CCS work (not only in terms of branches and professions, but also employment modes) and they support a process-oriented approach. This approach means giving recognition to the actual scope of creative work, which includes research and preparation, and harmonising it with the UNESCO 1980 recommendations on the status of the artist [Voices of Culture 2021: 9; European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education 2021: 90; Damaso and Culture Action Europe Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021: 4].

The focus group discussion has highlighted the diversity and complexity of recognition criteria. Often the criteria for the recognition of the artist are the professional activity of the artist in the previous 2–3 years (Belgium, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Croatia), creative work as a basic occupation (Malta, Croatia, Belgium, Latvia), the contribution to the development of the national art and culture (Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia). In Belgium, the criteria for the recognition of the art are the specific CCS branch and the length of experience, while in Croatia and Slovakia economic criteria (financial indicators) have a considerable role. For instance, in Slovakia, the recognition depends on the person's declaration of taxable income by the Copyright Act in the previous year. In the states where the artists' status is defined by law, candidate applications are reviewed based on the specific criteria and decisions on the awarding of the status are taken mostly by an expert commission of an Arts Council alone or in collaboration with the Minister of Culture (for example, in Croatia). A similar process of decision-making is envisaged for introduction in Bulgaria, Malta, and Slovakia [Focus group discussion 2022].

When analysing the criteria for the artists' recognition in the Baltic States, the authors conclude that each of the states has chosen a different approach (see the comparison in Table 1). The more specific and distinct criteria for receiving the creative person status in each Baltic State have been highlighted in bold.

The criteria of artists' recognition and granting the status of creative person

Country	Title of the law	Cultural branches covered	Approach for the recognition of creative person status	Criteria for the recognition of creative person status
Latvia	Law on the Status of Creative Persons and Professional Creative Organisations, 2008	architecture, design, theatre, music, visual art, dance, literature and film art	through membership, by committee	1. Creates/performs professional artworks (products) in a specific creative branch. 2. Has professional education. 3. The artworks created have been publicly available at least 3 years before the awarding of the status. 4. **Remuneration for creative work is the main source of income.** 5. The creative activity provides contribution to the development of professional art and culture (as acknowledged by the relevant professional creative organisation). 6. Is a member of a professional creative organisation.
Lithuania	Law on Artistic Creators and Their Organisation, 1994	architecture, design, visual art, photography, film, literature, dance, interdisciplinary art, ethnic culture, crafts, journalism, circus, theatre	by nature of activity, through membership, by committee	1. The person's individual or collective artwork is positively assessed as professional art in the published monographs, reviews or articles by professional artistic evaluators, thus is recognised as a professional work of art. 2. The person's artwork is included, in the order prescribed by the law, in general comprehensive education programmes, professional education programmes and higher education programmes. 3. The person's individual or collective **artwork has been awared the Lithuanian National Culture and Art award**, the arts award of the Republic of Lithuania, the art award of the Ministry

Lithuania	Law on Artistic Creators and Their Organisation, 1994	architecture, design, visual art, photography, film, literature, dance, interdisciplinary art, ethnic culture, crafts, journalism, circus, theatre	by nature of activity, through membership, by committee	of Culture or an international award, an award given by other artists' organisation or a diploma of an international professional art creators' or performers' competition (except for school students' and higher education students' competitions). 4. The person's **artwork has been purchased by Lithuanian or foreign national museums or galleries.** 5. The person has been publishing for no less than five years arts evaluation articles or reviews in Lithuanian or foreign publications, as well as a person who has been granted the Doctoral degree in science or arts for research in a relevant arts branch. 6. **The person who teaches subjects of arts studies and occupies the position of a professor or associate professor in a higher education institution**, that educates professional artists in accordance with arts study programmes. 7. **The person is selected to individually or collectively represent Lithuania in internationally recognised events of professional art.**

Estonia	Creative Persons and Artistic Associations Act, 2005	architecture, audiovisual arts, design, performing arts, sound arts, literature, visual arts, scenography	through membership by authority	1. The author/performer in the sense of the Copyright Act, who is active in the specified CCS branches. 2. **Does not have a permanent work position.** 3. A member in at least one arts association, in which there are at least 100 members and which has the status of a professional creative organisation. In that organisation at least 50 members in the previous 3 years are active in creative activities in the specific arts branch and their artworks are publicly accessible. 4. A self-employed creative person who is **included in the Commercial Register**.

Table 1. Summary by the authors. Sources: Saeima 2018, Seimas 1994, Riigikogu 2005, Focus group discussion 2022, Matulis 2022.

To receive the status of a creative person, artists in Latvia have to be proactive, as they themselves have to initiate the application for the status either by becoming a member of a professional creative organisation, or by applying to the Commission of the Latvia Creative Associations' Council and receiving a letter of confirmation [Saeima 2018]. Another criterion, which is taken into account in the evaluation process, is professional education. The artist's application for the evaluation process should include not only a portfolio of creative work, but also information on the education completed [CCUL 2022a; Matulis 2022].

In Lithuania, there are seven criteria for granting of the status of a creative person, and the law stipulates that the artist has to meet at least one of them [Seimas 1994]. Decisions on the granting of the status to natural persons are made by the Council for Granting the Status of Art Creator and the Status of Art Creators Organisations, which works under the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, while for legal persons the status is awarded by Councils of Art Creators Organisations [Focus group discussion 2022].

In Estonia the criteria for the status of creative persons are determined by an association that joins at least 100 registered members – professionals of the given branch [Riigikogu 2005]. In 2021, the professional creative organisation's status was granted to 17 arts associations which join 6500 members [Joe and Soomre 2022].

Organisations submit their applications for the status to the Estonian Ministry of Culture, and the Minister of Culture takes decisions on the granting of that status [Riigikogu 2005].

The Baltic States maintain registers of creative persons on a national level. In Latvia, the law envisages that the artists' registers are developed and renewed regularly by the organisations that have the status of professional creative organisations, which join the artists working in the concrete creative sphere. Till 2023, 15 organisations have received this status [Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia 2023]. The task of these organisations is to collect data and information on their members (including their creative activity, the created artworks), and at the beginning of every year submit an updated list of members to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia [Saeima 2018]. In 2022 the database held information on 3074 artists [CCUL 2022b]. Professional creative organisations may receive a delegation contract from the Ministry of Culture, to assess the correspondence to the creative person's status and register the artists who are not members of any professional creative organisation [Saeima 2018]. Lithuania and Estonia have a similar system of registering artists. In Lithuania, it is carried out by a government-authorised institution that includes the councils, which make decisions on the granting of the status of creative persons and organisations and collect the information on the creative persons provided by creative associations, except for freelance artists [Seimas 1994; Focus group discussion 2022]. In 2021, in Lithuania the status of creative persons was enjoyed by 6976 artists [Kregždaite, Godlevksa et al. 2021: 11]. In Estonia, the register of creative persons is the responsibility of the Boards of creative organisations; they also maintain registers of self-employed artists, who receive state support for their artistic activity [Riigikogu 2005]. The focus group discussion demonstrates that state registers are important for the stocktaking of artists, although the existence of registers does not mean that the social situation and support mechanisms for the artists are better than in countries without the register. Such registers exist in Belgium, Greece and Slovakia; however, in countries like Bulgaria, Croatia and Malta there is no such register, or there is only a register for cultural organisations. At the same time, the introduction of a register is planned for the near future [Focus group discussion 2022].

3. Public support system and instruments

It has been emphasised on the EU level that "*art is work and it must be treated as such*" [Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland 2018], pointing out the need to give official recognition of the value and importance of the work of those employed in the CCS for the society and economy in the same way as it is with other sectors, so that artists and CCS professionals have rights and welfare benefits the same as other employed persons. However, the EU and its member states still

need to agree and introduce suitable regulation and support mechanisms for the CCS professionals, as well as improve collaboration and coordination between member states. The determining of an official artists' status is directly related to the creation and strengthening of a support system that is suitable for artists. Currently this issue has acquired a new urgency in the EU – the necessity to ensure that artists and CCS professionals have an equal level of social protection, including the right to paid illness and childcare leave, unemployment benefit, health and accident insurance, included in the national social protection systems. It is also being recommended to strengthen other roles of the artist (e. g., the role of the manager, marketing specialist, entrepreneur, etc.), envisaging and allocating stipends for research, training, mentoring programmes which would promote the development of other skills needed for artists (e. g., management and administrative skills) [Voices of Culture 2021: 11–12].

Different approaches and instruments are used in the EU member states for the support of those employed in the CCS, for example, tax relief, earmarked subsidies, grants, donations, sponsorship, loans [Snijders et al. 2020: 11].

In Latvia, the support system for creative persons is stipulated in the Law on the Status of Creative Persons and Professional Creative Organisations. Every year the State Culture Capital Foundation administers the funds from the state budget within its programme of Support for Creative Persons, which is implemented to promote the creative activity of artists. The Programme provides three kinds of support grants to creative persons, in the following cases: the person (1) temporarily has not received income for further creative activity because of the nature of that creative activity, (2) has short-term stoppage of activity, (3) is of the age of old-age pension and his/her monthly income cannot cover everyday expenditures (e. g., medical and utilities). To receive this stipend, the artist has to submit an application to the State Culture Capital Foundation, confirming the status of the creative person and providing information on the artworks created and made public in the previous three years. Old-age pensioners are required to provide documents demonstrating the incurred medical and utility expenditures. The stipend to a self-employed creative person may be used also for making state social insurance payments [Saeima 2018].

In the beginning of 2022, a working group was set up by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia to focus on enhancing the support mechanisms related to the status of creative persons and state support. The working group developed a proposal describing a way of providing systematic support to all creative persons in Latvia, to offer help not only to the artists in difficult financial circumstances, but also to promote the professional growth and development of the most active creative persons [Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia 2022]. As a result, the proposal includes three different support mechanisms: (1) social support, (2) support for growth, and (3) support for commercial activity. Social support would be the body of measures

that are already in place: support to old-age pensioners, minimum social payments and the stoppage benefit. Since the roles of artists are changing, as demonstrated by the theoretical framework, and they include not only creative activities, but also administrative work, marketing, producing and other related activities, support is needed also for the strengthening of these multiple roles. Therefore, the second kind of support, or growth support, would include grant systems to ensure support for creative or artistic activity, for example, creative trips, training and other activities and projects. In its turn, the commercial activity support is targeting only active creative persons, to support creative entrepreneurship, simplifying procedures and envisaging exceptions to these procedures and tax relief [Zariņš 2022; Ernštreits 2022].

In Lithuania and Estonia, normative acts also stipulate support to creative persons. In Estonia the Ministry of Culture through recognised professional artists' association allocates state subsidy to creative persons who are (1) engaged in a liberal profession, who have (2) temporarily lost income for the promotion of creative activity, and (3) for professional training (in-service training) [Riigikogu 2005]. A study carried out in 2021 on the access of freelance artists to social guarantees in Estonia, concludes that the social guarantees meant for persons employed in project-based work, are not sufficient, as they cannot cover the actual expenses [Koppel, Masso, Arrak and Michelson 2021: 93].

The Lithuanian law determines that the artists enjoying the status of creative persons have the right to receive support from the state-funded Social Security Programme for Artists, which envisages support during a temporary creative stoppage, and support to artists with low and irregular income [Focus group discussion 2022]. Support for artists is also legally fixed in other laws, for instance, the Law on State Social Insurance defines that the artists who have the status of a creative person have the right to a pension, health insurance, maternity benefit, provided their income is not insured. For the social protection of the artists whose annual income is smaller than the state-determined 12 minimum monthly wages, the state provides social insurance payments from the state budget. The Law on Health Insurance states that the persons who receive income from Authors' Contracts, or performing activity, have to make compulsory health insurance payments, while the state-funded Programme of Social Protection of Arts Creators stipulates that these payments are made on behalf of artists with the status of creative persons. Meanwhile, the Law on Professional Performing Arts defines the social protection for the staff of professional theatre art institutions [Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends 2019; Lithuanian artists' association 2019: 2–3].

The EU member states consider that a stable and relatively successful approach in the sphere of social protection of artists has been implemented by Germany. Since 1983 a dedicated social protection mechanism for artists has been in force in

Germany, with the aim to obtain payments for the use of art from enterprises that are indirect employers. The national law on social protection states that every employer who receives benefit from art and creative activity has to pay 30% payments of all artists' payments to the Artists' Fund. The remaining part is subsidised by the state (20%) and the person employed in the CCS (50%). The state guarantees that the artists who pay the required social payments and are participants of the Artists' Fund, have pensions of old-age, disability and loss of provider, as well as health insurance and long-term care insurance, as well as limited insurance for periods of no work, provided the person has made additional payments for at least two years. The payments to the Fund are a compulsory requirement. Self-employed artists, who carry out their creative activity with commercial purposes and do not employ more than one person, and who according to their artistic activity in the interpretations of the Artists' Social protection Law are considered professional artists and who have annual income of at least 3900 euro, have to make the stipulated payments and have to become members of the Fund. In 2018, according to the data of OECD the Artists' Fund included 35% of all Germany' s CCS self-employed persons (a total of 1.3 million). Although the system has shown itself to be stable over decades, as since the early 1990s the total payments (including those from the state) for self-employed artists have increased four times, this system has challenges, too. One of those is the relatively low coverage of artists, another is not ensuring compensation in the case of work-related accidents, as well as performers tend to lose the right to the social guarantees from the Artists' Fund, as they combine self-employed work with temporary contracts [Galian et al. 2021: 33–35].

In recent years in Europe, new practices of artists' support are being discussed. In the autumn of 2021, the *Artists' Association of Finland* organised the *Fair Pay for Artists exhibition payment symposium*, in which visual art organisations from Finland, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA shared their experience and debated various exhibition payment models. The exhibition payment model envisages compensation to the artist for the preparatory work for a museum exhibition, for example, exhibition planning, placement of artworks, transportations, marketing, participation in related events and other tasks. This model not only promoted the societal recognition of the artists' work and its many roles, but also the receiving of suitable and fair pay for the hours worked by the artist in preparing the exhibition. To strengthen fair pay in Finnish visual art, The Artists' Association of Finland, Designers' Association Ornamo and Finnish Museums Association had worked for several years to introduce this model and in 2021 the Finnish government allocated 1 million euro for its establishment [Artists' Association of Finland 2021].

Other European states strive to support fair pay in CCS. In early 2022, the Arts Council England published an information material on the principles of evaluation

in the *Arts Council England's 2023–26 Investment Programme*. It is stated in the new grant system that only projects in which those employed in the CCS will receive sufficient and fair pay, matching the practice codes and guidelines in the given art branch, will be supported. Project leaders have to ensure that artists are paid in accordance with all hours worked by the artist, and all roles accomplished (including research, planning, supplying, etc.), and in the case of mobility – the expenditures of the stay [Arts Council England 2022].

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands a Fair practice Code was developed several years ago. It stipulates the principles of fair practices in the CCS and offers a catalogue of fair remuneration. Since the introduction of the Code, many cultural organisations in the Netherlands have signed the declaration of intent on the observation of the Code. In 2022 the EU National Institutes for Culture cluster started a new discussion cycle Fair P(L)ay, to discuss on the European level a fair system of CCS pay, copyright and mobility and to collect existing practices, initiatives, and to promote understanding, information and fair attitude to the artists' work both in the sector itself and in the broader public [EUNIC 2022].

Conclusions and suggestions

- The study findings bring to the forefront the *invisibility* of artists from two perspectives – from the point of view of tax policy and public support instruments, by means of the appreciation of their workload, diversity of skills needed and fair pay. The existing precarious work combined with a lack of knowledge and competences decrease the potential for artists to gain regular income.
- The study findings show that in order to provide fair pay for artists and creative professionals there is a need for improved cooperation among policy makers, advisors, state institutions, private entities and NGOs to resolve the questions of fair pay rates.
- Overall, the EU member states use different approaches of recognition of the status of creative persons (through membership, by authority, by committee, by nature of arts activity, by artistic output) and their combinations. Each state has stipulated various criteria for the identification of professional artists (economic activity, creative activity, education, etc.).
- Artists' registration and stocktaking systems have considerable differences – some states have introduced national-level artists' registers, overseen by a state-delegated cultural organisation, while other states have no such register. Although the existence of registers in part makes it easier to identify artists, yet the authors cannot conclude that the registers make artists *visible*.

- When considering support mechanisms on the EU level, it is important to acknowledge that merely financial support is not sufficient. There is a need for other kinds of support as well – to strengthen the other roles of the artist and all artist's work, for example, providing education and training, involvement of producers, an umbrella legal organisation to seek project funding, etc.
- It is necessary to discuss and address the issue of fair pay on the level of the EU. This discussion should appear on the agenda of all member states, and it has to become a part of the support system. Gradually the states have to abandon the idea that the artist loves all that he/she does and therefore can do it for a lower remuneration. Project budgets have to prioritise artists' pay and not technical expenditures – it is high time this out-dated approach changed.
- To develop a systematic approach for artist recognition and support in the Baltic context, the authors highlight three main directions: (1) Systematic approach to support creative practice not only during periods of low or no-income, but to create stability and security within the CCS. There should be various support mechanisms such as social support, growth support and commercial support. (2) Sustainable coverage of social guarantees for all artists and cultural professionals. Social guarantees for the irregularly employed or freelancers with irregular income: accessibility of healthcare, options to decrease a risk of retirement-poverty and the risks of tax-optimization. (3) Better targeted cultural funding, which emphasizes the artist's work, which includes multiple and different additional skills and roles, a much greater input of time and energy than merely pure creativity. Accordingly, support by those three directions has to be a focus of various cultural policy instruments.

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TRANSLATORS, INTERPRETERS, AND THE CREATIVE CLASS: AN EXPLORATION OF THE POST-COVID PROFESSION

PhD **Antony Hoyte-West**
Independent scholar, United Kingdom

Abstract

Coined just over two decades ago, Richard Florida's concept of the 'creative class' has generated significant academic and popular interest. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, the present literature-based study examines the links between translators, interpreters, and the creative class. This is accomplished firstly by outlining relevant sociological perspectives pertaining to the status of the translational professions, before presenting and reviewing Florida's definition of the creative class. Subsequently, building on a range of recent academic studies on the topic, attention turns to how the translation and interpreting professions navigated the unchartered territory of the coronavirus lockdowns. As such, the technological, practical, and pedagogical aspects will be presented, discussed, and compared with other creative professionals. Finally, the overview concludes with some brief potential implications for future professional practice.

Keywords: *translation profession, translation sociology, creative professionals, status of translators and interpreters*.

Introduction

Although adapting to constant change is seemingly part of modern life, recent advances affecting translators and interpreters have included the growing prevalence of artificial intelligence, expanding institutional language policies, as well as the

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move to remote working heightened by the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions. Indeed, though translation and interpreting are commonly considered among the most ancient of human activities, the professionalisation of the sector remains relatively recent. The creation of accreditation procedures, training programmes, and professional associations is largely a product of the last century, and it has been fuelled primarily by increased demands for translation and interpreting services in both the public and private sectors at local, national, and international levels. In addition to established specialisations such as technical and literary translation as well as conference and community interpreting, new domains such as post-editing, localisation, and transcreation have also entered the field over the past few years.

Though the role of creativity in the act of translation is well-attested, comparatively little attention has been paid to sociological aspects of the convergence between translators, interpreters, and the creative industries, Accordingly, this article aims to explore the nexus between these translational practitioners and the so-called 'creative class', a notion outlined by Richard Florida, the American urban studies scholar, in his landmark book *The Rise of the Creative Class* over twenty years ago [Florida 2002] and subsequently revisited in a later, fully-revised version [Florida 2012]. Accordingly, this literature-based analysis explores the role of translators and interpreters within this milieu, informed by examination of the translational professions from a sociological slant. Particularly in this post-pandemic era, attention will be paid to the increasingly fluid nature of translation and interpreting in modern times through presentation of several recent research studies. In addition to noting the rise of these new domains mentioned above, this contribution aims to highlight some of the evolving changes to the translation and interpreting professions precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, these changes will be compared with wider developments in other creative professions.

Translation, creativity, and some relevant sociological aspects

The links between translation and creativity have been much discussed over the past few years. This has been illustrated, for example, by the noted scholar Kirsten Malmkjær's recent monograph entitled *Translation and Creativity* [Malmkjær 2019], as well as a recent special issue of *World Literature Studies* [Hostová 2022], which included a roundtable with prominent experts in translation studies [Bassnett et al. 2022]. To name just a few additional examples of the significant amount of research being conducted in this broad and growing field, other studies include examinations of how creativity can be incorporated into media accessibility and audiovisual translation [Romero-Fresco & Chaume 2022], translation for arts and

cultural institutions [Rizzo 2022], as well as how to enhance the inclusion of creative aspects in translation training contexts (e. g., see Morón & Calvo [2018]; Ponce-Márquez & García [2020]). Indeed, this interest has been heightened by the advent of transcreation, which has been the subject of burgeoning scholarly activity over the last decade. Though acknowledging that a variety of possible definitions exist, and also that the exact limits of the term may be somewhat unclear, a recent definition of transcreation has been put forward as:

> "*the intra-/interlingual adaptation or re-interpretation of a message intended to suit a target audience, while conveying the same message, style, tone, images and emotions from the source language to the target language, paying special attention to the cultural characteristics of the target audience. This re-interpretation of the message may imply adaptations that move away from the original text to a greater or lesser extent to fit the original purpose, transmit the original message and overcome cultural barriers. For such reasons, it is present in persuasive and communicative contexts*" [Díaz-Millón & Olvera-Lobo 2021: 12].

As highlighted in the last sentence of the definition, the uses of transcreation in "persuasive and communicative contexts" make it versatile enough to be incorporated into the realms of marketing, advertising, and other relevant professional areas. Indeed, several studies have been published exploring the differences between translation, transcreation, and copywriting (e. g., Pedersen [2014]; Benetello [2018]; Carreira Martínez [2018]). In this regard, it can be argued that this certainly highlights the links between translators and interpreters with the broader creative and cultural industries.

Yet, despite this evident interest in the intersection of translation with creativity and the creative industries, the examination of translators and interpreters as creative professionals appears to be somewhat understudied, save for the studies presented by Veselá & Klimová [2015a; 2015b] and Kapsaskis [2018]. This is despite that a swing within Translation Studies towards sociological angles from the early 2000s onwards (see e. g., Wolf & Fukari [2007]) has helped to place translators, interpreters, and their profession in the foreground. Many studies which explore the occupational status of translators and interpreters have appeared, analysing a variety of markets, contexts, and modalities (recent examples, include Arévalo-Montoya & Cordova-Bernuy [2020]; Hoyte-West [2020]; Uysal [2021]; Ruokonen & Svahn [2022]). Indeed, this contribution develops the author's broader project on this topic [Hoyte-West 2021a; 2021b; 2022] by extending its scope to include relevant creative and cultural aspects.

The creative class: a brief overview

As mentioned in the introductory section, the idea of a 'creative class' was coined by Richard Florida in the early 2000s in the light of ever-evolving urban geographies. As posited by Florida, a new class of creative urban-dwellers would assist with regeneration and bring prosperity to cities. At the core of this new class of professionals there would be "*people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, and entertainment whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content*" [Florida 2012: 8]. This nucleus was surrounded by creative professionals "*in business and finance, law, health care, and related fields* [who] *engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education or human capital*" [Florida 2012: 8] and who also "*share a common ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference, and merit*" [Florida 2012: 9].

Indeed, Florida's definition of this creative class encompasses many of the professions traditionally thought as comprising the creative and cultural industries, to which the requirement for an economic component is added. Through this economic prerequisite, and by including not only artists, musicians, and filmmakers but also those white-collar workers who incorporate a creative aspect into their work, Florida extends the potential scope of this new, highly-educated cadre of twenty-first century professionals.

As a framework for analysis, Florida's work has brought both acclaim and controversy (e. g., Peck [2005]). These factors have ensured that over the past few years, Florida's notion of the creative class has gained wider traction, thus influencing other scholarly disciplines and attracting media interest (e. g., Heathcote [2014]; Williams [2016]; Wainwright [2017]). To give some examples, work researching aspects of the creative class regarding rural areas [Eglīte 2022], transnational commuters [Łuczaj, Leonowicz-Bukała & Kurek-Ochmańska 2022], and specific cities and countries (e. g., Báez, Bergua & Pac [2014]; Pavelea et al. [2021]) has been done. In addition, the fluid nature of the composition of the creative class has also been analysed and critiqued (e. g., by Kačerauskas [2020]). Yet, building on Florida's definition of the creative class, and given the highly-specialised nature of their educational background and professional activities, it is evident that translators and interpreters could be considered to fall under this designation. Though it could perhaps be mooted that translators and interpreters do not form part of Florida's 'core' (with the possible exception of transcreation-related activities), nonetheless, it could be argued that they are part of that grouping of creative professionals whose occupational tasks align with Florida's wider notion of a creative class.

The pandemic and its aftermath: Some observations regarding translators, interpreters, and other creative professionals

As has been clearly documented in academia and beyond, the restrictions associated with limiting the spread of the COVID-19 have had ramifications for society at the local, national, and international levels [Kumar et al. 2021]. For many countries, the COVID-19 shutdowns came after years of economic uncertainty, which was combined with other issues such as strict fiscal measures and changing demographic shifts. In the world of employment, these policies resulted in the large-scale adoption, where possible, of technology-based remote working options.

In their 2021 study exploring how urban areas might change in a post-pandemic world, Florida and colleagues Andrés Rodríguez-Pose and Michael Storper highlighted some of the macro- and micro-geographic implications that various aspects of COVID-19 policies could potentially have on the creative classes. This included the legacy of the social mixing and lockdown restrictions, as well as changes to the ways work and commercial activities are conducted (e. g., citing the move of creative professionals away from urban areas due to remote working opportunities) [Florida, Rodríguez-Pose & Storper 2021].

As outlined elsewhere (e. g., Liu & Cheung [2022]) the COVID-19 pandemic has had a large-scale impact on the translational professions, with major changes to the location and nature of the work undertaken. Though home-working was previously common among some professional translators (e. g., see Kolb [2017]), in noting wider trends away from in-house employment [Risku, Rogl & Milošević 2020], for some practitioners this was a new development, especially for many interpreters. Indeed, with multilingual meetings and other events forced to shift online, this change brought with it a host of technological, professional, and institutional factors which required immediate attention [Hoyte-West 2022]. In contrast with translators, who were well-versed in the various software and interfaces required to do the job in this age of increased digitalisation, for interpreters, the rapid move to technology-based Remote Simultaneous Interpreting (RSI) via Zoom and other platforms meant the quick mastery of these digital tools to ensure an effective and professional service. Under strict conditions, interpreting hubs were also set up where groups of interpreters could use the relevant technical equipment to ensure high-quality RSI (see Buján & Collard [2022]; Giustini [2022]; Hoyte-West [2022]).

For other members of the creative class, the enforced confinements also proved vastly limiting. In some instances, in the world of theatre and the dramatic arts, the complete moratorium on live events and social mixing required significant accommodations to be made (e. g., see Mellēna-Bartkeviča [2021]; Hylland [2022]), with some events able to be moved online, as demonstrated by the virtual staging of Shakespeare's plays by the prestigious Globe Theatre in London [Marcsek-Fuchs

2022]. In general, though, the uptake of remote work proved challenging for creative professionals. Though precarity was previously a feature of many creative professions across the spectrum, the impact of COVID-19 merely highlighted this aspect (see e. g., Comunian & England [2020]; Kurzbauer [2022]; Richards & Pachella [2022]). Indeed, with regard to the translational professions, it can be said to be characterised by a high proportion of freelance practitioners [Moorkens 2017], with all the varying positives and negatives this status can bring. As such, Florida [2012: 89–94] acknowledges the complex reality that freelance existence entails. In the context of translators and interpreters as professionals, issues of the growing "uberization" of the market have been already explored [Fırat 2021], as has the importance of ensuring adequate remuneration through the setting of appropriate rates [Lambert & Walker 2022]. As noted before, this situation compares similarly with others among the creative class, extending latent trends which existed even before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the rise of the gig economy [Spurk & Straub 2020].

Lastly, the lockdown rules had an important knock-on effect on the provision of education and training linked to the creative professions. For university teachers of translators and interpreters, the mandatory shift to online learning meant that trainers had to adapt rapidly to new virtual teaching environments, a challenge in common with primary, secondary, and tertiary educators in many countries across the globe. As detailed in the case study by Hodáková & Perez [2022], translator and interpreter trainers had to quickly learn how to engage with their students, amend curricula, and adopt relevant assessment procedures without compromising the high standards of professional practice required by the translation and interpreting markets. In addition, the changing employment practices already mentioned have also encouraged the proliferation of various translation and interpreting-related certifications offered alongside traditional degrees and diplomas [Hoyte-West 2022]. Whereas the latter are typically awarded by a university or accredited professional institution, many of the new credentials (for example, the training courses for using specific interpreting portals) are offered by private companies. As such, though different in content, form, and approach, these qualifications cater to the changing educational and professional reality occasioned by wider market forces.

Building on the examples of transcreation, the concept of 'translation plus' has gained extra traction (see e. g., Spinzi [2021]) exploring, for example, the "*value-added service*" that the role of the translator could bring to financial institutions [Williamson 2021: 83] and to broader corporate communication strategies [Massey 2021]. Indeed, with all the changes that the global translation and interpreting professions are undergoing, it is important to be cognisant of the extra value – beyond their multilingual expertise – that practitioners can bring to the broader organisational – and by extension, creative – context. This is particularly true in a world where English

is increasingly dominant, and where initiatives like the European Union schemes to promote fluency in two languages as well as the mother tongue mean that formalised multilingualism will become more and more prevalent [European Parliament 2023: 2]. Accordingly, this will undoubtedly have repercussions not only for translators and interpreters, but also for professionals active in the broader creative and cultural industries.

Coda

In a precursory manner, this short exploration has sought to outline some of the links between the creative class and translation and interpreting practitioners. In providing a panorama of the long-attested links between creativity and translation, this study also outlined some relevant research dealing with sociological areas of the translational profession. Then, the relatively new concept of transcreation was also presented, before Florida's notion of the creative class was briefly introduced and explained. Further to Florida's definition, it was established that translators and interpreters could indeed be considered members of this select grouping.

Turning to the coronavirus pandemic and its aftermath, the recent study by Florida, Rodríguez-Pose & Storper [2021] was used as a springboard to summarise some recent research on the impact and ramifications of the lockdown mandates on translators and interpreters as well as on the wider creative class. Worthy of specific attention were the necessary changes to work modes and professional practice caused by restrictions on social mixing and the move to online work. These changes also contributed towards underlining remuneration issues and the latent precarity of employment, as well as the changing urban dynamic and need to be physically present in the workplace. Some of the consequences on the education and training of translators, interpreters, and other members of the creative classes were also highlighted, of which the shift to virtual formats remained paramount. Finally, the importance of translators and interpreters contributing more than simply linguistic expertise was underscored by the concept of "translation plus", with its allied notion of conferring additional advantages to a given context, client, or market.

At the time of writing, in common with other occupational areas [Kramer & Kramer 2020], it still remains to be determined how all of these post-pandemic changes will influence the broader professional status of translators and interpreters. Yet, as demonstrated by the wealth of research studies showcased in this article, the interlinkage of translators and interpreters with Florida's concept of the creative class is a topic ripe for additional investigation. As an overview purely based on the analysis of scholarly literature, the limits of this contribution are quite clear and more in-depth survey- and interview-based work remains necessary. Indeed, with advances in technology, it is certain that our professional and personal lives will become ever

more linked with artificial intelligence. These advances may affect not only the modes and means of working but, as observed in a recent newspaper article written by a copywriter about the nascent ChatGPT technology and its possible impacts on his profession [Williams 2023], may also have an effect on the creative product itself. Should this be the case, then there will undoubtedly be clear consequences for the professional trajectories of translators, interpreters, and other creative professionals over the next few years.

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THE CONDITIONAL GIFT – INTERPRETATIONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN APPLYING FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE STATUS

PhD **Agnese Hermane**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies
Dr.sc.soc. **Ilona Kunda**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies

Abstract

European cities compete for the status of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC), as it is proven to enhance city visibility and the profile of cultural events in the city; it also allows addressing issues of strategic cultural development of the successful candidate. Importantly, the status comes with an explicit requirement to ensure sufficient public participation in developing the bid and implementing the cultural programme. Prior research demonstrates that meaningful participation is not easy to achieve; the research on that aspect is considered scarce.

The article aims to analyse the interpretation of public participation, its challenges and shaping factors as seen by ECoC bid-producing teams. The main research question is "What did the bid development process uncover about the capacity of bid-producing teams to foster public participation in the Latvian cities – ECoC finalists?"

The current paper examines the challenge of participation encountered in the process of developing the bid for the second round of ECoC 2027 by three applying cities in Latvia. The study was carried out between October 2022 and March 2023 using qualitative methodology. The theoretical starting point of the study is the four-part framework of factors influencing participation by Kaifeng Yang and Sanjay

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K. Pandey [Yang & Pandey 2011]. The study suggests that these factors are indeed useful in conducting an analysis of participation. In addition, the study supports the prior conclusions of scholarly literature pointing out that more nuanced language is needed to interpret participation and participants. The article pays special attention to the nuances of digital participation and the organisational characteristics of the public body in charge of participation in cultural planning.

Keywords: *ECoC status, public participation, cultural planning, digital participation*.

Introduction and the objective of the study

Bidding for the status of the ECoC and implementation of the successful cultural programme is a unique set of processes, activating a broad range of stakeholders for developing and carrying out a large-scale programme of cultural events.

While the programme has to be effective and meaningful in terms of the city's cultural strategic goals, one "official" precondition stands out and deserves particular attention – that of public participation in the programming and implementation of these events. One may view the exchange promised by the bidding city as receiving a gift (i. e., the status and the funding) and enacting the corresponding obligation to freely provide the return gift of increased public participation. We do not aim to carry out an ethnographic analysis here, but rather use the metaphor of gift giving in a general, abstract way, to point out that the status of the ECoC does not come without its conditions – and these conditions may not be easy to fulfil. Prior scholarly literature indeed points out that achieving meaningful participation is not easy [Biondi et al. 2020; Jancovich & Hansen 2018; Piber et al. 2017]. Moreover, as Tommarchi and colleagues point out [Tommarchi et al. 2018], such analyses are scarce.

This study will focus on participation in the process of developing the ECoC bid put into the context of the interpretation of the meaning of participation as reflected in the bid books as textual material. The objects of our study are the processes and resulting bid books of the three Latvian cities competing in the final stage of the bidding process in 2022.

The viewpoint reflected will be that of bid-producing teams, that is, local-government-approved agents in charge of achieving public participation. We also use the bid book texts (on participation) as a meaningful reflection of the context as seen by these teams. The teams are in the centre of our study as it is precisely these groups of agents who are in charge of promoting or engendering a response to the desired gift (that is, receiving the status of the ECoC).

The **main goal** of this article is to analyse the interpretation of public participation, its challenges and its shaping factors as seen by ECoC bid-producing teams.

We seek to answer the following research question:

What did the bid development process uncover about the capacity of bid-producing teams to foster public participation in the Latvian cities – ECoC finalists?

We believe that this article will contribute to the current understanding of public participation in cultural planning, specifically for large-scale cultural events requiring a sustained effort and the interface of local authorities and the general public.

Background

The sub-section outlines the background of the three cities-finalists in terms of the global context factors influencing public participation, the number of city inhabitants, population heterogeneity, and a short characterisation of the main theme of the winning application.

Initially, eight Latvian cities applied for the status of the European Cultural Capital 2027. The process of the development of the application was complicated by the start of the global pandemic. This strongly impacted the possibilities for active citizen involvement in usual forms, both by bringing the processes online and also by emotional distancing effects on the population. Instead of interactive workshops involving creative thinking methods and gamification elements, the collection of ideas from inhabitants took place mainly as online conversations in smaller groups. At first – it might seem a disadvantage but as organisers admit, it made it possible to hear quieter voices between loud opinions that usually dominate the process when decisions are made in groups.

After the pre-selection process, three Latvian cities – Daugavpils, Liepāja and Valmiera continued to the next round and Liepāja, Latvia's third-largest city, was selected to be European Cultural Capital 2027 together with Aveiro in Portugal.

Latvian candidate cities are comparatively small cities with quite diverse historical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The total number of inhabitants in Latvia is 1.87 million; however, one-third of them live in the capital city – Rīga which is the biggest Latvian city [Centrālā statistikas pārvalde / The Central Statistical Bureau 2022]. According to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia in 2022, there are 79 120 inhabitants in Daugavpils and it is the second-largest city in Latvia. With 67 360 inhabitants, Liepāja is the third biggest Latvian city. Valmiera with its 22 757 inhabitants is 9 on the list of cities in Latvia [ibid.] Daugavpils is a multinational city – 48% of inhabitants are Russians, 21% of inhabitants are

Latvians, 13% are Polish, 7% are Belorussians, 2% are Ukrainian, and 9% belong to other nationalities [Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde / Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs 2021]. The ethnic situation in Liepāja and Valmiera differs, while most of the inhabitants are Latvians – in Liepāja 59%, and in Valmiera around 85% [ibid].

Liepāja's ECoC theme – (un)rest – is inspired by the wind, which blows strongly in the city and, also metaphorically, from the city towards Europe. The bid is about taking an active stand on societal situations of rest and unrest by harnessing the wind and working with it to develop necessary cultural competencies for finding meaningful solutions [Expert Panel's report 2022: 11–12]. The ECoC expert panel report appreciates the focus of the bid on the alleged 85% non-active cultural consumers – in order to take a more inclusive approach and eliminate the existing polarization [Expert Panel's report 2022: 15].

Theoretical framework

Participation as an ECoC requirement

The status of ECoC is attractive for cities as a tool that allows putting culture in the centre of development for an extended period, to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and increase the cultural activity of local inhabitants, to increase audience engagement [Tommarchi, Ejgod Hansen & Bianchini 2018]. It also can bring more materialistic benefits such as economic growth, the attraction of tourists and improvement of infrastructure [O'Callaghan & Linehan 2007; Campbell 2011]. One of the goals of the ECoC Programme is to increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area and participation plays a significant role in this mission. The rules of the programme foresee the strengthening of such aspects as:

- promotion of social inclusion and equal opportunities ensuring the broadest possible involvement of all the components of civil society;
- involvement of the local population and civil society in the preparation of the application and the implementation of the action;
- creation of new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, volunteers and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities, with special attention being given to persons with disabilities and the elderly as regards the accessibility of those activities [European Parliament 2014].

The following reasons for the rise of the participation idea are given by Enrico Tommarchi and colleagues: the need to redress the practice when up to the 1990s the public funding used to be given to predominantly elite art; the hope that participation

will provide a solution to increasing social isolation, the lack of intercultural dialogue; the need to address the pervasive crisis of democracy [Tommarchi et al. 2018].

Participation and its levels

There is a wide variety of terms used to characterise participation in cities – citizen participation, citizen involvement, civic engagement, co-creation, creation of cooperative ecosystems etc.

We define participation as civic involvement aiming at the joint creation and experiencing of cultural projects, events and experiences [Piber et al. 2017; Biondi et al. 2020].

As noted by Mario Ianniello and colleagues, *participation* (..) *is not a dichotomic variable: it can entail different levels of engagement* [Ianneillo et al. 2019]. One way to look at it is to distinguish between four levels: (1) participating in the role of the spectator, (2) participation in the creation of the content of cultural events, (3) participation in the development of cultural programmes/projects (co-creation), (4) participation as a volunteer, involvement in events implementation [Tommarchi et al. 2018].

According to professor of Cultural Policy and Participation at Leeds University Leila Jancovich and professor at School of Communication and Culture at Aarhus University Louise Hansen, analysing the case of Aarhus as an ECoC, several interpretations of participation may coexist in an ECoC programme. In their study [Jancovich & Hansen 2018], in some sub-projects "participation" meant attracting audience for a cultural event, in others the idea was closer to "civic participation", while still in others – participation meant challenging the idea of how cultural institutions should work (this is the most transformative kind of participation). The same study found that "participation" differed greatly in the bid-production stage and in the implementation stage (when participation was mostly about attending the programme events) [ibid].

Challenges of participation

Prior research on the processes of implementing ECoC programmes suggests that there are numerous participation-related challenges.

One of the key conclusions is that the ECoC programme is too limited in duration to foster a meaningful change in participation modalities, scope and impact. Some researchers note that participation may serve instrumental ends, to offset the dissatisfaction of the local population with mass tourism and gentrification of ECoC site areas (cf. Tommarchi et al. 2018). Volunteer programmes tend to have a high assessment on "participation"; however, it must be noted that being a volunteer presumes that the individual has certain (unequally distributed) resources at their disposal.

The pervasive audit culture that requires pre-set levels of participation to justify the spent funding may have the effect of selecting safer options in event planning, addressing the already active segments of the population. Among the barriers of participation, some researchers name professionals who are too invested in their professional roles and scared of de-professionalisation as the result of too active participation processes.

All in all, research demonstrates that meaningful civic participation is a socially multi-layered process with a complex dynamic [Demartini et al. 2020; Tommarchi et al. 2018; Jancovich & Hansen 2018].

Factors that influence participation

A literature review on the general practice of citizen participation [Ianniello et al. 2019] suggests that there have been very few attempts to provide empirical evidence of the factors influencing citizen participation. To the best of the authors' knowledge, there has been no literature review as to participation in the context of ECoC, just isolated attempts to address the issue. We will briefly reflect on the current state of knowledge in this sub-section.

As shown by Ianniello and colleagues, there are three groups of significant factors: (1) contextual ones, in particular, information deficit and asymmetries among participants as well as the attitude of public officials [ibid: 26]; (2) organisational arrangements, especially community representation criteria and process design [ibid: 29]; (3) process management factors, in particular, group dynamics and issues related to the quality of collaboration [ibid: 32].

One of the studies on the influencing factors analysed the interpretations by public administration [Yang & Pandey 2011] and suggested four groups of factors. We selected this lens due to the fact that the subjects of our study are local government-endorsed bid-producing teams, that is, a part of the formalised governance. Yang and Pandey as researchers of public administration suggest that according to this group, outcomes of participation are influenced by the following factors:

1) competence and representation of residents (the competence in the issue; group representation rather than individuals; the risk of leaving out "insignificant" groups);
2) features of the governing body (hierarchy, red tape, centralised decision-making that relates negatively to information circulation and learning by doing);
3) mechanism of engagement (the desirability of using multiple engagement mechanisms and their match with the goals of participation (they foster the ability to reach agreement, responsiveness and trust);

4) features of the political environment (the form of governance; political culture; legal conditions; strong support by elected politicians fosters stability) [ibid].

Importantly, Yang and Pandey conduct a quantitative multivariate analysis to find out if all of the factors are equally important for public participation outcomes, and their conclusion is that the important variables are the support of elected politicians, limitations of red tape and hierarchical authority; that using multiple mechanisms is more likely to lead to good participation outcomes and participant competence is positively associated with participation outcomes [Yang & Pandey 2011: 887]. In fact, in the analysis by Yang and Pandey the participant competence is the strongest predictor of positive outcomes of public participation. As regards representation, the study found that there is a certain trade-off between competence and representation, hence the public administrators would do well if they conduct a thorough stakeholder analysis first [ibid: 888].

Based on these conclusions as sensitising ideas, we conducted our qualitative study, which is a case of involving inhabitants to voice their needs on desired developments in the cultural life of their city.

Methodology

Qualitative content analysis of applications and three in-depth interviews with the representatives of multisector bid-producing teams that were operating at a certain distance from the local government structures. All informants were female with considerable experience in cultural management. The interviews were carried out via Zoom for an average of one hour and analysed using the thematisation approach. The following aspects were emphasised in interview guidelines: (1) the current situation of public participation and the commitment towards the promotion of participation; (2) the manifestations of the four factors of public engagement during the bidding process; (3) the outcomes of the public participation exercise for the public administration bodies in charge of the ECoC bidding.

Results and discussion

We start the section with an analysis of the ECoC bid developers' description of the low participation problem and their commitments towards its increase. Later on, we discuss the four factors influencing participation [Yang & Pandey 2011], as well as the perceived outcomes of participation.

Overall, the interviewees from the three bidding cities emphasize that in Latvia, the involvement of inhabitants in the application development process cannot be taken for granted; prior to applying for the ECoC status, local participation level used to be low. All the interviewees consider the lack of participation a wider general

problem in Latvia. In their applications describing the current state of participation, the cities admit that the situation is problematic and there is a strong necessity for change.

The cities use specific figures both to express the level of participation and the commitment to change. Liepāja indicates that there is a lack of civic engagement and that too many people do not get involved in city life and do not express their opinions beyond writing comments in social media. With the help of the ECoC status, Liepāja wants to raise the number of active citizens from 14% to 30%, to reset the mindset – *from inertness to meaningful action*. Daugavpils as the second largest city of Latvia specifically mentions the low citizen involvement in the NGO sector, indicating that only 8.7% of all the NGOs of Latvia are active in the Latgale region. In its application, the team of Valmiera candidate city talks about the cultural gap; noting that the c*ity is at a cultural divide and that there is a need for bridging, a need to fill this existing gap with new, diverse contemporary cultural offerings*. Thus, the present state and the need for change is described through the metaphors of technology ("reset") and doing away with a division ("fill the gap").

In their applications, the cities (predictably) demonstrate a strong commitment to change, and citizen participation is described using such terms as meaningful change, openness, the willingness to listen, to care for each other etc. The three bid books refer to metaphors of belonging, commonality and mutual acceptance. For instance, Liepāja's team stresses the wish to create an open and active community, to create a broad public engagement programme and increase the number of civically active people. There is a promise to *involve everyone who is ready* and to activate the volunteer movement. The bid includes a metaphorical comparison about the change of thinking: *from hotel to home* – inviting everyone to see their city as their home, not a hotel. Liepāja also plans a cultural renovation by expanding the concept of culture in the public consciousness and building the capacity of cultural operators. To create the necessary changes, Daugavpils uses the metaphor of a *common language that has to be found, created and spoken*. Culture is seen as the basis for a common language in a society that enables the celebration of different traditions and values. The team commits to help in the creation of an *open and integrated local community that cares for each other*, especially encouraging the participation of the population groups at risk of social exclusion. Creative, culturally educated and culturally active citizens and an increased number of NGOs are necessary to achieve the goals of Daugavpils. The city of Valmiera is committed towards significant change in thinking and attitudes of residents. By involving people in cultural processes, Valmiera wishes to in*crease people's critical thinking abilities and the recognition of the new and the different, to increase open-mindedness, empathy and self-awareness*. Deep and genuine community involvement is necessary *to achieve the significant transformation of the*

living environment of the city and county, becoming a highly cultural urban micro-city. Valmiera intends to start the DIY movement and to involve those 26% of residents who have expressed their ability to become volunteers of ECoC.

In the situation when the "gift" of the ECoC status is conditional upon ensured and promised participation, expressions of commitment are understandable. Less visible are offerings as to reasons for the present situation of low participation. In its bid, the Liepāja team stresses the fatigue and apathy of people caused by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The Daugavpils team describes the general confusion of people caused by fast-developing technologies, and stresses the historically determined fragility of the context – *the existence of unspoken and buried issues, past grievances and clashing viewpoints,* that can fan the flames of conflict in the community. Valmiera refers to alienation and individualisation, recognising that many people are *sceptical, in denial or simply inert.* Thus, we can conclude that only Daugavpils refers to issues and practices originating in the community itself; the other two bids attribute the low participation to either an external threat or presumably global social trends. We can also reiterate that neither city considers its level of participation to be unique, and all refer to the overall low participation in Latvia.

Next, we turn to the analysis of the four factors of effective participation as seen by the bid-producing team leaders.

Factor 1: Competence and representation of inhabitants

When discussing the process of involving inhabitants in the generation of ideas for the bid, the authors of bids noted their prior limited grasp of the heterogeneity of the city inhabitants and their interests. Despite the wide experience in the field of culture, tourism and municipal work, the authors of applications admit that they had had only a superficial knowledge of the big variety and specifics of different resident groups – *one can never know enough, but the genuine interest to build the application based on residents' ideas is crucia*l.

Some of the bid-producing teams noted that they had to devise a strategy for discussions with those who had a negative mind-set and did not offer anything apart from criticism: they listened to these individuals so that they could feel heard, but did not get into prolonged discussions with them. Overall, the bid-producing teams *talked to those persons who wanted to contribute.*

Interviewees admit that although it is vital to involve people who cover a wide range of sectors, fields and geography, it is not possible to involve everyone and there will always be someone who will complain of not being involved to a sufficient extent.

According to the interviewees, the process of joint discussions was indeed conducive to the generation of ideas – the inhabitants' ideas were used to build the foundation of the applications, and most of the ideas were offered by the inhabitants.

This is a very necessary requirement, it prevents a municipality from making an application in isolation from the wishes of the citizens, from the thoughts of the citizens. It requires the application drafters to have an active conversation with the residents so that the application is not written but the residents have the feeling that it is not about us. (Interviewee, city Z)

Public involvement is very much needed. Because we are all in our own bubbles, we don't know what happens on the right, on the left, we just live in our own juice. Young people, for example, or seniors. As we started to get more and more involved, we realised that every group of people is so diverse and the needs, ideas, and thoughts are so nuanced. The youth! How incredible were their ideas! Or seniors – how knowing and open they are! We included not only diverse representatives from various professional fields; but also – taxi drivers, hairdressers etc. (Interviewee, city X)

Thus, the involvement of diverse groups indeed produced satisfaction of the bid-producing team with the results.

Factor 2: Features of the governing body

In the case of all three bid-producing cities, the teams were multisectoral and set at a certain distance from the local government structures. Being to a certain respect external allowed for considerable freedom in adopting operational decisions and implementing them. There was also a horizontal structure of sub-groups, each led by a professional in charge of achieving a joint process of idea generation.

A big advantage was that we didn't have specific positions in the municipality. We came from different spheres, we were able to take a step back from all these processes and we were able to look with a fresh eye at this community involvement. (Interviewee, city X)

In addition, in two cases there was also an added benefit of an external key expert in participatory processes, who in both cases was an artist, a theatrical or film director and thus a professional used to elicit the needed responses from the public.

He is an authority for the local cultural workers, he was very convincing and gave them confidence that he knows what he is doing. So, there were no questions why we should do it the way he wanted. At the same time – he was very successful in creating that bottom-up approach involving the people. (Interviewee, city Y)

We believe that the distance from the usual institutional set-up, the horizontal internal structures and the external expertise in response-building were crucial in implementing the broad programmes of idea generation that are in evidence in all three cities.

