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Rihards Delvers

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CONTENT

MENTORSHIP FOR BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR

PhD **Kaari Kiitsak-Prikk**
Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre

PhD **Annukka Jyrämä**
Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre; Aalto University, School of Business

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

Abstract

This paper focuses on how mentorship as an integral part of cultural management higher education could enhance meeting the needs of the cultural and creative sector (CCS). As societal changes occur rapidly, there is a need for novel ways to adapt higher education curricula accordingly, ensuring flexibility in educating students to respond to societal needs. We suggest that integrating mentorship into formal education could be one such approach. The research question is: What are the potential roles, benefits and challenges of mentorship in cultural management programmes in terms of knowledge sharing and co-creation? The aim is to explain if and how mentorship could work as a tool in developing the skills and competencies of future forerunners of the sector.

The paper builds on an action research method and applies a qualitative approach to two cases of piloting mentorship programmes. The data collected include observation notes and surveys on interventions in two cultural management master's programmes. The interventions include mentoring activities, peer-to-peer mentoring and co-creational workshops. As a result, the paper outlines possible

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approaches and suggestions for how mentorship schemes in the CCS could support the development of capacities to meet the sector's needs today and in the future. The originality of the paper lies on its novel view of how higher education could build a framework for a new type of solution to address gaps in skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes among professionals through mentorship.

Keywords: *arts management, CCS, mentorship, education, communities of practice*.

Introduction

This paper focuses on how mentorship, as an integral part of cultural management higher education, could enhance meeting the needs of the cultural and creative sector (CCS). As changes in society occur in unexpected and rapid ways, there is a need for novel ways to adapt curricula accordingly, and for flexibility in educating students to respond to societal needs. The CCS sector requires individuals with new competencies, such as understanding digitalization and new technologies, adapting to changes in social cohesion, and having the capacity to be activists or change agents [e. g., see VVA et al. 2021]. The range of skills and knowledge needed for new managers and policymakers in CCS calls for a new approach to learning and education. In this paper, we elaborate on the learning and knowledge creation perspectives within universities, focusing on programmes in arts and cultural management.

We aim to add a new understanding of the phenomena of capacity building through analysis from a knowledge co-creation perspective and the interplay between tacit and explicit knowledge [see e. g. Nonaka et al. 2001, 2000; Von Korgh et al. 2000] with learning through communities of practice framework [see e. g. Brown and Duguid 1991; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 2000; Wenger 1998] that has been used in analysing learning in the context of professional communities [Lave and Wenger 1991] as well as in the context of education [e. g. Goldie 2012; Tomlison and Jackon 2019; Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh 2022; Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh and Jyrämä 2023]. We aim to integrate the mentorship perspective with curriculum and education building on insights from previous literature [e. g. Grant-Vallone and Entsher 2000; Amayry and Crisp 2007]. The knowledge co-creation discussion is used as a tool to reflect on how to facilitate the changes in curricula in arts and cultural master's programmes. One way to tackle the challenge of keeping up with rapid changes in professional practice in CCS is through integrating mentorship into formal higher education. The research question is:

- *What are the potential roles, benefits, and challenges of mentorship in art and cultural master's programmes in terms of knowledge sharing and co-creation?*

The study analyses two arts and cultural management master programmes piloting novel ways to integrate mentorship into their curriculum. We assume educating managers for the CCS provides ways to build new competence and skills that allow agile governance, management and leadership which is capable of adapting to the ever-changing environment and capable of becoming active change markers if needed. The master programmes are the key actors in facilitating competence development among creatives and other stakeholders contributing to the sector.

We conclude the paper with implications for the higher education programmes in the CCS. We propose a framework for meeting the gaps in educating skills, knowledge, values and attitudes of the professionals in the format of mentorship.

Theoretical discussion

We acknowledge the multifaceted nature of knowledge: knowledge co-creation from the interplay between tacit and explicit knowledge. This perspective relies on the insights of Nonaka et al. [2000, 2001] on the interplay between tacit and explicit knowledge which we take as a starting point. Further we build on the knowledge co-creation processes analysed in organisational context [Von Korgh et al. 2000] where the role of shared beliefs, values and norms affect which facts, insights or experiences we perceive as valid and which ones we might omit [Von Korgh and Grand 2000 on dominant logic]. In addition, we look at co-creation occurring in communities [Von Krogh et al. 2000].