Factor 3: The mechanisms of engagement: the pros and cons of the digital environment

As mentioned before, the engagement process took place in the time of Covid-19 restrictions therefore most of the activities of engagement in all the cities took place in a digital environment which in the case of all three cities could be described as *extreme zooming* (e. g., Liepāja altogether had 1327 zoom conversations, up to 8 zooms per day). Other forms of engagement in candidate cities have been – open idea competition, future city games, educational seminars (Daugavpils); cultural mapping, working groups led by professionals, inhabitant forums (Valmiera) etc. One distinctive example of how to raise awareness about cities' wish to become cultural capital was used in Valmiera. Inhabitants were involved in a creative activity – the photo project "INSIDE OUT" that is described as the world's largest human photo project [Valmieras ziņas 2021] and could be implemented despite restrictions involving individual inhabitants from the whole county creating a common art piece.

There is unanimity of opinion on the strengths of online engagement – it was the ability to have a wider geographical coverage of people involved, saving of time and resources thus having more intensive, more targeted communication and the ability to hear the more silent voices.

> *The biggest advantage of digital communication was that we reached people who probably would not have come in person. It made it easier for people to plan their time, not having to go anywhere, not having to travel anywhere. You turn on your computer or your phone and that is it. You can do it in your pyjamas without turning on the camera.* (Interviewee, city Z)

> *Zoom allowed the most silent voices to be heard, as it gave everyone the opportunity to say what they had to say in a comfortable environment of each person.* (Interviewee, city X)

The main benefit was the constructive potential of the digital approach and high effectiveness that allowed the organisers to have many more meetings than otherwise possible. However, opinions differ on whether the digital format made the communication more focused and effective or whether it was the opposite – less effective in collecting and discussing ideas.

The pandemic helped us decide not to do anything unnecessary just to look good. We agreed as a team that there would be no flashy participatory events. (Interviewee, city X)

However, what we did, we could not have done in person. (Interviewee, city Z)

The opportunity to come together, to enter a common space, to look into each other's eyes, was stolen from us. The walking, the organising, was gone. However, the process was more intense because of that, and that was good. (Interviewee, city X)

But as far as the events are concerned, where it was important to exchange information, to plan, to have discussions, to get opinions, to get as much information as possible, it is clear that it would have been much easier in person, because digital communication, especially if there are many people involved, takes much more time and is not as productive. When everyone is sitting around a table and communicating face to face, it is more efficient and meaningful. (Interviewee, city Z)

The weaknesses of online engagement are the lack of emotions, energy of people and synergy of ideas. Teams were lacking the informal communication that is a vital part of workshops and seminars.

Workshops have the added value of informal communication, which is a definite disadvantage of digital communication. (Interviewee, city Z)

As mentioned before, the inability to organize large meaningful public engagement events for residents of the city online is also one aspect highlighted in interviews.

We couldn't do it so widely, so publicly, so that everyone felt involved. We did not reach everyone. We missed many people. (Interviewee, city X)

All the informants agree that overall there was a balance of pros and cons:

The digital format made easier our organisational work. However, there was a completely different feeling. The pros and cons balance out. (Interviewee, city Y)

There were groups that were excluded because of online communication – these are seniors in the case of Daugavpils, those who are not active in general in the case of Valmiera and those who have a negative mindset towards ECoC in the case of Liepāja. All the interviewees acknowledge having had difficulties with youth involvement.

Factor 4: The political environment (political culture, and support)

To ensure participation in the three bidding cities there was a demand for active input from the side of municipality officials who, as our study shows, do not always have a participatory mindset. For municipalities that could mean serious changes and overcoming of obstacles to introduce more involving, participatory approaches to the cultural and creative sector in the future.

> *Many of the ideas were very good, but it seems that the municipality is not ready yet to implement them.* (Interviewee, city Z)

A common feature of the broader environment was the culture of top-down decisions and low cooperation between institutions.

> *Minimal involvement of different sectors, reluctant. Culture and creative sector professionals do not come to events of other institutions. I am already here in my own backyard, don't touch me. Often also happened, something is offered to the inhabitants, but nobody comes. There is a big division between institutions. There was this moment – ECoC – so we had no options, everyone was forced to get out of their house and come and talk.* (Interviewee, city Y)

Support from the city authorities was strong enough to establish the multisectoral groups and provide additional funding for an external consultant.

> *The support of the council from day one was important; it is a big benefit for us. We have a very good cooperation.* (Interviewee, city X)

In the case of Liepāja, who had already produced a first-stage bid for the bidding process several years ago (Riga was the winner then), this was a more familiar process and meant also certain expectations of being able to win this time. For the somewhat less likely winners, this was an opportunity to achieve an acceleration in the cultural processes and the dialogue among cultural institutions and inhabitants.

The outcomes and the future

Informants indicate that changes in thinking thanks to the ECoC demands of citizen involvement have already started, e. g. as a result of the ECoC application development process two of the cities have started co-financing project calls for the creative sector and citizen involvement; there are also plans for citizens' advisory board development, co-creation training for cultural and creative sector professionals etc.

The ECoC demands have served as a good benchmarking tool for the self-evaluation of prior participatory practices in municipalities and have served as an incentive to understand that there is much more to be done.

If it had not been for the preparation of the ECoC application, such citizen participation events would not have taken place. It was important to realise that we have a lot to do; we have a lot to work on ourselves. This was a great moment, a great circumstance that made everyone realise how far we have to go and what those steps could be. It has changed the way we think, and there is much more emphasis on citizen involvement in the city's cultural development planning. Events were organised from the top, someone would organise and give. Now we are thinking more and more about how to make the cultural content so that the inhabitant of the city, the public, is a co-creator, and that has been the most valuable benefit. To realise that the community is not only a consumer of culture but also a co-creator. (Interviewee, city Z)

According to the informants, the change of mind-set in municipalities and cultural and creative sector organisations thanks to the citizen engagement demands in the ECoC application is irreversible despite the specific situation in Latvia where people are hard to engage.

Surrendering to that process was worthwhile. It is not easy for a Latvian in general, because the practice of participation is not ingrained, but it is the most valuable and necessary thing and should not be given up. (Interviewee, city Y)

When making decisions now, we think more about whether people will be involved – that's become one of the evaluation criteria. (Interviewee, city Y)

We are seeing this now that the application process is over. The progress in participation is already noticeable, the activities that are taking place now are much better attended and the response is much higher. We have learnt a lot ourselves. (Interviewee, city Z)

The public engagement helped us assess what we needed to put in the application – it was our choice, our approach. (..) *The more we looked into the application and made these requirements mandatory for ourselves, the more we realised that this is the only way we can actually change things.* (Interviewee, city X)

However, we should not draw too optimistic a picture since for municipalities and cultural and creative sector organisations it can be difficult to change, to adapt.

The inhabitants of the city have been inspired by the engagement processes. They are ready to do, ready to generate new ideas, and ready to develop existing ones. We need to think about how to mobilise local authorities more to come forward to the citizens. (Interviewee, city Z)

The question of sustainability of the participatory processes is vital also after the year of ECoC.

> *It is still a matter of many years, of systemic change, of generational change. One ECG application is not enough. (Interviewee, city Y)*

> *The ECE could be even more specific in asking that public engagement in cities continue beyond that (cultural capital) year. Sustainable projects on public participation should be explicitly requested. Then, perhaps at the national level, there should also be a framework for how to take things forward.* (Interviewee, city X)

There is a wider demand for a change of mind-set also on a national level and the ECoC can serve as an incentive for that.

Conclusions and future research

The low level of participation in the three bidding cities is described in the bids as a grave problem, however, there is little offered by way of reasons for the situation and possible long-term strategies for changing the situation. The ECoC bid does not require such analysis; however, we feel that it might be beneficial for bid producers to engage in some reflection on that.

The bid development demonstrated the limited awareness on the part of various cultural professionals of the concrete traits and needs of specific societal groups. However, the scale of discussions with city inhabitants much exceeded all prior engagement activities by cultural operators.

The digital participation mechanisms demonstrated both benefits (more opportunity for an equal share of participation) and drawbacks (no informal communication, less access by seniors and vulnerable groups). More research is needed to determine the drivers and hindering factors of digital participation.

The unusually active process of securing public participation may have been possible mostly owing to the ECoC teams operating at a distance from the usual institutional set-ups and being organised in a horizontal manner.

Returning to the metaphor of the gift exchange, we conclude that in the case of the three bidding cities, even those who did not receive the gift were winners, as the normative push by the ECoC policy towards more participation has turned out to be a catalyst and accelerator at least of some institutional changes, strengthened networks, and a legacy of bottom-up ideas for future cultural life in these cities.

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HOW TO NETWORK CULTURE: THE ANALYSIS OF THE ECOSYSTEM OF LATVIAN MUSIC FIELD

PhD **Līga Vinogradova**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies

Abstract

The study on the ecosystem of the Latvian music field was carried out within the framework of the CARD project ("the Cultural Capital as a Resource for Sustainable Development of Latvia") implemented by the Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies of the Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC). One of the tasks of the CARD project was to analyse the cultural ecosystem of Latvia and identify its operator groups, their relationships, and impacts in order to assess the resources of the arts and cultural capital in Latvia [LAC 2020]. Based on initial research, it was suggested to focus on a smaller-scale ecosystem and a specific sub-sector [Laķe, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. Therefore, this article examines the case of the Latvian music field within the cultural ecosystem of Latvia, as it encompasses a wide range of diverse operator groups. The key theoretical concept used in the research is "ecosystems" – the idea of culture as an ecology that reveals a larger system in a non-hierarchical way [Holden 2015]. In the sociology of art, perceiving culture as a larger system with many equal components is not new; for instance, Howard Becker's art worlds are based on networks and the distribution of key resources within them [Becker 1974; 1982]. John Holden's concept of the ecology of culture provides further methodological tools to analyse cultural networks within an ecosystem. The approach suggested by Holden is social network analysis (SNA) [Holden 2015]. While in theory, social network analysis (SNA) holds potential benefits for studying a cultural ecosystem, empirical studies on its application for measuring a cultural ecosystem and its associated limitations

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remain incomplete. The aim of the paper is to analyse the advantages and limitations of studying a cultural ecosystem using SNA. Two research questions are set: (1) How to analyse the ecosystem of Latvian music field and identify the main operator groups and their relationships? (2) What are the advantages and limitations of employing SNA to study the ecosystem of the Latvian music field? The results contribute to advancing methodological skills in both studying cultural ecosystems and developing SNA in the cultural field.

Keywords: *social network analysis, culture network, ecosystem, art worlds, music field, the sociology of arts*.

Introduction

Transparency in the cultural and creative sectors of Latvia, at a structural level, and the ability to identify various involved operator groups have been persistent challenges over the years. The main issue has been associated with the lack of clear demarcation within the cultural and creative sectors and the multifunctional and occasionally precarious activities of its participants. Researchers from the Latvian Academy of Culture concluded that during the Covid-19 pandemic, it became an urgent issue to identify the most effective mechanisms of political and financial support for diverse operators in the cultural and creative sector, encompassing both professional and amateur art. One of the main challenges in accessing state support was determining affiliation with specific cultural fields and addressing the heterogeneity of legal statuses in the production cycle of creative products [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. To address this issue, in the research project CARD – "the Cultural Capital as a Resource for Sustainable Development of Latvia" (implemented by the Latvian Academy of Culture in the framework of the National Research Programme "Latvian Culture – a Resource for National Development", 2020–2022) one of the tasks was to analyse the current cultural ecosystem of Latvia, examine the linkages among operator groups, and assess the resources of the arts and cultural capital in Latvia [LAC 2020]. To accomplish this task, the research team applied the concept of an ecosystem as a theoretical model to analyse a complex network of actors with diverse backgrounds and attributes. The analysis of the ecosystem can reveal essential development resources for operator groups within the network, including their behavioural chains and decision-making principles, which have a significant impact on the overall dynamic of the ecosystem [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022].

The issue surrounding the cultural and creative sector lies in the limitations of defining sector boundaries. It is evident that there exist linkages that extend beyond direct association with the creative product itself but hold significant importance

in its development, promotion, and long-term sustainability within the broader ecosystem. Long before the development of the ecosystem concept, sociologist Howard Becker articulated the idea that an art world exists due to the amalgamation of core and support personnel [Becker 1974]. When John Holden formulated the notion of viewing culture as an ecology and analysing it as an ecosystem, he posited that cultural ecology comprises not only people but also encompasses places and objects (such as concert venues and film cameras), ideas, and instruments [Holden 2015: 3–4].

Furthermore, the ecology of culture can be conceptualized as three highly interactive spheres: publicly funded culture, commercial culture, and homemade culture [Holden 2008; 2015: 7], the latter of which we recognize as amateur arts. In consideration of the multifaceted nature of the cultural and creative sector, researchers are sceptical about measuring it as a whole ecosystem. For instance, Holden suggests that creating a comprehensive map of the entire cultural sector associated with a specific territory may not be helpful [Holden 2015: 3]. Tsujimoto et al. propose analysing a particular product system [Tsujimoto et al. 2018], while Barker recommends narrowing the analysis down to a specific sector [Barker 2019]. Taking this into consideration, the research team of the CARD project made two decisions regarding this research. Firstly, to integrate more comprehensive elements into their analysis, e. g., the cultural and creative ecosystem encompasses not only operator groups such as cultural organizations and artists but also encompasses event venues, amateur art communities, infrastructure, and supporting institutions [Laķe, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. Secondly, to test the idea of measuring the cultural ecosystem, researchers of the project CARD decided to analyse the case of the Latvian music field. This specific field was chosen because in Latvia, it encompasses three spheres as suggested by Holden [2015 2008]: 1) "academic" or "professional art", which is recognized as a powerful sub-sector due to its cultural and educational value and is publicly funded in Latvia; 2) "popular" music, which is primarily commercial [Tjarve 2019; Sillama 2023]; 3) amateur, homemade, or informal arts, including folk arts practices in Latvia and the highly recognized tradition of the Song and Dance Celebration [Muktupāvela & Laķe 2018].

The next challenge was how to obtain information about operator groups and their relationships and how to analyse such a large-scale ecosystem as the Latvian music field. The idea, as suggested by Holden [2015], was to employ network diagrams or maps, also known as the social network analysis (SNA), to elucidate cultural phenomena. However, in Holden's report, he expressed reservations about mapping the entire ecology and proposed using SNA on smaller-scale ecologies, such as those geographically limited or confined to sectoral or sub-sectoral levels. In such cases, it can be valuable not only for revealing the types of relationships within an ecosystem

and its actors but also for analysing details like who shares information [Holden 2015]. Therefore, **the aim** of the paper is to analyse the advantages and limitations of studying a cultural ecosystem using SNA. Two **research questions** have been formulated: (1) How to analyse the ecosystem of Latvian music field and identify the main operator groups and their relationships? (2) What are the advantages and limitations of employing SNA to study the ecosystem of the Latvian music field? The findings of this research contribute to the enhancement of methodological expertise in both the study of cultural ecosystems and the development of SNA for the analysis of cultural phenomena.

1. Theoretical framework of cultural networks: art worlds and ecosystems

Network research in the social sciences has traditionally overlooked culture, as it has predominantly focused on social relations as the primary aspect of social structures. For a substantial period in network research, cultural elements, such as narratives, identities, symbolic boundaries, institutions, and rules, were neglected. However, as sociologist Jan A. Fuhse argues, over the past three decades, the social sciences have witnessed a "cultural turn", making it possible to explore the relationship between culture and social networks. Various fundamental branches of research have emerged since the 1990s to examine the connection between networks and culture. Firstly, cooperative behaviour within a network is seen as a result of cultural norms. Secondly, densely connected networks serve as the foundation for collective identities. Thirdly, under certain conditions, networks can foster intellectual creativity [Fuhse 2015]. Sociologists of culture and the arts have identified several theoretical approaches to studying culture as a network. For example, Wendy Bottero and Nick Crossley [2011] propose two popular ideas: Pierre Bourdieu's [1993] concept of artistic fields and Howard Becker's [1982] concept of art worlds. Their critique primarily centres on Bourdieu's focus on a field as "objective relations" between positions defined by their ranking in the distribution of power and various forms of capital [Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 113]. While Bourdieu's approach appears theoretically applicable to SNA it distinguishes a field as a theoretical space of objective relations, rejecting SNA for failing to distinguish objective relations from social relations. Conversely, a social network reveals concrete social relationships. Bottero and Crossley suggest that Becker's concept of art worlds is a more promising approach, as it can be analysed in terms of conventions, resources, and networks [Bottero & Crossley 2011].

Becker's concept of art worlds suggests viewing culture and the arts as a broader system or structure. The sociologist directs his analysis upon conventions among participants, the distribution and mobilization of their key resources (such as money,

skills, equipment), and the physical spaces where an art world exists. He introduces the term "division of labour" to characterize the various roles played by different individuals to coordinate their respective contributions within a specific art world. This includes not only core personnel, like singers, composers, and band members, but also support personnel such as managers, promoters, and technicians. Both groups must operate within established "conventions", which are agreements that have become a conventional way of doing things in the art world [Crossley & McAndrew 2014; Becker 1974; Becker 1982]. However, Bottero and Crossley [2011] express their disappointment with Becker's oversight in not considering Social Network Analysis (SNA) as a tool for analysing art worlds. They contend that the concept of art worlds aligns closely with questions that are relevant in SNA, including network centrality, density, closure, and segregation. Furthermore, SNA provides the means to investigate the diffusion of practices and the distribution of conventions and resources as a systematic network of social relationships, encompassing both interpersonal and positional connections.

The concept of perceiving culture in a non-hierarchical and structural manner, an extension of Becker's line of thought, can be discerned in John Holden's proposal to conceptualise culture as an ecology or ecosystem [Holden 2015]. To clarify the usage of two terms, "ecology" and "ecosystem", in various studies, researchers have noted that ecology is the science that studies ecosystems. However, in the cultural field, both terms are employed [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. The term "ecology" in the context of the cultural sector was initially introduced by Holden [2004], and subsequently, it became a widely embraced metaphorical framework for contemplating the cultural sector. Markussen [2011] defines cultural ecology as the intricate networks of arts and cultural operators, encompassing creators, producers, sponsors, participants, and more, from diverse communities. This definition underscores a concept derived from the biological realm – to regard culture and the arts as an interdependent and interconnected ecosystem. Drawing a parallel to Becker's art worlds, Holden posits that in the cultural system each actor is interdependent, and all parts make the whole system [Holden 2015]. The idea to analyse cultural ecosystem is to get a "view from above" and to see relationships, or as Holden calls it "flows", in the larger system, e. g., how careers develop, how ideas cross borders, money flow and products move within sub-sectors [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022; Holden 2015].

Both models for studying culture and the arts endorse a systemic network approach, viewing culture and the arts as non-hierarchical systems without dominant actors, such as artists or creators. This represents a new horizontal perspective on culture and the arts, departing from the traditional sociological idea that places the artist as the central figure in the production of culture and the arts. While Becker's concept of art worlds is primarily theoretical in nature, researchers have developed

methodological tools for studying cultural and creative ecosystems. These tools can encompass quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods [Tsujimoto et al. 2018; Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022].

2. Social network analysis in measuring the ecosystem

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is frequently cited as one of the primary approaches for studying a cultural ecosystem. In Tsujimoto et al.'s review of ecosystem studies, four major research streams are outlined for the examination of the ecosystem concept in culture. One of these streams focuses on multi-actor networks, with the others encompassing perspectives such as industrial ecology, business ecosystems, and platform management. Within this particular branch, behavioural relationships are analysed through the lens of social network theory [Tsujimoto et al. 2018]. Holden proposes several approaches to explore his concept of the cultural ecosystem, and network analysis is among them. As mentioned in the introduction, initially, Holden is cautious about employing network analysis to study the cultural ecosystem due to its scale. However, he suggests that it could be effectively applied to smaller-scale ecologies, which may be geographically limited or focused on the interactions of specific operators, such as local, sectoral, or sub-sectoral ecosystems. Network analysis can prove valuable in uncovering relationships and the various types of interactions that occur among organizations and individuals within a cultural ecosystem. It has the potential to unveil the degree of interconnectivity, identify the most connected or isolated operators, and shed light on those who share information and engage in co-production. However, Holden acknowledges that implementing network analysis to measure an ecosystem presents specific challenges. These challenges include the difficulty of delineating boundaries, addressing questions regarding the interconnectedness between local and sectoral networks, avoiding over-simplification, and accurately capturing the quality of a network [Holden 2015]. Bottero and Crossley argue that networks of interaction emerge from the collective action (previously discussed in Becker's work [1974]) inherent in artistic production. Resources circulate through these networks, and their circulation concludes when the exchange of pertinent resources ceases [Bottero & Crossley 2011]. As the researchers of the CARD project were particularly concerned with the flow of resources within a cultural ecosystem, they found SNA to be beneficial due to its capacity to offer a "helicopter view" of the system and its potential to quantitatively measure and visually depict the actors and their connections within an ecosystem. However, they also acknowledge and critically assess its limitations, such as the potential for simplifying empirical reality [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. For instance, one limitation highlighted by Crossley and McAndrew is that SNA is more of a complementary methodology or a component of mixed methods

[Crossley & McAndrew 2014], and therefore, SNA fits within a larger research design.

Prior to explaining how we applied SNA to this study, there are a few definitions, terms, and measures in SNA that need clarification. Networks provide a general means of depicting patterns of connections and interconnections among the components of a system. As a simplified representation of a system, they capture primarily the fundamental aspects of connection patterns and not much else [Newman 2010]. A social network can be described as a collection of social entities, such as individuals, groups, and organizations, interconnected by relationships. These relationships within a social network can encompass personal connections, professional affiliations, the exchange of resources (such as information, goods, or money), interactions, and more [Tabassum 2018]. SNA represents a perspective, paradigm, or framework, rather than a theory or a methodology [Lakše, Tjarve & Grīnberga 2015]. It is founded on the premise that social life primarily emerges from relationships and the patterns they create. SNA offers a lens through which to approach the issue but does not predict the specific outcomes. Instead, networks provide guidance on where to investigate and uncover how social relations influence various aspects of life [Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994; Marin & Wellman 2011]. Researchers suggest that the primary objective of SNA is to extract more information than the traditional methods of analysing interrelated entities, albeit at the cost of increased data complexity [Tabassum 2018].

A network is typically represented in a graph composed of two fundamental **elements**: a collection of points, also known as vertices or nodes, and the lines, referred to as edges, links, or relations [Newman 2010; Barabasi 2012; Tabassum 2018]. Vertices and edges in a network can be augmented with additional system-related information, such as names and strengths. Vertices can represent various individual entities, depending on the field and project's subject. Newman posits that the process of simplifying a complete system into a network representation has both advantages and disadvantages, as it involves the loss of some information [Newman 2010]. An edge is a line that connects two nodes and can represent diverse types of relationships. Edges can be either undirected or directed, depending on whether the relationship is symmetric or asymmetric. Additionally, edges can be unweighted or weighted, with the latter often used to represent attributes like duration, emotional intensity, interaction frequency, and a variety of other factors [Tabassum 2018]. There are two main types of networks: whole networks and ego networks. Whole networks provide a "bird's-eye view" of a social structure and typically encompass all nodes; thus, researchers can analyse multiple relationships. In contrast, egocentric networks focus on the network surrounding a single node. It is recommended to use complete data on all network linkages, as there are

numerous concepts and measures in network analysis that can be fully applied to whole networks [Scott 2012].

Researchers propose various **methods for gathering data** for a network, including observation, retrieval from archives or historical materials, trace observation of electronic communications, surveys, and interviews. However, there are several challenges associated with collecting network data through surveys and interviews. To compile comprehensive data, respondents need to possess a list of network members and be able to identify individuals with whom they share specific relationships. This can be problematic when the list is excessively extensive or when a complete list is unavailable, and an alternative is to have respondents recall these connections from memory [Marin & Wellman 2011].

Various **measures** can be applied in network analysis, providing researchers with information about the roles of nodes within the network and the overall characteristics of the network as a whole [Tabassum 2018]. Visualizing a network becomes challenging when dealing with large and complex networks [Scott 2012]. A study conducted by the author of this paper, focusing on the Riga 2014 programme as part of the European Capital of Culture initiative [Laķe, Tjarve & Grīnberga 2015], found that visualization can be beneficial when nodes include their attributes within the network structure. Additionally, it was concluded that supplementary measures are necessary for a thorough analysis of a network structure. Below is a list of some of the most commonly used measures in SNA and applied to this study (see Table 1).

Table 1. The most commonly used measures in social network analysis.

Centrality is one of the most fundamental measures for determining the significance of an actor within a network, providing insights into the concentration of relationships among a few individuals and offering an indication of their social influence. The most commonly used centrality measures include degree, betweenness, closeness, and eigenvector centrality [Tabassum 2018].
Degree centrality indicates the number of edges or neighbours connected to a node (actor). In directed networks, there are two variants: **in-degree** centrality (representing the number of incoming nodes, i. e., the number of edges ending at a specific node) and **out-degree** centrality (representing the number of outgoing nodes, i. e., the number of edges originating from a specific node) [Tabassum 2018].
Betweenness centrality quantifies the degree to which a node serves as a bridge between other nodes within the network. It reflects an actor's role in facilitating the transfer of information from one section of the network to another. Actors with high betweenness centrality play a crucial role in the flow of information throughout the network [Goldbeck 2015; Tabassum 2018].

A **path** is defined as a sequence of nodes in which consecutive pairs of non-repeating nodes are connected by an edge. **Geodesic distance** refers to the length of the shortest path between two nodes [Tabassum 2018].
Density is a network-level measure that quantifies the level of interconnectedness within a network, indicating the extent to which nodes are connected to each other. It is expressed as a ratio of the actual number of edges in the network to the maximum possible number of edges [Scott 2012; Tabassum 2018].
Network centralization is a characteristic of network structure that measures the degree to which the edges in a network are concentrated among a small number of actors. In a centralized network, numerous edges connect to a few nodes, whereas in a decentralized network, there is less variation in the number of edges per node, and no nodes dominate. This metric can provide insights into the decision-making processes within a network [Krebs 2013].
Hubs are nodes within a highly centralized network that possess the highest number of edges. **Peripheral players**, situated at the network's periphery, are often considered less influential, despite their connections to other networks, and can play a valuable role in information transfer [Newman 2010; Krebs 2013].
Clusters and cliques are two distinct types of groups that can be identified within a network. **Bridges** are the nodes that connect two separate sub-groups within a network and, as such, play a crucial role [Krebs 2013; Hoppe & Renelt 2010].

Considering the wide variety of measures available in SNA, we will now delve into how to **apply SNA to a music ecosystem**. Music production is inherently a collective endeavour, underpinned by interactions among social participants and organizational connections. A music world entails individuals collaborating where their actions are interdependent [Crossley & McAndrew 2014]. Various conceptualizations of music clusters exist, often categorized as "popular" and "academic", or alternatively referred to as "elite" forms of music. As mentioned previously, in Latvia, there is a distinct division between three robust clusters known as "academic", "popular", and "amateur" arts. In the field of art sociology, the prevailing concepts used to denote these clusters are "scenes", "fields", and "art worlds" [Crossley & McAndrew 2014], with the former, as previously discussed, offering theoretical and methodological advantages in constructing a systemic analysis of musicians' activities [Martin 2006]. Different music worlds exhibit varying structures and sociological characteristics, ranging from institutionalized and extensive to informal and compact. The identity and boundaries of a music world often hinge on factors such as musical styles (e. g., the jazz world) or geographical regions (e. g., the French music world). However, within a given music world and its representing network, a wide array of actors is involved, extending beyond human participants. Consequently, SNA encompasses more complex networks that include various sites of activity (rehearsal spaces, venues, record shops, studios, etc.), official entities,

and economic actors, each playing a pivotal role in comprehending a music world and the networks that connect them [Crossley & McAndrew 2014].

Researchers are aware of the **limitations** of SNA. Bottero and Crossley acknowledge that SNA alone does not offer a comprehensive depiction of the social reality within a culture, but it does provide one dimension of it, while other dimensions remain important [Bottero & Crossley 2011]. The recommendation is to focus on relationships, connections, and networks within the cultural and creative ecosystem to assess the overall vitality of the "system". For instance, the quality and quantity of relationships are crucial factors to consider [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. Furthermore, SNA does not preclude the nature of ties between participants and uncovers not only collaboration but also competition and conflict, which can be positive indicators of increased contributions and the promotion of innovation [Crossley & McAndrew 2014]. This holds particular significance for the creative sector, including the music field. Sociologists suggest that dense networks are conducive to stylistic innovation, while traditional cultural forms tend to thrive within dense and closed networks as they tend to foster cooperation, trust, and mutual support among actors [Crossley & McAndrew 2014].

3. Research design

In the CARD project, the objective of empirically studying the ecosystem of the Latvian Music Field using Social Network Analysis (SNA) was to identify operator groups (actors) and their interactions while analysing the nature of their relationships and collaborations. The uniqueness of this network analysis lay in its focus on discerning the types of collaborations among specific **operator groups** (e. g., composers, producers, managers, etc.), rather than how individuals collaborated. Consequently, each node or actor in the network represented information obtained from a list of representatives for each operator group. Before conducting the SNA, researchers needed to address several questions:

- Where should the boundaries of the Latvian music field be drawn (e. g., should educators of musicians, technical workers, operators from other field(s), and those working in crossover fields be included)?
- How should operator groups (potential actors in the network) be identified, and how can their uniqueness within the network be established?
- What kinds of relationships or links can be identified?
- Should collaborations only be identified between operator groups that were studied, or should the option be given to identify collaborations with groups excluded from the primary study (i. e., will there be feedback from all actors in the network)?

- Who can represent each operator group?
- How should data be collected from the required operator groups and their collaborations?
- Should exceptional and rare collaborations be considered when concluding collaborative relationships between two operator groups?

To delineate the boundaries of the Latvian music field, the decision was made to base empirical work on the UNESCO and World Bank model of the cultural and creative cycle of production [UNESCO & World Bank 2021]. This model identifies five core activities: creating, making, distributing, exchanging, and archiving, each comprising specific sub-activities. Importantly, these activities can intersect with other cultural forms, sectors, industries, and broader societal and economic aspects. For instance, the "creating" music activity encompasses composing, recording, musical instrument work (including skill instruction and crafting), and other related tasks. Through consultations with experts, this framework was adapted to align with the Latvian music field's context (see Figure 1). Notably, the "achieving and critiquing" activity was expanded to include music critics. Consequently, it was decided to investigate 14 operator groups that primarily represented key roles

Figure 1. Operator groups within the ecosystem of Latvian music field. Adapted by the author from the model of the cultural and creative cycle of production [UNESCO & World Bank 2021].

within the music ecosystem, while others were designated as secondary groups or those concurrently involved in other fields. Educators in the music field, technical workers, and media professionals were excluded from the primary study due to methodological considerations and data consistency objectives.

The next step involved deciding on the methodology for data collection and its application. Researchers determined that the most effective way to reach the target groups was through an online survey of operators in the Latvian music field. The survey was distributed to various organizations, including state and local governments, NGOs, and commercial firms within the Latvian music field. The questionnaire encompassed inquiries regarding the activities these organizations engaged in within the music field, the specific activity considered as their primary occupation in the music field, characteristics of this primary occupation, required and available resources, and, notably, the types of collaborations they partook in within the music ecosystem. In total, the survey reached 365 respondents (n), each of whom was classified into one of the 14 operator groups based on their designated primary occupation. An inherent challenge within the Latvian music ecosystem was that respondents often engaged in multiple activities, averaging around three activities per respondent. For instance, composers might also serve as text authors, producers, and performers. To visualize operator groups and their collaborations in a network, a unique primary occupation had to be assigned to each respondent. This step was crucial as researchers acknowledged the complexity of determining which collaborations arose as a result of a specific activity. Additionally, providing an exhaustive list of collaborations for each activity of every respondent would have made the survey excessively lengthy and impractical to complete.

Respondents were inquired about four types of collaborations or relationships: 1) general; 2) financial (both incoming and outgoing payments); 3) other contractual obligations; and 4) creative relationships. The list of collaborators extended beyond the 14 operator groups initially targeted in the survey, encompassing secondary activities and groups that were either excluded from the survey or inaccessible. All 14 operator groups specifically surveyed, as well as the others mentioned solely as collaborative partners, were included in the network as nodes, totalling 23 nodes in all. Each node established a relationship with another if at least one respondent from that group identified a specific type of collaboration, e. g. if one composer indicated collaboration with music critics, the nodes "composers" and "music critics" were linked. Consequently, the network unveiled all potential relationships between operator groups within the music ecosystem, including exceptional ones. The nature of these relationships meant that the network consisted of direct connections. Given that not all actors in the network represented outgoing edges, the network analysis focused exclusively on in-degree, i. e., the number of incoming connections for each

operator group. In other words, the primary measure gauged the extent to which operator groups collaborated with one another, regardless of whether there was information available regarding their own collaborations. In the network analysis, several measures were applied, including degree centrality (to assess the extent of collaborations for each operator group), betweenness centrality (to identify the most influential actors in facilitating information flow within the network), as well as measures characterizing the network of the music ecosystem, such as network centralization and density.

4. Results

The results yielded five networks that depict the ecosystem of the Latvian music field and how various operator groups collaborate within it, considering general, incoming and outgoing financial, other contractual, and creative forms of collaboration. Additionally, three networks were created to represent various music environments or smaller ecosystems within it – academic, popular, and folk music. Each of these networks comprises 23 nodes, each representing an operator group, with edges denoting directed relationships between nodes. The survey data revealed that 27% of all respondents exclusively represented a single activity or operator group defined in the network (see Figure 2). The remaining 73% of respondents were engaged in two or more activities within the music field, with an average of 3 activities per respondent. To maintain uniqueness in the network for nodes and

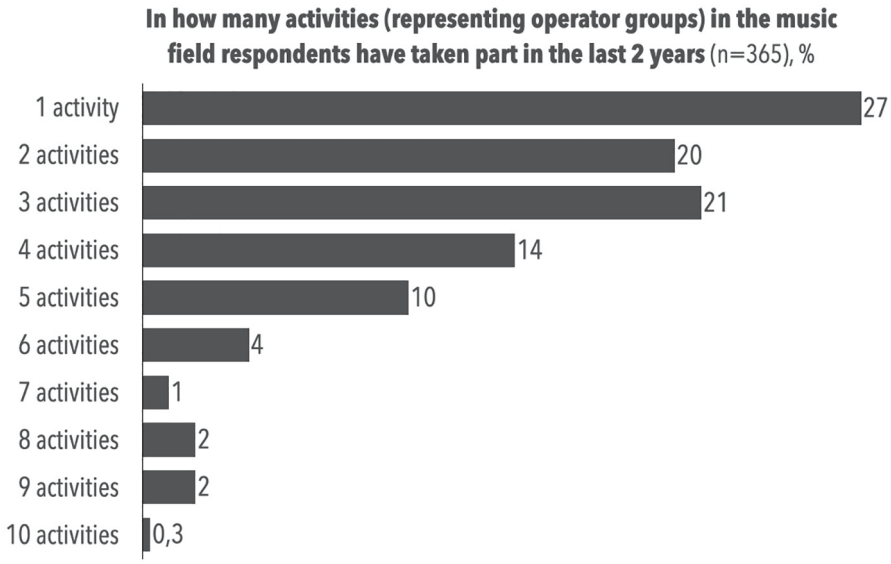

Figure 2. In how many activities (representing operator groups) in the music field respondents have taken part in the last 2 years (n=365), %.

their collaborations while maximizing respondent coverage, 73% of all respondents were required to select one primary activity or occupation in the music field to be assigned to a specific operator group. Consequently, reaching all operator groups equally posed a challenge. For instance, 19% of respondents identified themselves as text authors, but in the network, only 1% were assigned to this category, as it was the proportion that selected "text author" as their primary occupation. "Performer" was the primary occupation chosen by 52% of all respondents, followed by 18% working in concert venues, 9% composers, 4% concert organizers, 4% managers, and the remaining operator groups were represented by fewer respondents. This resulted in some operator groups in the network being underrepresented. However, this did not significantly impact the network's representation, as collaboration patterns between operator groups were still discernible. In conclusion, the chosen methodology permits the collection of data regarding primary operator groups and their customary collaborations. Nonetheless, it does not provide a comprehensive representation of the complete network within the Latvian music field's ecosystem.

The analysis of the network representing general collaborations (see Figure 3) revealed the ecosystem of the Latvian music field as decentralized. Therefore, there are no specific sub-groups in the network, and overall, each node has general relationships with quite a few other nodes in the network. According to in-degree (the number of incoming nodes), each node has between 8 to 14 collaborations.

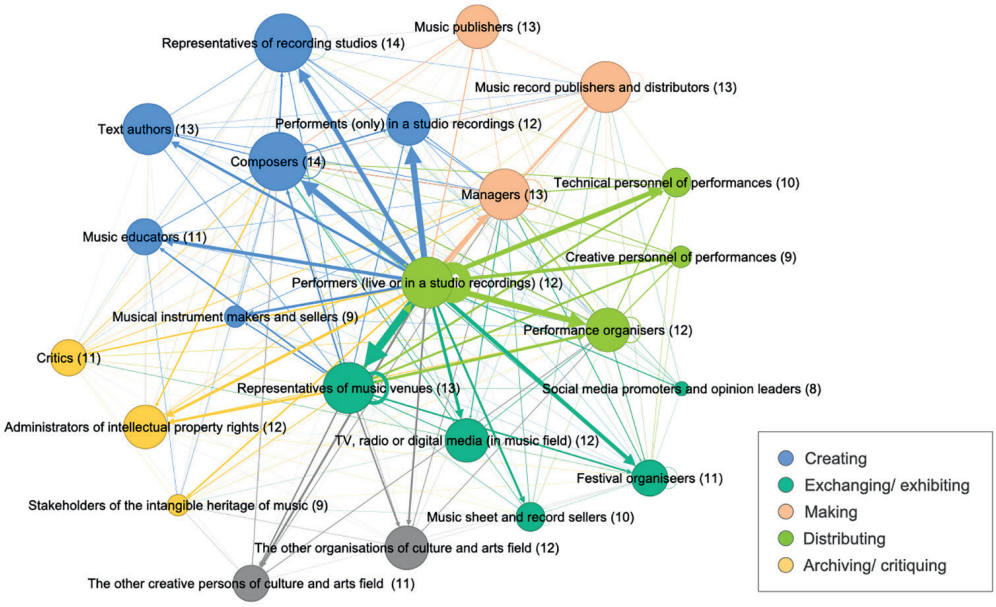

Figure 3. The network of general collaborations in the ecosystem of Latvian music field.

On average, there are 11.5 collaborations for each node. The operator groups with the highest in-degree or those most often indicated as collaboration targets were composers (14) and producers and engineers from recording studios (14). Social media promoters and opinion leaders (8) had the lowest in-degree. The nodes with the highest betweenness centrality were composers (8.7 calculated points for the measure), producers and engineers from recording studios (8.7), and representatives from concert venues (7.3). Interestingly, the network analysis suggested composers as the most important actors in almost every type of collaboration. Most other operator groups collaborated with them in a creative way (12), had non-financial contractual collaborations (11), and provided funding (11) to composers.

To draw conclusions about the importance and distribution of each type of collaboration within the Latvian music field ecosystem, two measures were considered: the average degree of collaborations per actor and network density (as shown in Figure 4). The analysis revealed that the general collaboration network had the highest average degree, with an average of 11.5 collaborations per actor. This is not surprising, as respondents may find it easier to think about their relationships with others in a general sense rather than specifying a certain type of collaboration. When respondents had to focus on specific types of relationships, it appeared to be more challenging for them to define them. As a result, all four specific networks had significantly lower average degrees: 7.9 in the creative network, 7.5 in the other contractual collaborations network, 7.4 in the outgoing financial network (giving money), and 6.3 in the incoming financial network (receiving money). It is

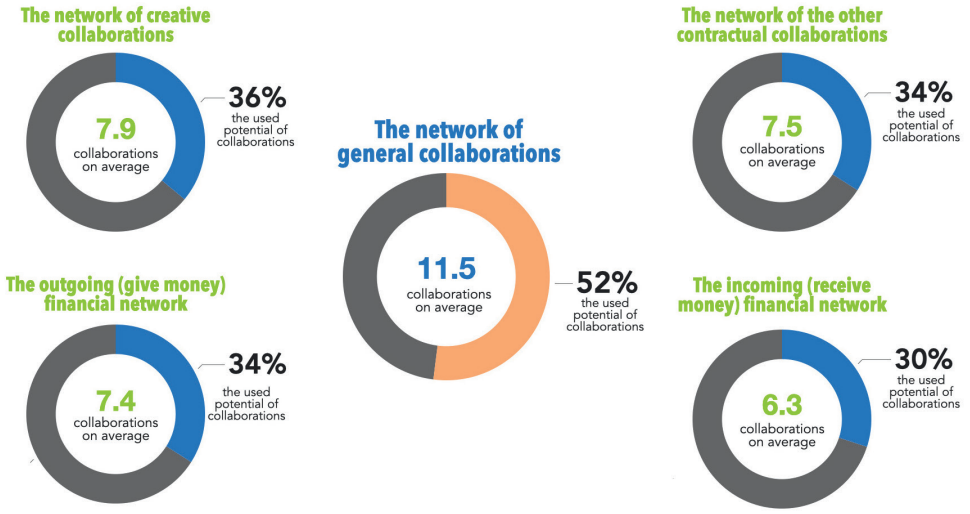

Figure 4. Types of collaborations in the ecosystem of Latvian music field: average collaborations and network density.

noteworthy that the creative network had a slightly higher average degree than the financial networks, suggesting that the creative agenda is prominent in the music field ecosystem. The measure of density, which indicates the level of connectedness in the networks, was also considered. The density was transformed into a percentage for better understanding. In the general collaborations network, the density was 52%, meaning that 52% of nodes were connected to each other. In a hypothetical scenario where each node collaborates with every other node in the network, the density would be 100%. In contrast, the density was lower in the other networks: 36% in the creative network, 34% in the other contractual collaborations network, 34% in the outgoing financial network (giving money), and 30% in the incoming financial network (receiving money).

Comparing these measures becomes even more interesting when we look at the three music fields: academic, popular, and folk (see Figure 5). Separate networks and their analyses were conducted based on respondents' self-identification with the field they mainly represent. SNA indicated that the network representing popular music has the highest collaboration potential, with a density measure of 32% and an average of 7 collaborations per actor. Academic music also showed a relatively high collaboration potential, with a density of 27% and an average of 6 collaborations per actor. In contrast, the folk music network had a significantly lower collaboration potential, with a density of only 12% and an average of 2.7 collaborations per actor. In summary, the folk music field appears to have fewer collaborations and does not fully utilize its potential for collaboration compared to the other two music fields.

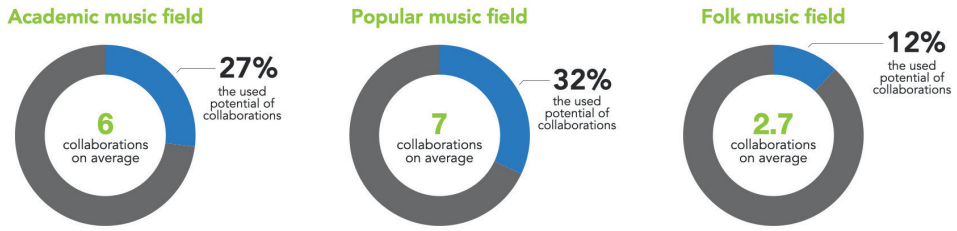

Figure 5. Comparison between academic, popular and folk music fields: collaborations on average and the network density.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there were several issues encountered in representing the ecosystem of the Latvian music field, many of which can be attributed to the methodology of **networking culture in general**. Firstly, the decision regarding the boundaries of the network had a significant impact on the results, as several groups were excluded from the survey's target group, mainly those engaged in activities in other fields or having

a secondary role in the music field. However, there is no available data to determine how these exclusions might have affected the network. It could be speculated that the average degree of collaborations might increase with the inclusion of new actors in the network, or it could decrease, as the excluded groups may not be primary representatives of the music field. Secondly, not all relationships in the network were reversible. While the previously mentioned groups were excluded and did not provide information about their collaborations, they still appeared as collaboration partners for some of the respondents. As a result, they were represented in the network, but no information was available about their own relationships with others. This led to the decision to only count incoming collaborations to assess how many other operator groups collaborated with a specific group. However, this approach introduced inconsistencies in the network and made it challenging to present the findings effectively to an audience. Thirdly, there was a methodological decision regarding how to handle the various activities undertaken by representatives from the music field, with respondents on average engaging in three activities each. Since the objective was to measure collaborations between operator groups rather than individuals, and it was clear that distinguishing separate collaborations for each group through the survey would be challenging, respondents were asked to identify their main activity within each operator group and were instructed to exclusively respond in relation to their main activity. Consequently, the network reflects the tendencies of collaboration between operator groups within the music field ecosystem, but it does not capture the complete network of all collaborations. Fourthly, despite the planned approach to reach each operator group through the survey, there were several underrepresented groups in the final dataset. This was primarily because many of these groups were not considered to be primary actors in the music field. One potential solution could involve employing a different sample selection approach, such as quota or stratified sampling, to ensure more balanced representation. Fifthly, the decision to construct the network based on operator groups necessitated a strategy for aggregating responses from multiple respondents associated with a given group. Researchers chose to count each and every collaboration mentioned by respondents representing a particular group. Consequently, the network also includes atypical relationships between operator groups, providing information about a variety of potential interactions, not just the typical ones. From the perspective of testing how to measure a cultural ecosystem in Latvia using a smaller-scale (music) field as a case study, this approach offered a broader perspective on the ecosystem as a whole.

Therefore, the author suggests that networking culture presents various methodological **challenges**. Firstly, there is no specific theoretically and methodologically interconnected framework that can be readily applied to the field of cultural and artistic networks. In many cases, one aspect or another remains unresolved,

as demonstrated by Becker's concept of art worlds [1982] and Holden's idea of a cultural ecosystem [2015]. However, the ecosystem framework chosen by the researchers in the CARD project was deemed the most beneficial for gaining a comprehensive structural "view from above" of culture [Lakše, Kunda & Tjarve 2022]. Secondly, the decision to focus on a specific cultural field was motivated by the realization that representing the entire cultural field would be practically impossible. Therefore, narrowing down the scope to a specific territorial (Latvian) and sectoral (music) field was chosen. However, even within the cultural field, defining boundaries proved to be a challenge. Thirdly, the nature of the cultural field revealed that individuals often take on multiple roles or engage in various activities within the field. In SNA, nodes must be unique, so decisions had to be made on how to reduce the multiple roles of an actor to a single, unique node. Options included selecting only one role, grouping similar roles together, or attributing each node with information about the diverse roles they hold. Fourthly, setting boundaries within a cultural field is a complex task, and decisions about who is included and who is excluded must be made. These decisions are often influenced by data gathering methods and available resources, which ultimately define the representation of the resulting network. Fifthly, to construct a complete and accurate network, ideally, every node should provide information about its relationships. When this is not the case, applying various SNA measures becomes challenging, and the precision of the analysis is compromised. Additionally, difficulties in visualizing and presenting the network can hinder the communication of study findings, making it essential to develop clear and understandable schemes for translating network elements.

Overall, SNA offers several **benefits** and provides different types of data about the cultural ecosystem compared to traditional research methods. Here are some key advantages of using SNA in cultural research:

1. Precise representation and clear boundaries: SNA allows for the precise representation of the larger cultural structure and necessitates setting clear boundaries within this structure. This helps researchers gain a clear understanding of which entities are included and excluded from the analysis.

2. Multidimensional analysis: SNA enables researchers to analyse various dimensions within the cultural ecosystem. Researchers can focus on specific parts of the ecosystem, such as academic or popular music fields, while using the same set of actors. This flexibility allows for a more nuanced exploration of relationships.

3. Attributes and additional dimensions: by assigning attributes to each actor or node in the network, researchers can explore additional dimensions. For example, in this study, it was possible to analyse operator groups based on their status as public, commercial, or non-governmental operators, providing deeper insights into the ecosystem's structure.

4. Measurement and comparison: SNA allows for the measurement and comparison of different types of relationships among the same actors or operator groups. In this study, it revealed that creative collaborations were more dominant than financial collaborations within the cultural ecosystem.

5. Additional data collection using survey method: SNA, when combined with surveys or other data collection methods, allows researchers to gather additional information about the cultural ecosystem. For instance, this study collected data on available resources, providing insights into why certain operator groups or smaller ecosystems within the larger one may lack necessary resources.

These advantages highlight how SNA can provide a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of cultural ecosystems and their dynamics.

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COLLABORATION IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES – FROM CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS AND INTERMEDIARIES TO NETWORKS

Mg.art. **Žanete Eglīte**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies

Abstract

Collaboration is the core of creative work, and it can help small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as individual creative professionals, develop creative products that would not be possible if these parties were working separately. The aim of the paper is to reveal benefits of collaboration in creative industries from theoretical and practical perspectives. The paper analyses the concept of collaboration in creative industries and provides a theoretical overview of collaboration models that can take various forms, such as networks, creative intermediaries, and clusters.

Also, the author has developed a creative industry collaboration matrix, including the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia's list of creative industries (Architecture, Design, Cinema, Performing arts, Visual arts, Music, Publishing, Television, Radio and interactive media, Advertising, Computer games and Interactive software, Cultural heritage, Cultural education, Recreation, Advertising, Entertainment and other cultural activities) [LR Ministry of Culture 2022], as well as adding two more creative industries, which are identified in other theoretical models of creative industries used in Europe – Fashion and Crafts. By interviewing various experts from creative industries, the intensity and frequency of collaboration in creative industries are compared, and it is evaluated which creative industries are more prone to collaboration.

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

This paper presents the collaboration matrix and summarizes the main conclusions on how this matrix could be used for future research.

Keywords: *creative industries, collaboration, creative synergy, networks, creative intermediaries*.

Theoretical Overview

Collaboration has always functioned as the kernel of creative work [Graham and Gandini 2017], and by working together, creative industry professionals and businesses obtain several opportunities and benefits. Csikszentmihalyi also explains the essence of collaboration in his system theory. "Creativity does not happen inside people's heads, but in the interaction between person's thoughts and socio-cultural context" [Csikszentmihalyi 1996]. Also, Karlsson agrees with this point, mentioning that creative individuals and creative teams will be more creative the more exposed they are to a variety of ideas and this cannot be achieved in isolation [Karlsson 2010]. Significant amongst the reasons why companies want to build relationships is the value that relationships generate [Biggeman & Buttle 2012].

When working together, small and medium enterprises can increase their focus through specialisation in functions that are complementary within their networks [Bititci et al. 2007]. Barrett and colleagues also note that social interaction, communication, and collaboration are essential elements of creativity [Barrett et al. 2021]. Thus, collaboration partners bring different perspectives, combine skills and knowledge to create the most successful performance possible [Pakeltiene et al. 2017; Parida et al. 2017]. For example, in the more commercial creative industries, such as architecture, design, and advertising, it is generally accepted practice to compete in competitions to win orders [Plug and Rengers 2001]. For example, to develop a more comprehensive offering with better solutions, architects collaborate with other architects, attract designers, and artists.

In academic literature, two concepts are discussed – collaboration and synergy:

Collaboration is a number of autonomous organisations working together, pooling, and sharing resources, information, systems and risk for mutual benefit [Bititci et al. 2007]. Collaboration – a distinct mode of organising with a positive, purposive relationship between organisations that retain autonomy, integrity and distinct identity, and at the same time, the possibility to withdraw from the relationship [Cropper 1996, cited in Bititci et al. 2007]. Collaboration is not simply the sum of its parts where each team member contributes to the project separately; rather, one contributor may inspire new ideas that come from other contributors or go back and forth in the process thus making it a complex synthesis of creative

thinking [Adler & Chen 2011]. Recent studies have shown that collaboration with other entities (companies, suppliers, customers, universities, etc.) allows the effective use of the acquired knowledge [Stejskal & Hajek 2017]. In addition to the financial value of collaboration, knowledge transfer, reputation benefits, access to networks, and the creation of competitive advantages (strategic value) are also obtained [Day 2000]. Collaboration is also believed to help some artists, as their art is in a fragile position as soon as the word "business" is mentioned [Loncaric 2014]. Collaboration is therefore very important and crucial for the successful performance of companies. Relationally connected parties are able to discover new ways to manage their businesses to improve processes as well as to innovate jointly [Biggeman & Buttle 2012].

Synergy is defined as the interactions among team members where the collective creative results are greater than the sum of their individual efforts [Pakeltiene et al. 2017]. Synergy promotes two effects – the additive effect (by using resources more efficiently) and the synergy effect (by utilizing unique resources of companies) [Itami 1987, cited in Holtström and Anderson 2020]. Anderson describes synergy as excellent resource utilization to adapt more successfully to a changing environment with increasing competitive pressure. An example of synergy is two integrated units that can achieve more together than by operating separately [Sirower 1997; Holtström and Anderson 2020]. In this way, a business network is dynamic and the different actors adapt mutually to each other's activities [Holtström and Anderson 2020].

In essence, the concepts of "collaboration" and "synergy" are very similar. If "collaboration" is defined as the joint work and activities of several individuals who individually contribute to the achievement of a more effective result, then "synergy" is the interaction of two or more partners or forces, the combined effect of which is greater than the sum of the individual effects. Thus, further in the paper, the term "collaboration" will be used.

Companies face challenges in a world of increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), and they must overcome these challenges to survive and thrive. They need to be equipped and prepared with the skills and capability to do this. Cross-sectoral collaboration between artists, designers and the corporate world could, if formalised, professionalised, and orchestrated answer to the needs and problems in these areas [Kouzmine-Karavaïeff & Hameed 2022]. Cross-sectoral collaboration is the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately [Bryson et al. 2006]. Enterprises need new knowledge to ensure their new competitive innovation [Stejskal & Hajek 2017], and they bring innovations in other sectors due to their

marked tendency to cooperate with others. A large number of small enterprises and a high proportion of the self-employed characterize the market segments of cultural and creative industries; cooperation is, therefore, vital for companies' success. Knowledge spill-overs stemming from collaboration on innovation may represent another important source of knowledge generation [Agarwal et al. 2007]. Cross-sectoral cooperation between creative industries and other sectors promotes open innovation settings, and different perspectives are generated by the combination of several partners (KEA, n.d.). In addition, cross-sectoral collaboration, innovation, and spill-over effects are closely related phenomena [Loncaric 2014].

Deloitte specialists in professional services list the benefits of collaboration among creative industries in the development of creative products, including creative supply chains, common intellectual property and creative technologies [Deloitte 2022].

The following will examine several types of collaboration models in the creative industries.

Networking is a central mode of interaction. It functions as a means of sharing tacit knowledge, fostering relationships within flexible working environments and building competitive advantages [Grabher 2004]. Networks are dynamic, and the various participants adapt to one another's activities [Holtström and Anderson 2020]. It is very useful when creative actors operate in networks and maintain close collaboration and collaborative relationships with suppliers, customers, and demand and supply [Madudova 2017]. These networks have an economic function, providing cultural producers with vital routes to market, and are key sources of collaboration and competition [Pratt 2004]. Networks are valuable support structures for small and medium-sized enterprises, providing access to support, information, and knowledge [Comunian 2012]. Also, networks seem to play a central role in the development of sustainable creative production systems in the urban economy [ibid.]. Networks and networking can be seen as crucial practices for finding work, sustaining a career, and progressing within the often freelance and insecure labour markets of the cultural industries [Lee 2013].

Clusters are one of the types of creative industry networks where the collaboration and interaction of certain groups or individuals is promoted, often in a closed context (city, neighbourhood, region) [Comunian 2012]. Creative industries tend to cluster in specific places and the reasons of this phenomenon can be due to a multiplicity of elements linked mainly to culture, creativity, innovation and local development [Lazzeretti et al. 2009]. Such connections between companies and industries are fundamental to competition, productivity, new business formation, and innovation. Cluster evolves based on geographical proximity, develops over time, boosts competition and collaboration resulting in innovation, and potentially

creates greater economic benefits through higher productivity, better knowledge management, and entrepreneurial opportunities [Enkhbold et al. 2013]. Mostly, cluster participants are not direct competitors, but rather work in different industry segments. At the same time, they have common needs, opportunities, constraints, and obstacles [Porter 2000]. Common knowledge and ideas enable creative individuals in clusters to continue combining or recombining similar or different knowledge and ideas to create new ideas and creative expressions [Karlsson 2010]. Despite various studies on clusters, there is still a lack of understanding about the correct conceptualization of a cluster. It has been previously believed that creative industries and clusters are concentrated in specific locations such as large cities and metropolises [Lazzaretti et al. 2008; Florida 2002], but in recent years, with lifestyle changes, the impact of the pandemic, and technological advancements, creative industry companies and employees are also working in rural areas. Recent studies have also been critical of assumptions that the creative city model fosters creativity, demonstrating that creative and art-based initiatives also foster development opportunities in rural and local areas [Conticelli et al. 2020]. Moreover, a new term emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic – Zoom cities – describing neighbourhoods near big cities as places that can leverage the best of central business districts and create new experiences for residents and businesses [Shapiro 2022]. Shapiro also notes that the creative economy, particularly the phases where intellectual property rights are created and monetized, can occur anywhere [ibid.].

Creative intermediaries or brokers are individuals and organizations that provide and support the work of other creative individuals [Jansson and Hracs 2018, cited in Comunian 2018]. The concept of creative intermediaries was already defined by Bourdieu, identifying them as bridges between cultural product producers and consumers [Bourdieu 1979]. There are various designations for creative intermediaries in literature, including intermediaries, facilitators, and brokers, but their essence is very similar – these individuals and organizations are regarded as agents who operate as connectors between art, technology, and business. They have a social position that provides them with access to important knowledge [Stea and Pedersen 2017]. Also, in academic literature there is a concept "Creative brokers". Creative brokers are regarded as agents who function as connectors between arts, technology, and business. They occupy a position in the social space that provides them with access to nonredundant knowledge [Stea and Pedersen 2017]. Creative brokers need to establish interaction among talented individuals to enhance the effectiveness of good ideas, connect otherwise isolated environments, support and monitor knowledge transfer, and encourage collaboration among different individuals [Long et al. 2013]. Creative brokers can generate ideas, stimulate knowledge transfer, and facilitate collaboration among various groups of people focused on creativity [Tjarve et al.

2021]. Creative industries require connecting points, actors, and coordinators or facilitators with interdisciplinary skills capable of operating in various sectors and understanding different perspectives, languages, and cultures. These coordinators or intermediaries translate challenges into adaptable solutions, present new visions for creative industries, and share the interest in working together to develop business practices [KEA 2019].

Creative individuals and artists are important because they develop ideas, metaphors, and messages that help promote social networking and experiences. Accordingly, creativity contributes to innovation, graphic design, human resources management, and communication [OECD 2018]. The ability to attract and retain creative people, the so-called creative class, is fundamental to sustainable economic development in society – and not just creative or knowledge-intensive businesses. Creative individuals promote collaboration and sustainable development through the dissemination of high-quality innovation and technology. Unlike cluster theories, theoretical approaches to creative individuals also involve the position that work follows people – if until now, "creative class approaches" dominated, where creative individuals concentrated in cities and metropolises [Florida 2002; De Propris 2009], individuals can choose alternative lifestyles, prioritize well-being, healthy food, nature, and sustainability practices, and live outside cities as well [Selada et al. 2011]. This trend is facilitated by the development of communication technologies, forms of entrepreneurship (most creative individuals are individual professionals (freelancers), self-employed or small business owners), and their boundaries between work, leisure, and life are often blurred [Selada et al. 2011].

To conclude, creativity is in core of creative industries and does not take place in isolation; collaboration acts as one of the main drivers of creative product development, innovation, and spill-over effects. Cross-sectoral cooperation can happen in various forms, starting from large networks and ending with cooperation between creative individuals.

Methodology

To evaluate the collaboration between creative industries, a qualitative study was conducted, having structured interviews with 16 experts from Latvia. All experts were presented with an identical question structure, and these questions were arranged in matrix form. The collaboration matrix, created by the author of the paper, assesses the intensity and frequency of collaboration between creative industries, identifies which creative industries are most inclined to collaborate with others, and which creative industries collaborate the most with others. The matrix also provides the opportunity to identify potential innovation areas by revealing which creative industries have collaborated the least with each other.

The collaboration matrix includes the cultural and creative industries defined in the Republic of Latvia in the year 2022 (Architecture, Design, Cinema, Performing arts, Visual arts, Music, Publishing, Television, Radio and interactive media, Computer games and interactive software, Cultural heritage, Cultural education, Recreation, entertainment and other cultural activities) and is supplemented by three additional industries – Advertising, Fashion and Crafts. As the concept and listing of cultural and creative industries are inconsistent – it varies in the works of different theorists and models developed by organizations, there is no single definition of cultural and creative industries. Also, it is important to note that the list of cultural and creative industries in the Republic of Latvia, has changed in the year 2023 – with adjusting definitions and including Advertising in the list [LR Ministry of Culture 2023].

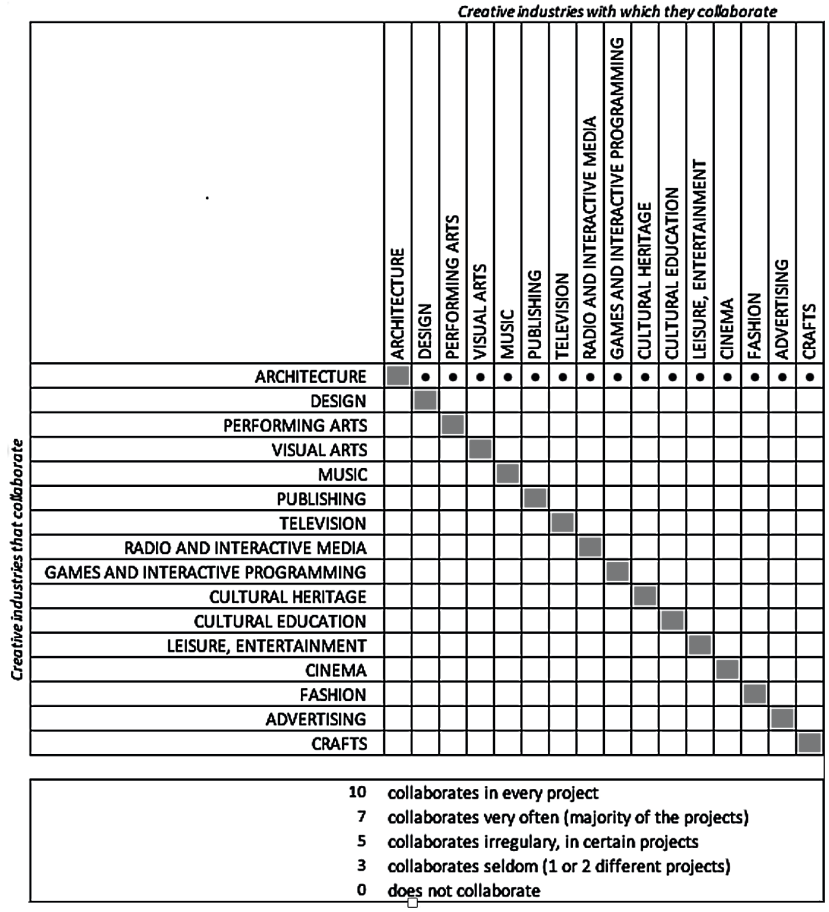

Figure 1. Collaboration matrix of creative industries. Includes evaluation principles and process samples for the architecture industry (created by the author).

In total, there were 16 initial interviews with 16 experts, one for each industry. The matrix was tested in a preliminary interview with one of the experts, who is experienced not only in the professional but also in the academic field (Design industry). Based on the preliminary interview, some changes were made to the matrix, and the next set of interviews were organized. Collaboration within one industry was not included in the matrix.

Experts for the structured interviews were selected by evaluating several criteria:

1. Acknowledged professional experience in the industry that the expert represents.
2. Academic experience, including teaching in universities and academies.
3. Awards received for professional projects.
4. Publicity in the local media, with more than one publication.
5. Expert experience in the public field when discussing actual industry issues.

Each expert representing a particular creative industry was asked to evaluate the collaboration and its intensity with other creative industries, arranged in a matrix, using a scale of collaboration intensity prepared by the author, where 10 is collaboration in every project and 0 is no collaboration. Then these expert evaluations were summarized in the matrix, and all intensity ratings were added together to obtain the total collaboration intensity rating points. The author also calculated the average indicator to make it easier to compare the collaboration intensity of industries.

In the horizontal direction, collaboration is visible, where experts from each industry evaluate collaboration with other industries. Experts make an assessment according to the gradation indicated in the matrix, starting from "collaborates in every project" and ending with "does not collaborate". In the vertical direction, the intensity of collaboration is visible, as each industry is attracted as a collaboration partner.

Findings

Based on the results of expert interviews, information was obtained regarding the collaboration of each creative industry with other industries. By organizing these results in a collaboration matrix, it was possible to discover which creative industries collaborate the most with others. The interviews were structured, and an intensity scale with a specific gradation was used to evaluate the collaborations. The author coded all the obtained results and expressed them in points, both by calculating the total point count and by calculating the average indicator.

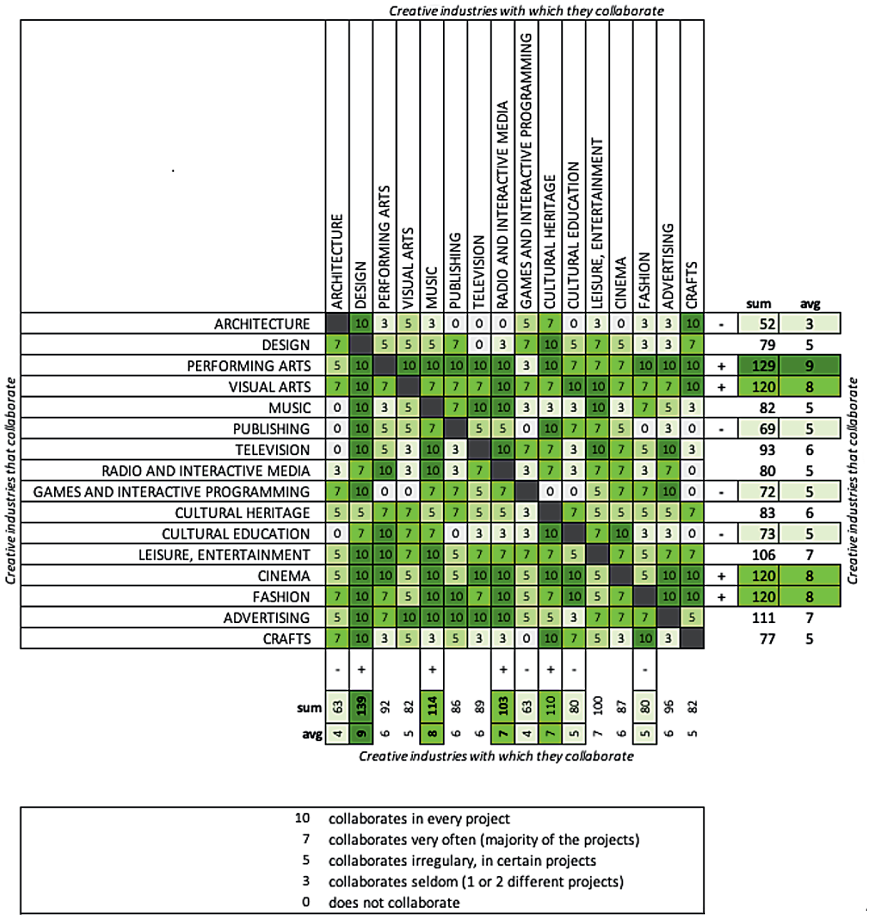

Figure 2. Collaboration matrix of creative industries, filled out by all the expert answers and calculated results (created by the author).

Sorting the results obtained by intensity, with which specific creative industries collaborate with other creative industries, the following distribution was obtained:

Table 1. Creative industries, that collaborate (created by the author)

Rank	Creative industry	Points total	Average result
1	Performing arts	129	9
2	Visual arts	120	8
3	Cinema	120	8
4	Fashion	120	8

5	Advertising	111	7
6	Leisure, entertainment	106	7
7	Television	93	6
8	Cultural heritage	83	6
9	Music	82	5
10	Radio and interactive media	80	5
11	Design	79	5
12	Crafts	77	5
13	Cultural education	73	5
14	Games and interactive programming	72	5
15	Publishing	69	5
16	Architecture	52	3

Thus, performing arts is a creative industry that collaborates the most with other industries, especially actively with design, visual arts, music, publishing, television, radio, interactive media, cultural heritage, fashion, advertising, and crafts. The second most active industries are visual arts, cinema, and fashion. The least active industry is architecture – its most intense collaboration is with design and crafts industries, but it collaborates rarely with other industries. The other less active industries in collaboration are publishing, gaming and interactive software industry, as well as the cultural education industry.

Looking at the results vertically and studying with which industries all other industries most actively collaborate, the following results were obtained:

Table 2. Creative industries, with which they collaborate (created by the author)

Rank	Creative industry	Points total	Average result
1	Design	139	9
2	Music	114	8
3	Cultural heritage	110	7
4	Radio and interactive media	103	7

5	Leisure, entertainment	100	7
6	Advertising	96	6
7	Performing arts	92	6
8	Television	89	6
9	Cinema	87	6
10	Publishing	86	6
11	Visual arts	82	5
12	Crafts	82	5
13	Cultural education	80	5
14	Fashion	80	5
15	Architecture	63	4
16	Games and interactive media	63	4

The industry with which other creative industries collaborate the most is the design industry. Almost all industry experts pointed out that they collaborate the most with representatives of the design industry in their industry. Collaboration with the music industry, radio and interactive media, and cultural heritage is also actively developed. On the other hand, the industries with which they collaborate the least are architecture, gaming and interactive media, cultural education, and fashion.

It is essential to note that mutual collaboration is not linear – for example, if architecture collaborates with the design industry in almost every project, it does not mean that the design industry will collaborate with the architecture industry in every project.

The matrix also reflects the possible directions of innovation in the collaboration of creative industries – looking at collaborations where the rating is 0 or 3. Perhaps the collaboration of these industries could help create innovative creative products. For example, performing arts with the gaming and interactive software industry, architecture with television, publishing, or radio and interactive media, cultural education, and cinema.

During the interviews, the author realized that despite the experts' status, there were still additional details that might create biased results, such as strong personal influence and attitude against certain aspects of cooperation, and a constant desire to relate their experiences with the organization they work for.

It should also be noted that there are risks in defining the creative industries. For example, the non-uniform structure of each creative industry (such as radio and interactive media, whose working principles and tasks are often very different. Also, in the expert selection, it would be necessary to consider in even more detail the sub-specializations of each creative industry. For example, a film producer and an actor could have different views on collaboration.

Conclusion

Collaboration involves a group of independent organizations working together, pooling and sharing resources, information, systems, and risks for mutual benefit. It is a similar theoretical concept to synergy, where the interactions among team members produce creative results greater than the sum of their individual efforts. Collaboration has always been at the core of creative work. Creative individuals and teams are more innovative when exposed to a variety of ideas, which cannot be achieved in isolation. Small and medium-sized enterprises can increase their focus by specializing in functions that complement each other within their networks.

Collaboration can be expressed through various models, including networks, clusters, creative intermediaries or brokers, and between creative individuals. Collaboration is one of the main drivers of creative product development, innovation, and spill-over effects.

The collaboration matrix, developed by the author, was tested and evaluated by 16 experts from the creative industries. It was discovered that collaboration between industries is non-linear, meaning that cooperation between two industries can vary in intensity. The performing arts industry has the most connections and collaborations with other industries, but the design industry has the highest demand for collaboration from other creative industries. The architecture and gaming and interactive programming industries collaborate the least and are also the least collaborated with. The collaboration matrix and structured interviews helped the author discover potential areas for research improvement and allowed for interviews with more experts to overcome potential biases from personal views, non-uniform industry structures, and differences in opinions among various professionals.

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ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF SENIORS AND DEMENTIA PATIENTS: REMINISCENCE SESSIONS

Mg.art. **Elza Ēķe**
Latvian National Museum of Art

Abstract

Museums worldwide are increasingly announcing themselves as potential partners in promoting public health and well-being. Responding to the population ageing and its consequences, seniors, including persons diagnosed with dementia, become active target audiences in museums. Reminiscence sessions are one of the most frequently used approaches in museums working with seniors and dementia patients in promoting their health and well-being. Considering the subject's topicality, the article investigates tendencies and main challenges in implementing reminiscence sessions in museum environments. The author analyses previous researches, case studies, and public programs of museums and concludes that museums, with their specific resources, suitable environments, and wide geographical spread, have an underestimated potential to become essential institutions providing reminiscence sessions. Therefore, museums should strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation networks with the health and social care sectors and implement measurable reminiscence activities for further research. In such a manner, it would promote awareness among policymakers and broader society concerning museums as credible partners for enhancing health and well-being for seniors and patients with dementia.

Keywords: *Museum, Well-being, Seniors, Dementia*.

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

Introduction

United Nations research shows that people over 65 are the fastest-growing age group in the world [United Nations 2017]. Population ageing will soon become one of the most serious challenges in the European Union. Although life expectancy is increasing, it is concluded that healthy life expectancy and the age at which individuals are free from any form of disability have not increased [Hamblin and Harper 2016]. Aggravations of chronic or cardiovascular diseases and mental illnesses such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease are becoming severe challenges for seniors, their relatives, and health and social care providers. The necessity for seniors' long-term care increases the burden of national health and social services and related expenditure [Paskaleva and Tufkova 2017]. In order to promote integrated health and social care system, cross-sectoral solutions are being identified, assessing the potential of the cultural sector, including museum institutions. Considering the subject's topicality, the aim of this article is to investigate tendencies and main challenges in implementing one of the most frequently used activities for senior audiences – reminiscence sessions in museum environments. Theoretical and literature review has been developed analysing previous researches, guidelines, public programs of museums. The selected case studies reflect the diverse possibilities of reminiscence activities. The research questions addressed in this paper is as follows: What are the different forms and key prerequisites for ensuring successful reminiscence activities within museums in museum practice for senior audiences and people with dementia in promoting their well-being?

Tendencies reveal that in preventing health problems and promoting well-being, state-managed health, and social care will be directed to greater community involvement [Todd and Camic 2017]. Meanwhile, research reveals that cultural activities delay the deterioration of cognitive functions and reduce chronic pain, dementia, depression-related symptoms, and risks of violence [Bernardo and Reinoso 2020]. Despite the diversity of cultural institutions, museums are most often indicated as senior-friendly places to promote health and well-being [Bernardo and Reinoso 2020]. Pier Sacco highlights the valuable benefits of increasing cultural participation for senior audiences, as it significantly affects life expectancy and psychological well-being [Nicholls et al. 2013]. The innovative non-medical approach, social prescribing, including the subsection – museums on prescription, which has experienced pilot projects in Canada, Belgium, and Great Britain, reveals the development of interdisciplinary cooperation in promoting public health and well-being. Hamish Robertson emphasizes that museum specialists must develop more knowledge about senior audiences and related challenges. Already, museums in many parts of the world have established successful collaborations with nursing homes, hospitals, medical schools, and research institutes to improve their

knowledge. Thus, museums as institutions will be irreversibly involved in a broader political context related to aging processes in society [Robertson 2015].

Museums as health and well-being promoters of seniors and dementia patients

One of the most significant challenges in the senior audience is dementia. Dementia is a general term for a neurodegenerative disorder of brain function characterized by the progressive and continuous loss of cognitive function, impaired short-term memory, and language abilities. As the disease progresses, the patient may become unable to perform daily activities, becoming dependent on caregivers. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia [Bansal and Parle 2014]. Compared to 2005, researchers predict that by 2040 the prevalence of dementia in the world context will have tripled [Silverman 2009]. Responding to the forecast, in 2012, British Prime Minister David Cameron launched the *Challenge on Dementia* initiative, which included promoting dementia-friendly societies and environments. It provided independent living opportunities for people with dementia, including access to museums.

Research has shown that visiting museums improve dementia patients' well-being, mood, self-awareness, and cognitive abilities [Hamblin and Harper 2016]. At the same time, in more than half of the United Kingdom museums that offered health and well-being programs, people with dementia were the second largest target audience [The Heritage Alliance 2020]. The well-being factor has been present in museums before. It became particularly relevant at the beginning of the 21st century when the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki already offered independent programs for seniors to increase positive emotions, well-being, and mutual communication between people with specific diagnoses, for example, Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers [Silverman 2009]. A notable contribution to the museum field in working with seniors and dementia patients made the Museum of Modern Art (New York). In 2007 it developed a program for people with mild or moderate dementia. The program, with art-viewing and discussion activities in the presence of a museum educator, served as an example of good practice for many museums worldwide to develop further inventions. Helen Chatterjee and Guy Noble have devoted considerable attention to research on the topic, analysing the impact of museum-initiated practices on various audiences, including seniors, and people with dementia, showing positive results, reduced depression, blood pressure, as well as stress and anxiety reduction [Thomson and Chatterjee 2016]. Currently, there is a growing number of art-for-dementia programs within museum settings [Tan 2018]. Opportunities for the participation of seniors and dementia patients are diverse. Visiting museums is only one of the dimensions

that museums can offer, opening up opportunities for volunteer work, community projects, creative workshops, and other activities, ensuring seniors' communication, social inclusion, and the opportunity to share knowledge.

Further, the author will analyse one of the museums' most frequently used activities for senior audiences and patients with dementia to improve their health and well-being: reminiscence sessions. At the same time, the author does not reject other approaches, which are determined by the specificity of the museum and available resources. It should be considered that senior audiences and, in the case of dementia patients, the stage of the disease has diverse nature. Various socio-economic factors exist between countries and regions, so it is necessary to adapt every form of activity by analysing the specificity of geographical location [Jamtli 2017].

Reminiscence activities in a museum environment

Reminiscence therapy was formed in the 1960s related to Robert Butler's theory regarding the importance of reviewing life in strengthening an individual's memories and cognitive abilities, which is particularly important for people diagnosed with dementia. A personal-centred approach determines the importance of a person's perception of the past. Reminiscence therapy is a general term for several related but different therapeutic approaches to promote seniors' well-being, communication ability, and intellectual functionality in some cases [Macleod et al. 2021]. Since the mid-1970s in Europe and North America, reminiscence sessions have been one of the most widely used activities for seniors and people with different stages of dementia.

In various derivations, cultural heritage institutions use this approach for senior audiences [Morse and Chatterjee 2017]. Considering historical knowledge, the availability of resources, and the appropriate environment, museums as memory institutions can increasingly become widely used organizations providing reminiscence sessions in the future. Reminiscence sessions in museums are organized in various forms, allowing a wide range of museums to be involved. Amanda Burke and research colleagues point out that museum-led reminiscences are valuable in a broader perspective – for museum institutions, senior audiences, and their caregiving institutions. At the same time, museums must critically evaluate the possibilities of providing such activities in high quality, being aware of priorities and available resources, choosing the most appropriate model [Burke et al. 2012].

During reminiscence sessions in museums, participants encounter their past experiences, and the individual's perception of history and memories is recognized and evaluated. Stimulated memories allow the individual to perceive better and adequately assess current situations. All human senses are often activated during the session – touch, sight, smell, taste, and hearing. Most often, reminiscence sessions in museums offer the environment of a particular historical period with audio and

visual stimuli. It promotes self-awareness, improved mood, and overall quality of life [Jamtli 2017]. This form is often used at open-air museums. They have the necessary resources to work multisensory with the museum environment, acting on the senses that can promote connection, for example, with the participant's childhood or middle age periods. Art museums use related themes from art history to serve as a stimulus for memory. Customized tours, selected artwork viewing, hands-on and creative activities are used under the guidance of museum staff. Considerable in-depth research in the context of reminiscence programs in museums was developed from 2014 to 2017. The project incorporated museums from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, and Great Britain, as well as higher education institutions, to improve informal educational opportunities for seniors with declining health, and physical abilities as well as to develop reminiscence opportunities in museums for people with dementia. A multisensory environment was created in the museums, presenting the historical period of the 1940s to 1970s and offering appropriate artistic activities. The sessions included an introduction, a tour of the exposition, a coffee break, discussions about a specified period of history, and tactile engagement. After the session, the participant had the opportunity to take an object from the venue with them, such as a postcard, which provided further memory stimulation. However, the research did not measure the long-term effect of the reminiscence sessions; meanwhile, elements of well-being such as a positive mood, interest, and attention were significantly increased. The participants' memory impulses were raised as soon as they entered the venue. The study revealed differences in the intensity of memories between genders. For women, memories were promoted more intensively, which is related to the use of the household environment. The research authors emphasize that reminiscence sessions in museums have a sufficient impact on the well-being of seniors with dementia to position themselves as valuable cooperation partners for caregiving organizations. The positive result of the holistic approach, combining objects, environment, managers, and social and sensory experience, is emphasized [Jamtli 2017].

In addition, the National Wool Museum in Australia has significantly contributed to the development of reminiscence sessions in the museums by creating a specialized environment – a *Reminiscence Cottage* for people with dementia and their caregivers. It was created to improve the quality of life and positive emotions of people with dementia and to promote the interaction of people with dementia in public spaces [Pearce 2016]. The cottage is designed like the 1930–1950 typical household. In an accessible multisensory environment, visitors have the opportunity to interact meaningfully. Caregivers or relatives of dementia patients were provided with information and guidance on how to use the cottage, while specific programs were developed for the groups of caregiving institutions. Representatives of the

institution Alzheimer's Australia trained museum staff and volunteers to work with patients who have Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. The project's authors emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary partner organizations and the expert group's participation in the project's implementation, allowing to comprehend the specifics of the target group and the project's relevance to it [Pearce 2016]. Following a similar principle, a *House of Memories* was created for the needs of dementia patients in The Old Town Museum in Aarhus, Denmark. It is not open to the public but is meant for Alzheimer's patients [Heersmink 2017]. Experimental approaches are also implemented elsewhere in Europe, for example, in Swedish and Norwegian museums [Cutler 2019].

Diverse forms of reminiscence activities

Reminiscence sessions in museums are organized in various forms. Experimental sessions enable museums to find the most appropriate solution. It is worth developing a broad program that shifts the focus from passive nostalgic participation to active learning of participants. For example, the Peranakan Museum's in Singapore created a program for clients of the Alzheimer's Association Day Center, *Let's Have Tea at the Museum*, which combines reminiscence sessions with the use of collection items and creative activities. In the program *Memory Lane* at the Museum of Oxford, the reminiscence sessions took place in different venues, such as the Oxford Church, creating collaborations with partner organizations [Hamblin and Harper 2016].

Reminiscence sessions in museums can also be provided with separate elements: *object-handling* activity and *Loan boxes* (other sources *Memory boxes*). If the museum cooperates with partner organizations, these approaches allow reaching a broader audience in hospitals and care facilities for seniors and dementia patients with limited physical mobility. *Object-handling* is a widespread reminiscence activity, allowing participants to get to know museum objects tactilely (3D replicas are also used). Activity promotes discussion, develops sensory perception, evokes memories, and stimulates individual interpretation of the subject. Especially for seniors, it can strengthen social interaction, reduce anxiety, divert attention from the medical environment, and improve physical and mental stimulation [Eveland 2020]. One direction of use involves acquiring and analysing new information, assuming equality of knowledge if the chosen object is previously unknown to all. The other direction involves using objects to stimulate memories [Gough 2016]. Discussion is particularly important for dementia patients, who often lose confidence in their knowledge [Turk et al. 2020]. Canterbury Christ Church University study involved 300 hospital patients and care clients in object-handling sessions. Quantitative measures showed significant increases in participants' well-being and happiness. Qualitative analysis revealed that patients who participated in activities increased social interactions and

sensory stimuli and improved emotional, energy, and motivational levels [Thomson et al. 2017].

Loan boxes or *Memory boxes* can be used to provide reminiscence sessions inside and outside the museum, making it more appropriate for the cooperation organization to include the activity in the daily routine [Jamtli 2017]. The box contains a set of museum objects or their replicas (objects, photographs, and documents) and recommendations. They can be designed for use with or without the presence of a museum specialist. Usually, subjects are assembled in themes (childhood games, sports, transport, etc.) or for a certain period of history. *Loan boxes* or *Memory boxes* are used for different audiences, for example, educational institutions, but additional in work with seniors and people with different stages of dementia. The activity provides an opportunity for discussion in a group with caregivers or relatives to stimulate memories and promote the overall mental state.

In 2009, National Museum Liverpool collaborated with Liverpool Primary Care Trust, and the mental health center Mary Seacole House created *Memory box* to make culture more accessible to seniors. Following the positive experience, the *Houses of Memories* initiative was developed to promote the contribution of art and museums to public mental health and well-being. The museum created a training program for health and social care professionals and developed guidelines for *Memory box* implementation in different museums. As a result, the connection between dementia patients and the museum's potential to promote well-being was strengthened [Hamblin and Harper 2016].

Meanwhile, museums are implementing approaches to be used above museums. For example, Museums Victoria offers a traveling museum in a minibus, similar to National Museums Liverpool provides *House of Memories on the Road*. This mobile museum focuses on people with dementia. The minibus, equipped with 3D cinema and other sensory stimuli, visits local communities, care facilities, and interactively engages seniors.

Prerequisites for ensuring successful reminiscence activities in museums

Before planning reminiscence sessions for seniors and patients with dementia, the general accessibility of the museum should be considered. Different barriers can prevent visiting a museum – physical, cultural, social, intellectual, psychological, emotional, etc. When planning activities, the venue, accessibility for persons with limited mobility, room lighting, air temperature, proximity to facilities, etc., must be evaluated. Nina Silverstein points out the importance of an advisory group representing the interests and needs of seniors in museums [Silverstein et al. 2001]. It is essential to find an appropriate partner organization that can fully inform about the specifics of the audience. Providing reminiscence sessions requires intense

preparation and education for museum employees. With partner organizations, it is recommended to provide training sessions for museum staff. Reminiscence specialist Helen Fountain (Museum of Oxford) has put forward principles for the development of successful reminiscence programs:

- Use spaces that are not accessible to other museum visitors;
- Organize group sessions, ensuring eye contact with participants;
- Involve caregiving staff from the participant organization;
- Ensure that the items used are suitable for the audience of seniors (heaviness, fragility, etc.);
- Make sure that participation is voluntary and participants are aware of the subject and objectives;
- Organize sessions for up to 15 participants;
- Create a session plan with the flexibility to focus on issues that appeal to participants;
- Use a variety of resources to stimulate memories, such as photographs, audio recordings, and scents;
- Listen and show interest in what the participants say, evaluate achievements;
- Encourage the caregiving staff for further actions after the etc. [Fountain 2015].

In mentioned activities, providing enough time for communication and discussion is essential. It can become the most valuable part of the session for seniors and patients with dementia. Communication skills can be crucial when working with seniors, especially dementia patients as cognitive decline is often associated with adverse changes in communication skills. Reminiscence sessions can also stimulate negative feelings and memories.

Among researchers, there is no consensus regarding the possibilities of assessing the impact of artistic and cultural activities in the context of health and wellness [Hamblin 2016]. However, separate tools have been implemented that allow measuring such activities, for example, UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit, Museum Engagement Observation Tool, etc. Measuring the impact of activities is essential for promoting program quality and cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as acquiring funding and strengthening support from policymakers.

Conclusion

Meanwhile, the author emphasizes that it is vital to be aware of the limits that can be achieved with the involvement of museums and other heritage organizations

activities in promoting the health and well-being of seniors and dementia patients. It is essential to separate creative and cultural activities that can be useful in achieving therapeutic goals from the therapy of a psychological nature. Anna Hansen indicates that it is necessary to define that museums cannot cure, for example, people with dementia through activities. Museum cannot diagnose health problems, and used activities cannot improve health and well-being to the extent of reducing an individual's caregiving needs. However, museums can provide individuals with meaningful activities that promote health and well-being and work preventively [Jamtli 2017]. On the one hand, the role of museums is not to replace health and social care services, but on the other hand, museum activities include long-term cooperation with local health and social organizations.

A cross-sectoral collaboration with the health and caregiving sectors is an essential factor in developing and providing successful reminiscence sessions in a museum environment. Although the benefits of the mutual partnership are significant for all parties, challenge of the collaboration between the cultural heritage sector and the public health and care sectors and its planning is highlighted [Camic and Chatterjee 2013]. Therefore, further research is needed to develop more integrated potential mechanisms between those sectors to form partnerships for public health and well-being.

The role of organizations and educational institutions representing the international and local museum sector is essential for promoting the health and well-being of seniors and dementia patients in the museum environment. This applies to museum specialists' education and strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation networks while recording good practice examples for further research. National and municipal policy planning and management institutions should develop a direction of action in integrating the cultural sector, including museum institutions, in promoting public health and well-being. Thus, individual museum initiatives today could serve as examples of good practices for sustainable solutions for the common good of society in the future.

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ENHANCING ACCESS TO CULTURAL SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS IN MUNICIPAL CULTURAL CENTRES

Mg.art. **Dita Pfeifere**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Abstract

In recent decades, the concept of access to culture has been increasingly highlighted on the international political agenda, gradually coming to the attention of Latvian policymakers, to state cultural policy documents, funding programmes, municipal cultural development planning documents and the daily work of cultural organizations. In the article, the issue of access to culture is analysed both in the context of cultural policy of Latvia and the legal regulation of cultural centres, and in the context of international cultural policy and cultural rights, which are represented by the documents developed by the UN, UNESCO and the European Union in the field of cultural rights, cultural protection and development.

The aim of the article is to evaluate to what extent the internationally and nationally determined political and legal framework regarding the promotion of access to culture for vulnerable groups is implemented in Latvian municipal cultural centres.

The research methodology: mixed research strategy, which involves both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The qualitative research methods are content analysis, including analysis of relevant literature, official reports and documents of state institutions, as well as secondary data analysis. An electronic survey of municipal cultural centres and cultural organizers was conducted to obtain quantitative data.

Findings: the outcome of the study shows that a number of specific issues must be addressed to improve access to culture for vulnerable groups in Latvia. Analysis

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of survey data shows, that cultural centres pay special attention to ensuring the availability of cultural services for the following vulnerable groups, which are the focus of this study: older persons, children and people with limited financial means. Whereas, minorities, persons with disabilities and migrants are involved much less in the activities of cultural centres. One of the most significant obstacles affecting the accessibility of cultural services in cultural centres is the accessibility of the environment, which is primarily important for people with disabilities; moreover, people with disabilities have very limited opportunities to access the content of events.

Keywords: *access to culture, cultural centres, vulnerable groups, cultural policy, cultural rights*.

Introduction

Although the promotion of access to culture for vulnerable groups of society in Latvia has been specifically highlighted in various contexts in recent decades, internationally this issue has been discussed for a much longer period of time. The basic principles of equal access to culture for all members of society were defined already in 1948, in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights [United Nations 1948], marking an important vector for the future both in the creation of national cultural policies and in the research of the problems of access to culture. According to cultural policy researcher Carole Rosenstein, cultural rights, along with such a field of cultural policy as copyright, have always been a widely discussed issue of international cultural policy [Rosenstein 2018: 267], accordingly gradually coming to the attention of national policy makers. General access to and participation in culture for everyone, including in decision-making, is one of the key components of rights-based approaches to cultural policy within the international discourse of contemporary cultural policy [Baltà Portolés, Dragićevic *Šešić* 2017].

The issue of access to culture in various contexts has also been discussed in the approaches to cultural democratization, cultural democracy and cultural decentralization, and related academic studies [Malraux 1966; Ahearne 2002; Duelund 2001; Morel 2003; Kawashima 2004; McKenzie 2018]. It is essential to note that the study of access issues covers a wide field of interdisciplinary research – the concept of access plays an important role not only in culture, but also in other areas related to basic human rights, including education, healthcare, social protection, etc. The article "The Concept of Access: Definition and Relationship to Consumer Satisfaction" [Penchansky, Thomas 1981] by US scientists Roy Penchansky and John William Thomas, published in 1981, is considered one of the first important theoretical

studies of access issues, in which, by developing studies initiated by several other scientists in the 1970s [Fox 1972; Aday, Anderson 1975 etc.], they offer comprehensive theoretical framework for the concept of access. It is important to note that although both scientists developed their theory of access by applying it to the specifics of the healthcare sector, however, over time it has been adapted to other sectors as well, guided by the research results by modifying it accordingly and applying the particularities of the specific sectors.

According to the definition of access proposed by Penchansky and Thomas, "*access is viewed as the general concept which summarizes a set of more specific areas of fit between the patient and the health care system*" [Penchansky, Thomas 1981: 128]. The specific areas, the dimensions of access, are as follows: availability, accessibility, accommodation, affordability and acceptability [Penchansky, Thomas 1981: 128–129]. Katarina Tomasevski, a researcher of international law and international relations, has also made a significant contribution to the study of access issues, specifically focusing on the aspect of social equality issues of access to education. In her publications she emphasizes that access to education should be provided to all school-aged children without discrimination based on gender, language, religion, health status, citizenship, family income level and other factors [Tomasevski 1999, Tomasevski 2001]. According to the researchers of The Danish Institute for Human Rights, she proposed a 4-A scheme for education, denoting the four essential features that primary schools should exhibit, namely *Availability*, *Accessibility*, *Acceptability*, and *Adaptability*. This framework was then applied in the CESCR General Comment No. 13: *The Right to Education* [United Nations 1999] and has been adopted and adapted in later the CESCR General Comments No. 14 and 15 on health and water, changing the Adaptability criteria to one of Quality [Jensen, Villumsen, Petersen 2014: 41]. This has also been taken into account in the preparation of other UN documents, including the CESR General Comment No. 21: *The Right of everyone to take part in cultural life*, defining the basic principles of cultural availability and accessibility, which will be analysed in detail further in the article.

The aim of the article is to evaluate to what extent the internationally and nationally determined political and legal framework regarding the promotion of access to culture for vulnerable groups is implemented in Latvian municipal cultural centres.

The research methodology: mixed research strategy, which involves both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The qualitative research methods are content analysis, including analysis of relevant literature, official reports and documents of state institutions, as well as secondary data analysis. An electronic survey of municipal cultural centres and cultural organizers was conducted to obtain quantitative data.

Access to Culture in Context of Cultural Rights

The understanding of the problems of cultural availability and accessibility today is closely related to the concept of international human rights and cultural rights. The main principles of cultural rights are defined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights [United Nations 1948], stating that "*everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality*" (Art. 22) and "*everyone has 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*" (Art. 27) [United Nations 1948]. These norms of cultural rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were concretized in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, stipulating that member states recognize the rights of every person (Art. 15, Para. 1): "*(a) to take part in cultural life; (b) to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications; (c) to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author*" [United Nations 1966].

A detailed explanation of the main principles and concepts of cultural rights is provided in the General Comments No. 21 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The document states that "*the following are necessary conditions for the full realisation of the right of everyone to take part in cultural life on the basis of equality and non-discrimination: availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and appropriateness*" [United Nations 2009]. From the definitions of these main terms given in the document, it follows that cultural availability means the provision/existence of cultural opportunities in general, while "*accessibility consists of effective and concrete opportunities for individuals and communities to enjoy culture fully, within physical and financial reach for all in both urban and rural areas, without discrimination. It is essential, in this regard, that access for older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as for those who live in poverty, is provided and facilitated. Accessibility also includes the right of everyone to seek, receive and share information on all manifestations of culture in the language of the person's choice, and the access of communities to means of expressions and dissemination*" [United Nations 2009].

The document explains in detail the obligation of member states to promote the availability and accessibility of culture to every member of society (individually or as a member of a specific group of society), emphasizing that the norms included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights "*prohibit any discrimination in the exercise of the right of everyone to take part in cultural life*

on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" [United Nations 2009]. It is also emphasized that "*no one shall be excluded from access to cultural practices, goods and services*" [United Nations 2009]. In this context, the document singles out several groups of society that require special attention (*Persons and communities requiring special protection*), to ensure access to culture and equal participation in cultural life, those include women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty, minorities, migrants, indigenous peoples [United Nations 2009].

Access to Culture in Context of International Cultural Policy

The importance of the availability and accessibility of culture is emphasized not only in the field of cultural rights but also in the international arena of cultural policy – both in the international documents adopted by UNESCO in the field of culture and in the documents related to cultural policy of the European Union. In the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, one of the eight main principles is the *Principle of equitable access*, stipulating, that "*equitable access to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions from all over the world and access of cultures to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural diversity and encouraging mutual understanding*" [UNESCO 2005].

According to European researchers on cultural policy, the goals of the European Union's cultural policy are in line with the cultural vision and main principles set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [Pasikowska-Schnass 2017: 8], including the dimension of promoting cultural availability and accessibility. The European Commission's statement of 2007 *A European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* [European Union 2007] emphasizes the need to promote the availability and accessibility of culture in the context of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. In the *Work Plan for Culture (2015–2018)* of the European Union *accessible and inclusive culture* was identified as the first operational priority [European Union 2014].

In international cultural law and cultural policy documents, various groups of society can be identified that are defined as ones that should be given special attention and the inclusion of these groups should be promoted – inter alia, migrants, people belonging to national ethnic or linguistic minorities, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, children, older people, Roma, travellers, the LGBTI community and others. It should be noted that there is no single conventional designation for these groups of society, terms such as *persons and communities requiring special*

protection, vulnerable groups, groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, etc. are used. This article uses the concept *vulnerable groups* as a unifying designation for these groups of society, which "*has become widely used in academic literature as a theoretical framework for the discussion and analysis of inequalities, economic or social disadvantage, violations of human rights and unmet basic needs*" [Schroder, Gefenas 2009]. According to the researchers, although this concept is widely discussed in the academic environment and is not unambiguously perceived [Higgins et al. 2022], however, it is recognised and widely used in the field of human rights.

Access to Culture in Context of Cultural Policy in Latvia

Availability and accessibility of culture and broader public participation in cultural processes are important cultural policy issues that are regularly brought up both on the international and Latvian agendas of cultural policy and mark the progress towards the development of a democratic and inclusive cultural model. Ensuring cultural availability and accessibility has historically been and still is one of the most important tasks set forth in the cultural policy of Latvia.

In the medium-term policy planning document Cultural Policy Guidelines 2022–2027 *Kultūrvalsts* (Cultural State) (hereinafter referred to as the guidelines), a sustainable and accessible culture is defined as the main strategic goal of the planning period, emphasizing that cultural offer in Latvia must be accessible to every member of society, and guaranteeing equal opportunities for every Latvian citizen and resident to use a diverse cultural offer and to actively engage in cultural processes, regardless of a person's place of residence, age, gender, nationality, education or income level [Ministry of Culture 2022]. The document emphasizes that in the provision of cultural services special attention should be paid to regional and economic accessibility, including people with low incomes, digital accessibility, accessibility to groups at risk of social exclusion, including the accessibility of cultural offers to people with functional disabilities, minorities and immigrants, accessibility to people living in the diaspora, development of cultural services for a specific audience, especially children and young people, as well as for the marketing and design of cultural services [Ministry of Culture 2022].

However, the target groups of this study were not defined on the basis of the Latvian cultural policy guidelines, but on the basis of the groups of society defined in General comment No. 21 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which special attention should be paid to ensure access to culture. Two methods were used to collect data: 1) content analysis of official reports and documents of state institutions, as well as content analysis of secondary data, were performed to obtain qualitative data; 2) to obtain quantitative data, an electronic survey of heads of municipal cultural centres was conducted.

Functions of Municipal Cultural Centres in the Context of Cultural Availability and Accessibility

In the sense of the regulations, cultural centres in Latvia operate as multi-functional cross-sectoral cultural institutions, which can be established by State, local government entities or bodies governed by private law [Saeima 1998]. Historically cultural centres in Latvia started to form in the second half of the 19th century, as gathering places of local society (society houses, community houses), and in various periods of historical development, in response to the needs of society, as well as the political and ideological background, they have performed not only cultural functions, but also educational, leisure, scientific development, charitable and other social functions, but in certain periods also political functions [Pfeifere 2022]. According to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau (hereinafter – CSB), at the end of 2021, 558 cultural centres were operating in Latvia [CSB 2022: KUN010], whereas on the official Latvian Cultural Data Portal, in the section Cultural Centres, information on 564 cultural institutions can be found, of which 99% are cultural centres founded by municipalities or structural units thereof [Latvian Cultural Data Portal 2023].

The operation of municipal cultural centres in Latvia is regulated by several regulatory acts, the most important of which is the Law on Cultural Centres, which determines the legal status, functions, operation of cultural centres established by municipalities and other issues related to the operation of cultural centres [Saeima 2022]. The purpose of the Law on Cultural Centres highlights the role of municipal cultural centres *in promoting the availability of quality cultural services for the entire Latvian society, in the preservation and sustainable development of Latvia's cultural and historical environment, cultural spaces and intangible cultural heritage, in strengthening national identity, in the availability of lifelong learning, in the creation of new cultural products and services, and the participation of the society in the promotion of cultural processes* [Saeima 2022]. The National cultural policy document Cultural Policy Guidelines for 2022–2027 *Kultūrvalsts* also repeatedly emphasizes the role of cultural centres in ensuring access to culture and promoting public participation in cultural processes in regions of Latvia. In the context of this study, it is important to note that the guidelines state that to improve the availability and accessibility of culture, a series of specific issues must be addressed regarding the economic and regional availability of the cultural offer, as well as the physical and digital accessibility, both for society as a whole and for vulnerable groups. Improving the use of cultural infrastructure for persons with various functional disabilities is highlighted as one of the priority issues, indicating that a significant number of cultural institutions, including cultural centres, are only partially accessible to people with functional disabilities [Ministry of Culture 2022].