Communities of practice provide a tool to look at learning occurring in the context of everyday activity. In communities of practice, people share similar values, norms and practices. The practice can be interpreted as a profession, but could also be any shared practice, such as shared education and learning [Lave and Wenger 1991]. Communities of practice can be seen as a place for learning, especially learning through socialisation and hence can be adapted to educational context [Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh and Jyrämä 2022; Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh and Jyrämä 2023]. Mentorship, similarly, is a way of co-creating knowledge through sharing experiences and networks. In many cases, mentors represent the communities of practice which students are aspiring for. Mentors' role in opening up the avenue to the negotiations of meanings within communities of practice can be vital. Mentorship relationships can be formal or informal encounters, occurring through expert-novice relationships or peer-to-peer interaction [e. g. Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2000; Bryant 2005; Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh and Jyrämä 2022]. Thus, we see mentorship as a means to enhance knowledge sharing and co-creation in our case in an educational context [see also Aranburu et al. 2023]. Mentoring relationships provide a platform for the co-creation of knowledge and mutual learning. Connecting mentorship to knowledge discussion with communities of practice perspective allows us to look at

knowledge co-creation and learning as interaction, highlighting the role of relationships and community as spaces of learning. This brings forth the experience (tacit knowledge) as one starting point for knowledge co-creation in addition to explicit knowledge as traditionally adopted in formal curricula. The skills and competencies for agility and activism are created in communities and in interaction, often developed through urgent needs to respond to challenges in practice. Hence, we argue that communities of practice within academia need to be more opened up to share practices to access these novel competencies, as discussed in Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh [2022]. Mentorship could integrate academic communities with the ones in practice. Focus on mentoring with an emphasis on experience and tacit knowledge creates new insights for curricula design and supporting structures. Our study opens up the role of communities of practice, the needed skills on competencies and the challenges of how they can be integrated into curricula with the focus on mentorship (see Figure 1).

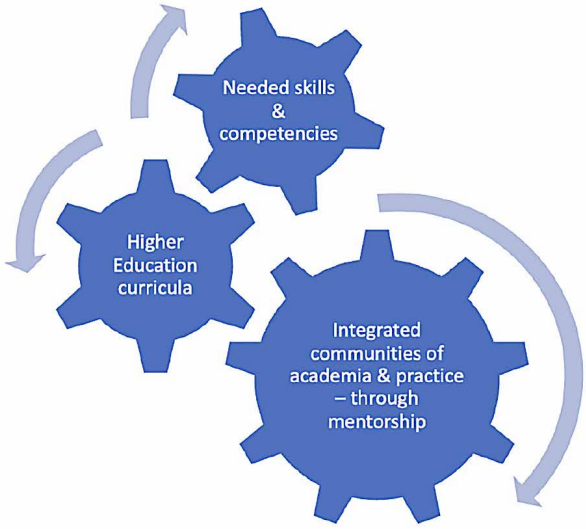

Figure 1. Summary framework by the authors.

Next, we shall look into the role of mentoring in two pilot cases followed by analysis from the perspective of knowledge co-creation and communities of practice.

Research Design

Two cases of piloting mentorship programmes were carried out with action research methods in the cultural/ arts management MA programmes in Latvia and Estonia. The cases provide a unique setting to analyse integration of mentorship to curriculum and the specific interventions created to both ensure smooth integration

but also to learn on the process of mentorship integration itself. Mentorship was a new concept for the organisations and was approached somewhat differently in the two cases, but both had a shared understanding of mentoring.

The analysis in action research traditionally occurs through cycles of action and reflection [e. g. Wadsworth 1998; Gronhaug et al. 1999]. During the action research period the interventions included setting up the mentorship schemes, providing training and consultations for both mentors and mentees. The interventional meetings and workshops enabled to design and affect how the cases proceed but also enabled to collect the empirical data, thus to continuously analyse and adapt the insight gained to the programmes. The interventions are described in more detail in the findings chapter.

In addition, student and mentor feedback was collected and analysed based on a survey done in August 2021 at the Latvian Academy of Culture (n – 24 students, n – 16 mentors, general sample – 25 students, 25 mentors); and a survey, personal feedback and observations were done in 2022 at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (n – 16 students, n – 16 mentors, general sample – 19 students). The primary themes of feedback were the advantages of the programme for mentors and mentees as well as the primary difficulties that programme participants faced. There were questions on development of competencies, skills and attitudes; effect of mentorship on vision of job and / or opportunities in the industry: knowledge of the daily professional environment, gaining contacts with people in the sector etc.

The data included written materials such as invitations, workshop guidelines and materials, photos etc. of the interventions and the feedback results. The material for analysis of the process consists also of our own field notes and remembrances, saved emails, and the presentations and papers made during the project.