To explore whether municipal cultural centres have the necessary operational conditions to be able to qualitatively implement the tasks set forth in regulatory acts and state cultural policy documents and to find out the opinion of the heads of cultural centres about what should be done to improve the accessibility of cultural services to vulnerable groups, an electronic survey of municipal cultural centres was carried out. Both closed and open-ended questions were included in the survey questionnaire. The general population of the survey (n = 551) was determined based on the information on cultural centres available in the section on Cultural Centres of the official Latvian Portal of Cultural Data, including only cultural centres founded by municipalities. Answers from 398 respondents were received, which covers 72% of the general population and allows to consider these data as representative.

Limitations of the study:

Two of the aforementioned vulnerable groups – women and indigenous people – were not included in the survey questionnaire as separate research target groups, based on the fact that studies of cultural consumption and access to culture conducted so far in Latvia show that mostly women participate more in the consumption of all cultural activities, with the exception of certain types of events, where men are more active consumers [Ministry of Culture 2023], whereas, Livs, who in the sense of this study should be considered indigenous to Latvia, are a numerically small population (according to the data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs from July 1, 2017 – less than 170), which has been fully integrated into Latvian society, and a specific cultural offer for this target group is created only within the framework of the Liv community [The Livonian Culture Centre 2023].

Assessment of the Accessibility of Cultural Services to Vulnerable Groups

To find out to which of the vulnerable groups of society cultural centres pay special attention to when creating their offer of cultural services, the respondents had to answer the closed-form question, ticking all the appropriate groups from the sixteen target groups, among which were also the six groups that are in the focus of this study – *children, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty, minorities, migrants*. 91.4% of respondents marked the local community/locals of the city parish as the main target group which is widely and very widely involved. Older persons (83.8%), families with children (82.8%), children aged up to 12 years (67.2%), young people aged 18 to 25 (56.9%), young people aged 13 to 17 (52.9%), people with limited financial means (53.6%), residents from remote settlements in the given municipality (52%) and residents from other municipalities in the given region (50.7%) were indicated as the subsequent most important target groups. From the answers of the respondents, it can be concluded that more than half of

the respondents pay attention to ensuring the availability of cultural services for the following vulnerable groups in the focus of the study: older persons, children and people with limited financial means. Whereas answers of the respondents regarding the other vulnerable groups in the focus of this study – minorities, persons with disabilities and migrants allow concluding that these target groups are involved to a much smaller extent in the activities of municipal cultural centres.

To explore respondents' views on the economic accessibility of cultural centres services respondents were asked which groups of the population have discounts to tickets price available in the cultural centres of the municipalities represented by the respondents. The answers of respondents show that discounts are most often offered to children (54.5%), older persons (36.6%) and students (31%). Relatively less often, ticket discounts are applied to other vulnerable groups – persons with disabilities (persons with group I disability 17.5%, persons with group II disability 14.6%, persons with group III disability 11.6%), persons living in poverty (4%). 16% of respondents indicated that discounts for tickets are offered to companions of persons with disabilities. Several respondents indicated in their comments that discounts are not applied to paid events for the following reasons: "*Entrance fees to events are so low that there are no discounts, free events are also available*"; "*There is no discount because mostly there are free events*"; "*There are no ticket discounts. Ticket prices are very friendly, starting from 1.00 EUR, depending on the target audience of the event and the actual costs. There are many free events. The most expensive tickets are for 7.50 EUR for balls/entertainment events*".

In the context of these answers, the data obtained in the survey about the proportional ratio of paid and free events in cultural centres are important. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate the data on the number of paid and free events in 2022, because on the official Latvian Portal of Cultural Data, these data are partially available only for 2021. The analysis of the obtained data shows that in 2022 in the cultural centres surveyed, 71% of the events were free of charge, which allows concluding that even though ticket discounts for paid events were not available for all vulnerable groups, the opportunity to visit a relatively large number of events without entrance fees was ensured.

One of the most significant barriers affecting the accessibility of cultural services in cultural centres is the accessibility of the environment, which is primarily important for persons with disabilities. However, it is important to note that by reducing or eliminating accessibility obstacles for persons with desabilities, other groups of society also become beneficiaries, including seniors, people with temporary mobility or functional impairment, families with small children, etc. When analysing the accessibility of cultural services for people with disabilities, the following aspects of accessibility should be considered:

1) Accessibility of the physical environment (important for people with mobility impairments);

2) Accessibility of the sensory environment (important for people with visual and hearing impairments);

3) Perceptual accessibility (important for people with mental health disorders).

Based on the above, the respondents were asked several questions regarding the accessibility of the environment and services in the cultural centre. First, the respondents were asked to rate on a 10-point scale how accessible the premises of the cultural centre are for people with disabilities (the respondents were explained that this means the ability of people with disabilities to independently enter the building, to find their bearings in the building, move around the premises, between floors, visit the facilities, etc.). The accessibility of cultural centres was assessed as fully adequate (9–10 points) for people with mobility impairments by only 35.3% of respondents, for people with mental health disorders – 35.2% of respondents, for people with hearing impairments – 27.3% of respondents, for people with visual impairments – 18.1% of respondents. Respondents also had the opportunity to freely comment on the issue of environmental accessibility. Several respondents indicated that the staff of the cultural centre do not have sufficient knowledge about aspects of cultural accessibility for people with disabilities: "*Employees of the cultural centre do not have the necessary skills to deal with people with special needs. Usually, people come to the cultural centre with an assistant.*"; "*I am not aware of special adaptations for people with visual and hearing impairments*"; "*The staff of the cultural centre is not trained to work with people with visual, hearing impairments and mental disorders. In case of mental disorders, the visitor needs the help of a specialist*", "*There is a lack of knowledge that could improve/facilitate the accessibility of premises for people with mental disorders*", "*In order to accurately assess accessibility, a specialist's assessment would be necessary because I admit that there are situations which are not fully considered*". Most of the respondents indicated that the premises of the cultural centre are only partially accessible for people with disabilities.

Further, the respondents were asked to assess on a 10-point scale how accessible the content offered in the cultural centre is to people with disabilities and whether the adaptation of appropriate technical solutions to the specific needs of people with disabilities for content access is ensured (for example, the availability of subtitles/sign language for people with hearing impairments, audio translation for people with visual impairments, adapted seats for people with mobility impairments, etc.). 59.8% of respondents indicated that it is not possible to ensure full accessibility of event content in the cultural centre (marked respondent rating: 1–2 points) for people with visual impairments, 60.6% of respondents indicated that it is not possible to ensure accessibility of event content to people with hearing impairments, 30.8%

of respondents indicated that it is not possible to ensure the accessibility of event content for people with mental disabilities and 23.7% of respondents indicated that the cultural centre cannot ensure full accessibility of event content for people with mobility impairments. From these data, it can be concluded that persons with disabilities have very limited opportunities to access the content of events offered in cultural centres because even if they manage to overcome physical obstacles with the help of an assistant and get to the venue, the opportunities to enjoy and perceive the content of the events are very limited.

Recommendations for Improving Cultural Accessibility in Municipal Cultural Centres

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked a closed-ended question, in which they were offered to choose the most appropriate of the given answer options regarding what specific actions should be taken to improve the availability and accessibility of cultural services in cultural centres. The table reflects the most important actions in the opinion of the respondents that would help to improve cultural accessibility in cultural centres:

Table 1. Recommendations of respondents (Source: author's compilation)

Recommendations of respondents	% of respondents' answers
Adequate technological equipment	67.7%
Larger municipal subsidy for core activities	66.2%
Experience exchange events in Latvia	64.7%
Training, courses, seminars for employees of the cultural centre	63.8%
Target programme of state support for cultural centres	63.5%
Enhanced opportunities to attract additional funding in project tenders	62.0%
Additional human resources (employees) in the cultural centre	54.9%
More active involvement and participation of volunteers	50.1%

The need for better cooperation with state institutions (19.9%), municipal institutions (28.5%) and the non-governmental sector (25.2%) was indicated as an important factor in improving cultural accessibility. Respondents also believe that greater tolerance and understanding of residents towards different target groups of society (28.8%), as well as greater interest of people with disabilities to participate (30.6%), would help to improve cultural accessibility.

Conclusions

In the cultural policy of Latvia, the availability and accessibility of culture are put forward as one of the priorities of the national cultural policy. Both the Law on Culture Centres and the National Cultural Policy Guidelines emphasize the role of cultural centres in ensuring access to culture and promoting public participation in cultural processes in the regions of Latvia while recognizing that in order to improve the availability and accessibility to culture in Latvia, a series of specific issues regarding the economic and regional availability of cultural offer must be addressed, as well as physical and digital accessibility, both for the general public and for vulnerable groups.

From the data obtained in the survey of cultural centres, it can be concluded that cultural centres pay special attention to ensuring the availability and accessibility of cultural services for the following vulnerable groups, which are the focus of this study: older persons, children and people with limited financial means. Whereas, minorities, persons with disabilities and migrants are involved much less in the activities of cultural centres.

Data from survey allow to conclude that persons with disabilities have very limited opportunities to access the content of events offered in cultural centres because even if they manage to overcome physical obstacles with the help of an assistant and get to the venue, the possibilities to enjoy and perceive the content of the events are very limited. In the open questions, some respondents admit that cultural centre employees lack knowledge about working with persons with disabilities.

As the main actions that should be taken to improve the availability and accessibility of cultural services in cultural centres, the respondents pointed out: the need for appropriate technological equipment, the need for more municipal subsidies for core activities, the need for experience exchange events in Latvia, the need for training, courses, seminars for employees of cultural centres, the need of the target programme of state support for cultural centres, greater opportunities to attract additional funding in project tenders, the need for additional human resources (employees) in cultural centres and the need for more active involvement and participation of volunteers.

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IMMERSIVE VIRTUAL REALITY FOR DARK HERITAGE INTERPRETATION: THE CASE OF ŽANIS LIPKE MEMORIAL

Mg.hum. **Diāna Popova**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Abstract

The article will focus on the use of immersive virtual reality experiences in the interpretation of the dark heritage for young audiences. Here, through a case study of the Žanis Lipke Memorial, a new virtual reality experience was tested with young people, evaluating the benefits and shortcomings of this tool in conveying the story of the largest Jewish rescue mission at the time of the Holocaust in Latvia.

Given that every heritage institution aims to pass on the heritage to future generations, it is also essential for them to keep up with the practices of the new generation of the *digital natives* in their information-seeking, education and leisure-time habits, given that technology plays a pivotal role in their daily life. While virtual reality is often associated with the entertainment and gaming industries, it is also increasingly used in educational processes, in this case – as an interpretive tool in educating people about the Jewish rescue mission and Holocaust at the Memorial.

Young people in the focus groups acknowledged the emotional, embodied and implicit learning aspects of the virtual reality experience, but also pointed out some spatial and technological shortcomings of it. While some had relatively low initial expectations about the innovativeness of the Memorial, in the end, most recognised that the high-quality, realistic and historically accurate immersive virtual reality

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experience, combined with a physical tour at the Memorial, provided a deeper understanding of the historical event in question.

Keywords: *Dark heritage, immersive virtual reality, dark heritage interpretation, youth audiences, Žanis Lipke Memorial.*

Introduction

This article will elaborate on the possibilities of interpreting the dark heritage for young audiences through immersive virtual reality (VR) experience, based on a case study of Žanis Lipke Memorial (hereinafter – Memorial). It is a small non-governmental memorial museum in Riga that commemorates the largest Jewish rescue mission during the Nazi occupation of Latvia between 1941 and 1945 when the Lipke family and their helpers rescued more than 50 Jews. This article seeks to address the interplay of relatively distant topics, which come together in this context and create a new synergy. These topics are the interpretation of dark heritage to young audiences and the application of immersive virtual reality for creating engaging educational experiences at a museum.

This article will shed light on the opinions expressed by young people after testing a new virtual reality experience *Lipke's Bunker* (see Figure 1), which reveals the conditions of the underground hideout in Ķīpsala where Lipke's family hid Jewish people, saved from the Riga Ghetto and local concentration and forced labour camps. The bunker was built in 1942 and used until 1944, sheltering 8–12 Jews at a time. Since the bunker no longer physically exists, Memorial has created

Figure 1. VR *Lipke's Bunker* screenshot. Rights holder: Žanis Lipke Memorial.

an immersive virtual reality simulation in an attempt to recreate the conditions in the hideout at the time. To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the novel technology in a museum setting, several focus groups with 16–26 years old students were conducted at the Memorial in 2021, where after a short tour of the memorial, they participated in a pilot trial of the newly developed VR experience.

To demonstrate the synergy of dark heritage, heritage interpretation and virtual reality, this article will highlight some theoretical perspectives in these realms, demonstrating that virtual reality should not only be perceived as a technological marvel in the entertainment and gaming industry but also as an innovative tool to facilitate learning, also in heritage education. The article includes a description of the research methodology and an analysis of the focus groups on the pros and cons of the VR experience in a memorial museum. In conclusion, some noteworthy remarks young people voiced about the innovation in memorial museums are presented for further consideration.

Contemporary challenges in interpreting dark heritage to young generations

Dark heritage as a theoretical concept has developed alongside *dark tourism* studies, that explore topics of visiting, managing and interpreting sites associated with tragedies, suffering and death, including sites of wars, disasters, genocides, acts of terror and others [Thomas et al. 2019]. This discipline also explores the ways how the difficult past is presented to audiences today and why people visit sites of dark heritage [Eckersley 2020].

While it was initially common in dark tourism research to explain tourist interest in dark places as an attraction and fascination with death [Sharpley 2009; Thomas et al. 2019], there is now a strong emphasis on the educational function of dark destinations [Dresler and Fuchs 2021; Roberts 2018]. This is also in line with Light's [2017] conclusion that there is no clear rationale for distinguishing dark tourism from heritage tourism in terms of travellers' motivations and visitation experiences, as many of them are purposefully choosing to visit dark sites for learning, commemorating, pilgrimaging and understanding the past. Thus, the dark heritage memorials and museums are also increasingly focusing on creating more informative, interpretive and educational content in order to justify their mission as memory institutions, public enlighteners and conscience-keepers, creating a dialogue from the past through the present to the future on painful issues that divide and pressure society [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience 2018; Sevcenko 2002].

Undoubtedly, all heritage institutions have as one of their main goals the preservation and transmission of heritage to future generations. This is where skilful and engaging heritage interpretation plays a role. Over the past century, as heritage

interpretation has become a recognized discipline in theory and practice, it is also anticipated that it will evolve into a more "inclusive, culturally situated, dialogical and critically reflexive art" [Ablett and Dyer 2009: 211]. That is especially relevant when working with the interpretation of the painful, traumatic and difficult heritage which often causes dissonance and disagreement in different parts of society.

Keeping these incentives in mind, the contemporary museum pedagogy in the field of dark heritage has an important task to interpret the difficult past to the youngest generations which are the most distant from the painful tragedies of the last century and beyond. Also known as *digital natives* [Dingli and Seychell 2015], *generation Z* [Breuer 2022; Turner 2018] or *IGen* [Twenge 2017], these are the young, tech-savvy people who were born around the turn of the millennium and have grown up in the era of information and communication technologies, spending a great deal of their time in digital environments. Not only their lifestyle, values and habits are radically different from the older generations but also the ways how they communicate, seek information, educate and entertain themselves.

Considering also the vast possibilities of digital manipulation, rewriting history and publishing fake information, an accurate and professional dark heritage interpretation turns out to be quite an important yet sensitive issue for contemporary society, linking education, culture of remembrance and ethical aspects together. While the representation of dark heritage through simulative and interactive media such as video games and VR leads to the backlash on the risks of gamification and commercialisation of human suffering [Kansteiner 2017], it is important to remember that if the institutions of history and heritage preservation leave a vacuum in the digital environment, it may be filled by other actors whose attitude towards historical accuracy, research and education may be overshadowed by other motives. Furthermore, also "young people are no longer spectators, but users and producers" [Walden 2015: 3], acting as content creators and influencers for other viewers, opening up multiple avenues of self-interpretation of any historical event, based on whatever information they find relevant for their content.

While the long-standing social media struggle to reach young audiences [Richter 2019], technological advances and global transformations such as the pandemic have enhanced the development of new social virtual reality apps. They are promising a new future for social interaction, marketing, education and entertainment in the metaverse [Hackl 2020], offering a sense of presence and interaction with other users in exclusively virtual environments. As young audiences already spend much of their time in online gaming spaces, large tech giants such as Meta (former Facebook) are striving for socializing teenagers into the upcoming social virtual reality platforms like Horizon [Rodriguez 2023]. The future of virtual technology and immersive presence in the virtual worlds is still in development, but as it speeds up and aims to

transform digital communities, it should not be ignored by memory institutions that aim to reach young audiences.

Nevertheless, while communication on social networks is one of the key skills that museum communication specialists can no longer avoid mastering to reach out to the public, the following section of the article will focus on the way how a new VR technology is applied on-site at a memorial museum dedicated to a Jewish rescuer Žanis Lipke in Riga.

Heritage interpretation – learning through experiencing

Since the 1950s, when cultural heritage interpretation as a discipline took on a more concrete theoretical and practical shape, its primary aim has been to educate the public to understand, appreciate and preserve the heritage [Silberman 2013; Tilden 1957]. However, in recent decades, several heritage scholars have expressed criticism of heritage interpretation's excessive focus on cognitive knowledge production, while neglecting the possibility of heritage to be experienced in more diverse and holistic ways, integrating also emotional, affective, embodied and aesthetic attributes. Besides, people often prefer experience to learning and do not separate their cognitive, emotional and sensory experiences while visiting a heritage site [see, e. g. Smith 2021; Staiff 2014]. While this criticism does not question the need for heritage sites to contribute to educating society about past events, shifting focus from instruction and information to more emotional and participatory engagement could foster deeper understanding and interaction, especially among younger generations for whom historical events may seem very distant and traditional heritage interpretation methods unattractive.

Simultaneously, the challenge of interpreting dark heritage lies in the need to balance the educational and emotional messages at the sites of human suffering and traumatic events. It is important to reflect the gravity of what happened in an ethical and historically accurate way, but also to evoke a deeper sense of empathy, understanding and awareness among the visitors. Today, the possibilities to incorporate different nuances of human perception in interaction with dark heritage sites could be complemented by the integration of virtual or augmented reality technologies, allowing for more personal presence and immersion into the historical context.

One such example where an immersive VR experience has been integrated into the dark heritage interpretation is the VR *Lipke's Bunker*, produced by the Memorial. It demonstrates that carefully designed immersive audiovisual and historically accurate VR experience can assist in the interpretation of a difficult past. In autumn 2022, a specially designated space for the VR experience has been opened at the Memorial (see Figures 2 and 3), where visitors, mostly small groups

Figure 2. VR Space at the Žanis Lipke Memorial. Photo: Didzis Grodzs. Rights holder: Žanis Lipke Memorial.

Figure 3. VR Space at the Žanis Lipke Memorial. Photo: Didzis Grodzs. Rights holder: Žanis Lipke Memorial.

of schoolchildren or students, can use the Oculus Quest VR headsets to travel back more than 80 years into the harsh reality of a Jewish underground hideout in Riga. Following the narrative told from the perspective of Žanis Lipke's then eight-year-old son Zigfrīds, visitors descend into a virtually reconstructed three-dimensional 3m × 3m bunker to explore it from a first-person perspective and interact with artifacts located there.

The *Lipke's Bunker* VR experience was developed in several stages by Latvian VR designers, but before the last iteration and launching it to the public, several focus groups with young people were conducted to test the new VR experience with the target audience.

Approaching research methodology with young people's perspectives in mind

In autumn 2021, the author of this article together with her fellow researchers Elizabete Grinblate and Raivis Sīmansons from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia conducted four semi-structured focus groups at the Memorial. The focus groups were aimed at getting young people's perspectives on the new VR experience, its suitability for conveying the historical narrative, the improvements needed, as well as youth's general attitudes and experiences of visiting places of dark heritage.

To form the focus groups, a nonprobability sampling method was chosen, combining convenience, purposive and snowball methods to recruit young people in their late teen or early adulthood years. It is suggested that choosing sampling units for convenience or coincidence can be applied during the initial stages of a study or during a pilot study [Given 2008: 520]. This VR testing was approached as a pilot study since VR experience as an interpretative tool had not been in use at the Memorial before and these were the first audience studies in this context.

In total there were 18 participants recruited, in the age range of 16–26 years. In small groups of 4–6 people they were first introduced to the story of Žanis Lipke and the permanent exhibition at the Memorial in a short guided tour, then they were instructed about the use of VR and one by one went through the VR experience. Finally, they participated in a group conversation with the researchers.

One of the research approaches in the focus groups was empathy mapping [Campese et al. 2018], where each participant before trying the VR experience would write down their feelings and thoughts on sticky notes and place them on a large poster divided into four quadrants stating – "What do I see?", "What do I hear?", "What do I feel?", "What do I think?". After the VR experience, the group was invited to repeat the process by writing down their feelings and thoughts again to see if they felt differently or if anything had changed. This exercise helped the

researchers to steer the conversation towards topics emerging from the participants themselves, thus adapting the pre-designed semi-structured interview script to the thoughts and feelings important to the young people, allowing them more agency in the research process.

This turned out to be a beneficial approach when working with young informants, given that any research is a hierarchical situation where the researchers possess the authority to instruct and guide the data collection process. There, however, is a risk that young people may feel inferior to the researchers and only follow their instructions or questions, withholding some of their thoughts or opinions. Kerr et al. [2023] suggest that combining multiple research methods could benefit researchers to understand youth's experiences at dark sites. The empathy mapping activity allowed for more diversification of the data collection methods, enabling to build a more meaningful conversation around themes initiated by the participants before engaging them in the pre-written interview questions.

Benefits of VR assisted experience at a dark heritage site

Virtual reality is currently understood as a technology whose main feature is the ability to provide the user with a sense of "presence" in a digitally generated world, with research also showing the effectiveness of VR as an affective medium. For example, Riva et al. [2007] suggest that there is a circular interplay between VR's ability to create a presence effect and elicit an emotional response, where on the one hand a greater sense of presence is observed in an emotional virtual environment, and vice versa when the emotional response is enhanced by the effect of presence being experienced through VR.

Several participants expressed similar feelings about their experience in the virtual *Lipke's Bunker*, saying that the physical immersion in this environment increased the effect of realism of the story and that the visual quality of the VR experience allowed them to imagine the situation at the time relatively well, for example, the real narrowness of the 3×3 m bunker. At the same time the current technological solutions for VR, which require the user to navigate the virtual environment with the help of special hand-held controllers, required some physical adaptation, as explained by this participant:

> *I was surprised that it seemed so realistic, that I was actually in the actual space, and... and... Well, yeah, it took me a minute to realise that... I overcame those instincts that I wanted to go somewhere, and I shouldn't go, but... move with... remote controls.* (Ēriks)[1]

[1] All participants have been anonymised and given pseudonyms.

This immersion in the realistic VR environment was described by some young people as a particularly exciting sensory experience, given that the VR design included interactive options. "Touching" specific objects in the virtual bunker allowed for a closer inspection or interaction with them, as they were accompanied by a narrative, photo or audio recording, illustrating the historical circumstances. For some participants the feeling of the historical VR presence was especially strongly felt:

> *This was my first [VR] experience. Seeing and touching things, like a suitcase, listening to the radio. It was... WOW...* (Anastasia)

The virtual reality allowed the user to interact with the environment with their whole body, as the person could stand, turn around or bend down to navigate the bunker space and complete the built-in tasks to move forward in the VR experience. In addition to stimulating the cognitive aspects, this immersive virtual environment also activated embodied knowledge [Ellingson 2008]. This is evident in this young man's words, where he highlights the effect of bodily presence and kinetic memory in the overall VR experience:

> *I think about the senses, both seeing and hearing are there. Then I think it's the same with films, but with virtual reality, there's an extra sense, some kind of movement that helps you remember.* (Mārtiņš)

Mel Slater points out that virtual reality can contribute to implicit learning through embodied experience, or the way the VR establishes virtual body ownership – *a virtual body coincident in space with the real body and seen from first person perspective can generate the illusion that it is the person's body* [Slater 2017: 30]. In this way, a sense of presence can be generated as an illusion that the user is in a particular place and events are really happening there.

Implicit learning, in turn, is a process in which people unconsciously learn new information or acquire abstract knowledge [Reber 1989, cited in Slater 2017: 24] where subjects are not self-aware of what they have learned and cannot articulate it concretely because the information learned is complex, incidental, and realised through different cognitive processes than those used for purposeful learning, for example, correlations, counts or patterns [Seger 1994, cited in Slater 2017: 25].

In the focus groups, it was demonstrated that in terms of VR as a complimentary source for learning about the Holocaust and Jewish rescue, young people acknowledged that this experience extended their ability to get information about the subject in a different way than in traditional learning environments. That implicit learning was amplified by the sensory and embodied aspects of presence in the virtually recreated historical space:

> *It's hard to imagine something like that [the Holocaust]... I was just thinking about that as well, that when you read all that stuff in history books, for example, you go through it but you don't quite dwell on it. But if you really go inside it in virtual reality, you can then picture it and understand it much better.* (Ričards)

Alongside cognitive stimuli, the effect of presence and embodiment can also help to create an emotional and empathetic response when learning about the dark heritage. Slater [2017] provides an example of an increased possibility of reducing people's bias against other races by embodying a person in another race through virtual reality. Several focus group participants acknowledged that the virtual experience of being transported into a narrow bunker where the Jews were hidden from the Nazis and hearing the story of terror, hardship and danger from a first-person perspective, created a more emotional attachment to the particular place and circumstances:

> *All the stuff that doesn't connect with you at school, all the dates* (..) *but it's the emotional stuff that would connect.* (..) *You don't remember how many died in the Holocaust, but you remember [that] the man who lived in* Ķīpsala *made a bunker under the shed. That, I think, is what you remember more and you go deeper into it because of the empathy, the human empathy.* (Ēriks)

Perhaps the fact that VR experiences offer not only observation but also action [Slater 2017: 23] helps making history learning more interactive on topics where the school curriculum alone cannot create such a deep connection to the past. Thus, with participatory VR experience and activation of different senses, the desired educational goal could be achieved through new, innovative heritage interpretation approaches.

Moreover, given that the specific VR experience of the *Lipke's Bunker* was relatively short (it took on average 12 minutes to complete it), the participants were able to stay focused on what was happening in the virtually recreated environment, which, together with the built-in interactive options, helped to picture the historical event in more detail. Hence, the immersive 3D audiovisual experience comprised a lot of simultaneous, implicitly perceivable information, including the real size of the space, historic artifacts, light, colours, sounds etc., condensing the story to a "lived" experience. Of course, this technology could not reproduce the sense of smell, taste, temperature or touch, which limited the realism, however, that sense of being present in a virtually recreated historic space seemed to provide more impact than traditional ways of learning about the past, as demonstrated by this informant:

> *The game taught me such concentrated information, and I'll walk out of here and I'll be able to retell the event, whereas in other museums, for example, there's so*

much detail and so many posters. Yes, I read something, but in the end I'm... I can't really recount it. (Mārtiņš)

To sum up, it can be considered that, with the proliferation and increasing accessibility of modern technology, museums and memorials of dark heritage have the potential to use virtual reality tools in a meaningful way to tell young audiences about the tragic events of the past, offering an innovative museum educational experience that enables a co-witnessing of the historic circumstances without separating cognitive, emotional and embodied experiences, thus providing a more holistic encounter with the heritage site.

Downsides of VR assisted experience at a dark heritage site

While the VR technology could provide innovative ways to help museum educators to interpret difficult heritage, focus groups revealed also some shortcomings of VR as a new medium in museum space.

There were conditions that young people found distracting or not that well designed during the VR testing. While the VR requires intense focusing on the actions occurring within it, the physical space where the experience takes place plays an important role too. As people can physically move within a certain range allowed by the VR headset, some users became concerned about the chance of accidentally running into a nearby object, such as a display cabinet or wall beam which were in a close proximity.

Another factor that seemed to be disturbing for some, was the sound interference from the external environment, caused by other people talking loudly or moving around the exhibition space. These sounds were intruding the VR user's experience and created a distraction from the virtual presence. A situation where you are fully immersed in a virtual environment, but are affected by obstacles or distractions from the physical environment, creates a noticeable distortion and interruption in the VR experience.

It was also suggested that there was a need for clearer instructions and easier technical solutions, especially for visitors less familiar with the VR technology. For example, the initial complexity of using the navigation controllers seemed to be unclear for some users, as well as other in-experience settings like adjusting the level of sound. Some participants pointed out that if a VR headset was freely available in the museum exhibition for individual use, but it did not work intuitively, or it was not clear how to operate the controllers, they would not try to understand it, but rather skip it and move on. This suggests that integrating such technology into a museum requires an easy VR viewing experience and a clear visual, recorded or personal instruction of its use.

The Memorial solved these issues before launching the VR experience to the public by setting up a special VR room with soft, round seats rotating around their axis, which help the user to stay in the VR environment safely and allow some mobility but prevent from colliding with an object in the exhibition. Also, instead of having VR experience as a part of the exhibition, it is now offered to small groups of visitors under the guidance of museum staff in a form of a special museum education program, thus limiting intrusion from other museum visitors. That allows for more privacy for the participants and facilitates a space for post-experience discussion with the museum educator. The VR designers also solved the initial problem with the slightly cumbersome controllers by reducing the navigation options the user needs to complete the VR experience.

Nevertheless, besides technological and spatial imperfections, there are also certain conceptual limitations to the introduction of VR as an interpretative tool for dark heritage education. Some young people commented that the VR experience for them was not able to represent the full scale of historical events, yet it provided a certain insight into the concrete situation. It would therefore not be possible to master the complexity of historical circumstances with the VR experience alone, however, it could provide a good aid in the interpretation when combining different methods of museum education and history learning. Such a view is illustrated here:

> *VR left me slightly underwhelmed. I think [VR] could be a great example of how to replicate historical conditions, but it's impossible to replicate the full extent of it.* (Ieva)

Also, in terms of emotional attachment to the event, not everyone experienced and felt it equally intensely during the VR experience. For some the virtually mediated narrative could not evoke such strong feelings, rendering it an artificially created product. At least on one occasion, a greater connection with the historical events seemed to be experienced during the tour at the museum exhibition:

> *On the emotional level, I didn't feel any particular strong emotions, but I rarely feel that way about artificial environments, be it a film, a game, or a book. Maybe it was the exposition that evoked a bit more emotions. But otherwise, I think it's a very good idea.* (Miks)

Although this was not the focus of this study, future research could evaluate how the effect of presence, learning and emotional engagement differs between those users who are new to VR experiences and those who are already active VR users in other contexts, such as gaming. At least for some of those focus group participants who tried the VR for the first time at the memorial, the experience was described as

more engaging and entertaining than educational. Conversely, those who mentioned playing video games or using VR for entertainment purposes in other contexts found this dark heritage VR experience more educational than game-like.

Concluding remarks on making dark heritage, technology and young people connect

To conclude the discussion on the use of virtual reality as an educational tool at dark heritage sites such as memorial museums and engagement of the young generations in learning about important yet tragic historical events, some remarks made by the focus group participants are worth considering.

One of the concerns for heritage institutions already now but more so in the future could be their public image and communication with younger audiences. Perhaps, past experiences of visiting other museums may have led some participants not to associate these memory institutions with experiences that could capture their attention and motivate them to pay a visit. This is echoed in the relatively modest pre-visit expectations about going to this memorial museum:

> *I mean, nothing personal, but I thought it wouldn't be that innovative.* (Zane)

Furthermore, some research participants had relatively low expectations not only about visiting the memorial museum per se but also about the planned VR product testing. Although it is a very innovative technology, some were hesitant about whether a small, non-commercial, non-profit institution would be able to finance the production of high-quality VR content, compared to the high-tech VR solutions offered by the commercial gaming industry:

> *For me personally, I thought, coming here, the memorial is still... it's not a museum, you don't really have to pay for it. And I thought, well, it's not going to be very impressive, but when I was in the [virtual] environment, it was very impressive.* (Ēriks)

Even though before the visit several focus group participants had not heard of the Memorial and the historical events that took place there during the Nazi occupation, the experience of combining a guided tour at the exhibition and immersion into the virtual environment of *Lipke's Bunker* for most participants created an interesting, engaging, empathetic and even surprising encounter with this dark heritage site.

Thanks to its properties to spark cognitive, emotional and embodied responses during the immersive first-person presence in the virtual environment, the VR experience *Lipke's Bunker* can be considered to be a helpful resource to interpret the largest Jewish rescue mission during the Holocaust in Latvia. However, VR

experience alone would not be sufficient to convey the historical complexity of the events, therefore a combination of different heritage interpretation techniques and tools would be the most beneficial.

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CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH OF THE STĀMERIENA PALACE. THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF THE PALACE IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN HISTORICAL STYLES

Mg.art. **Zane Grigoroviča**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Bc.art. **Kristiāna Paula Lībiete**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Abstract

The article *Cultural and Historical Research of Stāmeriena Palace. The Architectural Design of the Palace in the Context of European Historical Styles* aims to study the cultural and historical heritage of Stāmeriena Palace, focusing on the architectural research of the manor house in the context of the influences of European historical styles.

The article is based on the research work, which is based on the documents found in the Latvian State Historical Archive, the Herder Institute Archive in Marburg, Germany, the Estonian National Archive, and the Alūksne Zonal State Archive. The research of Stāmeriena Palace as an architectural and artistic unit is based on unpublished research, as well as on observations made by the authors of the article. Based on the information provided in the documents, photographs, and unpublished studies (architectural research materials), the article reveals the four stages of the construction of the palace. Detailed attention is paid to the first two construction periods of Stāmeriena Palace, from 1835 to 1905 and from 1908 to 1940, when the most significant architectural changes to the façade and the overall ensemble of the building can be identified, which are closely related to the characteristic manifestations of 19th-century historicism architecture.

Keywords: *Stāmeriena Palace*, *Historicism architecture, von Wolff.*

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

Latvia's cultural and historical landscape is unimaginable without its medieval castles and architecturally diverse manor complexes. The manor house without fortifications in the territory of Latvia originated in the 17th century from the model of the country houses of the great landowners of Western Europe [Ivāns 1988: 84]. A significant upswing in manor ensembles can be observed from the mid-18th century till the early 20th century. In 1920 the development of manors was interrupted by the agrarian reform, which abolished the manor as an administrative, territorial, and economic unit. The most important and often architecturally distinctive construction of historic manor buildings is the manor house (*kungu nams*, *Herrenhaus*), often called the palace (*Schloß*). In order to describe the architectural changes of the Stāmeriena Palace in the context of European historical styles, the term *palace* will be used in the following text.

The architectural form of the manor houses in the territory of Latvia reflects the forms of historic Western European styles. Often, foreign masters were invited to design the manor ensembles. Some of the masters who have contributed to the Latvian architectural landscape are Bartolomeo Francesco Rastrelli, Giacomo Antonio Domenico Quarenghi, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, etc. Although manor houses in the territory of Latvia have been heavily inspired by Western European architectural models, local architects included distinctive features in the local manor ensembles. The scale, stylistic specificity, and artistic scope of the historic buildings of any manor are related not only to the experience, skills, and taste of particular architects, sculptors, painters, and other masters but also to the aesthetic vision and material means of each landlord. As Dainis Bruģis acknowledges, the architecture of palaces in the territory of Latvia combines the cultural potential of the local aristocracy and its refusal to follow the standards of world architecture and interior [Bruģis 1996: 6].

Nowadays manor houses built in the territory of Latvia are in different conditions. Many of them perished in the First and Second World Wars. The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a particularly inferior time for manors. During this period 184 manor houses were burnt down [Zaļuma 2012: 66]. Nowadays many manor houses and outbuildings have been abandoned by their owners and have been looted and vandalized. At the same time, many properties are being restored and renovated. The beginning of a new era can also be perceived in Stāmeriena Palace. After the property relations have been settled and the legal proceedings have been terminated, the Municipality of Gulbene has regained the property rights of Stāmeriena Palace by the judgment of the Gulbene District Court of the Republic of Latvia on 13 April 2016 in case No C14047410. The long-running legal battle over the ownership of the palace has had a negative impact on its conservation and use.[1]

[1] *Stāmerienas pils.* Available: https://www.pilis.lv/lv/pilis-un-muizas/9367/stameriena-manor (viewed 10.01.2023.)

Over the last six years, Stāmeriena Palace has been mentioned in a very broad context, which indicates the admirable revival of the palace. The roof and façade restoration of Stāmeriena Palace was awarded the 2nd place in the competition *Gada labākā būve Latvijā 2019* (The Best Building of the Year in Latvia 2019). In 2021, in the Latvian Ministry of Culture's campaign, *Atrastā Latvija* (The Discovered Latvia) Stāmeriena Palace was recognized as the site with the highest number of visitors out of approximately 60 other campaign objects which included other manor houses, castles, churches, cathedrals, museums, nature trails, gardens, towers, bridges, promenades, beaches, etc.

Furthermore, Stāmeriena Palace is actively involved in the activities of the Latvian Association of Castles, Palaces, and Manors (LACPM). The activity of the palace shows that the objectives set by the association can be realized in practice – to promote the preservation of Latvia's cultural heritage, the identification, research, restoration, maintenance, adaptation to use, and development of the unique cultural heritage values and environment of castles, palaces, and manors; to promote the development of tourism, cultural and creative industries, and related infrastructure and services in castles, palaces, and manor houses; extend public access to castles, palaces, and manor houses; to promote the preservation of cultural heritage, develop public awareness of cultural heritage and encourage public participation in the protection of the cultural heritage. [1]

It should be noted that since 2021 the Latvian Academy of Culture has also established creative and scientific cooperation with Stāmeriena Palace and Gulbene Municipality.

The aim of the article is to study the cultural heritage of Stāmeriena Palace by focusing on the architectural study of the palace in the context of the influences of European historical styles.

Exploration of the Stāmeriena Palace

The research work is based on the study of documents found in the Latvian State Historical Archive, the Herder Institute Archives in Marburg, Germany, the National Archives of Estonia, and the Alūksne Zonal State Archives. The research of Stāmeriena Palace as an architectural and artistic unit is reflected in several fundamental, so far unpublished studies. In 1988, the architects Modris Liepa and Andris Veidemans of the LSSR Ministry of Culture's Cultural Monuments Restoration Office carried out surveys and photo-fixations of the palace facades and their details. The meticulous work was carried out by Gunārs Ivāns, historian of the

[1] *Latvian Association of Castles, Palaces and Manors webpage section "about us".* Available: https://www.pilis.lv/lv/par-mums (viewed 10.01.2023.)

LSSR Institute of Restoration, by studying documents stored in various archives [Ivāns 1988]. In 1993, the *Arhitektoniskā izpētes grupa* (Architectural Research Group) carried out an architectural and artistic study of the palace. Two other studies – *Stāmerienas parka apraksts* (Description of Stāmeriena Park) [Latvijas Nacionālais botāniskais dārzs 1996] prepared by specialists of the National Botanical Garden of Latvia and the architect Ilmārs Dirveiks *Stāmerienas muižas pils apjoma evolūcijas studijas* (Volume Evolution Studies of Stāmeriena Palace) [Dirveiks 1999] – complement and refine the studies carried out earlier. In 2017, the *Arhitektes Ināras Caunītes birojs* (Architect Ināra Caunīte Office) carried out a detailed architectural and artistic study, after which a construction project for the renovation of the interior of Stāmeriena Palace, reconstruction, and restoration was drawn up in 2021.

In-depth research of the archives and private collections was carried out in preparation for the exhibition of original documents, manuscripts, printed photographs, and objects *Ir Stāmeriena Sicīlijai rada!* (Stāmeriena and Sicily are Kindred Spirits)[1], which opened on 22 May 2002 at the Latvian State Museum of Art. The exhibition was based on materials from the collections of the Latvian State Historical Archive and the National Library of Latvia, supplemented by some private collections [Minde 2002]. The materials on the 19th-century development of Stāmeriena Palace and Park, the wooden and stone church, and the construction and renovation of the historic palace after the 1905 Russian Revolution were collected on the initiative of the Latvian Cultural Heritage Preservation Foundation. The authors of the exhibition are Gunta Minde, Head of the Reading Room Department of the Latvian State Historical Archive, and Ilze Lecinska, Head Librarian of the Public Relations Department of the National Library of Latvia. An insight into the life and people of Stāmeriena Palace can be gained from the research of Gunta Minde, which focuses on the research of materials stored at the Latvian State Historical Archive, recounting the stay of the Italian writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (*Don Giuseppe Maria Fabrizio Salvatore Stefano Vittorio Tomasi, Principe di Lampedusa, Duca di Palma, Barone di Montechiaro, Barone di Torretta*, 1896–1957) in Latvia [Minde 2022]. Ilze Lecinska, Head Librarian of the Public Relations Department of the National Library of Latvia, has been researching the connection of the palace with world culture and literature [Lecinska 2002, Lecinska 2007].

Stāmeriena Palace is mostly mentioned in passing studies devoted to its architectural specificity. In the previous studies, attention was devoted to the study of the history of the Baron von Wolff family, but the architectural study of the Stāmeriena Palace in the context of European historical styles was given only partial attention.

[1] The exhibition was on display at the Latvian national Art Museum from 22 May to 17 September, 2002.

Vitolds Mašnovskis, a manor researcher who has devoted 40 years to the study of Latvia's 1200 manors, has paid special attention to the castle. Part IV of his Encyclopaedia [Mašnovskis 2021: 321] has a separate section devoted to Stāmeriena Palace. The art historian Dainis Bruģis connects Stāmeriena Palace with Historicism architecture in his book *Historisma pilis Latvijā* ("Historicism Palaces in Latvia") [Bruģis 1997]. Similarly, in the publication *Vidzemes muižu arhitektūra* ("Vidzeme Manor Architecture") [Lancmanis 2015: 237] art historian Imants Lancmanis associates the Stāmeriena Palace with Neo-Renaissance impulses.

In the public sphere, the representatives of Stāmeriena Palace promote the idea of the palace as the pearl of European Romanticism,[1] naturally linking the palace to its best-known inhabitants and to Italy. However, in this respect, it is important to look at the 19th-century architecture not only as historicist but also as belonging to the culture of Neo-Romanticism.[2] The Stāmeriena Palace was built at the beginning of the 19th century when the grounds of the complex came into the possession of the Baron von Wolff family, but it is probably most often recognized by the name of the psychoanalyst Alexandra von Wolff (*Alexandra (Alexandrine) Alice Marie Baronesse von Wolff* (1894–1982)) and her husband Giuseppe Tomazi di Lampedusa from Italy, the author of the novel "The Leopard" (*Il Gattopardo*). Both personalities, who spent part of their lives together in Stāmeriena, have been the subject of several publications, including Ilze Lecinska and Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi's book *Vienā likteņdejā savijušies mūži* ("Lifetimes Tied by the Dance of Fate") [Lecinska, Lanza 2020].

Construction history and the owners of Stāmeriena Palace

Stāmeriena Palace was built in the beautiful area of Stāmeriena, between Stāmeriena and Poga Lake. The manor complex is surrounded by a 20-hectare landscaped park. Several buildings of the manor complex are still preserved: the Stāmeriena Palace, a barn, a servant's house, a blacksmith's house with a forge, a horse stable, a coach house with a coachman's apartment, and a miller's house. Stāmeriena Manor was established in 1809. Its owners belong to the younger branch of von Wolff family – the Jaunlaicene line, whose founder is Johann Gottlieb II von Wolff (1756–1817). Documents mention that Stāmeriena Manor

[1] This information can be found on social media and public websites such as https://m.travelnews.lv/?pid=119588https://www.visitgulbene.lv/objekts/stamerienas-muiza/, https://stamerienaspils.eu/lv/, https://aluksniesiem.lv/multimedia/foto-eiropas-romantisma-perle-stamerienas-pils/, https://neatkariga.nra.lv/regioni/330347-celojam-drosi-gulbenes-novads-piedava etc.

[2] For more information on Neo-Romanticism in Latvian art, see: [Grosmane 1998].

was originally part of Vecgulbene Manor, but it became independent in the early 19th century. The 1833 list of buildings,[1] dated 17 August 1833, among the 24 buildings on the manor farm lists a stone dwelling house with a tiled roof built in 1822 and a wooden house with a tiled roof built in 1810. The list of the manor buildings, compiled in 1833, was drawn up after the death of the manor's first owner, Heinrich Johann Friedrich von Wolff (1794–1832). The list shows that the manor complex included a stone building (*Wohnherberge* [2]) with a tiled roof, built in 1822. According to historical sources, the palace was extended and built between 1833 and 1843, when Constance von Wolff (born von Medegen) (1797–1844), the widow of Heinrich Johann Friedrich von Wolff, and her eldest son Johann Gottlieb Eduard von Wolff (1817–1883), the next owner of the palace, were the owners of the manor house. According to Minde's research [Minde 2002: 12, 13], after his mother's death in 1844, the estate was inherited by his son Eduard von Wolff according to the inheritance agreement of 23 April 1845. At the time of the agreement, a manor list was drawn up and listed 20 buildings, most of which were built of stone. The list includes the manor house, which is described as a rubble stone building (*Herberge*) with one grand piano and two separate cellars. The description indicates that the building was rebuilt and extended between 1843 and 1845. The addition of one wing was added to the building [Minde 2002: 13]. The intensive expansion of the manor complex and the reconstruction of the palace continued in later years, as Eduard von Wolff married Sofia Potemkin (*Patjomkin,* 1818–1997), the court lady of the Russian Tsar, in 1838, and gradually the whole family life was moved to Stāmeriena. At his wife's request, Eduard von Wolff had an Orthodox church built on the territory of the palace. In 1849, the Building Commission of the Vidzeme Governorate signed a contract with Eduard von Wolf to transfer the management of the church, the priest's dwelling house, and the school to the owner.[3] It is interesting to note that the Latvian State Historical Archive contains extensive information on the construction of the church, the architect, the materials, and the church furnishings, but hardly any information on the reconstruction work.

The list of the various buildings suggests that the life of Stāmeriena Palace was already quite vivacious at the beginning of the 19th century, but it is still too hasty to date the construction of the castle itself precisely. A stone in the cellar of the castle with the year 1835 carved into it makes it possible to date the construction or reconstruction phase of the palace (Figure 1).

[1] LVVA, 218.f., 1. apr., 1043.l., pp. 24.
[2] LVVA, 218 f.,1. apr.,1042, 1, pp. 34–35.
[3] LVVA, 10 F., 2. apr, 4498. 1, pp. 78–83.

Figure 1. Year number in the foundation stone of
the Stāmeriena Palace. Photo by Inga Barinska (2022).

The descriptions in the Latvian State Historical Archive funds do not provide information on the exact time of construction, architects, or craftsmen that worked in the palace during this period.

Considering the construction history of the Stāmeriena Palace more closely, Gunārs Ivāns points out that the real estate descriptions of the buildings contained in the funds of the Latvian State Historical Archives, only the description drawn up in 1871 contains brief data about Stāmeriena Palace. It mentions that the palace is built of stone masonry with a slate roof and is in good technical condition. The construction project, the author, and the time of construction are not mentioned [Ivāns 1988: 86]. The 1887 inventory of manor buildings mentions a massive building with a slate roof. This time it is called a palace (*Schloß*). The architect Caunīte's office also points out in her study that the information in the Latvian State Historical Archive documents is limited to "the name, the material of the walls, roof and a rough estimate of buildings condition". Information on the length and width of the building is also sporadic [Caunīte 2017: 8]. In the 1870s, the palace was modernized and so rebuilt in a Neo-Renaissance style.

In 1905 the castle was burnt down, and in 1908 the restoration works were completed [Ivāns 1988: 44]. As architect Ināra Caunīte concludes in her research, the construction history of Stāmeriena Palace reflects both the historical events of the time and the owners' devotion to the architectural traditions of a nobleman's home. At the same time, the changes in the building also reflect the generational changes of the owners of Stāmeriena Palace and the current trends in European architectural fashion [Caunīte 2017: 18].

After the death of Eduard von Wolff in 1883, Sophie von Wolff was the mistress of the castle until 1887. After her death, the estate was inherited by her sons Boris von Wolff (1850–1917) and Paul von Wolff (1853–1918). The further development and

improvement of the palace are linked to Boris von Wolff, who married Maria Teresa Alice Laura Barbi (1858–1948) on 30 January 1894 in the French resort of Menton. She was an Italian singer born in Modena in 1858 and the last muse of the composer Johannes Brahms (1838–1897). Both brothers had to live through the events of the 1905 Russian Revolution and the burning of the estate. Boris von Wolff also took care of the restoration work. As a result of the agrarian reform of 1920, the centre of the Stāmeriena manor with the palace became the inalienable property of the heirs of Baron Boris von Wolff, his daughter Alexandra and younger sister Olga, but the younger sister renounced the property. According to the deed of gift signed on 8 September 1932, the last owner of the castle was Andrea Pilar von Pilchau (1890–?), the husband of Alexandra von Wolff [Minde 2002: 16]. After her divorce, Alexandra married Tomasi di Lampedusa, author of the novel *The Leopard* (Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa,1896–1957). Unfortunately, the palace could not be restored to its former glory. During the Second World War, Stāmeriena Palace was used for military purposes, but from 1945 the building housed an agricultural technical school, and later the office and executive committee of the collective farm *Stāmeriena* [Dekante 2001: 23]. Since 1998, Stāmeriena Palace, the park, and two farm buildings have been managed by SIA *Zeltaleja1* and since 2016 by the Municipality of Gulbene.

In order to actualize the architectural formation of Stāmeriena Palace in the context of European historical styles, four periods of construction of the palace are put forward for examination:

1) the first phase, which symbolically takes as its starting point the year 1835 carved in stone in the basement of the palace, till the burning of the castle in 1905;

2) the period of the palace restoration from 1908 to 1940, when the palace was rebuilt;

3) the period from 1940 to 1990, when the Stāmeriena Palace was occupied by the Agricultural Technical School, after which the building was also used by the Stāmeriena Village Council and the administration of collective farm *Stāmeriena*;

4) the restored Stāmeriena Palace nowadays.

In the architectural characterization of each phase of the palace, particular attention was paid to unpublished sources. The first two construction periods of Stāmeriena Palace, which were distinguished from unpublished materials for the purposes of the study, were described in detail by the historian Gunārs Ivāns in his study *Bijušās Stāmerienas muižas kompleksa vēsture* ("The History of the Former St*āmeriena Manor Complex*") [Ivāns 1988]. In 2017, the architectural and artistic research of Stāmeriena Palace was also carried out by the *Arhitektes Ināras Caunītes birojs* [Caunīte 2017]. This study also reveals important information for the development of a more comprehensive phase characterization. Since the most significant differences in the façade and the overall ensemble are to be found in the first two distinct periods of the castle's construction, the paper has chosen to examine them in more detail. The article focuses only on the exterior of the palace.

From 1835 to 1905

Early examples of historicism can be seen in Europe as early as the second half of the 18th century, gradually marking a mannered end to the previously dominant classicism. Historicism as the dominant architectural style in Europe reached its peak between the 1830s and the 1890s. Although historicist buildings draw inspiration from historical examples, they are interpreted in the monuments rather than being blatantly imitated. 19th-century architects were interested in using the principles of historical styles for creative purposes: borrowed impulses are combined with period-appropriate building layouts, materials, and decorative solutions [Karštrēma 2023].

Historicist architecture emerged at a moment when Romantic ideas were becoming current in Europe, with a consequent interest in the national past, and the search for national styles and the search for uniqueness played an important role in the development of historicism. The change begins with the turn to Gothic. In the first half of the 19th century, Neo-Gothic was primarily associated with church architecture in Europe, but with the restoration of the Kölner Dom in 1842 and the construction of the Palace of Westminster, designed by architects Charles Barry and Augustus Welby Pugin, the style began to appear in other areas of the building. In Germany, France, and England, Neo-Gothic even became the "national style", in the belief that this type of form would contribute to the future of national architecture. This belief was most strongly expressed in Germany. Neo-Gothic became a conceptual notion that was supposed to personify both a logical constructive system and the creative approach of the master [Bruģis 1996: 33].

The presence of Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Baroque styles is more evident in secular architecture when in the mid-19th century there was a growing tendency in European architecture to create a rich and pretentious impression through decorative solutions inspired by Renaissance models [Karštrēma 2023].

If we describe the features of the architectural ensemble of Stāmeriena Palace in the period from 1835 to the burning of the castle in 1905, then the architectural formation of the palace at that time has features of Neo-Gothic and Neo-Baroque styles, but its form could be described as relatively simple. The manor house is situated in the middle of the park without a parade courtyard and without other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the palace. As a result, the small historicist building lacks symmetry. The relationship of the park to the manor house has been here resolved through the classical tradition – the overall composition uses distant perspectives from the building itself and the terrace. Such a layout can be seen as modern enough for the time in the Baltic Governorate because, in the territory of Latvia, an equivalent overall compositional solution of a manor house without a parade courtyard can be observed only in some manor centres (Pelči, Nogale) [Caunīte 2017: 9–10].

In the research report, architect Ināra Caunīte mentions that the 19th-century

Stāmeriena Palace resembles Neo-Renaissance castles in France. The palace plan is asymmetrical, consisting of several interconnecting quadrangles and rising two storeys in height. Almost the entire ground floor has a cellar. Each of the volumes, which are united in a single building, has a roof of a different pitch and shape. The south side of the castle is covered by a steep tent-like roof, while the other volumes are covered by flatter roofs. Not only the roof shapes are different, but also their coverings. Before the palace was burnt down, the steep parts of the roof were covered with natural slate. In the first phase, the building had only one massive tower, but in the study by architect Ināra Caunīte's office, this is separated from the overall silhouette. Above this massive tower was a flagpole [Caunīte 2017: 11–12].

Late 19th and early 20th-century pictures show that the entrance to the main façade was at one end. The front entrance was an unwalled porch-type extension (arcade) with Neo-Gothic gable arches, built of dolomitic stones (?). Above it was a wide balcony (terrace) (Figure 2).

In his study, historian Gunārs Ivāns explains that the stone-built extension with arches at the entrance does not seem to be organically connected to the overall composition of the building. He calls it an attempt by the nobility to romanticize the past [Ivāns 1988: 89]. The part of the wooden façade on the ground floor between the arcade and the large square tower in the middle of the façade was a closed gallery with four Neo-Gothic pointed-arch window openings [Ivāns 1988: 88–89] (Figure 3).

Figure 2. The gates in front of the Stāmeriena Palace, below the gates the wife of the owner of the manor, Boris von Wolff-Stomersee, Alice von Wolff (maiden name Barbi, Italian lutenist, and violinist) with her two daughters Olga and Alexandra (Lissy). (1900 (Decade)–1905). Available: Estonian National Archive, EAA.2073.1.198.13 (AIS).

Figure 3. Stāmeriena Palace before the 1905 fire. (1900 (Decade)–1905) Available: Estonian National Archive, EAA.2073.1.198.22 (AIS).

The second part of the main façade to the left of the brick tower was different. It had two storeys, as well as a semi-basement and attic roof story without cellars. The dormer windows in the attic are Baroque in style, with a rounded upper part. At the very end of the façade, which can also be considered a separate part of the building (the block), the mansard roof was considerably raised [Ivāns 1988: 89] (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Stāmeriena Palace in the winter of 1905. Photo from: Dekante, H. *Stāmerienas grāmata: muiža un pils, tagadne un nākotne* ("Stāmeriena Book: Manor and Castle, Present and Future".), p. 18.

From 1908 to 1940

After the restoration of Stāmeriena Palace in 1908, it became more splendid and expressive. The architectural design of the façade shows Neoclassical features. Also, the presence of Neo-Gothic in the structure is diminishing. Researchers argue that the restored palace has both a more successful volumetric composition and a more expressive silhouette (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Stāmeriena Palace before 1935. Archives of the Herder Institute in Germany. Available: https://www.herder-institut.de/bildkatalog/iv/228819

As Ināra Caunīte writes in her study, "The reconstruction of Stāmeriena Palace after the burning has created an architectural object appropriate to the period, that also demonstrates the taste and the requirements of the owners" [Caunīte 2017: 45].

The architectural design of the façades has also been complimented by some Art Nouveau elements. Some of the Art Nouveau additions are distinctive window openings on the second floor of the main façade, decorative moulding – sculptural masks (lions and women's heads), and the coat of arms of the Wolff family, the owners of the palace (Figure 6).

The coat of arms is depicted in the moulding as being held by two lions and surmounted by a wreath adorned with three armoured caps. Each of them bears flowers and animals: a lily flower between the wings, a squirrel, and a parrot. In the centre of the coat of arms is a running wolf with three lily flowers above it [Ivāns 1988: 102].

At this stage, the composition of the building plan consists of two squares and three rectangles of approximately equal size. The longest rectangle, stretching west-east and containing the large tower to the east, is flanked on each side by square volumes. The sides of the squares away from the centre of the building are also joined by longer rectangular volumes extending west-eastwards. The individual volumes, combined into a single building block, have different roof forms [Caunīte 2017: 17].

Figure 6. Coat of arms on the main façade of Stāmeriena Palace.
Photo by Edīte Siļķēna (2022).

After rebuilding the main change in the building's layout and volume is in the north end. The location of the main entrance has also changed. The structure in front of the former main entrance, an arched porch over the driveway with a balcony above, has not been restored after the burning. The material of the arched porch raises questions in both Ivans' and Caunīte's research. Its façades had a rougher finish than the other façades of the castle, so it is assumed to have been made of stone. However, nothing of it remained after the burning [Caunīte 2017: 14].

The restoration of the rear façade of the castle removed the first and second-floor windows at the ends of the projection (wings), replacing the openings with blind windows. The existing window in the raised mansard roof of this part of the façade has been given a decorative Neo-Baroque frame. A decorative balustrade has been created above the eaves at the edge of the roof. The Neo-Baroque gable on the rear elevation has been slightly altered, with two freestanding semi-circular openings replacing the three closely spaced small pointed-arched windows [Ivāns 1988: 101].

The part of the castle to the north from the large tower has been supplemented by a second lower and round tower. Both towers have pointed roofs – the main tower has a pyramidal roof with four small, decorative turrets, each located in its own corner of the large tower. The new round tower has a conical spire [Caunīte 2017: 18].

From 1940 to 1990

After the construction works were completed in 1908, Stāmeriena Palace has not undergone any major reconstructions in the 20th century that would have

significantly changed its architectural appearance [Caunīte 2017: 43]. In 1945, the Stāmeriena Palace was used as an agricultural technical school. In 1959, a training and counseling centre for the Republican Extramural Agricultural Technical School was established in the building. Later, the collective farm *Stāmeriena* and the village executive committee were housed in the castle and existed there until 1992. After that, the palace stood empty for six years [Caunīte 2017: 5].

The restored Stāmeriena Palace nowadays

After the Republic of Latvia regained its independence, Stāmeriena Palace was not used for a long time and was open to visitors only sporadically. After the property ownership was settled and the legal proceedings were terminated, Gulbene Municipality regained the ownership of Stāmeriena Palace by the judgment of Gulbene District Court of the Republic of Latvia on 13 April 2016 in case No C14047410.[1] Since 2018, with funding from Gulbene Municipality and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), renovation works amounting to EUR 1.46 million have been carried out, which can be seen as an important step towards the restoration of the palace to its former glory (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Stāmeriena Palace after the restoration in 2019. Photo: stamerienaspils.eu (Available: https://stamerienaspils.eu/lv/).

[1] *Stāmeriena Castle.* Available: https://www.pilis.lv/lv/pilis-un-muizas/9367/stamerienamanor (viewed 26.01.2023.)

The roof, façade, windows, and foundations of the building have been restored in the period since 2018. During this period the building's decorative elements have been renewed and restored, and utilities have been installed [Eniņa 2021]. In 2021, the roof of Stāmeriena Palace and the façade of the building were renovated and restored as part of an ERDF project. During this period, 1249.5 square meters of the total façade volume was renovated [Latvijas Republikas Kultūras ministrija 2022]. During the restoration works, the damaged parts of the foundations and the basement were reinforced and rebuilt. Vertical waterproofing of the foundations was carried out. The wooden roof structures and their covering were restored. During the restoration of the roof structures, the original structures were preserved as much as possible, restoring and replacing damaged areas. The roof was also rebuilt with a pyramidal roof and a historic overlight window. The engineering networks – storm water drainage, lighting, electricity, video, audio, and communication cables – have also been restored and supplemented [Latvijas Republikas Kultūras ministrija 2022: 204]. The work included the rebuilding of the pergola columns, the restoration of 99 historic windows, the palace entrance steps, eight mouldings with women's heads, and the restoration of the building's façade decoration – six sculptural lion heads [Latvijas Republikas Kultūras ministrija 2022: 205].

Nowadays there is a landscape park of about 20 hectares around the castle. Some of the former manor buildings have been preserved – the blacksmith's house with a smithy, a horse stable, a coach house with a coachman's flat, a servant's house, a barn, and a miller's house [Caunīte 2017: 3]. The restored Stāmeriena Palace is now open to the public. Guided tours are offered to visitors. Various festivals, concerts, exhibitions, art open-air workshops, theatre performances, and other events take place here. Couples can also choose the premises of Stāmeriena Palace as the venue for their marriage ceremony.

Conclusion

In the course of the research, it has been established that the architectural design of Stāmerina Palace can be confidentially linked to the Historicism that was dominant in Western European architecture of the 19th century. It has not been possible to find out the exact date of construction of the Stāmeriena Palace. The beginnings of the construction of the palace date back to the 1820s. The documents provide more accurate evidence about the four stages of the construction and the development of the palace; however, the most significant architectural changes occur in the façade of the building and the overall ensemble can be observed in the first two distinct periods of the palace's construction – from 1835 to 1905 and from 1908 to 1940.

The façade and layout of the Stāmeriena Palace, built in the first period, show direct influences from the French Neo-Renaissance castles and palaces. The plan of

the palace has an asymmetrical shape. The entrance to the main façade was located at the north-eastern end of the palace, built using Neo-Gothic pointed arches. There was a closed gallery on the first-floor level with four Neo-Gothic bays of pointed windows. Baroque-style features can also be found in the skylights built into the attic. After the restoration of the Stāmeriena Palace in 1908, it acquired a more successful volume composition, and also its silhouette became more expressive. Neoclassic features can be identified in the architectural design of the facades, and the presence of Neo-Gothic elements in the building is decreasing. Art Nouveau features can also be found in the façade tabs.

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PERSONALITIES OF PAINTERS VILHELMS PURVĪTIS AND IMANTS LANCMANIS IN THE LATVIAN ART FIELD IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

Mg.sc.pol. **Signe Grūbe**
Riga Stradiņš University

Abstract

The Latvian National Museum of Art's 2022 exhibitions "Purvītis" and "The Art of Imants Lancmanis", one dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Vilhelms Purvītis and the other a retrospective exhibition of works by Imants Lancmanis, are united by their ambition. It is a testimony to its time and to the personality of the artist. The main aim of this article is to use the sociology of art to portray the influence of two artists, painters and leaders of national art institutions, on the formation of national art perception in society. Two personalities, each working in their own time, but both with strong social capital and habitus – the ability to use it to shape the rules of the Latvian art field and construct national identity.

Keywords: *sociology of art, art field, national art, painter*.

National art institutions, which are key holders of cultural and symbolic capital, play an important role in building national identity. The national art institutions, which have had impact onto the formation of national art, have been analysed and the activities of those artists, whose personalities have influenced the formation of Latvian national art, have been studied. When examining the mutual interaction between the painters and national art institutions, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's analytical instruments – *habitus*, field and capital – help to

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understand how painters become aware of the external structures and reproduce them, expanding the internal structures in socially and culturally constructed space in the context of national identity [Bourdieu 2000]. The article allows determining some boundaries of the artistic field, as well as the cooperation models between the artists and the national art institutions revealing how the interest of artists and their position in the artistic field define their participation in the construction of national identity and the interpretation of content. The representatives of the nation can decode the work of art that entails the elements characterising the nation [Leoussi 2004]. It can be manifested through both the means of expression and content.

The Latvian National Museum of Art is one of national art institutions. The aim of the National Museum of Art is to educate the public and stimulate their interest in the evidence of Latvian and world visual arts, decorative arts and design in their historical and artistic manifestations, emphasising the place of the national art school in the history of culture and contemporary processes [Regulations of the National Museum of Art]. Today, the Latvian National Museum of Art is the largest professional art repository in Latvia, which not only collects cultural values in accordance with the museum's collection policy, but also provides opportunities for public education through a number of educational programmes.

It is not only the fact of an exhibition or event that is important, but also how it is presented to the audience. Pierre Bourdieu points out that museums, like educational institutions, are sites of symbolic abuse – they impose a self-defined definition of cultural values [Bourdieu 1996]. People with the right education feel at ease in a familiar environment. They thus take for granted a way of perceiving that has been acquired through education. This type of perception can be general or specific, conscious or unconscious, academic or free. In contrast, a less experienced viewer, confronted with academic culture, finds themselves in a foreign place and time. The disorientation and cultural blindness of less educated viewers is a reminder of the objective truth that the perception of art is a mediated process of encoding. If the information encoded in the works exceeds the viewer's ability to decipher them, they believe that they contain no deeper meaning – or, more precisely, structure and organisation – because they cannot decode and reduce them to a comprehensible form. Any decoding requires simpler or more complex code, which the viewer is more or less familiar with [Bourdieu 1993]. A work of art can reveal different levels of meaning, depending on the encoding techniques used. The meaning that is perceived at first glance is completely different from the meaning that it has as part of the whole artwork or as part of the overall artistic experience, which embodies deeper levels of meaning. The article pays attention to two exhibitions whose messages are resonating and understandable to contemporary society.

In 2022, the Great Hall of the Latvian National Museum of Art hosted two exhibitions that are unrelated to each other, but at the same time both of them surprised with their grandeur and captured the public interest. They are the exhibitions "Purvītis" (28.05.2022–16.10.2022) and "The Art of Imants Lancmanis" (12.11.2022–26.02.2023).

The exhibition "Purvītis" was dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the outstanding Latvian landscape painter Vilhelms Purvītis. Aija Brasliņa, the curator of the exhibition, points out that "*Vilhelms Purvītis (1872–1945), the founder of national landscape painting and its most ambitious moderniser, is recognised as one of the key figures in visual art in Latvia in the first half of the 20th century. At the turn of the century, the masterful painter of snow and early northern spring was noticed in St Petersburg, Paris, Munich, Berlin, Vienna and other European art centres. The best-known representative of Baltic modern art was equally involved in the new changes of the landscape genre, gaining success abroad, authority in Riga's art life and a consistently high status in the Latvian art world. Purvītis deserves special recognition as the implementer of the idea of higher art education and the co-creator of cultural policy in the independent Latvian state, as the first rector of the Art Academy of Latvia and the head of the Landscape Workshop, and simultaneously as the director of the prestigious Riga City Art Museum (now the Latvian National Art Museum), the creator of the national art collection and the organiser of representative international exhibitions*" [Brasliņa 2022]. The exhibition "The Art of Imants Lancmanis" thematically grouped paintings by Imants Lancmanis from 1958 onwards. The curator Helēna Demakova notes in the exhibition guide that "*Imants Lancmanis (1941) is a Latvian painter, art historian, cultural administrator and public intellectual. He is a well-recognised authority in many areas of Latvian society*" [Demakova 2022]. Both exhibitions were very popular with the public. The exhibition "The Art of Imants Lancmanis" was attended by 67 940 spectators at the Latvian National Museum of Art in 2022 [Latvian National Museum of Art 2022]. Additionally, the exhibition "Purvītis" was visited by 75 972 spectators and has become one of the most visited exhibitions at the Latvian National Museum of Art in the last 30 years [Latvian National Museum of Art 2023].

In the context of this article, it is important to focus on the personalities of the artists themselves –Vilhelms Purvītis and Imants Lancmanis – and their position in the field of art, which directly influences the perception of national art and the construction and translation of national identity in society. Both painters are separated by century, yet the work of both is capable of intriguing and engaging contemporary society. The art field has its own internal rules, which are known to its participants [Alexander 2003; Becker 2008]. The position of the artist in the art field influences the possible scenarios of their interaction. Art and the artist cannot

exist in isolation from society. The sociology of art studies the social conditions that affect a particular artist and how he or she is able to position him or herself in the social space using the resources available to them. Pierre Bourdieu emphasises power relations and the fact that ideas in the field of art are socially constructed [Bourdieu 1993]. It is important to establish what positions painters can occupy in the art field and what the role of national art institutions is. The work allows one to identify the ways in which national art institutions and painters cooperate, how painters' interest and position in the art field determines their participation in the construction of national identity and the interpretation of content. Both painters had and have a lot of symbolic capital, which is a form of power that is not perceived as power, but contributes to the legitimacy and recognition of demand. Symbolic systems fulfil three interrelated but distinct functions: cognition (knowledge about art, religion, science, worldview), communication (providing society with recognisable messages) and social differentiation (ensuring the influence of the dominant group and the hierarchisation of society). The degree of influence of symbolic capital is directly related to the *habitus* of the painter. There are three basic concepts in this approach: position, position-taking and disposition (*habitus*) [Bourdieu 1996]. Painters occupy a certain position in social space, determined by education, occupation or proximity to power. The field of art allows for a different sociological interpretation of artists' work.

Vilhelms Purvītis (1872–1945)

Vilhelms Purvītis' life coincided with the formation of national consciousness and the creation of national art institutions. Biography of the painter and the development of the artistic style have been studied by Latvian art researchers, including Kristiāna Ābele, Aija Brasliņa, Eduards Kļaviņš, Dace Lamberga un Māra Lāce. Their publications have been used in this article to characterize Vilhelms Purvītis' position in the field of art. In 1890 Vilhelms Purvītis entered the Imperial Academy of Art in St Petersburg as a free listener in order to study painting. He created his diploma work "The Last Rays" and graduated with the title of artist first degree, the Large Gold Medals and the Prix de Rome for travels abroad [Ābele 2022].

After his studies, Vilhelms Purvītis, together with his fellow students Johann Walter and Janis Rozentāls, formed the core of Latvian art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period their symbolic capital was formed. From 1909 until the First World War, Riga City Art School was under the direction of Vilhelms Purvītis.

In 1913 Vilhelms Purvītis was elected as academician of the St Petersburg Imperial Academy of Arts [Lamberga 2000]. In 1919 he was appointed director of the Riga City Museum by the government of Soviet Latvia, in August approved by

the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia as director of the Art Academy of Latvia. Due to the influence of the First World War the official opening of the Art Academy of Latvia took place in October 1921 and the first rector of the Art Academy became the painter Vilhelms Purvītis, who held this position until 1934 [Ābele 2022]. Thus, both national art institutions came into the hands of Vilhelms Purvītis. This article focuses on the personality of Vilhelms Purvītis, who largely laid the foundations of Latvian national art and contributed to its development to this day. This is where the sociology of art helps. As art historian K. Ābele writes "*The fifty-five years from the beginning of Purvītis' studies to the moment of his death fully spanned two important epochs in Latvian art history, with his work becoming one of the main cornerstones in the story of the creation of national art at the turn of the century and its development after the establishment of the Latvian Free State, but also in the next, marked by the arrival of totalitarian occupying powers, the end of his life and the death of much of his life's work in the final stages of the Second World War*" [Ābele 2022].

Vilhelms Purvītis' social trajectory is determined by the presence of symbolic capital, as well as by the position of power in social space and in the field of art. At the beginning of the 20th century, Vilhelms Purvītis demonstrated outstanding organisational skills (founding the Art Academy of Latvia, building the collection of the Riga City Art Museum, serving as rector of the Art Academy and director of the Riga City Art Museum), as well as his significant contribution to Latvian art.

One can see how Vilhelms Purvītis' position in the art field in Latvia at the beginning of the 20th century was shaped. In 1905, Vilhelms Purvītis distanced himself from the Latvian intellectuals' demand for civil rights in Latvia, because it was directed against their main supporter – German society. During this period, Vilhelms Purvītis did not have enough symbolic capital at his disposal, nor did he have the necessary motivation and habitus to use existing resources in support of a civic initiative.

The situation was already different in 1909, when Riga City Board invited Vilhelms Purvītis to become the director of Riga City Art School, and in 1919, when he was appointed the director of Riga City Art Museum.

The founding and early years of the Academy of Art were associated with artists' resistance and disagreements, when, in the early 1920s, disagreements arose between traditionalists and modernists, determined by generational differences in artistic views and personal motives [Brasliņa 2008]. The founding of the Art Academy of Latvia depended largely on the position taken by Vilhelms Purvītis in the field of art – it was planned to transform Riga City Art School, which he headed, into an art academy, and Vilhelms Purvītis' habitus dominated discussions on the usefulness of the institution, which proved itself in the following years. Perhaps as a result, as art historian Andris Teikmanis writes, Purvītis' foresight was proven – the Art Academy

of Latvia became the foundation for the national art school, preserving a humanistic understanding of art values in the context of the most controversial historical events [Teikmanis 2002].

With the establishment of the Latvian state, the national artistic heritage began to be acquired, in which the director of Riga City Art Museum, Vilhelms Purvītis, played a significant role. Justifying the need to acquire works by Latvian artists from the first exhibition of Riga Artists Group, Vilhelms Purvītis began to build a collection of Latvian classical modernism [Lāce 2008]. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Latvian art collection continued to expand.

The national art collection also included works in the collection of the Latvian State Museum of Art (founded in 1920), which were purchased under the leadership of director Burkards Dzenis. Riga City Art Museum and the State Museum of Art depended on grants from the state and city budgets. Both museums were led by personalities who saw the long-term importance of the artistic development process and were aware of the need to present artistic achievements to the nation, even though the process of acquiring works was bureaucratic and complicated and the budgeted funds were not always forthcoming. Both collections form the core of the present collection of Latvian National Art Museum.

Vilhelms Purvītis' work was directly aimed at the identification and dissemination of national identity. His *habitus* promoted the selection of professional works, which gave the public the opportunity to see outstanding Latvian art in the permanent exhibition of the Latvian art section, thus enhancing national self-confidence [Lāce 2005]. The museum held solo exhibitions, group exhibitions and joint exhibitions of Latvian art, as well as exhibitions of works by foreign artists.

The new state institutions underestimated the importance of the intelligentsia and the painters' contribution to the unification of the nation and the creation of the state, and critically cut state funding in 1924–1925 [Lāce 2008] and 1929–1932 (the time of global economic crisis) [Gerharde Upeniece 2016].

When commemorating Vilhelms Purvītis in the 21st century, the most popular reference is to his legacy as a painter – the landscapes of Latvia. The description of the 2022 exhibition at the Latvian National Museum of Art also states "*The name of the European Latvian classicist has become one of the symbols of national identity in Latvian art history and public perception. In the form of poetic archetypes, "Purvītis-style" images, motifs and moods maintain their presence in our sense and vision of the landscape*" [Brasliņa 2022]. Where at the end of the 19th century Latvian art depicted the national landscape in an idealised way influenced by the mythological space of the past (A. Baumanis (1866–1904)), at the beginning of the 20th century, thanks to the works of Janis Rozentāls, Vilhelms Purvītis and Johann Walter, an image of a landscape symbolising Latvia emerged. These artists did not limit themselves to

depicting landscapes, but tried to give the motif a special meaning that would express the love of their homeland, the grandeur or beauty of nature. The accessibility of the visual image of the landscape to a wide audience allowed the dissemination of elements of national identity. Vilhelms Purvītis' landscape paintings have stood the test of time and their subjects and pictorial techniques are still considered Latvian.

Today, in the 21st century, we can appreciate not only Vilhelms Purvītis' outstanding achievements in painting, but also his personality as a phenomenal presence in the processes that shaped and strengthened the foundations of national art institutions.

Imants Lancmanis (1941)

Biography of Imants Lancmanis and the development of the artistic style have been studied by Latvian art researchers, including Helēna Demakova, Ginta Gerharde Upeniece, Eduards Kļaviņš. Their publications as well as writings by Imants Lancmanis himself have been used in this article to characterize Vilhelms Purvītis' position in the field of art.

The creative activity of the Latvian painter Imants Lancmanis takes place in several fields. Imants Lancmanis has been associated as long tenure as the director of Rundāle Palace (1976–2018), where he began to work in1964.

After graduating from the Art Academy of Latvia in 1966, he devoted himself to the study of European cultural history. During his studies at the Art Academy of Latvia in the early 1960s, Imants Lancmanis established the so-called "French Group", which included six members – Imants Lancmanis, Ieva Šmite (Lancmane), Bruno Vasiļevskis, Maija Tabaka, Juris Pudāns and Jānis Krievs. The group enjoyed talking about the latest trends in European art, listening to music and the cult of Paul Cézanne that dominated painting [Demakova 2017].

From 1971 to 1988, as a historian of art styles, Imants Lancmanis was a lecturer at the Art Academy of Latvia.

From 1976 to 2018, Imants Lancmanis was the Director of the Rundāle Palace Museum, where he devoted most of his creative life to the restoration of Rundāle Palace.

The aim of Rundāle Palace Museum was to develop the Rundāle Palace ensemble into an internationally important centre of art and cultural history, which is also connected with the study and promotion of Latvian and European ancient art [Regulations of the Rundāle palace Museum]. After the agrarian reform of the Latvian Republic in 1924, the Board of Monuments included Rundāle Palace on the list of state-protected objects. The restoration of the Palace began in 1932. After the Second World War, a grain collection point was set up in the Palace. In 1964 the Palace became a branch of the Bauska Museum of Local History and Art and

in 1972 an independent Rundāle Palace Museum was established, which under the leadership of Imants Lancmanis has become a cultural and historical object of European importance.

In the words of H. Demakova, curator of the exhibition "The Art of Imants Lancmanis", "*The restoration of Rundāle Palace became a partisan war of his resistance, and painting – alongside the palace – the embodiment of his visions*" [Demakova 2022]. From his graduation from the Art Academy of Latvia in 1966 until the 1990s, Imants Lancmanis produced only a few paintings. All his time was taken up with the restoration of the palace. When he resumed painting, the artist turned to thematic narratives of Latvian and European historical points, which include stories from the past of the Latvian people. Now, after leaving his post as Director of Rundāle Palace Museum, Imants Lancmanis has turned to painting again.

Imants Lancmanis occupies a position of strong symbolic capital in the Latvian art field. This is evidenced, for example, by his participation in the creation of the Latvian Cultural Canon. The Latvian Cultural Canon, like those of other European countries and inspired from Denmark experience, is a collection of the most outstanding and remarkable works of art and cultural treasures, reflecting the nation's most significant cultural achievements throughout history. The Cultural Canon includes the values that characterise Latvian culture in various fields of art, of which we are proud and which should form the basis of every Latvian's cultural experience, ensuring a sense of belonging to Latvia. In the Visual Arts section of the Latvian Cultural Canon, it was decided to highlight only those artists who are no longer with us by selecting 15 specific works by 15 specific personalities. The group of experts on the visual arts of the Cultural canon, included the Director of Rundāle Palace Museum Imants Lancmanis [Latvian culture canon official site]. His presence in this commission in 2008–2009 clearly indicates his strong position in the Latvian art field and his symbolic capital.

Although Bourdieu refers to artists as unorthodox, as free from imposed social norms, this does not mean that artists are explicit agents of socio-political change. For example, in the exchange between Pierre Bourdieu and the artist Hans Haacke, it is identified that, firstly, the *habitus* of the artist is the awareness of the artwork as a political or social expression and, secondly, that artists are not easily organised and involved in political movements and actions because "good art" is presented as "disinterested" and "good artist" as "disinterested" [Bourdieu and Haacke 1995]. Thus, when he was in charge of Rundāle Palace Museum, Imants Lancmanis only slowly returned to painting, which, as the artist himself admitted, is saturated with symbols and references, and called it conceptual romanticism. The concept of the conceptual romantism was created by his wife Ieva Lancmane [Kļaviņš 1999]. His wife was also the closest collaborator at the Rundāle Palace Museum.

In an interview with the author of the publication, Imants Lancmanis, answering the question of whether an artist can influence social processes, says "*Not only artists, but also culture in general can influence very little. Art, like literature, has an impact when people are oppressed, when, for example, under serfdom, Latvian songs (dainas) provide a moral foundation, or during the Soviet era, literature, metaphors or just wonderful poetry served as support for people, they flourished, they felt it was like a spiritual drink. But in a consumer society with so many temptations to pseudo-culture, Dan Brown will be read instead of real literature and pop music has largely driven into the cellar what I consider the only real music. Art has little opportunity to affect something – it is not a weapon of propaganda. It is a thing in itself, which, at some point, touches the string of a human soul, inspires, opens some horizons or develops subconsciousness. Man lives with dreams, fantasies – he feels support and emotional experience through art, literature and music. Art is not able to deliver anything better than emotions, and, which is important – an aesthetic satisfaction. Artworks do not just need to be made beautiful, they must bring in some sort of accomplishment; there must be a "missile", which makes change in one's mind. The social role of art has been greatly diminished and it will not be an aid calling to battle and an aid for rectifying broken souls*" [Grūbe 2010]. The significance of art is emphasized in crucial stages for the nation, thus indicating the artist's essential role in social cohesion and the formation of national identity.

Imants Lancmanis states that he finds it important to encode a specific message in his works. An illustrative example is his series *The Fifth Commandment*. The 1905 Revolution and the First World War are depicted in eight paintings, accompanied by a very detailed explanation of each of the works and each of the images they contain. Imants Lancmanis explains that the working method is the embodiment of visions with the help of historical materials and analytical photographic studies, with each phenomenon searching for its unique, unrepeatable prototype. The exhibition is dedicated to: past and future victims [Lancmanis 2009]. They are works about the losses of war and the lessons of war. In 2009, Imants Lancmanis was nominated for the Purvītis Prize for this series of works. Purvītis Prize was founded in the 2008 to promote development of new projects and original ideas, acknowledge the best achievements in Latvian professional visual arts and popularise the success of Latvian artists both in Latvia and abroad.

Conclusions

Two centuries. Two painters. Two personalities with the potential to influence artistic processes in Latvia, including the development of national identity. As the curator of the exhibition "Purvītis", Aija Brasliņa, points out, "*In Latvian art history and public perception, the name of this European Latvian classic has become one of*

the symbols of national identity. As poetic archetypes, "Purvītis-style" images, motifs and moods retain their presence in our sense and understanding of the landscapes that surround us. The painter's vision of his native northern nature, as well as his classically composed ideal Latvian landscapes in changing seasons, are considered to be the canon of national landscape" [Brasliņa 2022]; the works of Imants Lancmanis, as Helēna Demakova, curator of the exhibition "*The Art of Imants Lancmanis*" points out, "*confirm the epic nature of the artist's vision combined with meticulous detailing. The nodal points of Europe and Latvia in his works are intertwined with local ethnographic and natural examples; the symbolic message of his paintings embodies motifs found in art history and real life*" [Demakova 2022].

Two personalities who construct national identity not only through their paintings, but also through the position they take in the field of art.

Both have proven themselves as personalities capable of sustaining and developing important national art and cultural institutions in times of change and of shaping national art and national identity through their position in the field of art.

Vilhelms Purvītis participated in the founding of the Art Academy of Latvia, in the creation of the collection of the present day Latvian National Museum of Art, was rector of the Art Academy of Latvia and director of the city art museum, and made a significant contribution to Latvian art. Vilhelms Purvītis' foresight and authority formed the Latvian Academy of Art as the foundation of the national school of art, and his diplomatic activity helped to guide it through the initial difficulties. Vilhelms Purvītis' contribution to the establishment of national art education is invaluable, and the foundations of the training system he created determined the development of Latvian professional art. Vilhelms Purvītis promoted the people's understanding of art both in painting, by creating the image of the Latvian landscape, and through his pedagogical activity, believing that the broadest masses of small nations could only become remarkable through spiritual culture. The painter's ability to work and fight for the realisation and improvement of national identity underlines the unchanging historical relevance of this value.

Determined leadership of Imants Lancmanis in the restoration of Latvia's cultural heritage – Rundāle Palace – required both patience in researching historical material and a great deal of work. His art is the same, where every detail is thought out and composed into a painting with a specific purpose and a message for the viewer. Imants Lancmanis' art is like a history book of Latvia, allowing us to follow the events of history through his eyes and at the same time reflecting on the individual's feelings about his or her place in the constant cycle of life. The art, and with along it the national identity, is in constant transformation and in search of itself.

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JUST "A FOLLOWER WITH NO VISIBLE CHARACTERISTICS"? EXAMPLES OF ERNESTS ŠTĀLBERGS' MODERNISM IN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

PhD **Karīna Horsta**
Art Academy of Latvia, Institute of Art History

Abstract

The view of modernist architecture as a "unified mass" without regional traits or specific developmental trends has sometimes become symptomatic and is threatening to monuments of this style even today. This article aims to introduce the most significant conclusions obtained from the analysis of the architect Ernests Štālbergs' creative legacy in the context of Western modernist architecture, identifying the means used to localise the style. Formal and stylistically comparative methods were applied for this purpose. Štālbergs' modernist works reveal three lines of influences – from the German architect Erich Mendelsohn, the French architect Le Corbusier and the Nordic modernism. This does not mean direct appropriations of composition but rather impulses and inspirations. Štālbergs attempted to adapt modernism to local conditions, as he paid attention to the context of surrounding environment and regional traditions. However, he was more interested not in national but in regional identity, thus fitting in a wider cultural space.

Keywords: *Ernests Štālbergs, modernism, Erich Mendelsohn, Le Corbusier, Nordic modernism*.

In his review of the large exhibition organised by the Latvian Architects' Society in late 1934 – early 1935[1], architect Jūlijs Lūsis concluded that architects active on

[1] The exhibition took place at Riga City Art Museum (present Latvian National Museum of Art) in honour of the Society's tenth anniversary. More than 300 works were exhibited.

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Latvia's architectural scene could be divided in three loose groups: "*original style seekers*", "*deliberate followers of some* (..) *trend*" and "*those* (..) *working with various stylistic forms*" [Lūsis 1935: 5]. Lūsis described the representatives of functionalism Ernests Štālbergs, Kārlis Bikše and Jānis Blaus as "*deliberate followers of international modernism with no visible characteristics*", adding, however, that their modernism had "*a German perspective*" [Lūsis 1935: 5]. At that exhibition, Štālbergs showed various works from the 1930s, revealing the diversity of his functionalist period. It included designs and photographs for the Great Hall and cloakroom of the University of Latvia, Riga municipal apartment building, the Freedom Monument, monument to the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment, Ķegums Power Plant, houses of the Minister of Justice Hermanis Apsītis and conductor Artūrs Bobkovics as well as furnishing designs and photographs for the veneer factory owner Zālamans Šefers and the architect's own bedroom [Latvijas Arhitektu biedrība 1934: 33–40]. The opinion of Lūsis who was Eižens Laube's student and represented conservative approach is not surprising. However, it is rather superficial and overlooks the existence of regional specificity or distinct lines of influences within modernism, thus endangering the monuments of this style until our days.

Ernests Štālbergs' output reveals the development from academic neo-classicism cultivated in St. Petersburg Academy of Arts in the 1910s and modernised neo-classicism in the first half of the 1920s towards functionalism in the 1930s that he upheld even after the Second World War in spite of Socialist Realism imposed by the occupational power. However, Štālbergs' stylistic evolution was not linear, as he used to look back to his earlier periods at times as well as to seek compromises between the commissioner's aesthetic demands and his creative principles.

Štālbergs gradually began to embrace functionalism in the second half of the 1920s. This was a transitional period of his activity when he moved away from neo-classicism and abandoned decorativeness typical of his short-lived Art Deco episode. Influences of ideas and direct examples from German modernist architecture are evident during these years. Bruno Taut[1] and Erich Mendelsohn were important authors for Štālbergs in both theory and practice. A well-considered synthesis of modern German architectural impulses is seen in the 1929–1930 Riga municipal apartment building at 12 Lomonosova Street. It manifests inspirations from Taut's theoretical works and his Schillerpark housing estate (1924–1930) in Berlin, Ernst May's Bornheimer Hang estate (1926–1930) in Frankfurt am Main as well as from the so-called Frankfurt kitchen furnishings found in "New Frankfurt" apartments [Horsta 2020]. However, designs of this period show Štālbergs' stylistic

[1] Štālbergs was especially interested in Bruno Taut's classic theoretical work *The New Apartment: Woman as Creator* (*Die neue Wohnung: Die Frau als Schöpferin*, 1924).

experimentation and fluctuating attitude towards modernism. Alongside more modernist examples, he also created markedly retrospective works. During these years, the architect tried to find a balance among the latest phenomena, the classical tradition and the local context.

The 1930s are typified by Štālbergs' professional maturity when he fully accepted functionalism, rapidly and purposefully exploring the style's possibilities and abandoning the previous cautiousness seen in the early decade. The change of attitude, similarly to other architects in both Latvia and the entire Northern Europe, was fostered by the famous 1930 Stockholm Exhibition [Ashby 2017: 142]. Impulses of this exhibition strengthened Štālbergs' involvement with the Nordic modernist architecture and indirectly introduced Le Corbusier's ideas regarding the arrangement of dwelling houses [Seelow 2016: 132]. Therefore, in the early 1930s Štālbergs learned the language of modernist forms from Le Corbusier's works. The 1930s emerge as a new beginning in Štālbergs' professional career when he radically changed his approach to architecture and attitude towards the environmental context, also becoming much freer in dealing with floor plans and form. Functionalism liberated the architect's creative potential and inspired ambitious projects, thus the period was very productive. During the decade, there was a change of functionalist forms in Štālbergs' individual style, as the early 1930s reveal a "purer" functionalism but later the Nordic stylistic trend with its natural, cosy version of functionalism gained more prominence. This is evidenced by the use of wooden finish in both exterior and interior as well as by the connection with nature and emphasis on the natural relief.

Ernests Štālbergs was an academically trained professional who critically assessed each new architectural development and completely opposed the copying of certain styles or short-lived stylistic trends. Therefore, lines of influences described below do not mean direct appropriations of composition but a synthesis of impressions in line with the architect's understanding of architecture, his individual aesthetic views and creative principles. Štālbergs' approach was that of an individualistic and regional perspective of modernist architecture, commonly defined in opposing terms as a unified, international style.

The first line of influence evident in his designs comes from the German architect Erich Mendelsohn. An excellent example is the competition design for Riga People's House (Figure 1), a surprising, radically modernist third version of the building that followed two neo-classical variants (1926, 1927). This work dated to 1928–1929 is the architect's first consistently modernist design, revealing a rapid adaptation to the formal means of the style. The pronouncedly modernist building with expressive arrangement of volumes and a glass-towered corner shows strong impulses from Mendelsohn's Schocken Department Store (1926–1928) in Stuttgart (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Ernests Štālbergs. People's House in Riga. Third design version (competition design). 1928–1929. Perspective. Latvian State Archive, coll. 95, reg. 1, file 139, p. 19.

Direct influences suggest that he possibly saw the building in person, as during his 1928 research trip to Germany [Štālbergs 1928] the architect prepared for the work on his Riga municipal building project and could visit the exemplary Weissenhof Estate[1] in Stuttgart for this purpose.

[1] It was created after the noted 1927 exhibition in Weissenhof where leading modernist architects of the time, like Le Corbusier, Bruno Taut, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius and others, designed permanent dwelling houses.

Figure 2. Erich Mendelsohn. Schocken Department Store in Stuttgart. 1926–1928. Postcard, 1930. From: *http://www.ansichtskarten-markt.com/de/kategorie-1/grossstaedte/stuttgart/ak-foto-stuttgart-partie-eberhardstrasse-kaufhaus-schocken-1930-rar*

Influences from Mendelsohn remained persuasive later too. Reconstruction design of Hotel de Rome in Riga was worked out in summer 1930. Štālbergs here proposed a bold solution, breaking the uniform rhythm of the 19th century neo-renaissance façade with a remarkably modernist element – a narrow, vertical, fully glassed semicircular bay window (Figure 3). A similar principle was used for the reconstruction of the newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt* administrative building in Berlin by Erich Mendelsohn and his assistant Richard Neutra in 1921–1923. They put a new, contrasting modernist structure on the historicist Art Nouveau building, creating a streamlined corner [Krohn, Stavagna 2022: 58]. Štālbergs turned the 19th century historicist building into a shell for the modern content and lifestyle, manifested by the sharply contrasting glass split on the façade. The architect's clear shift towards modernism is seen in the concept of reconstruction, aimed at a deliberate contrast between the new structure and the historical architecture. The striking difference between the old and the new emerges as a surprisingly progressive idea in Latvia's architectural milieu of the time.

One has to agree with the Estonian historian of architecture Mart Kalm that inter-war Latvian architects were much attracted to Mendelsohn's typical style with its rounded façade forms [Kalm 2019: 16]. Therefore, Štālbergs blended in a local functionalist trend.

Figure 3. Ernests Štālbergs. Hotel de Rome reconstruction design. 1930. Perspectival view from Aspazijas Boulevard. Latvian State Archive, coll. 95, reg. 1, file 233, p. 35.

In the early 1930s, the line of influence from Le Corbusier became stronger in Štālbergs' output, especially evident in his dwelling house designs, including architectural volumes as well as floor plans and interiors. Štālbergs examined and interpreted Le Corbusier's works to master the formal language of modernism. For example, in a sketch of an unknown mansion, Štālbergs tried the French architect's five principles of modernist architecture – the building had a flat roof, band-type windows on the façade but the ground floor was envisaged with a covered, post-supported gallery with large, shop-like windows, creating a visual impression of a volume resting on posts above the ground [Štālbergs ca. 1930–1931]. The sketch reveals influences from Le Corbusier's most typical works of the second half of the 1920s – semi-detached house at Weissenhof Estate (1926–1927) in Stuttgart and Villa Savoye (1928–1931) in Poissy. Štālbergs returned to this typical modernist façade composition in his 1934 competition design of Liepāja Latvian Society House – the main façade facing Rožu Square (Figure 4) is compositionally close to Le Corbusier's classic Villa Savoye. Direct impulses from Le Corbusier are also evident in the engineer Aleksandrs Siksna's house with its two-level, multi-functional

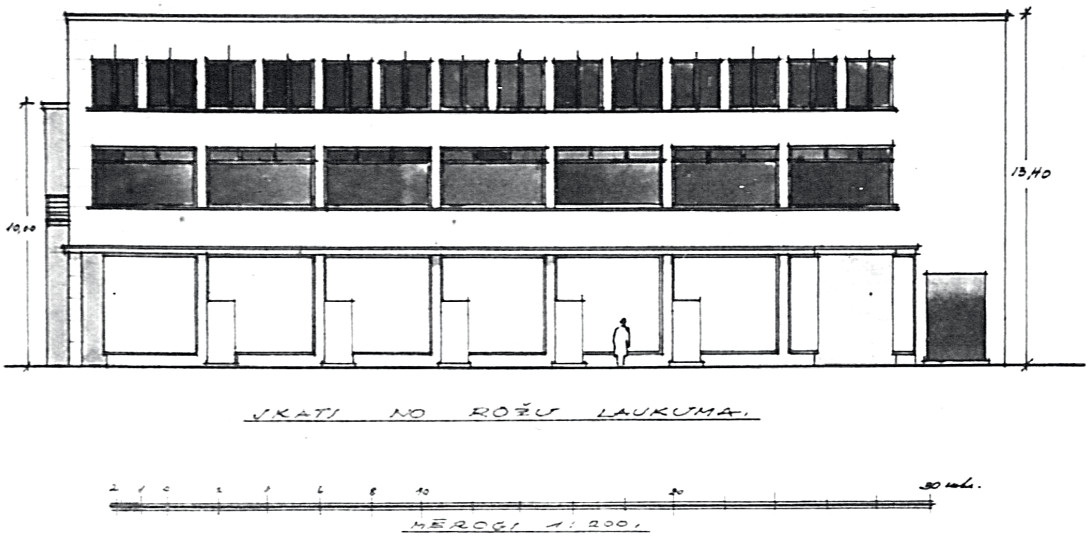

Figure 4. Ernests Štālbergs. Liepāja Latvian Society house design. 1934. Main façade. Latvian State Archive, coll. 95, reg. 1, file 238, p. 4.

living room, having a large window and a vertical multi-level division, the upper floor intended for the engineer's office [Štālbergs ca. 1931]. The effect is enhanced by the stairs shifted to the side of the room. In line with Le Corbusier's idea of "an architectural promenade", different views of the expressive room are revealed while climbing the stairs [Cohen 2006: 24].

The line of Nordic modernism is also present in Štālbergs' creative work throughout the 1930s, becoming more prominent in the second half of the decade. Štālbergs got more direct impulses from the Stockholm Exhibition that became a turning point in his output, shaped his understanding of modernism and outlined the future years of activity. Štālbergs chose Sweden as the main reference point in the implementation of modernist architecture and visited the country on a regular basis, paying particular attention to new buildings and establishing of professional contacts. For example, he joined the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*) [Štālbergs 1942]. Besides, Štālbergs was attracted also by the modernist architecture of other Nordic countries, especially by the active Finnish architects' achievements.

Impressions of the Stockholm Exhibition, especially of its main restaurant's (architect Gunnar Asplund) spatial image with a rounded glass structure, are clear in the restaurant hall for the previously mentioned Hotel de Rome [Štālbergs 1930] with a striking semicircular form and a curved, fully glassed outer wall. This design also shows relationship to nature important for the Nordic modernism, as Štālbergs

planned the glassed outer wall as a winter garden that would compensate for the lack of greenery and cover the view of the hotel's unattractive inner household yard.

A similar connection with nature is demonstrated in children's sanatorium *Gaujaslīči* whose architectural expression is based on the relief as well as on natural and modest finish materials (Figure 5). The building's façades are clad with vertical boards that create an aesthetic effect based on rhythmical lights and darks, also giving a modernist interpretation of the surrounding wooden cottages. However, one can widen the scope of analogies and influences, as such exterior finish was very common in exemplary houses at the Stockholm Exhibition, modernising the archetype of traditional Swedish farmstead. The sanatorium was possibly a synthesis of impulses from several such houses, evidenced not just by the vertical board cladding but also by the use of the single-pitched roof, close window proportions and rhythm. Similar examples were house no. 49 designed by Sven Markelius and house no. 47 by Sigurd Lewerentz. Štālbergs also took photos of simple, similarly boarded one-family houses during his visit to Sweden in 1934 [Štālbergs 1934]. The sanatorium complex was created, purposefully using the natural light, relief and pine forest conditions. The building conformed to the right-angle aesthetics but it was more adapted to human needs and emphasised naturalness, directly revealing the regional specificity of Northern European functionalism.

Figure 5. Ernests Štālbergs. Sanatorium *Gaujaslīči*. 1936–1939. View from the north. Photo: Ernests Štālbergs, 1939. Latvian State Archive, coll. 95, reg. 1, file 127, p. 8.

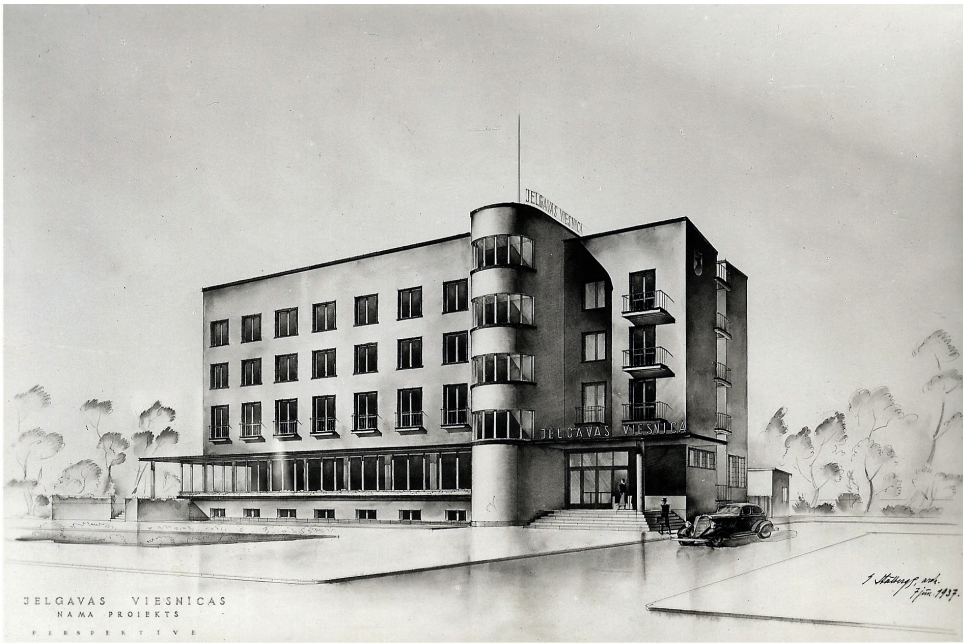

Figure 6. Ernests Štālbergs. Jelgava hotel design. 1937. Perspective. Photocopy. Latvian State Archive, coll. 95, reg. 1, file 153, p. 12.