In action research in one's own organisation, the difficulty of mixing different roles, researcher, project manager, organisation's member, has aroused discussion among the researchers [e. g. Holian 1999]. In our study, our priority was the education provided to students and second the research. However, as the mentorship programmes were openly presented as pilots, we were able to test and engage in different formats of mentorship and collect feedback. The role of self-reflection is crucial in action research, as one needs to be aware of one's actions and choices both as a researcher and as a project manager [e. g. Holian 1999; Marshall 2001]. It is not easy to know what feelings, ideas, and thoughts one can share with the group members or put into research material. As Marshall [2001] points out, there is no one way of reflecting and making the story. In our case we had regular meetings to reflect the pilots in the context of the REMAM project [see more: remam.eu], and inside the two programmes, these activities enabled us to tackle the above-mentioned

challenges in action research. In this paper, the two cases are used to illustrate the role of mentorship in education context with knowledge sharing and co-creation perspective rather than provide the final outcomes of the analysis.

The two pilot cases and findings

Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT) carried out a pilot mentorship programme as an organic part of cultural management MA studies. 16 students with a versatile level of previous experience and with some experience as practitioners in CCS experienced the pilot programme in three phases over three semesters. Each student was matched with handpicked practitioners as mentors for one semester. For the next semester, the same students were matched to peers from Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) Creative Industries and Growth Management MA programmes. In addition, the pilot season consisted also of tutoring where the core academic staff supported each student's learning path. Thus, each student had a tutor throughout the three semesters, a mentor (practitioner) for the second semester, and a mentee (peer student from LAC) for the third semester.

The mentorship programme aimed to support students in their challenge-based learning and to provide practical insights for better integration of academic studies and practice. The practitioners-mentors (mostly graduates of the same MA programme) were briefed in a webinar and personal phone calls. Online materials and suggestions were provided. From February to June 2022, there were 1–3 mostly online meetings between mentee and mentor. The pilot season did not include any face-to-face network events, but the relationship between student and mentor was freely created based on the respective ways of each. The coordinator of the programme did not interfere between mentor and mentee, and the initiative to establish first contact was set on the students. Mentorship contributed to specific learning outcomes and was graded pass/ fail.

The peer-to-peer (P2P) mentorship served the purpose to support mentoring skills among future leaders of the CCS and build international connections within the same (sub)field. P2P mentorship pairs (mentor from EAMT – mentee from LAC) were matched by the programme coordinators based on the pre-survey among the students and taking into account the goals of each student. The students of EAMT had a week-long intensive training on the topic of mentorship and for the third semester they were assigned the role of mentor to share their experience and knowledge from their studies and practice. The P2P mentorship pairs met 2–3 times; five pairs managed to have an eye-to-eye meeting. P2P mentorship contributed to a curricular module and was graded pass/ fail.

The results of the pilot programme clearly outlined the benefits for the students. Mentorship contributed to their problem-solving and networking skills, as well

as helped to relate to practice. Students agreed the mentorship in both semesters enhanced competencies and industry relationships. For example, a student noted on the practitioner-mentorship: "*We had very helpful discussions which widened my view on the cultural sector*." The mentorship enabled students to "observe different perspectives (mentor/mentee). "*The opportunity to think differently*" was highly appreciated, as well as the received "*new skills and educational moments*" throughout the pilot programme. The wish to have even more "*skill of flexibility*" and "*skill to make the room in your mind*" suggests the mentorship helps one to realise the need to become agile and open-minded.

However, the need for facilitation was also claimed, as some students were less active, or the relationship match was not ideal. The students expressed the wish for "*more guidelines and frame*". There were also cases of mis-match either on personal level or having expertise in a topic less relevant for students. The mis-match led to informal endings of the mentoring relationships. This indicated that the mentorship programme requires coordination and support for both mentors and mentees; from matchmaking to goal setting to follow-up. The practicalities required more active intervention than provided in the pilot season. It speaks of expectations that the education system has a structured way of handling these initiatives.

All students were assigned to mentorship, regardless of their personal wishes and motivation. This might have been one of the reasons for the lack of interest from the student side to engage fully in the mentoring relationship in addition to unsuccessful matching. On the other hand, many students had access to relevant communities of practice outside academia already, hence there might have been lower motivation towards mentorship as access to relevant communities or competencies.

The feedback from mentors outlined the benefit of being involved in such a programme, indirectly. A mentor outlined: "*I could structure my knowledge better.*" Restructuring implicit knowledge contributes to new understandings. During the mentorship programme a mentor realised:

> "*...the labour market in the arts is so confusing and, in some way, transforming now that there is no concrete hard skill necessary for a student to acquire beyond those that can really be learned from the internet for example. I think more important is to be able to engage critically with the current discussion and situation and make informed decisions. Be able to assess your own competences and values and what are the places of these in the current situation in the sector and beyond. Because the sector is transforming, the skill necessary is the ability to tune into and predict what is about to happen in the world and how one acts upon this transformation.*"

The same aspects – the ability to understand oneself and one's competencies; as well as that "*it's more about the gut feeling*" was noted by students.

Mentors confirmed the mentorship as a useful tool to make an impactful contribution. One mentor pointed out: "*It is always valuable when you can support, help someone struggling with some problem in which you have the competencies to help*." Mentorship programmes have an impact on activating the practitioners of the CCS towards taking more of the role of a socially responsible leader. They perceived mentoring as part of their own professional development and societal engagement.

Both mentors (practitioners) and students (both in the role as a mentor to peer, and as a mentee) recognised the benefit of the programme to their communication skills and to the ability to be in the mentorship relationship. Students learned professional competencies needed for pro-active and agile arts management like problem solving, co-creation, purposefulness, flexibility, critical reflection. The competencies seem to be knowledge based, including both implicit tacit knowledge and elements of explicit knowledge (see Table 1 for the summary).

Table 1

Summary of the key aspects of the EAMT case. Based on a survey, personal feedback and observations were done in 2022 at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (n – 16 students, n – 16 mentors, general sample – 19 students).

Benefits	Requirements/ challenges
• Mentorship as tool for personal (or organisational) social impact and social engagement. • Mentorship is an integral tool for professional development. • Mentorship as a tool to connect academic content and build bridge towards practice – integrative activity. • Mentorship leads to realisation about skills necessary in the sector and enables self-identification.	• Mentorship requires stable coordination, professional facilitation and consistent structures. • Need for support from both CCS and higher education frameworks. • Flexibility of curriculum requirement – outcome based and "gradable" format creates challenges for students. • Mentorship as an obligatory or optional activity affects motivation of students.

Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) launched a pilot mentoring programme involving 26 mentors and 30 mentees (from February – June, 2021). The pilot was created as a response to the growing requirement of the sector itself and also of the Latvian Ministry of Education to strive for higher education institutions (HEIs) meeting the needs of the corresponding industry. In addition, a report within LAC [2019] suggested to provide students with a deeper understanding of the diverse and

fragmented labour market of the CCS, to develop a network of mentors of the sector, who would create an in-depth understanding of the institutional and organisational specifics of a particular sub-sector.

The aim of the pilot mentoring programme was to strengthen the involvement of the industry players in the study process and by developing cooperation with industry professionals to expand student's experience and to give the student another tool to get to know the specifics of the future profession. First applications of mentors were asked for (mostly the graduates of the LAC) and then offered the list of mentors to students. Students applied for mentors of their own choice, but the final choice of a mentee in case several students applied was done by mentors themselves. Some of the mentors did not get any application which created some disappointments. The participation of the LAC programme is a voluntary option for students. Therefore, students who applied were motivated and deeply interested to participate. The mentors and the students, both, but separately, were briefed in an online seminar, materials about the programme were given and the aim of mentorship and some suggestions were provided. The mentorship consisted of mostly three online meetings between mentee and mentor. Due to the administrative issues, there was no mid-term evaluation meeting.

The LAC case highlighted that students value close collaboration between the HEI and the CCI and are looking for an opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding of the sector. Students wish to get to know the industry "from inside", being interested in real, practical or new work experience or job opportunities, and in-depth insights into the profession from a person not directly related to the academy (hence "fresh", perhaps different opinion). Students look for contacts, networking with field professionals and would like to be presented with a "wide "selection" of mentors". In addition, they indicated a wish of getting help in finding the right direction, individual approach and emotional support, getting support in the study process and opportunity to attend seminars on personal growth.

Evaluation of the LAC programme identified that mentors valued networking with other mentors and professionals in the field, were looking for tips on being a successful mentor and getting to know the new generation, and learn from them (reverse mentorship). They addressed an issue of the necessity to transfer real life experience, to involve mentees in practical tasks in a natural CCI setting.

The LAC case shows that both mentors and mentees agree that motivation of mentees to be part of the programme, to be the driving force of the process and to succeed is of utmost importance – if a mentee is not motivated, a mentor who is first and foremost a successful practitioner in the field but not a professional coach or psychologist cannot help and the process of mentorship will not be successful (see Table 2 for summary).

Table 2

Summary of the key aspect of the LAC case. Based on a survey done in August 2021 at the Latvian Academy of Culture (n – 24 students, n – 16 mentors).