Conversely, influences of Finnish functionalism are visible in Štālbergs' later work – the Jelgava hotel design created in 1937 (Figure 6). The building's accent is a narrow semicircular avant-corps that marks the entrance and the main staircase of the hotel. In the initial design version, the semicircular avant-corps emerges as a self-sufficient plastic form with one glassed side only. Such a solution is close to Hotel *Aulanko* (architects Märta Blomstedt, Matti Lampén, 1936–1939) in Hämeenlinna (Figure 7). However, the design also features the other line of influences as such semicircular avant-corps were commonly used by Mendelsohn's followers too. Impulses of Finnish architecture are also identifiable in the spatial solution of the Jelgava hotel restaurant hall, reminding of Restaurant *Lasipalatsi* (architects Niilo Kokko, Heimo Riihimäki and Viljo Revell, 1935) in Helsinki that has a similar floor plan and interior. Especially similar are the rhythm of posts and the glassed outer wall. It is known that Štālbergs visited Finland in 1935 [Štālbergs 1935]. The Jelgava hotel design shows how the tendency of representation and Nordic comfort entered Štālbergs' functionalist buildings in the second half of the 1930s. Modernist column shafts imitated marble but the stair railings were crafted of wood – more pleasant to touch and warmer than metal tubes [Štālbergs 1937]; wood was especially popularised by Alvar Aalto [McCarter 2014: 94].

Figure 7. Märta Blomstedt, Matti Lampén. Hotel *Aulanko* in Hämeenlinna. 1936–1939. From: *https://en.docomomo.fi/projects/hotel-aulanko/* Photo: Pietinen / MFA.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate that consistent modernism and creative ambitions are better revealed in Štālbergs' unrealised designs or the so-called paper architecture. During construction the architect had to reckon with the commissioner's wishes as well as financial and technical resources, therefore modesty and compromises prevailed with dominant traditional architectural forms and greatly reduced functionalist details. While learning the functionalist language of forms, Štālbergs retained some critical attitude and tended to localise the style, creating an individual version. For example, he did not abandon sloping roofs or brick façades and also did not use the typical modernist white façades, choosing painted plastering or natural finish materials, like ceramic or wood cladding, instead. These aspects link his output to the architectural principles of Nordic countries. Štālbergs cared about the surrounding environmental context and regional traditions but differed from his Latvian colleagues, aiming to emphasise not national but regional traits, i. e., the Nordic identity, thus joining a broader cultural space.

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THE WORK OF ASPAZIJA AND RAINIS IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA[1]

Mg.hum. **Anna Freiberga**
University of Latvia
Dr. philol. **Ieva Kalniņa**
University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities

Abstract

The article looks at how Aspazija and Rainis reacted in the Constitutional Assembly on the political and cultural challenges of the time, and what is the importance of culture in their view. Aspazija and Rainis were members of the social democratic faction in the Constitutional Assembly. During the Constitutional Assembly, the adoption of the amnesty law and agrarian reform, as well as questions about the referendum and the place of the president in Latvia, were important. Rainis spoke in a debate here. Rainis' speeches always reflected his legal education His example of democracy in politics was Switzerland, while in culture (and in politics) – Greece. As a member of the Latvian Social Democratic Party (LSDSP) Rainis defended the most radical agrarian reform proposal, which radically transformed Latvian agriculture. Rainis consistently defended the establishment of the Culture Fund and participated in various discussions on the financing of culture, emphasizing that culture is one of the foundations of the state. Aspazija spoke less at the Constituent Assembly, her focus was on the importance of women in the new Latvia, as well as reducing social inequality. Also, the poet strongly defended the cultural field.

Keywords: *Democracy, agrarian reform, Culture Fund, a poet and politics, a woman in politics*.

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Introduction

The Constituent Assembly was the first elected parliament of the Republic of Latvia, which met for its first ceremonial session on 1 May 1920, in Riga, in the former Vidzeme Armory House, where the Saeima (the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia) currently operates. The Constituent Assembly existed until 7 November 1922, when the first Saeima began to perform legislative functions [Ločmele 2022].

The involvement of representatives of the intelligentsia in nationally important processes is a common phenomenon that can also be observed in the two other newly formed Baltic states at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, during the first period of the free state of Estonia, the writers Karl Ast, Alma Ostra-Oinas, and Axel Kallas were active in politics, while in Lithuania Gabrielė Petkevičaitė, Povilas Dogelis and Kazimir Ralys. The notable poets Aspazija (Elza Pliekšāne) and Rainis (Jānis Pliekšāns) have made their contribution to the development of the country of Latvia and have shown their position on socially important political issues, acting as members of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Latvia, representing the LSDSP. The Republic of Latvia proceeded in difficult conditions, with the state of war, the Spanish flu epidemic, unemployment, and the economic crisis, which had a significant impact on social issues and the positions of the cultural sector, where Rainis and Aspazija also had a word to say. The article examines how Latvian poets reflected on political and cultural sector challenges in the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Latvia, also focusing on issues of equality and protection. Along with these aspects, their views on these issues are compared, looking for the common and differences. The article consists of two parts, where the first tells us about the historical background in which Rainis and Aspazija worked, while the second part focuses on their statements. The methodology of the article uses the historical point of view and discourse analysis, but the sources used are the collection of Rainis' speeches – *J. Rainis. Speeches and interviews* (Riga, 1993) collected articles by Rainis and Aspazija, as well as National Library of Latvia (NLL) web digital collection *RunA*.

Rainis and Aspazija had little political experience, and the poets were also not used to speaking at large political gatherings, therefore, the usual discourse constructions of political speech are not observable in their speeches either. The beginning of Aspazija's political activity can be considered the turn of the 19th century when the poetess joined the *Jaunā Strāva*[1] movement [Cimdiņa 2022]. The thematic discourse of the problem is often viewed in the spoken or written language; however, the social construct of the discourse and its contextual manifestations are also important. Therefore, the power of discourse lies in the composition of spoken or written language or expression [Iedema 2011: 1164–1166]. According to the

[1] The movement of the Latvian intelligentsia at the end of the 19th century.

opinion of linguist Teun van Dijk, in the speech of political content, it is necessary to update the information that should affect a specific audience. It is not possible to include all informative aspects in a speech, so it must be socio-psychologically effective and reach a specific audience [Dijk 1980: 258]. In the case of Rainis and Aspazija, this speech is aimed at a relatively narrow political audience, rather than a wider society. There is no concrete evidence of the political discourse methods consciously used by the poets, however, their language style and emotional means used in argumentation reveal a lot.

Rainis' activity in The Constituent Assembly has been studied in the article *Rainis Satversmes Sapulcē* by historian Jānis Šiliņš in the collection of articles *Rainim 150. Un rīts būs jāpieņem, lai kāds tas nāks*, where the political landscape in which Rainis worked is described. Šiliņš has also described three principles in the three speeches of Rainis' Constituent Assembly: observer position, absolute democracy, and justice [Šiliņš 2015: 182]. The important question of being a politician or a poet, as a poet and a politician being between truth and power, was studied by Vita Matīsa in the article *Truth and power* in the collection *Borders: Rainis and Aspazija between Latvia and Switzerland* (2006), and in the article *Ceļš uz savu valsti. Rainis un Aspazija starp Latviju un Šveici* in the collection *From Castagnola Towards Liberty* describes not only the activities of the two poets in Switzerland but also Rainis' repeatedly expressed the idea in the diaries (1919–1920) that he should become the president of Latvia.

Rainis' activity in the Latvian Constitution was also described by contemporaries, for example, in the memoirs of Fēliks Cielēns *Rainis un Aspazija. Atmiņas un pārdomas*, a collection of memories first published in 1955 in Stockholm, the second time in 2017 in Latvia. On the other hand, the work of the poetess Aspazija is more often seen in the context of the development of Latvian feminist thought, where her poetry is analyzed in this context and the essential role of the poetess herself in society is emphasized, for example, in the collection of articles *Aspazija un mūsdienas: dzimums, nācija, radošie izaicinājumi* and in the compiled collection *Kopoti raksti. 1. sējums / Aspazija* (2017) by literary scholar Ausma Cimdiņa. Aspazija's activity in the Constituent Assembly has been described by Dr. iur Sandra Osipova's collection of articles *Nācija, valoda, tiesiska valsts: Ceļā uz rītdienu* (2020).

The status of Aspazija and Rainis in the Constituent Assembly

At the beginning of 1920, Rainis and Aspazija were still in exile in Switzerland, in Castagnola, when the election law of the Latvian Constituent Assembly was drafted, nevertheless, the Central Election Commission of that time allowed Rainis and Aspazija to be included in the electoral list. This was opposed by the Provisional Government led by Kārlis Ulmanis and the State Chancellery, which insisted that

poets were considered foreigners and therefore could not be included in this list within the framework of the law. To change the situation in favor of Rainis and Aspazija, the LSDSP of Latvia proposed making corrections. The People's Council rejected the amendments to the Election Law but accepted the addition to the law. As a result of this addition, poets could participate in elections and function fully in the Constituent Assembly. Šiliņš described this situation:

> "*The way out was found by adopting no amendments to the law, but only an addition, which read as follows: "Passive electoral rights in the elections of Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Latvia" are enjoyed by Rainis and Aspazija". Political party "Latvian Farmers' Union", which was the most opposed to allowing Rainis to participate in the elections, made the process a little more difficult by demanding to vote separately – first for Rainis and then for Aspazija. 36 politicians voted for Rainis, but the entire faction of the "Latvian Farmers' Union" – 17 MPs – abstained. The admission of Aspazija was unanimously voted in the elections*" [Šiliņš 2015: 180].

Rainis and Aspazija returned from Switzerland in April 1920, and they were welcomed in Riga at an officially organized event by a huge crowd of welcomers led by Marģers Skujenieks. The welcoming event was organized by the People's Council, it was included in the protocol of a separate presidium meeting. The status of the poets in the society is also evidenced by the fact that in their honor two major Riga boulevards were renamed after Rainis and Aspazija, and on July 12 of the same year a solemn event was held at the Latvian National Opera. Matīsa writes about the arrival of the poets:

> "*In the spring of 1920, it seemed obvious to Rainis to be greeted on the day of his return as a part of eternal Latvia and exactly a week later to run in the first parliamentary elections. He did not fully appreciate how significantly the role of the writer and intellectual in public life has changed with the change of historical eras*" [Matīsa 2006: 63].

After his return, Rainis was actively involved in the pre-election campaign, on 11 April he spoke at three meetings [Rainis 1993: 386]. In his speech, Rainis addressed the basic class of society, which should be the leading class in the nation: "(..) *the proletariat must win all rights, and the leadership of the nation must be taken into the hands of the basic class*" [Rainis 1993: 113]. Rainis identifies himself as a representative of LSDSP, as its member from the beginning of the party. The speech is made up of certain sentences that must elicit applause from the audience, at the end of the speech there are exclamation sentences with calls to vote for the party list. Rainis is therefore seriously thinking about motivating voters to vote.

Jānis Čakste was elected as chairman of the Constituent Assembly, and it was a disappointment for Rainis, because the poet was the most popular deputy of the largest party, so his ambitions were quite justified. He had a legal education and political experience, and he was known to many residents of Latvia. However, we must also consider the background against which the elections of the Constituent Assembly – the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic had been established in the country's neighborhood, The Spartacist uprising[1], and the November Revolution[2] had taken place in Germany. In 1919 Latvia experienced the terror of Pēteris Stučka's government, in such a situation, a representative of the LSDSP could not become president, so the other parties did not support the appointment of a social democrat to this position. It was also not beneficial for the social democrats themselves if Rainis had become the head of the Constituent Assembly or the president, because the president had to be politically neutral, so if Rainis was elected, they would lose an influential politician [Šiliņš 2015: 181].

Cielēns, being a member of the LSDP at the time, somewhat hypocritically emphasizes in his memories that Rainis encountered political reality for the first time in the Constituent Assembly elections: "*Rainis quickly left the meeting hall and went home disappointed, even though all the deputies gathered in the yellow representative hall to congratulate the newly elected president*" [Cielēns 2017: 78].

The directions of political interests of Aspazija and Rainis

Rainis' first speech took place on 8 August 1920, and it was dedicated to the Amnesty Law. The law was necessary because many people were awaiting trial in prisons or had already been convicted, whose guilt was a controversial issue – they were soldiers who had fought in various troops against the army of the Republic of Latvia, employees of the Soviet and German authorities. Rainis mentioned: "*There are already calls everywhere for this act: there are hundreds and thousands of so-called criminals waiting for amnesty*" [Rainis 1993: 8]. As a lawyer, Rainis also discussed the concept of amnesty in his speech, believing that more accurate concept is *non-mention* (amnesty) rather than *pardon*:

> "*The great wisdom of the ancient Greeks in politics – and I take politics in the cultural sense – was that they called such acts unmentions. They are now commonly referred to as pardons. This word is completely wrong, because often the pardoners have been more guilty than those who did the evil deeds, and it would be good if we called not to mention not only with the mouth but also with the heart so that we can create the new work in a certain community – Latvian new construction*" [Rainis 1993: 7–8].

[1] *Spartakusaufstand,* 1919.
[2] *Die Novermberrevolution*, 1918–1919.

Rainis emphasized that if the country wants to call itself democratic, then the amnesty law should include as many different groups of people as possible so that not only the amnestied but also their relatives will be included in the creation of the country.

In the plenary session of 14 September 1920, the "Law on Pardons" was adopted, which determined that the President of the Constituent Assembly has the right to release from punishment and its consequences persons who have been convicted by a valid court verdict, so pardons will be granted by the President, and amnesty by the Constituent Assembly. The decision was taken unanimously, so it can be seen that the Constituent Assembly resolved the current issues, alleviated dissatisfaction in society, and created an inclusive society.

In 1920, the main problem was the agrarian issue – in Latvia, more than 60% of the population lived in the countryside, and most of them were servants and landless. Their numbers were supplemented by soldiers returning home from the war and unemployed workers returning to their or their fathers' native places in the countryside. The agrarian question in the country was political, historical, national, and even psychological. The number of landless people in the country was too large, which could cause social and political problems, but it was the *Bermontiāde*[1] that decided that the land of the manor would not only have to be given to the landless but should be given for free. The first of these ideas was already during the *Bermontiāde* and the slogan "Land for free!" was put forward by LSDSP, which therefore gained a huge following. The moderate position of the *Latvian Farmers' Union* with Ulmanis, to acquire land for a fee, did not gain support [Bleiere 2005: 172].

Rainis, as a representative of social democracy, delivered a long, well-structured speech on 1 September 1920, where he tried to justify why the land should not be returned to the Baltic Germans for a fee and criticized the *Latvian Farmers' Union* for neglecting the interests of the landless and serving the nobility. Rainis emphasizes that the situation is not simple from a cultural point of view either, because, for example, the representatives of the German community asked for the stage of the National Theater for five evenings a week, but the Latvians would then have one day left. Rainis emphasizes that the land issue is not only an economic issue but also a cultural and national policy issue. Rainis refers to his intention to write the play *Kajs Grakhs* (*Caius Gracchus*), thus introducing a broader cultural context into the speech [Rainis: 1981]. The play focuses on ancient Rome, two tribune brothers Tiberius (Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus: ca. 163 BC–133 BC) and Caius Gracchus

[1] A part of the Latvian freedom struggle and the Russian Civil War, in which the Armed Forces of Latvia, with the support of the Allies of the Entente, repelled the attack of the Volunteer Army of Western Russia from 8 October 1919 to 3 December 1919 and completely defeated their opponent.

(ca. 154 BC–121 BC). Caius Gracchus was a Roman politician, who tried to continue the agrarian reform initiated by his brother Tiberius and fought against the supremacy of the Senate, defending democracy. In addition to these issues, the draft of the play discusses in detail the need for land for different social classes. Rainis worked on the play in 1917 and 1918, as well as when returning to Latvia, but it remained unfinished. Constitutional issues have not been addressed in the other literary works of the time of the meeting of the Constitution – the collections of poems – *Addio bella*! (1920), *Čūsku vārdi* ("Words of Snakes", 1920), *Uz mājām* ("To the Home", 1920), *Sudrabota gaisma* ("Silver Light", 1921), as well as in the collection of children's poetry *Zelta sietiņš* ("The Golden Sieve", 1920).

In 1924, on April 14, the Saeima decided not to pay compensation to the nobles for the expropriated land (the owner was left with 50 ha) and to distribute it freely to the landless (there was not enough land for everyone, and there were rules about who could receive land). This was a deliberate political choice to turn the landless from communist ideas, but the majority of the people saw it as a victory for justice, and at the same time it was also a victory for the social democrats [Bleiere 2005: 173].

In the Saeima, when Rainis defended the agrarian reform, he was interrupted: "*Voices to the right: "The only nationalist in the Social Democrats!"*. And Rainis answered: *"I think that nationalism is also in social democrats"* [Rainis 1993: 17]. In his speeches, Rainis understands the meaning of culture more broadly than his party members, and he also connects culture with politics, economy, or welfare. Šiliņš emphasizes:

> *"Rainis was a convinced democrat, not a supporter of party power and party discipline. For Rainis, the party was a means, not an end in itself. Rainis was an idealist and nationalist, not a materialist and internationalist. Rainis was a people's unifier and leveler of contradictions, not a propagandist of class struggle"* [Šiliņš 2015: 181].

There was a significant preponderance of men in the Constituent Assembly – out of 150 deputies, only six were women: Valērija Seile, Elza Pliekšāne (Aspazija), Berta Vesmane, Klāra Kalniņa, Zelma Cēsiniece-Freidenfelde, and Apolonija Laurinoviča. As an excellent poet and socially active personality, Aspazija was the most recognizable of the deputies, but her political experience was incomparably less than, for example, the former member of the People's Council Kalniņa [Osipova 2020: 197].

This partially justifies Aspazija's involvement in the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Latvia, leading to the suspicion that the poetess added ideas of European equality during her time in Switzerland. However, the ideas of human rights were close to Aspazija even before the exile, for example, they are reflected in the play

Zaudētas tiesības ("The Lost Rights", 1895).[1] During the time when Aspazija was active in the Constituent Assembly, the poetry collection *Izplesti spārni* ("The Wings Spread Wide", 1920) written in Switzerland (1908–1918) was published. It can be considered one of her most important collections, in which the experiences of the lyrical hero and feelings of nature are intertwined. In the period from 1920–1924, a compilation of previous works in ten volumes *Kopoti raksti* ("Collected writings") was also published. The mentioned literary works do not contain a clear political context; however, socially important ideas can be found in some examples.

Like Rainis, his spouse Aspazija became a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Latvia in 1920. In the notebooks of the transcripts of the constitutional meetings (1920–1922), we can read evidence of the poet's participation in political debates, in which she, perhaps less often than Rainis, but no less energetically stood up for the important human rights issues and problems of a social nature, especially the reduction of social inequality and gender equality promotion.

Aspazija gave her first speech at the Constituent Assembly on 10 September 1920. In this speech, she focused on the poor condition of teachers, reminding politicians about the importance of learning and knowledge for the longevity of the Latvian state. The poet stated that the teacher's task contrasts with the unfairly poor condition of teachers, which was rooted in bureaucratic uncertainty for several months, namely, whether the teacher's position should be paid from state or local government funds. Aspazija had argued in favor of paying for the position of a teacher from state funds, justifying the role of the teacher as the basic bearer of national culture. She recognized culture as a part of the essence of the state – if the state is unable to ensure the preservation and development of culture, then the very foundations of culture are also threatened. In the poet's view, cultural development is the basis for the existence of all large and influential countries:

> *"If we fail to do so, then the people's culture is threatened at its very foundations. Do I really need to show how important the cultural task is?* (..) *Culture is the soul of the people, the real strength of the people, and the character of the people. If we don't have this strength, we don't have this character, then we can't manage economic life either"* [Aspazija 1920: 856].

Rainis also spoke at the same meeting because the question of who will finance teachers' salaries was very important in the devastated country. The country lacked

[1] The play was created as a protest against the suppression of the rights of women in late 19th-century society. The central problem of the play is the woman's struggle for her rights and the respect of society.

financial resources, and many municipalities were very poor, so it was clear that they would not be able to provide teachers' salaries. Rainis compares that when the territory of Latvia was part of the Russian Empire, 8% of the budget was allocated to education, but the new country allocated only 2% to it. Rainis started his speech with one of his constant topics – a reminder that culture is very important in the construction of the state. Rainis writes: "(..) *the fight against the teacher is the fight against culture, and the peasant has always been and always will be the one who hinders culture*" [Rainis 1993: 29]. He emphasizes that culture, to a certain extent, requires higher development from parliamentarism, and believes that if culture and education are not supported, the development of state finances will not be ensured either. Aspazija's and Rainis' views on these issues are the same they complement each other. In the Republic of Latvia, a law was passed that teachers are paid from the state budget, and they are equated to civil servants. This strengthened the prestige of the teacher's work, and a lot of young people actively studied to become teachers.

In the context of issues of social injustice, Aspazija does not forget about social inequality in the field of gender. At the meeting on 2 December 1920, the poet emphasized her mother's socially vulnerable position, sharply reprimanding the non-serious attitude of the politicians of the Constituent Assembly:

> "(..) *this question is a sacred question, is a serious question because he is the very root of life. And here I found the case that it was precisely about this question, then such fun arose, especially here in the center, that it offended my woman's feelings*" [Aspazija 1920: 1480].

The speech of the poetess was powerful at the meeting on 10 December 1920, where it was decided to strengthen the marriage laws and make a transition from church marriage to civil marriage, Aspazija calls this a progress and renouncing of the remnants of feudalism, which limited the freedom of the individual because the process of church divorce was extremely complex and usually unfair to the woman. The poetess considers the acquisition of human freedom, previously suppressed by feudalism, not only as the classic deprivation of feudalism but also as the fall of the patriarchal model. In addition to praising the progressive policy, Aspazija emphasized: the adoption of this law is a day of celebration for women because the third pillar of the old model – the supremacy of men – is also falling:

> "*Until now, marriages have been based on the domination of men, although in the most natural first state all marriage was where the mother was with her child, the mother belonged to the child and was only respected as such*" [Aspazija 1920: 1560–1561].

On 28 September 1921, Rainis got involved in the discussion about the Constitution, specifically the referendum and the presidential elections. At the beginning of his speech, Rainis also addressed the current issue of citizenship:

> "*There is almost a view of citizenship that the state is just an extended private farm, some kind of general store, some kind of consumerism. We do live in small conditions, in a small area, but this view is also harmful, more harmful than all ruling views combined because this is a delusion at the very core: public life is as different from private life as an individual person is from a nation*" [Rainis 1993: 25].

Rainis has called for the introduction of a referendum as one of the basic rights of the people, as he observed in Switzerland. According to him, the referendum is an expression of democracy, and the political development of the people increases through referendums: "*I say, the introduction of the referendum is not a revolutionary step either, it is a step towards the education of the people in a political sense*" [Rainis 1993: 27].

Although Rainis was opposed to the introduction of the institution of the president, he probably hoped to occupy such a position himself. Rainis' attitude towards the institution of the presidency is twofold: in his diaries and reality, he wants to become the president of Latvia, but he has lived for many years in Switzerland, where there is no such institution of the president of the country, and the forms of government closest to him from history are democracy (Greece at the time of Pericles) and republic (Roman Republic). Rainis believes that the president is a legacy of the time of the monarchy, and the country can be politically strong even without such a ruler, in a speech dedicated to the referendum and the establishment of the institution of the country's president (1 September 1920), Rainis cannot really justify why Latvia would need a president because, in the case of Switzerland, democratic governance was implemented without such a head of the state. He was also skeptical of the idea of a president elected by the people because in that case populists who mislead the public could win. However, the poet emphasized the representative function of the president, which requires a creative spirit: "*He should be the head that can give cultural goods*" [Rainis 1993: 31]. According to him, only a democratic country can be a cultural country and only a cultural country can exist (such as Greece in the time of Pericles), so the president must represent and understand this interaction of culture and national welfare.

Rainis' position on culture as one of the cornerstones of the country is consistent with Aspazija's opinion on the importance of the cultural issue, which the poet expressed at the meeting on 7 October 1921. On this date, the issue of funding distribution came to the agenda, leaving the cultural sector represented by

poets in the role of a stepchild. Aspazija expressed her indignation at the phrases heard at the meeting, for example, that there is no economic basis for creating the Culture Fund, culture does not need any organization, etc. Aspazija has defended the cultural sector, stating that its representatives were among the initiators of the idea of a Latvian state:

> "*Even when Latvia was not yet established, our cultural workers were the ones who saw this ideal in the spirit and created it. You only come after them as their practical fulfillers. But now you wonder, you can still say it is a bad thing!*" [Aspazija 1921: 1553]

In 1921 and 1922, Rainis also talks about the financing of the Culture Fund, which is constantly threatened, because economic activity is important for the country. Rainis emphasized that spiritual culture is as important as material culture and that countries with developed cultures also have a high level of material well-being.

Apart from the economic and cultural issues, the poets also came to the attention of the aspects of civil rights in the Constitutional Assembly. Since the activity of both poets in Latvian politics was threatened due to their status as foreigners, the discussion of the asylum seeker's rights at the meeting on 18 January 1922, provoked a sharp reaction from Aspazija. When deciding on ensuring the rights of Latvian citizens on the territory of the country and the defense of the country outside the borders of Latvia, the right not to extradite citizens for political crimes was also discussed, which raised concerns in the mind of Arveds Bergs, a member of the non-partisan group, raising thoughts about the havoc that would be caused by the uncontrolled reception and defense of political criminals, so that the provision of asylum to such persons would not be necessary or desirable. Aspazija reacted strongly to these statements, as she herself was a political emigrant. As an argument, the poet reminded of the political vulnerability of emigrants in 1905, when the supporters of the idea of the Latvian state were declared separatists and, only thanks to the asylum rights established by other countries, could they continue to build their dream of the free Latvian state. In this regard, Aspazija almost prophetically indicated the possibility of new political clashes and the importance of the role of the political diaspora in the restoration of the country:

> "(..) *Political clashes may arise again because we did not expect and did not foresee the outbreak of the great war, which came like a terrible storm over us. If such cases were to arise in the future, where would we have to look for these blue rights again in other countries, or should we now deny these rights to foreign emigrants?*" [Aspazija: 1922: 1580]

Rainis emphasizes the need to build Latvia as a country inclusive of various peoples, and Belarusians became the center of his attention. On 27 June 1922, Rainis speaks in defense of Belarusians, because Latgale deputies, especially Francis Kemps, recommend removing the funding allocated to Belarusian schools and cultural needs because there really are no such Belarusians. Rainis refers to the statistics that Belarusians are still in Latvia, about 60,000. Rainis outlines the history, refers to Belarusian literature, and notes that there are 52 schools in Latvia where the language of instruction is Belarusian, they make up four percent of the population of Latvia, and they have the right to learn in their schools, and also have the opportunity to develop culture.

Aspazija and Rainis focused on strengthening the rights of various social groups, which was not important for many politicians of that time. Both poets saw Latvia as a democratic and cultural country but described a democratic society as an inclusive society.

Acting in the Constitutional Assemblies was a short period in the lives of both poets, but they were both among the drafters of the new country's Constitution and the first adopters of laws.

Conclusions

Rainis and Aspazija were members of the *Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party*. In their speeches, they defended social interests, and vulnerable and underprivileged groups of society – workers, and soldiers. Rainis' speeches often mentioned such terms as *working people*, *landless people*, *basic class*, *the proletariat*, etc.

Rainis was a lawyer by education and graduated from the most prestigious educational institution of his time – the Faculty of Law of the University of St. Petersburg (1884–1888). The skills acquired in the studies allowed Rainis to understand legal texts and improve the nuances of laws.

For Rainis Greece was an example not only in drama and culture but also in politics because Greece is the birthplace of democracy. Rainis believed that Latvia also had to become a country of culture. Switzerland, on the other hand, is another example of democracy for Rainis. Aspazija has also been influenced by the current human rights ideas in Switzerland.

Aspazijas' phenomenon in politics cannot be separated from her literary activity, as political views are revealed, for example, in the play *Zaudētas tiesības* ("The Lost Rights", 1895). Her personality and social status as a representative of the cultural field and defender of women's rights had a significant impact on controversial issues discussed in the Constituent Assembly.

As the members of the Constituent Assembly represented different sectors and were at different levels of education, it was important to address them comprehensively

and at the same time does not lose the rational argumentation which Rainis is perfectly used to, but in the case of Aspazija, a stylistically elevated way of speaking, warmth and confident characteristic of her expression can be observed. At the same time, Aspazija's emotional speeches show the personal values of the poetess.

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OF STILL AND MOVING IMAGES: STYLISTICS OF HERCS FRANKS' EARLY DOCUMENTARIES

PhD **Zane Balčus**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies

Abstract

Latvian documentary filmmaker Hercs Franks (1926–2013) directed his first films in 1965, the two short documentaries were produced at the Latvian television's production unit Telefilma-Rīga: "Salty Bread" (*Sāļā maize*) and "At Noon" (*Pusdienā*). Both films reflect an intricate practice and aesthetic element of the director – the use of still photography, which for him is both a research tool and a stylistic device present throughout his career. "Salty Bread" includes photographs as a stylistic element allowing the viewer to prolong observation of particular images, whereas in "At Noon" still photographs feature on the films' credits, but more significant is photography's use as a research tool for preparing the film.

The intermedial studies have explored the interrelationship of different media and used intermediality as a tool for close reading of specific works, among other applications. The connection of cinema and photography represent the potential of intermedial approach through the technological, aesthetic, institutional practices. Specifically documentary cinema in its relation to photography shares additional issues of the meaning of documentality and representation of reality.

Through close reading of Hercs Franks' first films, I would argue that Franks transcends normative documentary function in the use of still photographs [Hallas 2023] and demonstrates the intermedial practice in combining photography and documentary filmmaking.

Keywords: *documentary cinema, intermediality, Hercs Franks, photography, television.*

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

Introduction

The intersection of film and photography has a long history, and it has been studied from the aspects of technology, practice, aesthetics, institutional framework, and other.[1] The interconnectedness of both mediums *present a challenge to homogenous and reductive notions of medium specificity* [Beckamn, Ma 2008: 3]. Intermediality has become one of the recent most productive terms for humanities, resulting in wide scope of theoretical publications and debates, which have been propelled by the multiplication of media, requiring appropriate theoretical framework for their study [Pethő 2010: 40]. For the modelling of cinematic intermediality and its rhetorics, Ágnes Pethő proposes as one of the models intermediality as a performative act or an "action", where there exists a dialogue between different media which can also highlight their differences. Describing intermediality in spatial terms, she suggests that intermediality *appears a* border zone *across which media transgressions take place* [Pethő 2010: 58-60]. As Joachim Paech notes, *the film has always been a hybrid intermedial construction on its technical as well as its aesthetic level* [Paech 2011: 15].

Within the growing field of intermedial studies on film the analysis of film and photography's intermedial connections reflect the departure from the perception of medium specificity to greater self-reflexivity and intermediality challenging the traditional concepts of each medium. The role of documentary and its connection to photography as Roger Hallas notes *have long held complex intermedial relations around the concept and practice of documentary*, being perceived as evidence or actuality, among other shared meanings.[Hallas 2023: 2]. The still photographs and other non-diegetic elements within the documentary reflect the dominant narrative organization of documentary film – based on rhetorical continuity [Nichols 1991: 21]. Incorporation of still photographs within the documentary film has become common practice since the mid-20th century. The tension *between the photograph as object and as image allows it to transcend its normative documentary function as mere indexical evidence or visual illustration* [Hallas 2023: 10].

Hercs Franks (1926–2013)[2] artistic practice includes still photography, script-writing, reflections on documentary filmmaking, directing, later in his career also camerawork. Franks' passion for still photography had developed from an early age, when his father was a noted photographer in his native town Ludza and the region of Latgale in the Eastern part of Latvia. Franks called his camera a *still photography notebook* which he permanently had with him. Throughout his life, Franks continued

[1] See, for example: Stewart, G. (1999). *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Green, D., Lowry, J. (eds.) (2006). *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image.* Brighton: Photoworks/ Photoforum; Campany, D. (2008). *Photography and Cinema*. London: Reaktion books; Laurent, G., Lugon, O. (eds.) (2012). *Between Still and Moving Images*. Barnet: John Libbey Publishing.

[2] Internationally also used spelling – Herz Frank.

taking pictures, and regularly employed still images in his films[1], and, as noted by film scholar Inga Pērkone, it is possibly his most important stylistic element [Pērkone 2013: 55]. Franks has stated: *The alphabet of photography does help to learn the alphabet of cinema* [Franks 2011: 36].

Before directing his first films at the television, Hercs Franks worked at the Riga Film Studio as the photographer for fiction films from 1959, and also as a newspaper reporter. He wrote his first script "White Bells" (*Baltie zvani*) which was made into short fiction film in 1961 (directed by Ivars Kraulītis). The film was without any dialogue, and presented daily rhythm of the capital city Riga. Following narrative structure and approach of the city symphony genre of the 1920s, it portrays the gradual awakening of the city until it reaches hectic pace of midday. He wrote several scripts before directorial debut, continuing to contribute for other directors' films.[2]

In an interview published in 2009, Franks has commented: *I am a photographer by profession. (..) Photography is in a sense the opposite of cinema, but sometimes it can reflect the essence of life much more powerfully than cinema. Because the photograph stops the moment in its essence and it is possible to look into it more carefully. Sometimes I stop the film on purpose so that the viewer can look into the picture* [Franks 2011: 517–518]. This is reflected in the film "Salty Bread" which includes photographs as a stylistic element letting the viewer prolong observation of a particular moment or moving the camera over the photographs to discover more details. In the film "At Noon" photography is more of a research tool for preparing the production, however also in the film itself the credits are illustrated by still images.

Through close reading of Hercs Franks' first films and contextualizing them within the theoretical debate of intermedial relation between still and moving images, I would argue that Franks transcends normative documentary function in the use of still photographs [Hallas 2023] and demonstrates the intermedial practice in combining photography and documentary filmmaking.

Production context of the films

Franks directed his first documentary films at the Telefilma-Rīga – a production unit formed at the Latvian television a few years after the first TV broadcast in Latvia

[1] Franks has used various archival images, his own photographs, and has collaborated with notable photographers (for example, in the film "The Last Judgement" (*Augstākā tiesa*) (1987) Franks collaborates with the photographer Vilhelms Mihailovskis (1942–2018), one of the most notable photographers from Latvia at the time).

[2] The largest scale work was for the film *235 000 000* (1967) (original title – "USSR – Year 1966" (*PSRS – 1966. gads*)), created together with the director Uldis Brauns and extensive production team.

took place in 1954. Firstly, the early technologies allowed only ready made films to be broadcast, and the programming included broadcasting of films a few times a week [Rikards 2009: 3]. The next stage of development came when large studio cameras were introduced, and the material shot in the studio was suitable for broadcast, however they were not appropriate for use at other locations. While the portable filming equipment was unavailable, still photographs were used to substitute non-existing moving images recorded outside the studio. Large number of still images was recorded, and broadcasted accompanied by explanatory text. In 1955, portable TV production stations became available, allowing to film and broadcast events taking place outside the studio premises [Rikards 2009: 7]. In 1957 within the television a special unit was formed called Telefilma-Rīga (Television film-Riga) for creating original content – news stories, documentary films, musical films, and other. From very few people at its start, over the years it grew into substantial collective with almost 100 people, who worked until the Latvian independence in the early 1990s, when subsequently transformative changes in all fields of television and film took place.

Even though Telefilma-Rīga had its own staff members, there was a regular collaboration with the main film production centre in the republic – the Riga Film Studio. Some filmmakers made their debut films at the television and later joined the Film Studio, or it remained a parallel site for creating documentary productions, but in some cases it was the Film Studio were the first films were made before moving on to work for the television. Surveying the first decade of the Telefilma group, it was recognized: *Our television studio filmmakers' group has to some extent become a kind of experimental base for the documentarians of the [Film] studio* [Kalniņš 1966].

In the year 1965, when the two Franks' films were released, 10 films were produced at the television (with around 40 reels in total or 400 minutes). The output was described as dominated by the direct observation, reportage, character portraits [Kalniņš 1966]. The main differences between filmmakers' work organization at the studio and the television, was the time spent on filming each film and the planning of production output. The Film Studio had yearly production plans, but the television environment required (and allowed) greater flexibility, which also reflected in the films' form and content: *Here, plans change rapidly, life constantly brings its corrections, and sometimes it takes an hour and a half to make the next film* [Kalniņš 1966].

The two short documentaries "Salty Bread" and "At Noon" demonstrate the themes and approaches characteristic also to Franks later films, and they both have the same collaborators. The cameraman Visvaldis Frijārs was among the first Telefilma team members. He transferred to television from the Riga Film Studio, where he began to work in 1945 as a lighting specialist, later head of the lighting department. He was offered a position of an assistant cameraman at the Film Studio, which he remained at until drafting in the obligatory military service. After

discharge, instead of going back to the assistant's position at the Film Studio Frijārs joined the television, which had developed during his service years. Also for Frijārs, still photography was important creative practice even before the work at the Film Studio. His knowledge of the equipment, lighting specificity made him highly regarded lighting professional at the studio, and it later contributed significantly to his work at the television as a cameraman.

Television was also a nurturing place for sound director and composer Ļudgards Gedrāvičs, who became one of the leading talents in the documentary field in the 1960s, creating sound and music accompaniment, and original music for many films in television and at the Film Studio (including several Riga style or Riga School of Poetic Documentary Cinema films). He created poignant soundtracks combining realistic elements and direct sound with musical themes, also in unusual combinations.

"Salty Bread" (*Sāļā maize,* 1965)

In chronological order, the first film Franks directed was "Salty Bread". It was filmed at the fishing collective "Fisherman" (*Zvejnieks*) at Skulte village. *In the beginning I had nothing else than a small camera in my hands*, Franks has commented about the film, there was no specific idea, a title or even a script [Kainaizis 1974].

The film portrays the daily life at the village – fisherman return from the sea, life of their families on the coast, the first day at school, work on the fishing boat and other events, which are often filmed by concealed camera. Its main protagonist is an older fisherman, Jankovičs, but overarching theme of the film is time, transition between emotional states, relationships. The film was shot in spring and autumn of 1964, the time is compressed and liberated from division in particular seasons. In the episode where after long period at sea, the couples meet at the shore, he combines the shots from both seasons. This underlines the constant flow of time and the way of life for those people – regular leaving and meeting again. About the insertion of still photographs Pērkone states: *first there is the joy of the meeting, then the pain of parting, but the director stops it, splits it, editing the happy, even frozen moments of the meeting* [Pērkone 2013: 55]. Furthermore, she points out to the offscreen commentary in which the significance of the still image instead of moving image is stressed [Pērkone 2013: 55]. Film's offscreen text at this moment reads: *There are photographers in the world. Sometimes they are funny people, but they can do miracles. Even in autumn, they can give something of spring*. Thus the photographer here is attributed to as a person who can create magic and show something that has not been there. *We should remember in this context that 'stillness' is always a contrastive concept, one that presupposes a dynamic alternative against which the stillness is distinguished. If the notion of photographic stillness does not have its sense in contrast with cinematic*

motion, there must be some other dynamic dimension to underwrite its meaning [Friday 2005: 40]. The alteration between stillness and movement stresses the particular emotional charge of the moment which is depicted as a still image, letting the viewer to linger on it.

The still images are used throughout the film in different episodes. Most often they are shown for a few seconds, but in some cases, the camera moves across the still image, directing the gaze to certain element. Franks has explained, that the still images he had already shot became a key to envisioning the coherent film narrative – the stones in the sea, the old fisherman Jankovičs, and others – will be the elements that weave together moving image sequences. For Franks, who looks for metaphorical elements, the stones looked like the bread loafs which became the salty bread in the film's title [Kainaizis 1974]. *Viewing a photograph in a film is very different from viewing it directly. Film tends to overstate the photograph's difference, while presenting that difference as if it were its essence. We see the photograph exaggerated by those qualities that distinguish it from film: its stillness, its temporal fixity, its objecthood, its silence, its deathliness, even* [Campany 2008: 96]. In the context of the previously described episode, the photograph within the film is attributed a specific way of looking at it – how it is placed between other images and what meaning it represents. The moving camera across the images directs the attention and from "looking at" photographs the spectator start "watching" them, exploring the images in a duration [Azoulay 2015: 14].

The still photographs' materiality unites various images used in the film but it is possible to distinguishing two groups of these images. Contemporary photographs taken by the film's director and archival still photographs either from the private archive illustrating the life course of the character Jankovičs and more general historical images depicting the past. They demonstrate the stillness and temporal fixity, concurrently stressing the way of producing the images. *The motion picture stalls upon a glimpse into its own origin and negation at once. Such an instant is given over to that latent plangency generated in the screen's contrast between an immobile past and the passing movement that sweeps it into – and from – view. Everything stirring, elusive, and uncanny about the form of photography itself, even before the superaddition of the content (..) everything about the photochemistry of indexed presence is not simply redoubled by the submission to cinematic camerawork of such former works of still camera* [Stewart 1999: 10]. The stylistics of the still images in the film directly reflect the varying moments of their capture – the texture, the grain, the framing all signify their placement within the specific time of their production. Thus the still images of *Salty Bread* not just illustrate the past or stopping of the moment, but stress both the temporality of narrative and temporal fixity of the images within the context of their production time.

"At Noon" (*Pusdienā,* 1965)

The film *At Noon* developed from an assignment Franks received from daily newspaper *Rīgas Balss*. He had to report and take photographs of the performance of the theatre named after Yevgeny Vakhtangov visiting from Moscow and performing at different collective farms, construction sites, factories, and other venues.[1] Franks attended the performance at one of the districts of Riga at a construction site and became deeply engaged with the event: how on an empty square a stage was created, the audience gathered, the way they experienced the show, and how after the performance the audience left, the seating area was dismantled, and the square was clear again – as if nothing had happened. During the event, he was observing and taking pictures not so much of the performers, but the audience – portraits of people's faces, the expressions, emotions they had while watching the performance. This caused Franks to develop an idea that such an event could become an interesting film reportage on people at the construction site.

It involved a strict preparation for shooting: camera locations, tasks for cameramen, calculation of time for each stage of the events. *When you are confronted with an event and want to tell it figuratively, following its natural dramaturgy, at that moment, it seems to me that the work of a documentary filmmaker becomes like the work of a scriptwriter of fiction films. There is only one difference – in a documentary, roles must be designed not for those who will be filmed, but for those who will be filming – so cameramen* [Franks 2011: 73]. Franks created a still photo script – like an album of a photo film, as he already had images from the performance. *Where, in which construction site and with what theatre troupe it will be possible to make this still-photographed film?* [Franks 2011: 69], he reflected on the unknown elements of the future film. He recognized the complexity of the work – as it required at least three cameramen (also important question for him was – who will they be?), what will be the program of the performance? The dramaturgy was planned to be very clear: prologue (mounting of the stage), and three episodes: creation of amphitheatre, concert and clearing of the performance area [Franks 2011: 69].

The opportunity emerged a year later, when the Small Theatre (*Malij Teatr*)

[1] The article "Ķengarags aplaudē. J. Vahtangova teātra aktieri viesos pie celtniekiem" [Ķengarags applauds. The actors from Y. Vakhtangov theatre visit the builders] was published in *Rīgas Balss*, Nr. 142 (17.06.1964.), p. 4. It included the description of the performance and three photographs which present a close resemblance to the film's images: a group of spectators watching the performance pictured in medium close ups (titled: "Dress circle"), a wide shot of the stage and the seating area already full with the audience and performers on the stage (titled: "After the third bar bell ring..."), and the third depicts two performers on the stage and the audience is seen behind them (in this case, the title gives the names of the performers and the title of the sketch they are performing).

from Moscow came for guest performances to Riga. Franks arranged all the permits to film the performance at Olaine chemical factory building site on 6 August 1965. Telefilma assigned for the film four cameramen, and the main cameraman was Visvaldis Frijārs. The tasks were distributed very clearly – each cameraman received a photo layout of the planned film. They used three mobile cameras and one synchronous steady camera placed on the tripod at the stage [Franks 2011: 74]. Franks has described the preparation work in detail and putting at the centre the focus not on the performance, but everything around it. For shooting, they chose several performance pieces including the poetry reading and comical sketches, and the footage represents the reaction of the audience.

As Franks later wrote: *In this way, we were prepared for what Vertov called editing during filming, which is now constantly used by television to film live sports, mass events and demonstrations. It would be worth remembering the words of the well-known French director Jean Rouch here. He believes that there are two methods of making a documentary film. One means putting down the camera and waiting for* something *to happen, and the other is putting down the camera and waiting for* what we expect *to happen* [Franks 2011: 75].[1]

Filming was completed in one and half an hour – exactly the time from the preparation for the performance right until its end and clearing the area. The dramaturgy was created in the structure mentioned previously: the prologue (mounting of the stage), and three acts: creation of amphitheatre, concert and leaving of the area.

The film in itself consists of moving images, but still images are used only on the film's titles in the beginning (one image) and at the end credits (four images) as the background. In fact, these are not five images, but only one image which is shown in different fragments. The whole picture depicts two girls on the concrete blocks, the one on the right is standing and facing the camera, looking slightly to the left side, but the one on the left is captured in mid-air caught on camera when she jumps off the block. Her feet are in the air and the image reflect her in the moment of transition between the surfaces. This still image testifies to the transformed nature of the photographic image within the moving image who turned *its stillness into* arrestedness [Campany 2008: 12]. These still images present a contrasting temporality to the rest of the film. This intermedial temporality involves the arrested moment of the still image and the duration of its representation and in the same time its presence in front of the camera as an object [Hallas 2023: 9].

[1] Dziga Vertov and his filmmaking approach was important to Franks. For the film *235 000 000* an instruction manual was prepared and distributed to the filming teams. It included fragments from Vertov's diaries.

Conclusion

The films "Salty Bread" and "At Noon" demonstrate the use of still photography as a stylistic element and also a research tool for creating a moving image work. The role of photography as a stylistic element is applied differently in each film. In "Salty Bread" it is reflecting the metaphorical visual thinking of the director seeing bread loafs in the stones in the sea or depicting specific emotional moments of the characters, their environment and the past. In the film "At Noon" only several still images are used over the film's credits, which depict place where the main action is taking place and the children that are seen at the end of the performance. The production backgrounds of both films depict the importance of still photography for the creation of the films – characters, environment, planning, or meticulously prepared shooting plan.

The television production group provided an additional ground for creating documentary films, offering more flexible approach. In Franks' case, his interest in specific themes and use of certain stylistic approaches translate across different production environments – either it is film or television and reoccurs in his subsequent films. The moving camera and fragmented presentation of images can also be read as his reflection on an artistic practice pertinent to interwar avant-garde practices, where the fragmentation of objects, multiplication of points of view are present [Guido 2012: 19].

In his application of still images in the films "Salty Bread" and "At Noon" Franks transcends normative documentary function of the use of still photographs and demonstrates the intermedial practice, where the notion of temporality, stillness and movement of the images and "watching" the still images within the moving image realm.

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HUMAN AND MORE-THAN-HUMAN IN THE PERFORMING ARTS LANDSCAPE IN LATVIA

Mg.Sc.Hum. **Kitija Balcare**
Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia

Abstract

Integrating performing arts research into the environmental humanities frame, the aim of this paper, firstly, is to uncover theoretical ideas of posthumanist thinkers about species interdependency [Tsing 2012; Haraway 2015] in context of the environmental issues and, secondly, to integrate these perspectives into practices of the ecotheatrical performances in Latvia.

As it is no longer possible to separate nature from culture in a world outside humans [Haraway 2003], ecotheatre serves as a form of environmental imaginary [Woynarski 2015; May 2021] reshaping human and more-than-human relations, shifting from anthropocentric paradigm towards ecocentric worldview. Theatre of species rearranges the usual anthropocentric hierarchy and includes new actors in the theatre – non-human entities and the more-than-human world [Chaudhuri 2017].

The article provides close reading of three ecotheatrical performances, including *Bee Matter* (Iveta Pole, 2021), *Mushroom Picking Championship* (Ilze Bloka, 2021), *Last Night of the Deer* (Jānis Balodis, Nahuel Cano, 2022), looking how ecotheatre practitioners discursively, physically, and visually represent non-human species and their relationship with humans in the context of urgency of the environmental issues.

In ecotheatrical performances, physicality as embodiment comes to the fore, alongside with invitation to the spectator not to *think about* but already to *think with* nature resonating posthumanism and postmodern shamanism ideas.

Keywords: *ecotheatre*, *theatre of species*, *more-than-human*, *ecoimaginary*, *posthumanism*.

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Art in the times of anthropocentrism

When we think of the theatre and the environment nowadays, in challenging, thus, fragile times of the Anthropocene, it requires to reframe that how we look at the nature and revise our relations with other species. The concept of Anthropocene, suggested by chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000, opened ongoing debate in both geology and also in the academic and art communities [Parrikka 2020: 51]. On contrary, posthumanist researcher Donna Haraway takes position that *the Anthropocene is more a boundary event than an epoch* and the challenge to deal with is that *right now, the earth is full of refugees, human and not, without refuge* [Haraway 2015: 160].

However, our relation to the environment is shaped by various individual and also collective aspects. In context of the environmental humanities essential are four problematic directions which could be addressed, including *alienation and intangibility; the post-political situation; negative framing of environmental change; and compartmentalization of the environment from other spheres of concern* [Neimanis et al. 2015: 67]. Furthermore, finding in environmentalism a natural partner to postcolonialism, keeping in mind consumption and colonialism [Angelaki 2022: 75], reconsideration of the human and non-human relations could propose new ecological imaginary without transgressive attitude and overdominance.

Environmental historians point out that *natural world is not a passive background to human dramas* [Bird Rose et al. 2012: 3]; in turn, theatre scholars highlight that nature for a long time has been just a background for social conflicts in modern drama, so theatre is required to *turn towards the literal, a programmatic resistance to the use of nature as metaphor* [Chaudhuri 1994: 29].

In terms of environmental humanities, Australian philosopher Val Plumwood has identified two main tasks: firstly, to resituate the human within the environment, secondly, to resituate non-humans within cultural and ethical domains [Plumwood 2003]. It leads us to the posthumanist approach, where posthumanist subjects have *powers of affecting others and of affection by others* [Bignall 2022: 104].

Reimaginary of human and non-human relations therefore calls for overcoming binary thinking where nature and culture is place in opposition. As American anthropologist Anna Tsing claims *human exceptionalism blinds us* as legacy from monotheistic religions is idea about human mastery:

These stories fuel assumptions about human autonomy, and they direct questions to the human control of nature, on the one hand, or human impact on nature, on the other, rather than to species interdependence [Tsing 2012: 144].