Benefits of the mentoring programme	Requirements/challenges of the mentoring programme
• Mutual benefits; e. g. mentors engaging mentees as employers or successors. • Valuable networking with other mentors and professionals in the field. • Closer collaboration between the HEI and the CCS. • Development of professional competencies in CCS. • Entrance into the labour market of the CCS.	• Communication of the goal, expectations and tasks within the programme for all participants. • Guidelines for structuring mentoring meetings; facilitating networking events as a platform for sharing experiences. • Need of training for mentorship managers, mentors and mentees; need of financial and human resources. • Sustainability of the programmes needs facilitation and resources.

Discussion

The cases indicate that there is a need for explicit activity to integrate the academic and practice communities in the context of specific (master) programmes. It has been proposed that the academic communities are not closed, even if often concentrated around a discipline or a professor, the experts (i. e., academic staff) also have networks and connections beyond academia, hence can act as brokers between academics and the practice for the novices in the communities, i. e. students. Usually, the academic communities are created around a specific discipline or programmes with the relevant practitioners, alumni seen as the external community to connect with [e. g. Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh 2022; Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh and Jyrämä 2022]. The mentorship provided new insights, networks, and job opportunities for mentees. In co-creational workshops, mentors and mentees shared views on co-learning, resulting in some mentoring relationships leading to future job positions. Thus, mentorship can integrate the somewhat interlinked communities of practice, the one in academia and the professional one. On the other hand, cultural management is not a homogenous community of practice around distinct professional identity, but it is a heterogeneous field with multiple job descriptions and distinct (sub)fields within art forms, organisational formats etc. that create multiple (sub)communities of practice. It creates new challenges for mentorship matching and beneficial

mentoring relationships, as tackled also by Aranburu et al. [2023]. These sub-communities can have specific languages, norms, skills and competencies required, hence a student as a mentee might end up with a mismatching mentor. These specific characteristics affect the knowledge co-creation and mentoring relationship and need further analysis. The multifaceted nature of the cultural management field got highlighted when the mentor-mentee pairs were created – the mentors were hand-picked from different fields and positions to encompass the interest and topics of the master students; from museum leadership, to rock band agents to policy makers. However, based on the feedback, mentoring was a tool for building cavities to cope with new topics and challenges – and a way to enhance knowledge (co-)creation on one's skills and capacities rather than a tool for the field specific information, facts and matters.

In addition, MA students often have existing professional experience, and networks – and can perceive themselves as experts. The self-identified expertise showed especially in the peer-to -peer mentoring, where the students at times felt more senior than their peers, and some felt problematic their positions as mentors. This seems to point out that at times knowledge sharing, especially knowledge co-creation, requires self-identification as a knowledge owner.

To summarise, mentoring could be used as an **entrance** into the **labour market** of the CCS. According to NACE classification, professions corresponding to the CCS are employed in almost 300 sectors of the economy which face new challenges. The labour market needs people with high-level adaptability skills and the capacity to apply their knowledge and skills in a specific context in an agile environment. As the cases showed, mentorship opened up job opportunities, yet the diversity of the labour market creates challenges for mentoring programmes in terms of finding suitable mentors and having their organisation allowing time for such activity.

In addition, one of the main benefits of the programme is development of professional competences in CCS. Although various initiatives are supporting the **development of professional competencies** in CCS already, for example, as part of the Nordic Baltic mobility programme [Nordic Culture Point 2022]; and Creative Europe MEDIA business cluster programme [European Commission 2022], mentoring programme at the university level might foster this development Mentoring is a two-way relationship where knowledge is co-created rather than one way of passing on information as found in previous research as well as noted in our case analysis. In particular, the mentoring relationships were noted as spaces of learning of how to become professional by both mentors and mentees during the co-creational workshop [see also e. g. Kuznetsova-Bogdanovitsh and Jyrämä 2022; 2023]. We assumed the students would learn about the practicalities of the

(sub)fields of CCS, while the feedback stressed the learning about themselves as professionals. Acknowledging mentoring as a tool for professional development could legitimise mentoring in educational lifelong learning policies as well as within art and cultural organisation as an option for learning for professionals, in addition to sharing their experience.