Interspecies relations from the posthumanist point of view

Interdependency of species is core idea of posthumanist researcher Donna Haraway who proposed that *who and whatever we are, we need to make-with – become-with, compose-with – the earth-bound* [Haraway 2015: 159]: as humans'

nature is an interspecies relationship [Tsing 2012: 144]; as no species acts alone [Haraway 2015:161]; as human matters are deeply and existentially entangled with environmental issues [Asberg 2020: 110].

Taking into account that theatre is *a practice of collaborative imagination and collective conjuring* [May 2021: 4] and at the same time *lived, affective experience* [May 2021: 280], it gives a platform for rewriting narratives shaping human and non-human relations in the context of climate urgencies or place and space for ecological, also environmental imaginaries. As emphasized by environmental humanities researchers, the **environmental imaginary** essentially impacts how we deal with environmental crisis: *like social imaginaries, environmental imaginaries are sites of negotiation that can orient material action and interaction* [Neimanis et al. 2015: 81].

Looking back into history of the Western theatre, theatre scholar Una Chaudhuri points out that interaction with non-human onstage has been rare and mostly metaphorized: *On those rare occasions that human-animals bring their non-human cousins on stage, they tend to treat them as mirrors for themselves;* (..) *as symbols of human behaviour and allegories for human preoccupations* [Chaudhuri 2017: 3]. Moreover, American theatre scholar Theresa J. May, pioneer of ecodramaturgy, already in 2007 proposed ecocritical reading of plays suggesting to look whether performance inspire spectators to think newly about relationship to the natural world [May 2007: 105].

However, last decade, facing extinction of species and intensification of animal rights movement, *animals seem to be speaking back, rejecting their rhetorical exploitation, challenging us to think anew about them and about relationship to them* [Chaudhuri 2017: 4]. In order to cause a new ethical attention to human and animal relations, Chaudhuri proposed term ***zooesis*** *as the ways the animal is out info discourse: constructed, represented, understood, and misunderstood* to be used analysing discourse of animality and species in art, culture, and media [Chaudhuri 2017: 5].

Also, May states that *theatre can offer a source of new stories that reconfigure who we understand ourselves to be within the circle of life of the earth* [May 2021: 13], naming such theatre as urgently needed *what if?* theatre. Essential is also concept of **shared space** taking off a usual border, the so-called *fourth wall*, in between performers and spectators, as theatre researcher Vicky Angelaki proposes shared space as shared environment [Angelaki 2022: 46]. This aspect of ecotheatre is crucial to develop ideas of the environmental activism putting at the centre interspecies relations.

Ecotheatre as an environmental imaginary

As art holds together contradictions, it could shape a safe space for dealing with affective trauma of the climate change, dams, environment pollution [Davis 2020: 64]. In particular, theatre could serve as *a nourishment for our species and*

for the nonhuman communities that share this home planet with us [May 2021: 13]. Therefore, theatre becomes essential form of the environmental imaginary, but such imaginary, as posthumanism researchers Astrida Neimanis, Cecilia Asberg and Johan Hedren states, very significantly impacts how society deals with the environmental crisis [Neimanis et al. 2015: 81]. As theatre researcher Lisa Woynarski suggests, *ecological performance offers the potential to reframe relationships to the more-than-human world, questioning how we perceive ourselves in relation to the environment* [Woynarski 2015: 12]. Ecodramaturgical approach of theatre makers uncovers multivocal, multitemporal, transnational and transspecies stories [May 2021: 11]. Therefore, landscapes created by ecotheatrical performances are becoming shared spaces for ecological imaginary or ecoimaginary.

As Asberg highlights, human matters often are considered as divorced from environmental issues despite the fact that those are deeply, existentially entangled [Asberg 2020: 110]. As analysis of ecotheatrical performances in Latvia shows, such productions strive to regain a lost language which existed in ancient, pagan times, in order to reconcile the non-human and the human communities [Balcare 2022]. Chaudhuri proposes idea of the *postmodern shamanism* where animal is a figure to lead a new journey across ideological borders, above modernist theatre where human has been kept separate from many "others" [Chaudhuri 2017: 33]. By suggesting term **theatre of species** as *a theatre which restages all life as species life*, Chaudhuri defines function of it as a need *to understand, so as to transform, our modes of habitation in a world we share intimately with millions of other species* [Chaudhuri 2017: 158]. I suggest to take further idea of theatre of species as a sub-form of ecotheatre, recognizing on stage co-existence of human and more-than-human.

Furthermore, on the other hand, ecotheatrical productions in Latvia tend to abandon textuality completely and focus strictly on the physicality of ecotheatre, picturing environmental imaginary anew in nonverbal frame [Balcare 2022]. Such approach of posthumanistic theatre makers resonates with Anna Tsing, as she states, for instance, *fungi are not taking a position, even the hardy lichens are dying from air pollution and acid rain*; as for humans there are two approaches for such silent storying: ignore or consider what non-humans are telling us about the human condition [Tsing 2012: 152]. One fruitful approach how to strengthen relations with more-than-human, according to Tsing, is to make familiar places in the landscape *as the beginning of appreciation of multi-species interactions,* due to the idea that foragers nurture landscapes including multiple residents and visitors, not just a single species [Tsing 2012: 142]. Familiar places could be interpreted also as *naturecultures* in where *flesh and signifier, bodies and words, stories and worlds are joined* [Haraway 2003: 20]. In context of this analysis, I propose to look at the created imaginary environments as a place for shared space to deepen ecological consciousness of spectators.

Forest as a familiar place for ecoimaginary: *Mushroom Picking Championship*

Performance *Mushroom Picking Championship* (*Dirty Deal Teatro*, 2021) by the young director Ilze Bloka un playwright Madara Rutkeviča is an attempt to intertwine dramatical theatre with contemporary dance, while also entering the field of ecotheatre. Performance contains several thematic lines – human and nature, human and time, aging and rooting –, however, not as binaries but interrelated objects and processes. Dramaturgical material includes pagane omen saying – if you see a green forest in a dream, then everything will work out – where green, fresh forest is a sign of prosperity of nature and at the same time of the society.

Performance is based on the infotaining lecture by Valda (Latvian name with the meaning *power*), long-time organizer of the championship of picking mushrooms, interpreted by actress Indra Burkovska. Participants of the championship are represented by contemporary dance choreographers' group from Latvian Academy of Culture including Roberta Gailīte, Edvards Kurmiņš, Ramona Levane, Oskars Moore, Milena Paviļča, Katrīna Stepiņa, Darja Turčenko, Vladimirs Goršantovs. At the beginning they take the roles of participants of the championship, carrying knifes and plastic bags, later on slightly transforming into mycelia visualization through choreography based in interconnectedness. Spectators of the performance are given the role of supporters of the championship, mostly being silent, witnessing transformations. Performance starts with very text-based narrative and ends up visually physical way depicting gradual shift from anthropocentrism closer to the ecocentrism.

Valda is picking mushrooms in the forest, inherited from her father, adding that *papa never ate them [fungi], he adored them and called them the most advanced creatures on the planet.* She lectures in humorous way facts about mycelia secret life, asks questions to the spectators, incorporating her personal family relations with forest – starting from her grandfather to her personal convictions about power of nature in the world. Valda has promised her grandfather that she will keep this forest for mushrooms and for Latvians as place to be together. This strongly resonates with idea of Anna Tsing about familiar places as the way to accept multispecies relations.

The black room of *Dirty Deal Teatro* creates an image of the darkness of the unknown forest. Changing lights made by artist Oskars Pauliņš creates the illusion of a magical forest where the unimaginable and rationally incomprehensible can happen. The dancers are the ones who create the living scenography – both the people standing like a forest full of trees, in which at some point Valda begins to wander as if after taking hallucinogenic mushrooms, and the interconnected threads of the mushroom, discarding more and more human with every moment. These scenes vividly highlight the closeness of mutual relationships in nature and the outer

lushness of a natural forest, at the same time embodying the continuous change in nature, rejecting static scenography elements so becoming ecotheatrical.

Despite the narrative that *the forest is not a supermarket parking lot, the forest is the trees, the forest is the obstacles,* there are links to consumerism depicted visually on stage. Each of the performers owns his or her personal plastic shopping bag, branded with well-known supermarket names. These bags function instead of basket for mushroom picking parallelly drawing the idea that humans perceive forest as resource – as a place to come and own mushrooms. The rustling shopping bags at one point turn into a suicidal element and a symbolic image of the pollution of nature. Performers put bags on their heads and continue a long movement scene, keeping them pulled over their faces. Seeing a plastic bag over human face is obviously danger scene transmitting message of self-destruction: a vivid illustration that polluting environment, in this case forest, is endangering nature, including humans as well. Theatre makers highlight humans' inability to naturally integrate into the nature and meanwhile illustrates that nature and human is the same and not binaries.

Figure 1. Mushroom Picking Championship, 2021.
Photo: Aivars Ivbulis.

Also, Valda, dressed in a yellow velvet dress with frills as a chanterelle herself, sometimes flows among the dancers, but at some point the actress's participation in the movement dramaturgy ends and she observes the natural processes already from the side-lines. That could be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, as the gap in between nature and human hard to cross, secondly, as the stepping back and giving agency to the new generation being open and able to be with not be in nature. Quoting lines from the performance verbalized by Valda:

Where do we live? How do we live? What are we doing? We are destroying nature! We are destroying ourselves! What kind of symbiosis can we talk about here? But man must be in symbiosis with nature, otherwise the world will perish, there will be nothing left! If humanity dies, what will happen? What will remain? Mushrooms.

Gradually shedding layers of clothing, performers' movements intertwine, visualizing invisible connections with one another and embodying mycelia structures through choreography. Spectators are confronted with the landscape where nature silently accepts everything, even eats it, recycles it, adapts to it, in other words – nature continues with or without human intervention believing in a longevity of the nature.

Performance, containing split between verbal part and nonverbal part, represents that nature does not speak in verbal human language instead implicating physical language as a tool of building up longstanding human and non-human relations. Choice of interconnected choreography is the artistic strategy in the space of ecotheatrical performance opening up possibility to embody nature suffering in plastic pollution and absorbing it, leaving legacy of micropollution in nature, in mushrooms which accidentally could end up on the plate of the human. Message that goes through the performance reminds: polluting nature is polluting ourselves at the same time putting us under threat of survival comparing to the nature as the strong ally.

Embodying bees through materiality of hive: *Bee Matter*

Multimedial, physical performance *Bee Matter* (Iveta Pole, *Homo Novus Festival*, 2021) is created as an audio-visual rock concert, where the role of a rockstar is played by a bee queen, wearing a black motorcycle helmet on her head, ironically illustrating the bee's eyes looking at everything from its improvised throne – a pollen-dusted office chair. The performance, like a peculiar music video for the buzzing of bees, affects the viewer's senses, awakening the very sensitivity to nature and dropping a drop of tar to self-absorption, while narcissistically looking not in the reflection of the stream, but in the video camera of a mobile device.

There are six performers – Johhan Rosenberg, Lea Sekulic, Keithy Kuuspu, Jette Loona Hermanis, JI-Seo-hwon, Liisa Saaremäel –, outwardly androgynous, with waist-length, wavy, blond hair wigs on their heads, in beige underwear, with sports shoes on their feet. Zooming as an indication of being in their insect environment. Performers lack individuality in visual meaning; however, they retell onstage matriarchical hierarchy of the hive. Audience is attracted by anthropomorphised scenes of bee relations, but at the same time leaves a feeling of an outsider.

Figure 2. Bee Matter, 2021. Photo: Alan Proosa.

A yellow, circus-like round arena coloured by a beam of light. Yellow-black, pulsating graphics filled with hexagonal elements in the background and equally dynamic music rhythms. From time-to-time phrases are heard, shouted into the microphone, about a body with a sting, with wings, with a snout, but the texts are fragmentary and remain in the background of the physical theatre experience as irrelevant, placards. Transcending the memory of the human body in search of new movements, theatre makers create ecoimaginary through the senses, including, hearing, sight, smell, taste.

As Chaudhuri pointed out when actor embodies animal and spectator witnesses it, *it is like crossing another culture, hearing a strange language, experiencing a frightening recognition that is at the same time a delicious bafflement* [Chaudhuri 2017: 4]. Ecotheatrical space is made up from material, sensual elements including sounds and colours, such as vibrant buzzing and zooming of bees, lot of yellow colours immersing into pollen dust and sticky honey. Spectators are treated with this honey by bees. Androgyne performers faint, shake, sink, faint – they break their ties with the human movement structure. Androginity in their look and costumes lead to deliberation of faciality. Repeating visual elements on stage prevents the human mind from seeing the individual, generalizing and equating to a single, unified image of the bee. The important role of bees in the ecosystem is highlighted by a close-up video of an army of attacking bees flying straight – in a frontal attack. Bees are narrated as soldiers or even the last knights of nature who keep alive the world populated with consumerists.

On video projection made by artist Katrīna Neiburga audience is offered to take the bee's point of view, the video projection allows spectator to follow the bee's path through a field of cereals and poppies, with a possible sound of how the bee hears/sees. That is depicted as claustrophobic buzzing and a dizzying trajectory. Such bioperformative turn brings spectator even closer to the imagined possibility to look at the world through the bee's eyes – to exchange point of views – therefore coming closer to cross imagined species boundary.

Generalising concept of physical performance, all bees look the same for human, all humans look the same for bees, narrowing the line between binary approach us [humans] and they [bees] and emphasizing idea of *naturecultures* brought up by Donna Haraway [Haraway 2003].

Summing up, director Iveta Pole uses a corporeal artistic strategy to exchange roles – bees become humanistic, humans become *beeistic* – addressing the mind and the body of spectator by tasting honey, changing point of views (attacked by bees or flying as bees), using vibrant ultrasounds.

Thinking with the deer: *Last Night of The Deer*

Ecotheatrical performance *Last Night of the Deer* (*Homo Novus Festival*, Riga, 2022) is made by two theatre practitioners – Jānis Balodis from Latvia, Eastern Europe, and Nahuel Cano from Patagonia in Argentina, places which they characterize as places *where dead are not really dead and trees can speak back*.

Rooted in *verbatim* approach and made as an ecopoetic dialog mythical performance takes spectators on a journey reconstructing real route made by the authors from Klaipeda port to the Riga in a dark, snowstormy night. They were driving, taking roles of the Driver and Co-pilot and sharing personal memories and opinions, choosing smaller side road until they hit the deer on the road or deer hit the car on the road. Both authors announced this road-type performance as *a story about all-too-human forests and the more-than-human spirits that inhabit it*.

Conversation which opens the story starts with the reference to the mother of Driver saying that she is ethnographer with special interest in symbolic meaning of birds in Latvian folklore, therefore Driver also has knowledge rooted in pagane folklore, including *how to turn into a werewolf, where to find the dead from the plague, how to recognise places that witches visit*.

Whereas Co-pilot describes flashbacks of his childhood and mythical figure of his father which pop to his mind while entering supermarket. Theatre makers nominate supermarket as modern city dwellers' *forest* where humans are just *confused animals*. Anonymous tuna can on the *Lidl* shelf reminds Co-pilot of his memories being a child and his father as the person who *rode horses, hunted birds with stones, knew how to kill a chicken, a pig, a duck, knew how to fell a tree, he fished*

to have something to eat when he got lost, took out of jail his gambler father, made fires in the night, and knew how to guide himself back by the stars, however, later on father's figure is described by elements such as money, military service, work in supermarket. As Co-pilot points out, *my father, I guess, is a wild animal, but his children are city animals.*

If mother bears ecofeministic attitude towards nature including intuitive knowledge and closeness to pagan rituals related to nature, on the contrary, the father's image is made out of patriarchal demonstration of power over nature despite his knowledge how to get fire in forest and how to find a way by stars. They exchange personal stories until the moment when car hit the deer/deer hit the car which is characterized by Co-driver: *the deer does not understand what has happened to him, we are now inhabiting a confused space*. This metaphysical space in between life and death of the animal is also shared space with spectators as one of them is invited to embody the animal.

Figure 3. Last Night of the Deer, 2022. Photo: Aivars Ivbulis.

Other spectators are given the role of the forest, embodying figures of trees in the dark room of culture house in periphery of Riga. Mythical approach forms performance as a magical realism ritual where spectators are invited to take part as a witness of journey from anthropocentrism closer to the ecocentrism.

Presence of the deer is vocalized through the rhythmical soundscape reminding scraping of the deer hooves. Also, the presence of the animal is symbolically depicted with real antlers – element from the real deer. These antlers are given to one of the spectators who is invited to try out being deer who currently crosses the road in

between life and death turning storyline again from consumeristic existentialism issues back to spiritual process where non-human is alive.

Deer's thoughts are spoken aloud using *thinking-with* approach: saying that the forest is here to say a farewell and conjure up a moment with nice summer day where the deer is eating fresh, juicy leaves, sharing them with others; later on, remembering early days near the river, wind that shows the way and at one moment forest which becomes unrecognisable turning its back to the deer as a signal that deer has to leave. Balancing on the thin line in between life and death deer describes his farewell until Co-pilot puts the point at the end with smashing a stone – so the wounded animal could be free to go, leaving just a physical body or, as described by authors, *just a meat now* which is left to eat for four cruel dogs, domesticated by a human yet wandering, angry pets.

Authors of the ecotheatrical performance *Last Night of the Deer* create shared space, rooted in mythical, pagane atmosphere, described in parallels, for instance, supermarket as human natural biotope and animal as soulful entity with personal memories. However, human relates to the animal through anthropomorphic approach, lending to the deer humans voice together with humans' memories about beautiful moments in life connected with childhood, peaceful days in nature and tastes of the world, and notions about the death.

Conclusion

Although there are still metaphorical and anthropomorphising features in the depiction of non-human entities on stage, close reading of the examples of theatre of species reveals that theatre practitioners in Latvia are already approaching the narrative of interspecies relations.

By attributing specific roles to spectators – such as forest, deer, bee – and also exchanging them through performance, corporeal involvement of spectators is intensified through their senses, therefore deepening their ecological consciousness. In ecotheatrical performances, physicality as embodiment comes to the fore, alongside both verbal and non-verbal invitations to the spectator not to *think about* but already to *think with* nature which resonates with posthumanism ideas and enlivens, the so-called, postmodern shamanism.

By blurring boundaries between human and non-human, ecotheatre brings up a new landscape where nature is shared space: all entities there are interactive entities highlighting interrelatedness. Understanding of the concept of shared space is essential precondition to approach environmental activism through performing arts spreading shared responsibility idea already beyond ecotheatrical performances.

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DEPTHS AND SHALLOWNESS OF COMING-OF-AGE STORY "THE PIT"

Mg.art. **Daniela Zacmane**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Abstract

Over the course of last three decades, Latvian cinema has experienced significant changes. Since country's renewal of independence and return to Europe many socio-political transformations took place. Film industry also changed a lot. In the 21st century films mostly are made on the basis of digital technology; film directors can freely choose the subjects of the films. We may presume that the characters portrayed on the screen have undergone changes, for example, representation of mother, father and coming-of-age young people. However, have these changes truly occurred?

The essay will focus on coming-of-age story "The Pit", made by Latvian film director Dace Puce (*Dace Pūce*) (2020). Melodrama elements or – the backbone of melodrama can be recognized in the aesthetics of the film. The analyses of film will be based on article by Linda Williams "Mega-Melodrama! Vertical and Horizontal Suspensions of the "Classical"", where the author points out four features of nowadays melodrama. Although melodrama resonates with many social problems which are articulated according to aesthetics of melodrama, multiple stereotypes can be identified in the film when analysing the plot, the image of the victim and the way the viewers sympathy is directed to.

Keywords: *melodrama, modality, coming-of-age, The Pit*.

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

Several directors of Latvian cinema in this century: Janis Nords ("Amateur", 2008), Juris Kursietis ("Modris", 2014), Andris Gauja ("The Lesson", 2014), Renars Vimba ("Mellow Mud", 2016), Madara Dislere ("Paradise '89", 2018) have made their first full-length feature films as coming-of-age stories. Also, in other places of the world, the coming-of-age story is often the director's first or one of the first full-length feature films: Roy Andersson's "A Swedish Love Story" (1970), Richard Linklater's "Dazed and Confused" (1993). Director Francois Truffaut's career also began with a coming-of-age film. The release of "The 400 Blows" (1959) not only liberated the coming-of-age genre but also transcended numerous cinematic clichés associated with classical cinema, paving the way for a new wave of innovation and artistic expression. The film also surprised film critics and audience with its open ending. The young man Antoine Doinel (played by Jean-Pierre Léaud) runs to the sea, then he turns around and looks directly at the camera; according to several critics, that is when the French New Wave began.

The essay will focus on coming-of-age story "The Pit", made by Latvian film director Dace Puce in 2020; it is her first feature film. I argue that this coming-of-age film, which may be categorized as melodrama, regardless of being made in a free and democratic country by a woman film director (it was exceptional in Soviet time) falls into the trap of gender stereotypes.

The genre of melodrama is basically associated with the stories that have strong emotional effect on the viewer. This emotional intensity in films is achieved by various audiovisual means along the specific narrative scheme. The "melos" (from Greek μέλος – song, tune, melody) as Thomas Elsaesser writes "is given to drama by means of lighting, montage, visual rhythm, décor, style of acting, music" [Elsaesser 1991: 78].

Coming-of-age story focuses on the growth of a protagonist from childhood to adulthood and this genre, at least in Latvian cinema, has mostly been made in aesthetics of melodrama. It can be explained by the comparatively new paradigm in film theory – modality of melodrama. As Christine Gledhill writes: "The melodramatic specificity, then, lies in its operation as modality: as a mode of aesthetic articulation distilled and adaptable across a range of genres, and across national cultures" [Gledhill 2018: xiii].

The story of "The Pit" follows a ten-year-old boy Markuss (played by Damirs Onackis), who must start a new life in the Latvian countryside. He now lives with his grandmother since his mother has refused from her son, but the father has died. After Markuss has an "incident" with neighbour's daughter, nobody is friendly with him, except Sailor with a mysterious past. As they both start working on stained-glass window a special bond between them develops. The plot, at least from the point of view of filmmakers (judging from publicity materials etc.), made by film distributors seems

logic. To a large extent the film's narrative and visual style corresponds to "classical cinema" (or what David Bordwell described as "Classical Hollywood Cinema") pattern: time mostly is linear (with exception of some flashbacks), the narrative is a chain of cause and effect, it is structured with clear beginning, middle and end, aspects of space and time are subordinated to the narrative element. Also, the characters have steady traits, their action is psychologically and goal oriented etc., but is it so?

The film opens with the protagonist Markuss running; as it turns out later, he has lured and left the girl Emily in the pit. "Help me out Markuss!" shouts the girl from the dark depths of the pit in the forest. "It won't be that simple," says Markuss looking down. After a moment he leaves Emily alone there and runs home. Film scholar Linda Williams in her article "Mega-Melodrama! Vertical and Horizontal Suspensions of the "Classical"" draws attention that competition with TV series has in this century caused new dynamization of the vertical space of the screen. Today's popular big-screen films are structured vertically (and basically spatially), while in series horizontally and putting in front category of time (first of all, the serial itself is stretched in time, that is, in several series).

In her article Linda Williams isolates four features of melodrama, which will be used analysing "The Pit" in this essay. These features are:

1) suspense which is described as "prolonged anxiety produced by awaiting the outcome of a dangerous situation";

2) the drive to achieve moral legibility in the eventual resolution of the suspense. The key question here is: "Who deserves to live, who to die?";

3) the need to locate the goodness that deserves to live in a home "space of innocence";

4) excess [Williams 2012: 524–526].

In melodrama, characters and situations are often portrayed in stark, exaggerated contrasts – good versus evil, love versus hatred, pure innocence versus wickedness, and so on. Film scholar Peter Brooks (whom Williams also quotes in her essay) has precisely described melodrama as "logic of the excluded middle" [Brooks 1992: 62]. The lack of the middle can manifest itself in a direct and tangible sense through physical actions. Climbing, flying, falling down, tumbling etc., all presuppose uncertainty, tension, climax and some resolution. Williams mentions several films (for example, "Titanic", "Vertical Limit", "Cliffhanger"), the titles of which refer to verticality. Numerous film scholars, it must be emphasized, highlight a fundamental paradox wherein the perception of melodrama as a genre primarily for females stems from a particular perspective. Historically, the rhetoric of melodrama has been linked with action films.

In "The Pit", not to mention the title of the film, vertical movement happens constantly, both literally and figuratively. Along the pit there is also another

"underground" place – cellar. Tragic events will take place there. The body of prematurely born child of a young woman Smaida (she is frequently beaten by her husband) will be discovered there. Valuable stained-glass window at Sailor's shed, which once was made by Markuss father and will be finished by his son, stands for upward verticality. This is also a very powerful metaphor – the window high above lets the light in making it shine in different colours.

However, despite impeccable visuality, this verticality arises some deeper questions along – will somebody get out of it and when? – especially the pit. Many film scholars have noted that melodrama can be a powerful genre to articulate through individual characters social tension. Thomas Elsaesser in his profound article about family melodrama explores Hollywood films made in 1940–1963 proving that this form of melodrama so manifestly reflected and helped to articulate cultural and psychological context of the time. So does "The Pit". The film deals with many social problems like abandoned child, alcoholism, violence against woman and gender prejudice. Melodrama can be self-conscious social force that resonates with reality. There must always be someone the spectator sympathizes with in melodrama. One of the characteristic features of melodramas in general "is that they concentrate on the point of view of the victim," Elsaesser writes [Elsaesser 1991: 86]. Suffering of a protagonist may cause strong emotions of a viewer and that is what we expect from melodrama. Emotionless melodrama is either an oxymoron or a failure.

Markuss, and this is an obvious choice by the filmmakers, is presented as the key victim. The boy's father has died (from drug overdose), his mother (we see in one short episode) doesn't want to take care of her son, he has no friends, he lives at home with his grandmother; Markuss' only salvation is drawing – he has a talent for it, just like his father once had. The whole narrative is structured in a way which leaves no space for doubt that Markuss is the one we should sympathize with. The news that Markuss has left Emily in the pit spreads in the neighbourhood. Some people afterwards look at the boy with suspicion, Emily's mother shouts at him as he approaches the girl again, Emily's brother and his friends attack him in the street. The cause of these effects can be traced back in some of flashbacks. In one scene Markuss remembers hearing conversation between his mother Sveta and his granny. "He needs mother! Child is a gift," reminds granny. "I didn't need this damned gift," Sveta answers, adding that the father of Markuss didn't grow up even after the birth of a child; the only thing he was interested in, was painting. There is a cause to the effects now. Behaviour of Markuss has explanation or even a kind of justification. There is also another aspect – a distinctive verticality in valuation becomes apparent within the narrative. Father of Markuss was a talented artist and this is something that makes him "more valuable" in comparison with mother who just is neglecting her son (the mother's vocation remains undisclosed).

Most of the Latvian coming-of-age films made in recent decades represent existing "modern" models of families and related conflicts. Teenage stories usually deal with conflicts with parents. Often – with one of them, because the other one (usually the father) is missing – he does not participate in a young person's life. The contrast between the narrative of societal acceptance of divorce and single-parenting in reality and its representation in films indicates a prevalent societal dichotomy. In "the real world", there has been a growing acceptance of divorce and the choice to raise children as a single parent, reflecting evolving societal attitudes and changing family structures. Meanwhile a one-parent family in many cases is represented in films as a crucial deviation and this kind of model usually serves as a cause of serious effects. Since the "missing" person mostly is father, the mother who doesn't cope with her life and who has problems with their sons is a typical character. It can be observed in many Latvian coming-of-age stories such as "Mother, I love you" (Janis Nords, 2013), "Modris" or "Amateur". Such cinematic representations can be viewed as a reflection of societal anxieties, traditional norms, or rather, a desire to amplify melodrama for narrative purposes.

Verticality and hierarchy functions on two levels: between Markuss' parents also between Markuss and Emily. The missing mother's role for Markuss can apparently be partly filled by his grandmother, illustrating a certain degree of substitutability. However, the role of the father remains notably irreplaceable, showcasing a hierarchy in parental roles. Markuss and Emily find themselves situated within a clear hierarchical position, both symbolically and directly. Most of the flashbacks consist of episodes when Emily is in the bottom of the pit while Markuss is standing up there looking down cruelly at the girl. "Help me out, Markuss!" she cries jumping up and waving desperately with her arms. "It won't be that simple," says Markuss, letting counting-out game (this is the way not to take his own responsibility to decide the unlucky fate of Emily) he leaves her there and runs home. Markuss hides at home under the blanket. Occasionally, echoes of Emily's distress reverberate through his consciousness, evoked by recollections of "the episode". He resolutely refrains from engaging in discourse concerning these tormenting memories. Markuss counts dead flies on the windowsill and draws gloomy and scary pictures. The boy suffers. But what about little girl Emily and her mother?

Emily's mother (played by Inese Kucinska-Lauksteine) will desperately search for her missing daughter. When somebody fortunately finds and rescues the girl, mother breaks into Markuss' house. Melodrama clearly here manifests itself, quoting Thomas Elsaesser, as "a special form of mise-en-scène" [Elsaesser 1991: 75]. The mise-en-scène can be described as spectacular. It is dark outside and it is raining. Emily's mother cries, her tears fuse with raindrops on her face as she reveals to the granny the terrible truth about what Markuss has done. This is a very emotional episode.

"I venture to argue that the primary work of melodrama (..) had fundamentally been that of seeking a better justice," writes Linda Williams [Williams 2018: 214]. However, the mise-en-scène reveals the opposite. Emily's mother Sandra, here and in some other episodes looks hysterical, she is full of suspicion, even mean. For example, in one scene Emily's mother brings some sweets to the social worker begging she arranges the boy's mental health is checked on the basis of his horrifying drawings. In summary, the portrayal of the maternal character is constructed in a manner that fails and apparently has not been intended to evoke sympathy or compassionate understanding from the audience. The hierarchy of victims can be identified here. Hyperbolized version of it will read as follows – Emily is expected to make sacrifices for the benefit of Markuss, underlining a perspective where one person's (girl's) welfare is considered more significant than another's (boy's).

It is essential to reveal the further plot. Sandra (again it is raining heavily) later gets into a car accident. In a high speed her car crashes into the bridge railings and falls down into the water (verticality again, this time under the water). She is punished and since melodrama usually contains moral lesson, the question "why?" might appear.

Sandra's conduct aligns with the aesthetic principles of "excess", embodying an exaggerated and amplified approach to expression and action. In the book "Lovely Mothers" Jana Kukaine reflects on relationship between mothers and daughters – the issue is essential part of feminism theory. The author analyses also Freudian concepts, coming to a conclusion that "Getting lost in the labyrinth of these interpretations, one can notice that in all versions the same motive appears: the mother-daughter relationship is full of contradictions and tension, it is always pathological, varying from passionate affection to icy indifference and hatred" [Kukaine 2016: 170]. Mother Sandra behaves hysterically, which tends to be presented as "too big affection" to her daughter. However, "the excluded middle" approach has excluded one important aspect and it is – the motivation. Mother of Emily behaves and reacts in a certain way because she has ground for it – her daughter has been lured and kept in the pit; she has been in great danger. Emily's physical location down in the pit causes escalation of her mother's emotions. The film conspicuously contains a clash between melodramatic representation and psychological authenticity.

It must be pointed out that mostly the main protagonists of Latvian coming-of-age films are of male gender and the affection (or just the opposite) is usually between son and mothers; only recently several film directors have changed that. The most vivid example is film "Lame-os" by Marta Elina Martinsone (2021). The film director puts in the centre of the film three girls – ninth graders Sarmite, Sveta and Katrina in 1999, just on the eve of Millennium celebration, besides there is modality

of comedy instead of modality of melodrama in the aesthetics of the film. Martinsone approaches to Latvian coming-of-age film with a fresh and unique touch.

The second feature of melodrama described by Linda Williams – the drive to achieve moral legibility in the eventual resolution of the suspense and the question who deserves to live, who to die? manifests itself in episodes with Emily in the pit and even more in the car crash scene. We don't know whether the little girl will get out of the place. Several hypotheses may arise regarding further events and this in a way equalizes as, the viewers, with Sandra, Emily's mother – her shock comes from presumptions "what could have happened...". We don't know whether Sandra will escape from the car either. Underwater world, where Sandra falls into seems like another reality. Coincidences, chance, time pressure (too late or too early) are typical elements of melodrama. Markuss, who happens to be near the accident, helps Sandra. Emerging from the river, both figures stand in a state of purification, having shed the residues of insults, suspicions, and animosity. The profoundly evocative musical accompaniment to this scene conveys a sense of drama intertwined with optimism. The place where the horizontal and vertical lines cross, the sacred appears.

The shed of Sailor (played by Indra Burkovska) with stained-glass window can be interpreted as what Linda Williams describes as another feature of melodrama – that is the "space of innocence", the space where goodness is located. The visuality presented in the concluding scenes achieves a nearly tactile quality (cinematographer Gatis Grinbergs). The interplay of light and texture becomes prominent as Markuss completes the intricately designed glass-stained window. Illuminated by sunlight, particles of dust dance in the air, accompanying the burgeoning luminosity that permeates the expansive room through the art piece. This intensification reaches a zenith wherein the delineation between vertical and horizontal orientations becomes indiscernible.

The character of Sailor deserves exploration – it is so complicated and unique. If "The Pit" has its depths, then this is there. Sailor does not consider himself to be a victim (although he had grounds for it) but accepts his way of life as a conscious choice. There is no bitterness in this character. All he says is direct and wise. The melodrama is focused on "excess"; however, a notable juncture occurs wherein a seemingly static interlude prevails, suggesting a cognitive departure from anticipated heightened events. Markuss has discovered a secret about Sailor – he by chance sees that Sailor has woman's body. An inward process takes place – he thinks, he doubts. And in this case, instead of falling down into his own pit of disappointment, anger or self-pity, he chooses not to. Invisible vertical and internal movement proves to be the strongest one.

To conclude, the coming-of-age film "The Pit" uses features of melodrama described by L. Williams: excess, suspense, the drive to achieve moral legibility and the

"space of innocence" for the goodness. The suspense has primarily been constructed through the utilization of vertical movement, employing opposing downward and upward spaces. While the visual elements serve their intended purpose, it is evident that a stereotypical and shallow victim-oriented hierarchy underlies them, casting doubt upon the achievement of moral legibility and after all – also emotional power.

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COLOUR ANXIETY IN MARIA ZENKOVA'S ART: WITH LOVE FROM KYIV

Mg.art. **Iveta Feldmane**
Art academy of Latvia

Abstract

The war in Ukraine has dramatically altered the fate of many people, forcing them to make difficult decisions or even leaving them down a blind alley. The only choice for Ukrainian artist Maria Zenkova (1992) to escape the war was to leave her home, her job and sane environment in Kiev. Now Maria is a refugee and her new home is in Riga. The aim of the article is to find out how the anxiety of war affects the artist's life. How does disturbing news from her homeland affect her art? The representation of traumatic and affective experience in artwork is an issue where Affect theory can be used as a theoretical tool. The author interprets Maria Zenkova's artistic practice, highlighting some of the recent artworks. The interpretation of the artworks, along with the artist's own commentary, is based on the Affect theory, where an affect is viewed as an intense force that affects the body at the biological and emotional level. The article concludes that, despite the apparent denial, the theme of war appears in Maria Zenkova's art in the form of affective figures. The artist's active involvement in practices of collective support shows that in crisis situations such actions are even more important than the exhibition as an art event.

Keywords: *Affect theory, trauma, painting, Maria Zenkova.*

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In the spring of 2022, hundreds and thousands of Ukrainian refugees began to flow to Riga and other Latvian cities. Among them were Ukrainian artists fleeing the war. Also, Maria Zenkova. Clothes in a sports bag and a cat in a container: that was all of Maria's capital. But it turns out that artists and other representatives of creative industries tend to act as a "rapid response unit" in crisis situations. Arriving in Latvia, Maria immediately began to look for opportunities to paint, made contacts, got involved in the art environment, sought cooperation with other Ukrainian artists living in Latvia. Just a month later, the first group show, *War and Peace*, curated by Maria, took place, in which dozens of Ukrainian and Latvian artists participated. Soon after, the *Ukrainian album* exhibition followed, in the Academic library of the University of Latvia, and in September, Maria Zenkova opened a solo show in the European Union House, *With love from Kyiv*. The purpose of this article is to examine whether the theory of affect and some aspects of trauma studies can be useful in the analysis of an artwork, choosing the series of works by Ukrainian artist Maria Zenkova (1992) *With love from Kyiv* as an object of theoretical reflection. The research question is whether the Ukrainian war is represented as affect in the works of an artist who fled the war, or whether it remains outside the artworks. In addition to the theory of affect as a tool for interpreting art, the article also uses the methods of formal and iconographic analysis of the artwork, with four artworks as case studies. The first part of the article deals with the portraits painted by Maria Zenkova, which are interpreted within the framework of affect theory as materialized affects and in the context of trauma studies as icons of memory. In the second part, the representation of anxiety caused by the war in Zenkova's paintings is read as an ironic and conceptual message. Conclusions are drawn at the end of the article.

Representation of the theme of war in the portraits

Maria Zenkova's story resonates to a large extent with the fate of many Ukrainian refugees who, due to the war started by Russia, were forced to leave their homeland in order to look for opportunities not only to survive, but also to continue their professional activity. Maria Zenkova is a professional artist, painter, who was a teacher and doctoral student at the Kyiv Academy of Decorative Arts and Design until the beginning of the war. Looking at Maria Zenkova's works made during the last year, one can ask – what does the anxiety caused by the war mean in the artist's life, what impression does the disturbing news from her homeland leave on her art? The concepts of colour and anxiety mentioned in the title of the article show the possible coexistence of these concepts in cases where the interpretation of a visual artwork takes into account the perceptual component of the artwork and its ability to cause affective reactions in the observer. Along

with the formal analysis of painting, which investigates such form parameters as composition, colour, rhythm, texture and others in painting, the reading of the meaning and content is undeniably important. An artwork cannot be isolated from the environment and circumstances in which it is created. From the point of view of sociological art history, every artistic or creative activity is always rooted in a historically defined social and political situation. An artist's creative freedom and ideas cannot be completely detached from institutional influence, even when the artist seemingly chooses to do so [Wolff 1984]. What kind of art is created under the conditions of war and what is the relationship of the artist with the reality of war? On the one hand, as art and media theorist Boris Groys (1947) looking back at the classical period in art points out, "*The artist needed the warrior as a topic for art* (..) *The contemporary warrior no longer needs an artist to acquire fame and inscribe his feats into the universal memory. For this purpose the contemporary warrior has all the contemporary media at his immediate disposal*" [Groys 2008: 120]. And indeed, in the recent creative practice of Maria Zenkova, including the series of paintings, *With love from Kyiv*, the theme of war inevitably enters, although the artist herself denies it in words and says: "*Let journalists talk about war. I paint for a living.*"[1] In Maria's interpretation, the theme of war is not revealed directly or in the descriptive way, but rather is present in an anxious, expressive artistic expression, when colour, line and vibrating stroke "speak".

In the 21st century art there are no strict boundaries between genres. The portrait has also undergone changes, not only due to the entry of new media into art. Using painting as a traditional medium, contemporary artists create conceptual ideas, speak in the language of symbols, solve identity problems and express bodily experiences. The artist's self-reflection, capturing his external features on the canvas, is not an end in itself, but a means to discover other symbolic levels and meanings. Maria Zenkova generalizes the self-portrait and suggests it as a symbolic portrait, as a symbolic portrait of youth (Figure 1).

The title of the painting also confirms this. Analysing this work from a formal point of view, it is possible to distinguish individual elements, where their evaluation and interrelationships only partially express the meaning of the work. At the same time, one can observe and evaluate the manner and technique of painting, which reveals something more than the artist's temperament, taste and aesthetic priorities.

The self-portrait has been painted expressively, with free, wide strokes. Although the overall atmosphere of the work is seemingly optimistic, the figure conveys determination as it is rendered in motion, as if in leap or even flight, with its gaze

[1] Author's interview with Maria Zenkova on 11.10.22.

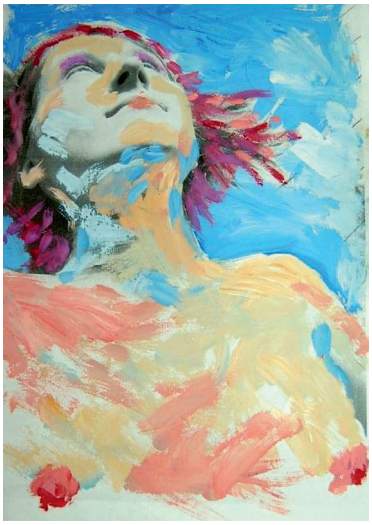

Figure 1. M. Zenkova "Youth" 2022, o/c, 85 × 60 cm
(personal archive of M. Zenkova).

directed upwards. However, there are a number of elements that spoil this "joy". The young woman's naked half-figure seems torn from a finished composition, it is tense and fragmentary. Of course, such conditionality of the figure is completely possible in realistic, figurative painting as well, but in this case one should think about deliberate incompleteness and the gesture of the artist permeated with anxiety. The tension in the body is underscored by the cool pink strokes of paint on the bare chest, which resemble scratches or bleeding wounds. There is an obvious reference here to the protest action held in March 2022 in Riga in front of the Embassy of the Russian Federation, where young half-naked women symbolically smeared themselves with blood, expressing their attitude towards the atrocities committed by the Russian military and in solidarity with the humiliated and raped Ukrainian women.[1] The interpretation of Zenkova's art is also possible using one of the angles of the theory of affect, which basically does not cancel the formal analysis presented above, but gives it additional grounding and a dimension of thought that recognizes the ability of matter to be affective, or in other words – to be an intense force. In recent decades, affect theory has taken an important place among other critical discourses. Affect is conceptualized as an *intense force* in the humanities and philosophy [Ott 2017]. The main theorists of the concept of affect as an *intense force* are Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995), Felix Guattari (1939–1992) actualized the influence of affect, calling it

[1] About 200 woman protest against sexual violence in war. Available: https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/latvian-women-protest-against-sexual-violence-in-war.a453144/ (viewed 24.04.2022.)

"affectation", which is the collision and interaction of two or more bodies (organic or inorganic), while "affect" is the product or result of this affectation [Colman 2010: 12]. The theoretical aspect of affect as an *intense force* is applicable in the interpretation of an artwork and in the creation of a philosophical concept. For example, Deleuze uses the scope of the Theory of Affect as a method in the interpretation of an artwork, analysing bodies painted by the British artist Francis Bacon (1909–1992). Reflecting on Bacon's works, Deleuze emphasizes the importance of area, texture, and especially colour in the plane of the painting and calls Bacon a great colourist, highlighting his ability to paint the texture of the body (flesh) and monochrome areas of colour in a nuanced way and with different intensity [Deleuze 2003]. Matter is given expression by affect "*It should be said of all art that, in relation to the precepts or visions they give us, artists are presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects. They not only create them in their work, they give them to us and make us become with them, they draw us into the compound*" [Deleuze, Guattari 1994: 175].

The study of affect is closely related to trauma studies. An art theorist who studies the representation of trauma in art, Jill Bennett refers to Deleuze, who "*subverts the opposition between thought and sensation, arguing that whereas philosophers think in concepts, artists think in terms of sensations. Sensation is generated through the artist's engagement with the medium, through color and line in the case of the painter* (..) *so sensation is what is being painted*" [Bennett 2005: 37]. Trauma studies in art focuses on the study of trauma experienced individually or collectively by an individual or a group of society and its representation in an artwork. Until now, one of the most prominent researchers in this field, the British art scholar Griselda Pollock, pointed out five characteristics of trauma, including the most controversial aspect in the discourse on trauma, which is that trauma is considered "unrepresentable", that is, something that resists representation. She suggests that: "*we should not perceive trauma as an "event" that we can never know, but think about trauma through "the traces of encounter" with the event. Therefore, the encounter with trauma presents a kind of "afterwardness", which can be extended in meaning*" [Pollock 2013: 4]. The representation of trauma and the problems associated with it raise a series of questions to which a formal analysis of the artwork cannot provide comprehensive answers. Jill Bennett takes a multifaceted view of the echoes of trauma, violence, and oppression in art as a result of socio-political collisions. Trauma, as a unique phenomenon, can be encoded or hidden in an artwork in a variety of ways and its recognition can be difficult. Bennett argues that "*The trauma, it often seemed, was not evidenced in the narrative component*" [Bennett 2005: 1].

The task of a visual art researcher is to find exactly those means of artistic expression that make us talk about the trauma aspect in art. Feeling the boundaries between the "outside" or form (or sign) and "inside" or content meaning of an

artwork is crucial in the context of trauma. Formal analysis tools, such as stylistic, iconographic, compositional, colour, rhythmic, texture, etc. analysis in fine arts has not been cancelled. However, contemporary art forms, which often use non-traditional media, do not always lend themselves to this form analysis.

In one of the artworks of the collection, Maria Zenkova paints a head expressively (Figure 2).

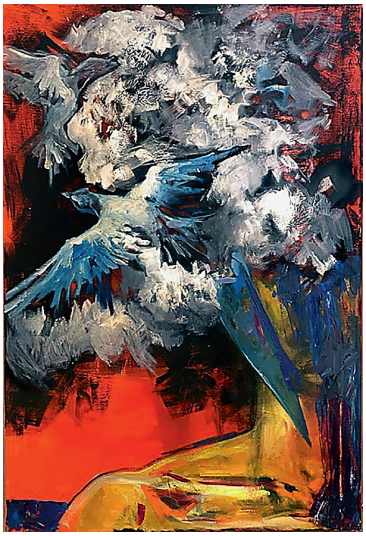

Figure 2. M. Zenkova "The War. Start" 2022,
o/c, 80 × 60 cm (personal archive of M. Zenkova).

The exposed shoulder and neck fragments are the only details that can be read in the composition as parts of the human figure. The rest is an explosion of colour on a burning red background, panic of disturbed birds and falling fragments. The words mentioned in the name of the painting – *The War. Start* clearly asserts the theme. Words, which are the verbalization of thought, create a narrative and record memories as a "story", but the vision, the visual image, is recorded by the "eye memory". By creating an artwork that contains a reference to a traumatic experience, the artist has inevitably stimulated the memory, re-actualizing those visual signs (visions) in which this traumatic experience was registered. A visual sign always has a relationship with the body and thinking. Arts and visual culture researcher Jill Bennett argues for the ability of a visual sign or memory icon to affect, citing medieval images of religious content that were meant to inspire piety as an example. A memory icon can function as a stimulus for affect. She writes: "*The conveyance of suffering through imagery in this context is possible only insofar as images have the capacity to address the spectator's own bodily memory; to touch the viewer who feels rather than simply sees the event*" [Bennett

2005: 36]. The narrative framework is not the most essential, it is not a mandatory component in the reading of this painting, but rather an icon of memory – a wound, a fragment that tends to injure the neck. The skin will be split open, the flesh will be wounded. Thus, bodily response comes before narrative, morality, emotion, or empathy. The search for affect is essentially a journey into "darker waters", where the unconscious, the enigmatic and the inevitable always lurk.

An ironic and conceptual representation

Along with decorative depictions of blooming chestnuts, chrysanthemums, sunflowers, seagulls and Riga cats, a series of symbolic works appear within the series, in which the message to be read resonates with the artist's confusion and fear. Many of Maria Zenkova's artworks in this series are more ironic than critical. They are like fairy-tale motifs painted by a child, reminiscent of scenes from naive horror films. For example, in the work *Situation*, what can be read as a direct reference to the well-known fairy tale of the Brothers Grimm *Red Riding Hood and the Wolf*. Trauma defies representation. It hides. Instead, "*Falling Bombs" become soap bubbles because "everything will burst like a soap bubble and disappear*," Maria says.[1] In words she does not hide that she does not want to talk about war in art, however, the fear caused by the war, insecurity about the future, no matter how she tries to avoid directly representing these feelings, emotions in art, or constructing a specific narrative, is still present. Such concealment or denial can take the form of naïve or openly ironic expressions.

Who's coming? is one of the most elaborate works in this collection. A group of men moves towards the viewer (Figure 3).

Figure 3. M. Zenkova "Who's coming?" 2022, o/c, 60 × 80 cm (personal archive of M. Zenkova).

[1] Author's interview with Maria Zenkova on 24.10.22.

In words Maria Zenkova describes it like "evil face of any aggression"[1]. The figures depicted in black suits could be mythological characters who decide what is good and what is bad. There is a question in the title of the painting, which leaves the choice up to the viewer. The artist emphasizes her ignorance, does not hide the fact that the division of roles into "victims" and "villains" is problematic, in her opinion. Trauma studies raise the issue of how the roles of victim and villain manifest in art. If the artist, experiencing a traumatic reality, was himself in the role of a victim, then his narration in art will most likely be directly from his own position – the victim's. Then an artwork can become a kind of testimony, a "view from the inside", a story of an eyewitness, which the viewer can perceive as a documentary. Video and photography are undeniably the most effective art media that can convey such a message. Also, an installation that uses real artifacts, as well as a performance that allows you to experience the message and live with it at the moment of its creation. However, Maria Zenkova's medium is painting, in which she incorporates different forms of message. In the painting titled *Do not touch!* (Не чипай) (Figure 4),

Figure 4. M. Zenkova "Не чипай!" 2022, o/c,
140 × 110 cm (personal archive of M. Zenkova).

Maria Zenkova provokes the viewer by turning the weapon into an art object. She uses the technique of conceptual art, assigning the status of an artwork to an object – "just a thing", which in this case is "just a weapon". At the same time, Maria uses the aesthetics of a poster, where the image is complemented with text. One word – don't touch – sounds like a warning whose meaning is unmistakably clear. However, the meaning of the artwork lies rather in the seemingly insignificant text

[1] Author's interview with Maria Zenkova on 25.10.22.

added as an instruction or explanation in the "small print" describing this weapon. The dangerous anti-personnel, nicknamed *бабочка,* does indeed visually really resemble a butterfly (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Landmine ПМФ-1 "*Лепесток*" (photo by Maria Zenkova).

The purpose of this mine is to blow up a person's limbs when stepped on. The Russian army widely uses this weapon on the territory of Ukraine, creating minefields. Mines are distributed by remotely launching a reactive charge. One such projectile sent from a long distance is capable of covering about 150 hectares of land with butterflies. Each rocket contains 312 mines. In order for the mine to work, it is enough to press it with a 5 kg weight. This *babochka* often attracts the interest of children, as it resembles a bright green plastic toy. A land mine suitable for children... The artist shows the subject in the most naked way. Nothing explains it better than the very purpose this object serves.

Conclusion

The Affect theory, known as the "anxiety-era theory", is useful in art analysis, because it looks at the artwork not as finished, enclosed, but as an open and dynamic process that still questions the limits of the interpretation of reality. It can be concluded that it is still not possible to completely avoid the representation of war experiences in art. As we can see in Maria Zenkova's paintings, her palette of colours is bright and vibrant. It can be read as a joyful way of looking at the world. Despite this, the pasty brushstrokes and the dynamism of the colourful figures evoke a sense of anxiety. Ghosts of memories loom in her imagery. They do funny things and make the viewer smile. Several Maria Zenkova's artwork reveal childish imaginary. Hiding

from the subject results in a naive or ironic expression. There is no denying that each individual reacts differently to a crisis. As the example of Maria Zenkova shows, it is extremely important for artists to keep creating. The artist's active involvement in practices of collective support and solidarity shows that in crisis situations such actions are even more significant than the exhibition as an art event. Maria Zenkova is a professional artist who paints to survive, literally. To make a living for herself and her family. Also, to support her brother who is fighting at the front for the freedom of Ukraine.

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MOTHERS ON TWITTER (X): EXCHANGING SUPPORT AND NARRATING MOTHERHOOD

Mg. sc. comm. **Elza Lāma**
University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences
Mg. math. **Gatis Lāma**
University of Latvia, Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art

Abstract

As almost all aspects of our lives, motherhood in the 21st century also is influenced and transformed by new media. Parents, especially mothers, use the *Facebook*, *Instagram* and even *Twitter (X)* as digital diaries, as stages for performing an ideal mother's role, or even "safe spaces" to gain support and the feeling of empowerment. Recent research of motherhood discourses and mothering practices in social media has mainly focused on the evidence of mediation and mediatization. However, limited attention has been brought to examining *Twitter* in context of mothering. Therefore, this paper focuses on the narratives of a particular cluster of Latvian-speaking mothers on *Twitter* who use *Twitter* as a platform for exchanging informational, emotional and physical support, forming a "portable" community. The case study consists of a narrative analysis of 11 in-depth semi-structured interviews with mothers and a thematic analysis of 1111 tweets, gathered from 9 other public *Twitter* accounts (covering a period of 2 weeks), that have been identified by interviewees as part of this particular *Twitter*-bubble. The paper provides an insight into the narratives of women, voicing their motherhood struggles and victories in the "safe space" of *Twitter*'s "bubble" of new Latvian mothers, illuminating also a unique and unlikely use for an asymmetric and decentralized social media platform.

***Keywords**: motherhood, mediatization, Twitter, X, portable community.*

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Introduction

Although modern technology may assist with daily chores and eases the physical toll of mothering, contemporary motherhood still comes with a set of challenges new mothers face, needing all forms of support – even remote via social media. Motivation for using *Facebook*, *Instagram* and various other platforms among new parents has been examined in many studies. According to Eurostat, in 2021 an average of 95% young people (ages 16–29) and 80% of adults use Internet regularly [Eurostat 2021]. Some mothers are eager to normalise their experience [Locatelli 2017], others feel the need to actualise and empower themselves [Lee & Chen 2018], to strengthen their identity [Archer & Kao 2018; Yam 2019; Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2017], and to create their own narrative or even autobiography [Zappavigna & Zhao 2017; Micalizzi 2020; Locatelli 2017]. While to some mothers the opportunity to present themselves, "perform motherhood" [Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2017] is important, there is a distinguished part of mothers who seek social support [Archer & Kao 2018; Locatelli 2017], a "safe space" [Archer & Kao 2018], and a digital community [Mourkarzel et al. 2021].

Researchers have mainly focused their gaze on *Facebook* and *Instagram*, and there is a significant gap in exploring, how parents use the social media platform *Twitter* (www.*Twitter*.com). Although on 23 July 2023, Elon Musk, owner and CTO of X, announced on his *Twitter* profile the graduate change of name and brand of the social networking site to *X* [Musk 2023], as the study was conducted previous to these changes, the authors continue to use the original name. *Twitter* is a public forum, where one can broadcast thoughts to a wider network of followers than on, for instance, *Facebook* [Lee et al. 2020: 818–819]. According to *Eurobarometer*, although *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* are the most popular social networks in Latvia, 13% or respondents had used *Twitter* in the last 7 days [European Parliament 2022] and is frequently among the Top 20 most visited Internet pages in Latvia [Gemius 2022]. Unlike other more popular social media, *Twitter* is asymmetric and decentralized: anyone can follow the feed of anyone else (although there is an option to restrict tweets and give permissions to selected individuals, as well as to block any user [Gruzd et al. 2011: 1296–1303]. Another feature is optional anonymity [Lee et al. 2020: 818]. Some researchers have explored "hashtag activism" on *Twitter* [Ahmed 2018; Grant 2016; Scarborough 2018], even *Twitter* as a community, concluding that *Twitter* does not satisfy all of the "third place" [Oldenburg 1999], characteristics, but "can be used to facilitate community creation and bonding" [McArthur & White 2016: 8]; although "*Twitter* was not originally designed as a tool to support the development of online communities", they exist as both "real" and "imagined" [Gruzd et al. 2011: 1297–1313].

In the context of mediatization – a "process of change" through which "core elements of a social society or cultural activity (like work, leisure, play etc.)

assume media form" [Hepp & Krotz 2014: 21], Hepp stresses that "support is also about individual personality development, a point that has rarely been addressed empirically nor from a normative point of view in mediatization research" [2020: 198]. Therefore, even though *Twitter* is not necessarily designed to stimulate formation of "portable communities" [Chayko 2007: 375–377], the main aim of this case study is to explore how *Twitter* is used by mothers to socialize, exchange support and narrate their mothering experience within their own "*Twitter*-bubble". The proposed research questions are:

- Why and how do mothers use *Twitter* in their everyday lives and journey into motherhood?
- Do these motives appear in the tweets of mothers that are part of this *Twitter*-mom community and how?

The case study consists of a narrative analysis of 11 in-depth semi-structured interviews with mothers and a thematic analysis of 1111 tweets, gathered from 9 other public *Twitter* accounts (covering a period of 2 weeks, from 26.10.2022–06.11.2022), that have been identified by interviewees as part of this particular "*Twitter*-bubble".

Theoretical background

Motherhood in the 21st century

Contemporary motherhood is packed with a variety of cultural, scientific, professional narratives [Sevón 2012: 61], and this experience in Western modernity comes with a seal of "intensive mothering" [Hays 1996] ideology, which is "both drawn upon and resisted" [Miller 2005: 85]. "Intensive mothering" expects mothers to invest seemingly unlimited resources of time, emotional labour, and energy in the wellbeing of the child, occasionally undertaking enormous risk and strain [Hays 1996; Das 2019]; it reproduces traditional gender roles, even idealizing them [Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2017: 277]. According to "intensive mothering" discourse, a "good" mother cherishes her motherhood experience as worthwhile and fulfilling; regretting motherhood is taboo [Matley 2020; Orton-Johnson 2017]. Women expect and are expected to have overwhelming feelings and connection with their babies [Kerrick & Henry 2017: 15].

The mediation and mediatization of motherhood in social media points to a juxtaposition of two discourses – "the emancipatory, feminist revival of women asserting themselves" and "the neo-liberal, self-regulating, self-managing, highly individualized discourse of ideal births", as Das [2019: 498–499] puts it. Challenging the "intensive mothering" discourse, while simultaneously accepting its terms and interacting with it, is a fragmented scene of several counter-narratives [Micalizzi 2020;

Orton-Johnson 2017; Littler 2020; Tiidenberg & Baym 2017]. A separate group of "alternative" mothering discourses also exists, trying to define motherhood outside the values of neo-liberal, patriarchal society, seeking the voice of actual mothers more aggressively. "Alternative" discourses hold the narratives of "solo-mothers", mothers with mental health issues [Tiidenberg & Baym 2017], sexual minorities [Kazyak et al. 2016], as well as mothers who are younger or older than the "average" mother [Hyde 2000; Morris & Munt 2019], etc. "Alternative" discourses also lift the taboo from maternal ambivalence, regret, anger, shame, guilt, and other emotions mothers are not supposed to feel [Moore & Abetz 2019: 392].

Motherhood is a subjective experience and contemporary mothers cannot be viewed as a homogeneous group [Lazard et al. 2019: 4]. "Intensive mothering" sets strict and unrealistic norms to which mothers cannot comply, all the while punishing women who cannot meet the standards of ideal motherhood. It is through "challenging" and "alternative" discourses that women narrate their struggles and redefine, what is "normal" or "beautiful" [Yam 2019: 93].

Social media: a bountiful source of remote support?

Even though some research recognises fathers using social media to share their parenting experience, mothers engage in social media to visually document their mothering journey more frequently [Holiday et al. 2020: 238–239; Lazard et al. 2019]. Traditional media often construct news through a masculine prism, ignoring or rendering themes of interest to women un-newsworthy [North 2016: 328], thus, social media add a new dimension to the discourse of motherhood and create a "performative space" [Archer 2019: 47–56], where women may articulate their views and experience. Women turn to social media to raise questions, gain information and advice [Lee et al. 2020: 826], "vent" and share frustrating episodes [Archer & Kao 2018: 123]. Social media help combat the isolation of motherhood and gain empowerment [Archer & Kao 2018: 126], as well as validation of "maternal identity" [Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2017: 279] or realisation of one's role as a parent [Lee & Chen 2018: 390–406]. However, the digital, extended space also embodies unresolvable conflicts and duality, as some research suggests the link between social media and postpartum depression [Chalklen & Anderson 2017], and other mental health issues or competitiveness between mothers [Chae 2015: 519].

Regarding mothering on *Twitter*, Talbot, Charron and Konkle [2021] have used *Twitter* to gain insight into the reality of pregnant women and mothers, living through the Covid-19 pandemic. *Twitter* as a community has previously been explored by Stewart [2020], Lee, Grogan-Kaylor and Lee [2020], and Mourkazel, Rehnm, del Fresno and Daly, illustrating the "unique sub-communities" of breastfeeding [2020], exploring advocacy and community engagement [2021], etc.

Method and research design

The research employs a netnographic approach [Talbot et al. 2021; Kozinets 2010]. First, in January 2022 an open-call on the author's personal *Twitter* profile was posted, asking to participate in a study of motivation to use *Twitter*: the call specified that only women who use *Twitter* daily and identify themselves as "*Twitter*-mothers" or feel part of their "*Twitter*-community" are eligible for participation. 17 women approached the researchers, agreeing to participate in the study. Second, remote, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 11 interviewees were conducted from July to September 2022.

The study considered all ethical research standards in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Approval for conducting interviews was given by the Committee on Ethics. The interviews were recorded without mentioning any names or sensitive data; the transcripts were anonymized, giving each woman a random alias (Table 1).

Table 1. Interviewees' profiles

Given alias	Age	Education	Number (age) of children	Profession
Anna	45	Higher	2 (3 and 5 years old)	Brand manager
Emma	38	Higher	2 (1 and 1.5 years old)	System analysist
Ilze	37	Higher	2 (6 and 9 years old)	Student
Amanda	35	Higher	2 (4 and 7 years old)	Marketing manager
Elīza	35	Higher	2 (6 and 9 years old)	Tourism manager/ specialist
Alma	36	Higher	2 (2 and 6 years old)	Researcher
Silva	42	Higher	3 (3, 6 and 11 years old)	Lower-level specialist/office worker
Mare	43	Higher	4 (13, 11, 7 and 3 years old)	Lower-level specialist, doula, breastfeeding consultant
Līva	34	Higher	2 (6 years old, 2 months old)	Educator
Mētra	32	Higher	2 (4 and 2 years old)	Human resources manager
Melisa	33	Higher	1 (1 year old)	Dentist

Next, the data were analysed via narrative analysis, identifying core themes. Then all interviewees were contacted once again and asked to list 5–10 other *Twitter* profiles they recognized as part of their "*Twitter*-community". Following the method of Ewing and Vu [2020] *Twitter* Application Programming Interface (API) [*Twitter* 2022] was used to extract tweets from the mentioned public profiles dating from 26.10.2022–06.11.2022, resulting in 1111 tweets. The tweets were analysed through sentiment analysis and an interpretative thematic analysis [Grant 2016: 142–143]. Lastly, the tweets were categorized in accordance to uses of *Twitter*, identified in the interviews.

Results

Interviews with women identifying themselves as "Twitter-mothers"

All 11 women, who characterize themselves as "*Twitter*-mothers" and feel a part of a specific "*Twitter*-community", reveal that they have been on *Twitter* for several years. Seven of them confess that they have been on *Twitter* since "the beginning", for 10–13 years, thus, "growing" together with their peers. Some of them, Elīza, Emma, Alma, Melisa, had taken "a pause" from the social network, just to join again (half of them under a pseudonym), when they became pregnant or birthed a child. Women's narratives bring to light several key themes in how *Twitter* may be used into the journey of motherhood and beyond.

First, *Twitter* is a version of a **digital diary**. Anna emphasizes: "I socialize, and sometimes use *Twitter* as – not exactly – but like a diary to write down, for instance, children's jokes etc." For Līva it is a "yell into vacuum": "a place to talk through an issue before you really deal with it." Sarma and Ilze stress that *Twitter* is a safe place, where to complain and to "declare everything has gone wrong." This revelation also resonates with conclusions by Valtchanov, Parry, Glover and Mulcahy, that these internet spaces among a safe online community enable ""rewriting" of motherhood to include more honest, diverse, and supportive experiences" [2015: 63].

Second, *Twitter* is a **window to the world** to peer into lives of people that live "outside" their real-life social circle and a general **source of information**. Amanda concludes: "*Twitter* is like and encyclopaedia illustrating the diversity of motherhood." To her mind, *Twitter* helps one to "extend horizons". Līva also points out "other experiences and other perspectives", whereas Elīza emphasises "different lifestyles" and the existence of a "dad-bubble" as well. For Mare *Twitter* helps to be empathic, as "there is no other place to get to know so many views". Melisa emphasises the authenticity of these experiences one gets to discover, that cannot be accessed "outside *Twitter*". Women's narratives reveal how these different opinions help normalize various mothering styles, stigmatized or even taboo feelings, emotions and behaviour – it gives "a bigger picture" as Mare puts it. Anna focuses on the diversity of

available information from specialists, medical professionals etc. Emma emphasizes not only the speedy receiving of information, but also sharing it and finding other mothers who have experienced similar problems and can give advice. Melisa puts it simply: "You get an essence in *Twitter* (..) in a whirlpool of conversation", whereas Mare appreciates the variety of themes of conversation and opportunity to learn something about other topicalities beside parenting, happening in the world.

Next, *Twitter*, according to mothers' narratives, is a **place of protest**. Ilze, Elīza and Līva describe a particular case where *Twitter* played a major role in informing the wider public about the obligation for women in labour to pay for epidural analgesia (although it was supposedly paid by the state) and the difficulties in acquiring it in Latvian hospitals due to bureaucratic technicalities and even unprofessional behaviour from medical staff. Līva comments:

"*Twitter* is a weird social network in Latvia. It's fast – you get information about topical events several hours if not days before it is broadcasted on TV. (..) It's an influential platform. *Twitterists* complain (..) and then the problem needs to be dealt with. (..) The speed by which this problem [with epidural analgesia] was dealt with was amazing."

"You can poke politicians and bureaucrats, and ask for change," says Ilze. Anna also recognises the influence of *Twitter* on the media agenda or views of politicians and other important public figures, whereas Mare and Ilze recognize the force behind the community of *Twitter*-mothers, who chime in when needed and provide additional evidence, experience or simply a strong word of support. "If someone comes and starts to shame a new mother, others rush to help," says Mare.

Then, *Twitter*, as per mothers' records, is a source of support – a feature recognized by all interviewees unanimously, and also present in other research, as, the Internet, in this case *Twitter*, has "the capacity to support and empower women from a range of backgrounds, by offering spaces in which they can be themselves and express their views honestly" as well as to find support in a safe environment [Mackenzie 2018: 119]. Amanda comments: "There are a lot of problems and sometimes you need (..) this sense of having a village." The feeling of "not being alone" also is expressed by Melisa and Mare, while Sarma says: "What really helps me is [to see] a lot of people with similar problems as me."

Līva emphasizes support and revealing of honest, pure emotions about oneself, about motherhood; she stresses: "The darkest thoughts are easier to express on social media. (..) You can get a more realistic picture [about motherhood] on *Twitter* [through anonymous accounts], as people are more likely to share their dark thoughts compared to *Instagram*". Ilze also feels that revealing true, depressive thoughts to loved ones would hurt them, thus, she confesses:

"[In the early months after becoming a mother] *Twitter* was my whole life, my link to the outside world. (..) My parents lived in another city, other relatives –

in a different district. Everyone has his own stuff, thus, only during the pandemic everyone else felt what it's like to stay at home completely alone [although you're not completely alone)."

Anna acknowledges her need to "talk down the anxiety", and that on *Twitter* one can find a "a shoulder, a person that says – "it's going to be ok'". Melisa also concludes that on *Twitter* there is "permission to make mistakes". Mare and other mothers mention "venting emotions": "You can go ahead and whine [on *Twitter*] and there will be 5 other moms that will say *YES! I feel the same way!*". Alma concludes: "Anonymous *Twitter*-mothers can reveal their emotions completely – if they don't have [an another] confidant." Honesty and authenticity of narrated experience, emotional support from other mothers and (partial) healing of a sense of loneliness, that had emerged from staying at home with a baby, resonates in all mothers' accounts. Amanda puts it in a different perspective:

"*Twitter* has substituted the almost non-existent post-partum assistance in Latvia. (..) *Twitter* has definitely saved many a new mothers lives by giving a sense she's not alone. (..) Let's face it – does any family physician call and ask how the new mother is doing? (..) *Twitter* values new mothers."

Amanda and other mothers mention not only emotional, but also physical and financial support, and even offline friendships forged through *Twitter*. Therefore, *Twitter*, as revealed in women's narratives, serves as a platform for interacting with their mom-community. Melisa, who has compared *Twitter* to enjoying a reality show, says: "We all want to belong. (..) I feel I belong to the *Twitter*-bubble, to all anonymous mothers." Whereas, one mother describes *Twitter* similarly to what Chayko has coined a "portable community" – a network of linked individuals, "who share social interests and norms, social interaction and a common identity, and provide sociability, support, information and a sense of belonging for one another", bringing their "communities and community members with them wherever they go" [2007: 375–377]. Amanda comments:

"If you don't have any support – and it happens in many cases – as motherhood is a lonely place especially in the first years, (..) the mother is alone, facing her demons. (..) So you go on *Twitter* which comes with you wherever you go – it's an extended room where all your friends (or not friends) are sitting, your support team. They may not come to you, and you may not receive physical support, but you get the feeling and it helps you to keep on going."

Emma says that "*Twitter* can help during the period of forced isolation", that occurs frequently when children are little. For Mētra *Twitter* is like a café; for Sarma *Twitter* is "like being in a party and watching how other people socialize and not participating: you can sit in the corner and say nothing, but you can reply to

someone or say something, if you want." Whereas Amanda compares *Twitter* also to a "Mexican soap-opera where you know Donna Beige".

Analysis of tweets from the Twitter-bubble

Tweets from most frequently mentioned accounts form the interviewees' *Twitter*-bubble were also studied. Of the 11 mothers and 1 father, mentioned by all interviewees at least 3 times, three had restricted access and were not included in the sample. In the period of 2 weeks 1111 tweets in total (from 9 *Twitter* profiles) were harvested via *Twitter* API (see Table 2).

Table 2. Most frequently mentioned *Twitter*-profiles by interviewees

Label	Mentions	Number of tweets (24.10.-06.11.2022)
Mom_1 (restricted)	10	–
Mom_2	7	114
Mom_3 (restricted)	7	–
Mom_4	6	99
Mom_5	6	130
Mom_6	6	57
Dad_1	4	148
Mom_7 (restricted)	4	–
Mom_8	4	191
Mom_9	3	230
Mom_10	3	110
Mom_11	3	32
		Total: 1111

Most of these *Twitter* profiles produced at least 110 tweets in 14 days; the majority of these tweets were replies to others, indicating a lively interaction between each other. A manual sentiment analysis on the 1111 tweets reveals that most of them (514 tweets) were positive – displaying either humour, encouragement, happiness, support, or care, containing emoji of love, smiles, laughter etc. 391 tweets were neutral, showing no emotion but rather stating a fact, giving a casual reply, asking a question. 206 tweets were negative, containing anger, outrage, dark sarcasm, sadness. By using the text analysis software *Sketchengine* (https://www.sketchengine.eu/), a corpus of 20 822 words from collected tweets was analysed, indicating that the most frequently used noun was *bērns* ("child"), while, clearing the corpus of stop-words, the most frequently used word was *es* ("I").

In total 143 tweets were not directed towards a specific person (the tweets beginning with "@"). A manual thematic analysis of these statement-tweets reveals several themes that had appeared in the interviews with mothers. Most of these tweets (80) were diary-like entries, recording events of everyday life, thoughts, experiences, including children's jokes etc. 42 tweets shared valuable information to others, for instance, about shopping deals, trustworthy businesses and specialists, "life-hacks", etc. 15 tweets provoked conversation or opened a window to the world, sharing a (self-proclaimed) "unpopular" opinion about various topics including parenting. Lastly, 6 tweets contained open questions, asking for information or advice about parenting. Therefore, the sample of tweets from the interviewees' "*Twitter*-bubble" 1) indicates active conversation with each other, 2) shows sharing of informational as emotional support, as well as – in several tweets – encouragement to show physical or even financial support to particular *Twitter* profiles.

Conclusion

The case-study of a Latvian-speaking community of mothers on *Twitter* provides valuable insight into the 21st century motherhood and the mediatization of mothering. Mothers' narratives reveal that *Twitter*, an asymmetric and decentralized social media network, may serve as fruitful soil for creation of a "portable" community for parents, especially mothers. For some *Twitter* is a diary to capture every-day moments of a mother's life, but it also is a source of valuable, individually tailored information and a window to the world, shedding light onto different lifestyles and styles of mothering, nurturing empathy, and challenging the discourse of "intensive mothering". Mothers' tweets provide a unique journey into "real motherhood" that respects all emotions, complications and victories as opposed to "intensive mothering" that acknowledges only heteronormative, middle-class "happy" couples, fully content with their role as a parent and oblivious to problems of any kind. In the "safe space" of their *Twitter*-bubble, occasionally behind a veil of anonymity, mothers narrate truthful stories and validate personal feelings in order to normalize their authentic experience and feel supported in the journey into motherhood. *Twitter* provides socialization at time and place of convenience, ensuring a "virtual village" that travels alongside the mother, empowering, encouraging, as well as providing emotional, and even physical and financial support, if needed, during periods of isolation from society or other hardships. The case study has its limitations due to a very particular sample of data and specific focus; however, its findings may be recognized by a spectrum of professionals (from media researchers to healthcare specialists) and researched even further to challenge the disinformation of "real motherhood" and the dominant discourse of "intensive mothering", as well as find new pathways to provide support to families with children, especially mothers.

Ethics approval

Approval for this research (No. 71-46/63) has been by the Committee on Ethics for the Humanities and Social Sciences of University of Latvia (LU Humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu pētījumu ētikas komiteja).

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METAPHORS AND METONYMIES IN LATVIAN AND ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH THE KEYWORD *HEAD*

Dr.art. **Elīna Veinberga**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Abstract

Phraseology, often considered a supplementary discipline in the past, now occupies a central place in many fields as an object of interdisciplinary research for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies in general and cognitive linguistics, pedagogy, translation, corpus and computational linguistics, lexicography, and psychology.

Two databases in Latvian and English are used to extract phraseological units (PUs) with the keyword "head". The article aims to identify, compare and contrast metaphorical and metonymic Latvian and English phraseological units, discussing the similarities and differences in meanings of the base form of a phraseological unit (PU) and its use in every analysed case. Since metaphor and metonymy are central thought patterns in cognitive linguistics, testing their function in PUs is crucial. Metaphorical and metonymic Latvian PUs and their English counterparts are examined in the cognitive linguistic framework, analysing conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymies.

Corresponding pairs of PUs are studied as one set to establish if they will function similarly. It can be concluded that pairs of PUs in both languages have the same structure, convey equivalent meanings and even have the same type of conceptual metonymy: A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE, for instance, *divas*

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galvas (*ir*[1]) *gudrākas nekā viena* (two heads (are) smarter than one) and its English counterpart: "two heads are better than one".

Keywords: *cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, phraseology, stylistics*.

Introduction

It is often believed that phraseology as a discipline is primarily represented by the European Society of Phraseology (EUROPHRAS), with a research tradition from Europe, Russia, and the German-speaking countries. EUROPHRAS was founded in Bielefeld in January 1999 and currently sits in Zurich. The EUROPHRAS president is a German phraseology scholar, Kathrin Steyer [EUROPHRAS 2022].

Phraseology today means interdisciplinary studies as a developing field expanding in various directions. For instance, to mention a few researchers: the Spanish scholar Antonio Pamies-Bertrán is a general linguist exploring phraseology and translation; the Croatian researcher Marija Omazić is studying idiom processing from a cognitive perspective and translation, using corpus-based methods; the Polish academic Joanna Szerszunowicz is working in the field of contrastive linguistics and contrastive phraseology from a cross-cultural perspective. A particular field closely related to phraseology is the research of proverbs, i. e., paremiology. Wolfgang Mieder is a German world-renowned proverb expert and a long-standing editor of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. He has written numerous books, including two volumes of *the International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*. American scholar Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. does research in experimental psycholinguistics and cognitive science, including understanding of figurative language like metaphor, irony, and idioms.

The theoretical framework for the article consists of studies in phraseology, especially contrastive phraseology (Dobrovol'skij, Naciscione, Piirainen, and Kunin) and studies in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson, Gibbs, and Kövecses).

One of the past leading scholars on phraseology was the Russian linguist A. V. Kunin (Александр Владимирович Кунин), whose definition of a PU as *a stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning*[2] can still be used as a stepping stone for one's research in this discipline [Kunin 1970: 210]. Stability and figurative meaning distinguish these units from free word combinations and set expressions that are stable but have no figurative meaning.

[1] Both versions exist with *ir* (EN: is) and without *ir*.

[2] In the original: Фразеологическая единица — это устойчивое сочетание слов с полностью или частично переосмысленным значением [Kunin 1970: 210].

There are many parallel terms of PU: idiom, fixed phrase, fixed expression, phraseologism, phraseme, phrasal lexical item, phraseological item, multiword unit, multiword lexical unit, multiword expression, polylexical[1] expression, etc[2] [Corpas Pastor and Colson 2020: 2; Wray 2002: 9]. Andreas Langlotz describes these terms as Cheshire cats: *Given this state of affairs, one has to develop a suitable strategy to find one's way through the terminological jungle to become capable of providing a systematic account of the Cheshire-cat-like nature of these curious linguistic phenomena* [Langlotz 2006: 2]. In their recent publication in 2022, Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij and Elisabeth Piirainen state that they prefer the term *phraseme* because PU does not sound natural in English and is a calque from Russian [Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen 2022: 36–37]. It can be disputed that PU is an acceptable term in English, and it will take some time for the terminological variety to stabilise; however, if the number of phraseology scholars who prefer the term *phraseme* rises sharply, it might be used in the future[3].

Latvian, unlike English, which is an analytic language, is a synthetic language where word order is less critical in meaning construction than inflexions; therefore, it might also affect PUs and their functioning in language.

Research question and methodology

Through qualitative analysis, the article aims to identify and compare metaphorical and metonymic phraseological units with the keywords *galva* in Latvian and "head" in English. The article's central **research question** explores whether Latvian and English PUs with the keyword *head* have similar or different conceptual metaphors and metonymies.

The following **methodology** is applied in this article: select appropriate Latvian and English databases; search the database for the necessary PU in Latvian and English; excerpt the most salient examples for detailed analysis; select appropriate Latvian and English monolingual dictionaries for the **base form** PU definitions; and draw a comparison of PU meanings, stylistic patterns and their use in both languages.

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[1] This term is used in the book *Computational Phraseology* edited by Gloria Corpas Pastor and Jean-Pierre Colson [Corpas Pastor and Colson 2020]. The term *polylexicality* appeared already in 2005 in French studies of semantics by Salah Mejri [Mejri 2004].

[2] In her book *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*, Alison Wray gives many terms that are used to mean PUs [Wray 2002: 9].

[3] Latvian has no terminological difficulties, and the most common term is *frazeoloģisms* (phraseologism). *Frazēma* (EN phraseme) has a narrower meaning in Latvian than *frazeoloģisms* [VPSV 2007: 120–121].

It is important to note that the **base form** is a dictionary form of a PU. Naciscione defines the base form as *an archetypal conception. It is a decontextualised unit of language, stored in the dictionary or the long-term memory of the language user, accessed when a discourse situation calls for it* [Naciscione 2010: 8].

The selected language corpora with real use examples in media and literature are *The Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian Texts* (*Līdzsvarotais mūsdienu latviešu valodas tekstu korpuss*) (LVK2018) [LVK2018 2016–2018] and *The British National Corpus* (BNC) [BNC 2009] in English. Unless indicated differently, these online dictionaries are used to verify the meanings of PUs, which are given in Tables 1–4: online contemporary Latvian dictionary to confirm the Latvian meanings [MLVV 2003–2023]; online English dictionary represented by Random House Unabridged Dictionary is used to verify the English meanings [Dictionary.com 2023].

A **corpus-based method** is employed to automatically extract PUs in context from databases. This method relies on a technique that uses a collection of texts, i. e., a corpus, as a source from which linguistic data can be extracted computationally via **keyword search** [Corpas Pastor and Colson 2020: 1–3].

In the identification of PUs, the **method** developed by Anita Naciscione has been applied: **recognition**: recognise that the expression is fully or partially figurative; identify the PU; **verification**: confirm the PU and identify it as a metonymy or metaphor in figurative meaning construction; **comprehension**: define the PUs in Latvian and English; and **interpretation**: examine the interaction of metonymy and metaphor in context [Naciscione 2010: 43–55].

Metaphor and metonymy in cognitive linguistics and stylistics

Metaphor and metonymy are two basic patterns of thought in cognitive linguistics. In 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson published a book *Metaphors We Live By* [Lakoff and Johnson [1980] 2003]. It became one of the essential elements for a new branch in linguistics – cognitive linguistics, spawning the *conceptual metaphor theory* that, more than 40 years later, remains one of the most influential theories in figurative language research despite various critiques.

The crucial difference between the classical approach to stylistic techniques and the cognitive linguistic approach lies in the treatment of figurative language either as a merely decorative and rhetorical tool (the classical approach) or patterns of thought that first exist in the mind and only then are expressed in language (the cognitive linguistic approach) [Aristotle [1941 Random House] 2001; Lakoff and Johnson [1980] 2003; Gibbs [1994] 2002; Kövecses 2002]. Zoltán Kövecses, in his newest book *Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory,* published in 2020, expresses a proposition: *It may be that there is no literal language at all* [Kövecses 2020: xii].

Conceptual metaphor can be explained by the formula **A** is **B**, where **A**[1] and **B** represent two conceptual domains that share some similarity or analogy in human experience. **A** is more abstract or the *target domain* that is understood in terms of **B**, which is more concrete or the *source domain*. Vyvyan Evans describes conceptual domains as *relatively complex knowledge structures which relate to coherent aspects of experience. For instance, the conceptual domain journey is hypothesised to include representations for things such as traveller, mode of transport, route, destination, obstacles encountered on the route and so forth* [Evans 2007: 61–62]. The systematic correspondences across conceptual domains are called metaphorical mappings [Lakoff and Johnson [1980] 2003: 246].

Conceptual metaphor can be represented graphically as follows (Figure 1).

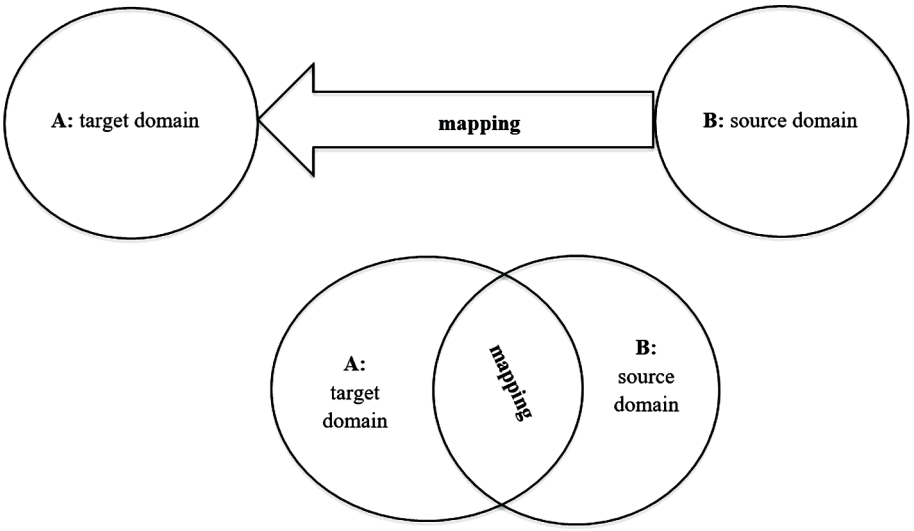

Figure 1. Graphic representations of conceptual metaphor in cognitive linguistics[2].

One could visualise conceptual domains as a memory cabinet with a set of shelves where, on every shelf, one keeps experiences related to a specific concept (Figure 2).

[1] Any two different letters can be used in this formula. It is often **A** and **B** because, in the Western tradition, we follow Aristotle, who first introduced these letters, defining metaphor [Aristotle [1941 Random House] 2001: 1476–1477].

[2] All figures have been designed by the author of the article – E. V., based on *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*.

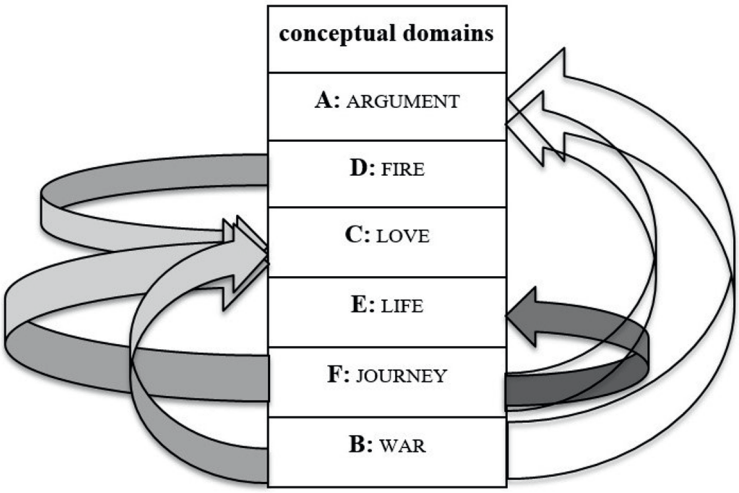

Figure 2. Conceptual domains: A memory cabinet with experience shelves.

This figure includes classical conceptual metaphors discussed in cognitive linguistics: AN ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY, AN ARGUMENT IS WAR, LOVE IS FIRE, LOVE IS WAR, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, and LIFE IS A JOURNEY [Lakoff and Johnson [1980] 2003; Kövecses 2002; Gibbs 2005]. The arrows represent metaphorical mappings from source domains to target domains. Conceptual metaphors are written in small capitals to emphasise their existence in our minds to distinguish them from linguistic metaphors, which allow us to perceive the underlying conceptual structure. Conceptual metaphors might not be expressed in language in the given phrasing [Kövecses 2002: 4]. For instance, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS FIRE is perceived from linguistic metaphors, such as *he/she is hot, there are sparks between us, Mike is my old flame, when the flames of love become ashes,* etc.

Metonymy is based on associations of contiguity or closeness, and one can use a formula **A1** stands for or is a part of **A** or vice versa[1] [Veinberga 2014], and there is only one conceptual domain involved.

According to Kövecses, *metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or idealized cognitive model* (*ICM*) [Kövecses 2002: 145]. Metonymies *are characterized by a particular relationship between one kind of entity and another kind of entity*. Kövecses suggests using the terms *vehicle entity* and *target entity* [Kövecses 2002: 145]. The *vehicle entity* is the one *that directs attention, or*

[1] Any letter can be used here: **A** has been chosen only for convenience to indicate one conceptual domain since **A** and **B** are used for metaphor.

provides mental access, to another entity, and the *target entity* is *the kind of entity to which attention, or mental access, is provided the target entity* [Kövecses 2002: 145]. Similar to conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy is also written in small capitals: THE WHOLE STANDS FOR A PART, A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE, or A PART STANDS FOR A PART.

The following letters and numbers will be used to denote three types of conceptual metonymies (Figure 3):

1) type **A1** stands for **A** (part stands for whole): *I need a helping hand*: hand ⇨ person;

2) type **A** stands for **A1** (whole stands for part): *Canada has many wins in ice hockey*: country ⇨ team;

3) type **A1** stands for **A2** (part stands for part): *Putin bombed Kyiv*[1]: the president of Russia ⇨ Russian air force under the orders of the president, who is the supreme leader of the army ⇨Russian army invading Ukraine.

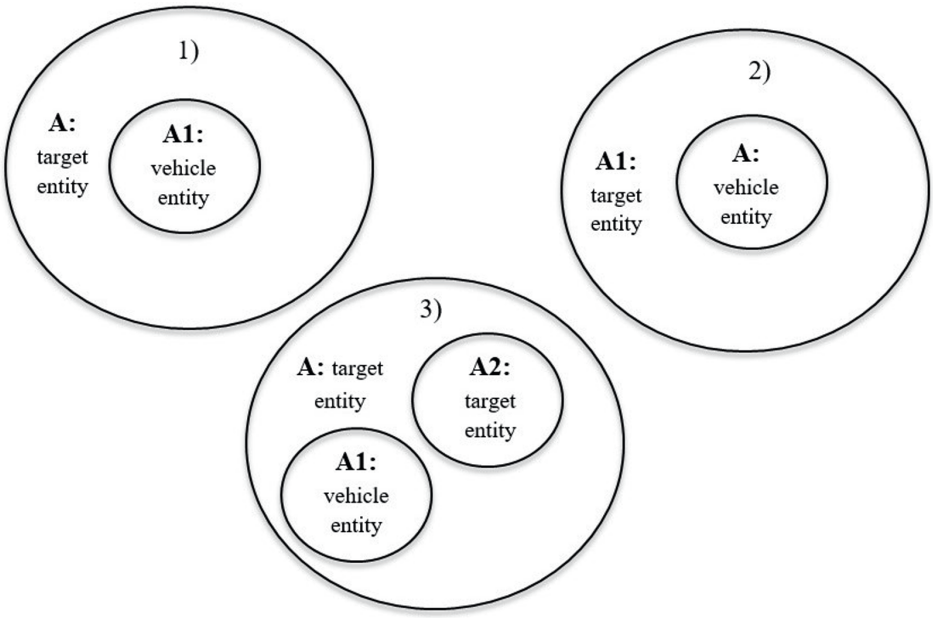

Figure 3. *Graphic representations of three conceptual metonymy types.*

In 3) **A1** (part) ⇨ **A2** (part) ⇨ **A** (whole), there are two target entities because **A1** stands for **A2**; however, **A1** and **A2** are both part of the whole conceptual domain **A**.

[1] According to Kövecses, such an expression can be described as a conceptual metonymy: THE CONTROLLER STANDS FOR THE CONTROLLED [Kövecses 2002].

Kövecses believes that *metonymies are, in a sense, "more primary" than primary metaphors*[1] [Kövecses 2020: xii]. It means that metonymy might be even more important than metaphor.

Comparison of Latvian and English PUs

In total, 160 matching strings of language containing PUs with keyword "head" were examined, 45 found in LVK2018; and 115 – in BNC [LVK2018 2016–2018; BNC 2009]. Eight PUs, the most appropriate and equivalent cases, were chosen for detailed analysis: four pairs of PUs with the keyword "head": (*turēt*) *galvu augšā* and "hold (one's) head (up) high"; *divas galvas ir gudrākas nekā viena* and "two heads are better than one"; *no galvas līdz kājām / no galvas līdz papēžiem* and "from head to toe"; and (*par*) *galvas tiesu* and "head and shoulders above".

For the analysis of the first pair, two results were found in LVK2018 and seven in BNC with this PU (Table 1).

Table 1. PUs (*turēt*) *galvu augšā* and "hold (one's) head (up) high".[2]

PU base form	meaning	example	stylistic pattern
(*turēt*) *galvu augšā*	people say it when encouraging someone to muster one's courage or to pluck up one's spirit, not to lose heart, faith, not to give in to weakness	*Dzīve turpinās, un viss būs labi.* ***Galvu augšā*** *(Pēc kaislīgajām attiecībām Diānu Pīrāgu ārstē trīs psihologi. 03.04.2016. Slavenības, populārā periodika).*	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 ⇨ A:** PART ⇨ WHOLE *galva* ⇨ ķermenis **A1 ⇨ A2:** PART ⇨ PART *galva* ⇨ *attieksme* **conceptual metaphor**: *LABAIS/KONTROLE IR AUGŠĀ*
hold (one's) head (up) high	behave proudly; maintain one's dignity, especially in times of difficulty, failure, or embarrassment	When you walk through a storm **hold your head up high** (The Daily Mirror 1985–1994).	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 ⇨ A:** PART ⇨ WHOLE head ⇨ body **A1 ⇨ A2:** PART ⇨ PART head ⇨ attitude **conceptual metaphor**: HAPPY/ CONTROL IS UP

[1] It is a term coined by Joseph Grady. Raymond Gibbs explains that *A primary metaphor is a metaphorical mapping for which there is an independent and direct experiential basis that can be expressed within language*, e. g., *DIFFICULTIES ARE BURDENS, KNOWING IS SEEING, MORE IS UP* [Grady 1997; Gibbs 2017: 29–30].

[2] All tables have been designed by the author of the article – E. V. The references in the examples have been preserved as indicated in the databases – LVK2018 and BNC [BNC 2009; LVK 2018 2016–2018].

The meanings of the PUs in Latvian and English are alike, focusing on being strong when times are hard, although there is more stress on endurance and being brave in Latvian. In contrast, in English, there is more emphasis on pride and dignity. There is also an additional word in English – "high" which underlines the idea of upholding a body position proudly. Stylistic patterns of the PUs (*turēt*) *galvu augšā* and "hold (one's) head (up) high" are identical. They are both metonymy and metaphor. When human beings hold their heads up high, their bodies are in an upright position. Thus, it is a conceptual metonymy: A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE, a head stands for the whole body. It is also a primary conceptual metaphor: HAPPY/CONTROL IS UP because "holding your head up high"/*turēt galvu augšā* means one's confidence, spirit and positive attitude, trying to project a positive attitude in an unpleasant situation. In the examples in both languages, there are situations when someone needs to be strong in a complicated situation in their lives: in the Latvian example, a lady has ended a personal relationship and is devastated, while in the English example, there is general advice on how to act in a challenging period of one's life.

For the second pair of PUs, there is one result in LVK2018 for *divas galvas ir gudrākas nekā viena* and one result for *salikt galvas kopā* as well as eight results for "two heads are better than one" in BNC (Table 2).

Table 2. PUs *divas galvas ir gudrākas nekā viena* and "two heads are better than one".

PU base form	meaning	example	stylistic pattern
divas galvas ir gudrākas nekā viena / salikt galvas kopā[1]	try to figure something out, solve something together; by combining the knowledge and skills of several people, you can do more and better[2]	*Abiem potenciālajiem orķestra līderiem ir vieni un tie paši mērķi* (..) *un* ***divas galvas ir gudrākas nekā viena*** *(LNSO galvenais diriģents būs Šišons. 24.05.2008. Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, nacionālā periodika).*	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 ⇨ A** PART ⇨ WHOLE *galvas* ⇨ *cilvēki*
two heads are better than one	it is helpful to have the advice or opinion of a second person; two people can come up with better solutions	(..) part of it has you as the chief designer and you have to accept the notion that **two heads are better than one** (Interview with Roger Black (1985–1994)).	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 ⇨ A** PART ⇨ WHOLE heads ⇨ people

[1] It means "to put heads together", and is synonymous with PU *divas galvas ir gudrākas nekā viena.*

[2] This explanation is given in a reading task for the Latvian language exam level C2 [Valodu portfelis 2015].

The words "one", "two" and "heads" are the same in both languages; however, the word *gudrāks* means "smarter" in Latvian. It does not imply that a smarter person is better, while smart decisions can be considered better than the ones that are not smart. In the Latvian example, two orchestra conductors must work together to achieve better results. In contrast, in the English example, the chief designer has to accept their team's help to work better, so both situations are similar. Equally, in Latvian and English, the PUs are conceptual metonymies of the same type: A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE, when heads stand for people.

LVK2018 contains 30 results of PU *no galvas līdz kājām* and four results of PU *no galvas līdz papēžiem*, and there are 73 results of PU "from head to toe" in BNC (Table 3).

Table 3. PUs *no galvas līdz kājām / no galvas līdz papēžiem* and "from head to toe".

PU base form	meaning	example	stylistic pattern
no galvas līdz kājām / no galvas līdz papēžiem[1]	covering the whole body, throughout, completely; to look at someone curiously, also shamelessly	*Meitene dažus brīžus klusēja, mani vēlreiz cieši noskatīdama* ***no galvas līdz kājām,*** *tad atkal jauki pasmaidīja* (*Lukjanskis, Egils. 2006. Kam neskanēs zvans. Rīga, Zvaigzne ABC*).	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 / A2 ⇨ A** PART ⇨ WHOLE *galva* / kāj*as* ⇨ *cilvēks* **conceptual metaphor:** CILVĒKS IR OBJEKTS (*ar sākumpunktu* ***galva*** *un beigupunktu* ***kājas***)
from head to toe	all over one's body	The likes of Naomi Campbell and Linda Evangelista were clad **from head to toe** in leather, rubber, latex and PVC (Clothes Show. 1991. London: Redwood Pub., periodical).	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 / A2 ⇨ A** PART ⇨ WHOLE head / toe ⇨person **conceptual metaphor:** A PERSON IS AN OBJECT (with a starting point *head* and an end-point *toe*)

The examples of the PUs are the cases of partially figurative meaning: in Latvian, a girl looks at someone literally directing her gaze all over their body and figuratively evaluating the person in a curious and flirtatious manner; in English, the supermodels are literally wearing the clothes of certain materials, and figuratively

[1] It means "from head to heels", and is synonymous with PU *no galvas līdz kājām*.

it is an exaggeration to say that their whole bodies are clothed because usually, it is not the case. The difference in meaning in these PUs is that in Latvian, there is an additional meaning of looking at the other person curiously or shamelessly. In contrast, in English, there is no additional meaning. The PUs in both languages are conceptual metonymies: A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE, and in this case, there are many body parts, starting with the head and ending with toes, that includes the whole body; thus, body parts stand for people. There is also a case of an underlying conceptual metaphor: A PERSON IS AN OBJECT as the person has a starting point and an endpoint. There is only a slight difference – in Latvian, the endpoint is "feet"; however, in English, it is "toe".

In the fourth set of PUs seven results appear for *galvas tiesu* in LVK2018 and 27 results for "head and shoulders above" in BNC (Table 4).

Table 4. PUs (*par*) *galvas tiesu* and "head and shoulders above".

PU base form	meaning	example	stylistic pattern
(*par*) *galvas tiesu*	far superior (compared to someone else)	*Lai kā es mīlētu un cienītu savas komandas spēlētājus, kanādieši ir* ***galvas tiesu pārāki*** (*Ar cīņassparu vien nepietiek. 06.05.2008. Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, nacionālā periodika*).	**conceptual metonymy**: **A1 ⇨ A2 ⇨ A** PART ⇨ PART ⇨WHOLE *galvas tiesa ⇨ galva ⇨ cilvēks* **conceptual metaphor:** LABAIS IR AUGŠĀ
head and shoulders above	greatly superior to	Though short, he stands **head and shoulders above** most. He is one of those characters whose personality is somehow several sizes too large (Leonard Cohen: Prophet of the heart. 1990. Dorman, Loranne S. and Rawlins, Clive L. London: Omnibus Press).	**conceptual metonymy** : PART ⇨ WHOLE head / shoulders ⇨ person **conceptual metaphor:** GOOD IS UP

There is conceptual metonymy in English: A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE. A head and shoulders stand for a person; however, in Latvian, A PART STANDS FOR A PART, and A PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE conceptual metonymy. In both languages, a primary conceptual metaphor: GOOD IS UP, can be construed, implying that the top parts are better, thus generating a similarity – the quality of some people is better than others. In the Latvian example, the sports team of the competitors is better than one's own team despite one's affection, whereas in the English example,

there is an individual whose personality is more notable than others despite being physically small. These PUs demonstrate their usage when something is objectively outstanding, regardless of one's beliefs or feelings.

Conclusions

Both Latvian and English databases contain media and literary texts. Nevertheless, there are more results in English, which can be explained by the fact that BNC contains a larger corpus collected over many years. LVK2018 contains more 21st-century examples than BNC, with mostly 20th-century examples. In English, there is also the database CORE: Corpus of Online Registers of English; however, language registers are outside the scope of this research.

PUs are known in phraseology under different names; nevertheless, terminological issues do not hinder the identification and analysis of their essence.

Metaphor involves two conceptual domains, which can be identified as **A** and **B**; in contrast, metonymy operates within one conceptual domain, which can be identified as **A**, and three types of conceptual metonymy exist. Metonymy dominates as it is present in all the analysed examples, Tables 1–4, whereas metaphor is present in Tables 1–3.

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that matching pairs of PUs can be analysed together and yield similar results despite the differences between synthetic and analytic languages. The PUs are used in analogous circumstances in Latvian and English: a difficult life situation, working together to accomplish something, wearing specific garments or looking at someone, and being objectively better despite one's feelings.

The following **similarities** with the keyword "head" were identified in Latvian and English pairs of PUs: fully or partially figurative meaning in all PUs; related meanings in all pairs of PUs; the most widespread conceptual metonymy is PART STANDS FOR WHOLE: Tables 1–4; analogous functioning in three pairs of PUs: Tables 1–3.

The subsequent **differences** were observed: three primary conceptual metaphors in Tables 1, 3 and 4; differences in the type of conceptual metonymy in two pairs of PUs in Table 1 and 4: PART STANDS FOR PART conceptual metonymy is identified.

In the future, performing a comparative analysis of PUs with other body parts, for instance, "heart", "skin", "hand", "foot", and others, would be worthwhile, including the PUs' etymology. Methodologically, creating one's own corpus using a corpus manager and text analysis software such as Sketch Engine could be invaluable.

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