Conclusions

To conclude, the analysis pointed out several outcomes of mentorship programmes. Mentorship relation allows new types of competence and capacity co-creation through sharing mentees' (students) current academic knowledge and mentors' (practitioners') experiential knowledge with the mutual learning experience. We wish to emphasise that knowledge sharing and co-creation in mentorship relationships was building up professional identity and self-identification rather than learning facts and matters about the (sub)field itself. This would encourage us to propose that **mentoring is a tool for openness and adaptability.**

Our cases revealed the multifaceted nature of the CCS and the need for tailor-made mentoring pairs. The knowledge on (sub)field specificities were highlighted in some respect but the co-created knowledge which is adaptable beyond communities was more emphasised.

Mentorship could be a complementary element of facilitating cooperation, and modern management in the CCS by including mentors from different sectors, building cross-community/sector understanding and allowing joint activities. There could be supportive frameworks and structures such as incentives, assessment tools or role-modelling from the governance. This would enable the art and cultural managers to build competencies needed in the future as identified previously: "*Ability to collaborate and co-create with other sectors is a definite requirement to the professional cultural manager tomorrow*" [KEA & PPMI 2019]. Moreover, cross-sectorial symbiosis raises opportunities for cultural management as a discipline [VVA et al. 2021]. The educational and professional development programmes need means to build the required competencies, and mentoring could be one of the ways to respond to this identified need.

Mentorship integrated into the curriculum provided a platform for building agile managers both from students and similarly a platform for professional development for practitioners. Higher education programmes could facilitate and support this co-creation by adding flexibility to their study programmes to facilitate learning through mentorship, and on the other hand by acknowledging mentoring as a means of professional development, and providing incentives for professionals to engage in mentoring activities. In addition, mentoring can be seen as a tool for building cross-sectoral understanding and ability to collaborate.

Our results seem to point out that mentoring can be seen as building societal impact on an individual level as recognized by mentors. However, we wish to point out that also organisations could reflect that mentoring could be one tool for societal engagement. To conclude, it would be beneficial to acknowledge mentorship as a formal tool for both educational activities as well as a tool for building better professionals for CCS. This would require legitimation of mentorship both in curriculum context as well as in art and cultural organisations incentives, for example as a societal impact indicator and a tool for professional development.

Finally, there should be a wide range of **best practices shared and evaluated** within the CCS on a national and European level. For example, in Estonia, folk culture mentorship support for folk dance and music leaders has been implemented by the Ministry of Culture to improve their professional competencies [Estonian Ministry of Culture 2021]. These kinds of initiatives are great measures to strengthen the rise of competencies for cultural management as well. Yet, a similar approach could also be applied to the level of European national and local cultural policies. Higher education quality assessment could include an indicator of mentorship. HEI funding scheme could include an element of whether HEI has a mentorship scheme or not integrated to their processes (for students as well as for the staff). In the cultural management domain, the curricula evaluations should consider whether the programme participates in the international mentorship network or not. Practising mentorship could be considered as part of the quality indicators of the curricula if sustaining tight relatedness to CCI field practice.

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MULTISENSORY APPROACH TO MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY AND EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT

PhD **Elīna Vikmane**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Cultural and Arts Studies

Mg.art. **Maija Ņikitina**
Riga Porcelain Museum

Mg.sc.soc. **Laura Brutāne**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Cultural and Arts Studies

Bc.art. **Lote Katrīna Cērpa**
Latvian Academy of Culture, Institute of Cultural and Arts Studies

Abstract

The study investigates a multisensory approach to accessibility in museums, highlighting the importance of its diverse dimensions in enhancing the experience for visitors with visual impairments. Utilizing qualitative research methods, the study explores the physical, intellectual, and emotional accessibility dimensions of the museum education project in the Memorial Museum *Raiņa un Aspazijas vasarnīca*. The study highlights successful approaches in stimulating intellectual and emotional accessibility. It reveals that the stimulation of emotions, memories, and imagination might play the most important role in successful implementation of the multisensory approach, allowing all visitors – both individuals with visual impairments and those without – to greatly enhance the overall museum experience and form a more intimate and personal connection with the content.

Keywords: *multisensory approach, accessibility, museums, museum education, visual impairment*.

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Introduction

The area of accessibility in museums for individuals with visual impairments has recently garnered increasing attention among researchers [Vaz et al. 2020a; Haines 2021; Cho 2021; Vasilakou et al. 2022]. Studies suggest that individuals born blind or losing sight before age three develop unique brain connections that enhance other senses, such as heightened hearing, smell, and touch, as well as cognitive functions like memory and language [Mass Eye and Ear 2017]. These individuals may exhibit superior auditory abilities in terms of orientation, auditory attention, peripheral sound recognition, and verbal skills [Boroujeni et al. 2017].

Thus, the focus of this study centres around the following research questions: (1) How does the multisensory approach enhance the accessibility of museums for individuals with visual impairments? The empirical analysis of the study focuses on the project *Sajūtu ceļojums* (Sensory Journey), aimed at increasing museum content accessibility for the visually impaired audience. Consequently, the second research question is (2) How do individuals with visual impairments experience the multisensory approach in the *Sajūtu ceļojums* project in terms of accessibility?

The structure of the article unfolds as follows: the authors highlight the specifics of multisensory approach regarding museums' physical, intellectual and emotional accessibility efforts for individuals with visual impairments in the context of their cultural perception specifics. Subsequently, authors present the methodological considerations of the empirical research design, discuss the research results and finalize with conclusions.

Multisensory approach to museum accessibility

Since 2022, museum accessibility, diversity, inclusive practices, and community involvement have become focal points globally and have been incorporated into the new definition of a museum by the International Council of Museums [ICOM 2022]. Accessibility in museums manifests in physical, intellectual, and emotional dimensions [Vasilakou et al. 2022; Haines 2021; Wagner 2021; Asakawa et al. 2018] emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach related to the cultural perceptual specifics of individuals with functional impairments [Vaz et al. 2020]. Despite notable efforts, museums face criticism for a perceived tendency to treat visually impaired individuals as *mentally retarded* [Montsho 2020], overlooking that positive museum experiences for visually impaired people depend on their reliance on other senses besides vision [Vaz et al. 2020]. Visitors encounter difficulties accessing artworks because museums predominantly remain visually oriented, hindering a connection with exhibitions through senses other than sight and impeding independent mobility within museum spaces [Vasilakou et al. 2022]. Exclusion, as termed by Seale, Garcia, and Rix [2020], results from museums neglecting the cultural perceptual specificity

of individuals with visual impairments, associated with the loss of one sense. This can be addressed through multisensory approaches to enhance museum content accessibility.

The multisensory communication approaches are *still a fairly novel concept*, that haven't *yet found their way into museums at large* [Neves 2012: 280], although sense-stimulating gadgetry is utilised in many public spaces. Nevertheless, a recent study in Korea emphasized the importance of combining all senses for perceiving individual artworks and that the integration of multiple senses supports learning, inclusion, and collaboration, aligning with the diverse cognitive and perceptual needs of the visually impaired [Cho 2021]. The study from Portugal recognises that blind visitors positively evaluate the multisensory experience in museums, perceiving the museum collection through smell, taste, and other senses as *unforgettable* [Vaz, Freitas, Coelho 2021: 80] experience.

Regarding physical accessibility, individuals with disabilities seldom visit museums due to mobility issues, both in reaching the museum and navigating within it. Personal independence during museum visits is a central theme in research, sometimes identified as social accessibility [Wilde 2014]. The absence of multisensory accessibility, such as artworks inaccessible for tactile experiences, leads to dependence on accompanying individuals [Asakawa et al. 2018] and thus lowers the feeling of equally valued audience segment. Several key points have been formulated to ensure physical accessibility for all institutions: for example, creating detectable and safe outdoor walking paths, ensuring an easily reachable and recognizable main entrance, ensuring an access control system, facilitating easy-to-access and detectable reception areas, enabling easy and safe indoor navigation, ensuring visible and readable signage or audial descriptions or information, and providing specific provisions for equipment and materials accessible to the public, opportunities to touching the objects without gloves etc. [Wagner 2021b; Wagner 2021a]. Technologies equally suitable for both sighted and visually impaired museum visitors become crucial tools in promoting accessibility [Vasilakou et al. 2022]. However, technological solutions must be supplemented with navigation technology [Asakawa et al. 2018] that enables visually impaired individuals to orient themselves continuously in space.

Various reports emphasize that physical accessibility, while important, is just the initial step, requiring additional efforts to ensure intellectual accessibility [Haines 2021]. How to achieve a concise yet profound and engaging presentation of information for individuals who cannot read the curator's descriptions and labels commonly found in museums? How to describe two-dimensional artworks to individuals who have been blind since birth and have no concept of the qualities of the surrounding world? Researchers unanimously agree that intellectual accessibility should encompass everything that provides information – adapted websites with

inclusive language, audio guides, social networks, information dissemination to the audience in a direct and convenient manner within exhibitions and virtual environments [Istanbullu Dincer et al. 2019]. Regarding the experiences of Braille readers and users, a correlation has also been identified between the ability to read Braille and a higher level of education [Sylvester 2020]. Specialists from Scotland's oldest organization supporting the visually impaired emphasize Braille as one of the most essential communication tools, offering visually impaired individuals the opportunity to learn proper spelling and grammar, especially when perceiving and analysing complex texts [Sight Scotland 2020]. Nevertheless, other studies highlight the opposite, that *Braille cannot be considered an inclusive reading tool because not everyone has developed adequate reading skills to read it, and texts with large fonts and appropriate contrast ratios do not serve all people with low vision* [Vaz et al. 2020c: 20].

Emotional accessibility in contemporary research is closely linked to sensory accessibility – encompassing imagination, memory, and emotional formation when interacting with physically available museum objects. Moreover, the interaction process should ensure both tactile and auditory experiences. Additionally, scent, as a carrier of information, can complement a blind person's perception of objects, evoke memories, and trigger specific emotions associated with a particular experience [Maggioni et al. 2020]. The Rijksmuseum project *In Search of Lost Scents* in Amsterdam, which involved exploring paintings with the aid of scents such as frankincense, myrrh, resin, and smoke [Verbeek 2020] demonstrates this rich experience as successful enhancement. Even souvenirs can help with shaping an image and also forming personal memories with a subjective and unique emotional background [Vaz et al. 2020], thus playing a significant role as tangible objects that can be taken away after the visit of a museum.

Design of empirical research

The study adopts a qualitative design, involving 10 informants (five persons without visual disabilities and five visually impaired persons) utilizing participatory research methodological principles with the following data collection methods: (1) five in-depth semi-structured interviews with project creators (without visual disabilities) – a museum worker, a creative team leader specializing in theatre aiming at the exploration of senses, two educators from Riga Strazdumuiža Secondary School – Development Center for visually impaired people, and a member of the *SOCINTEGRA* association's board, which implements projects to improve museum accessibility for visually impaired individuals; (2) five audio diaries as a convenient data collection method when working with visually impaired individuals, capturing data at the moment of a specific phenomenon, revealing sensitive and hidden

reactions [Bartlett, Milliga 2020: 9] recorded by visually impaired students from Riga Strazdumuiža Secondary School; (3) reverse brainstorming method among the same five students, where participants identified problems and challenges; and (4) four peer-to-peer interviews (with assistance from researchers) between the same students plus one researcher (without visual impairment) were applied to allow the participants to more easily reflect on their experience and understand the expectations of visually impaired individuals towards museum accessibility efforts in this particular case and their overall experience in museums. Fieldwork took place between March 2 and May 15, 2023. Data were fully transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis method. Data were coded using a deductive approach according to physical, intellectual, and emotional accessibility categories. To avoid the risk of subjective judgment, the codes – insights and memories of the youth and educators – were compared among three researchers.

Results and discussion

This study is part of a larger three-year project. The results focus on the museum education project *Sajūtu ceļojums* (Sensory Journey) within the Memorial Museum *Raiņa un Aspazijas vasarnīca* (Summer house of Rainis and Aspazija), aiming to enhance museum content accessibility for the blind and visually impaired audience. The project has been implemented since 2021 and awarded by the municipality as *The Creation of Outstanding National and International Cultural Events in Jūrmala* [municipality], in a museum up to an hour's drive from the capital city and is designed as a program to be registered before the visit because it shares the museum's only multi-usage space and must be installed prior the visits. It comprises ten *stations*, such as full-size mannequins of Aspazija and Rainis, great Latvian poets and public figures, dressed in early 20th century period-specific costumes and accessories, a three-dimensional tactile model of the summer house building, a wooden letter mosaic called *Letters of Love*, a tactile and aromatic coffee bean station, *Bench of Love* with an audio story, a station involving hair combing and plaiting, a *seaside station* with a lamp (sun) and a fan (wind), a tactile herbarium station, and a *Lab of aroma* where visitors can enjoy four scents linked to the life of the poets. Each station is equipped with headphones playing an audio file with accompanying text, poetry, prose, collectively forming a narrative about Rainis and Aspazija's life in intimate aspects and simulating the environment in which the poets could have lived. All stations are connected with cords – guides to assist people with visual impairments in navigating the exhibition without the assistance of a guide.

As delineated in the previously examined theoretical literature, the dimension of physical accessibility manifests in practice as an initial evaluation of general access to a specific cultural offering, followed by the assurance of accessibility to physical

entities. Although the informants in the interviews do not explicitly underscore the suitability of the Memorial Museum *Raiņa un Aspazijas vasarnīca* building for individuals with functional, specifically visual impairments, a notable observation arises. A major drawback is considered to be the fact that the program is not permanently available but requires prior request. A museum representative explains the management of the project's placement: (..) *if we have planned an event, such as a concert or an exhibition opening in the same hall,* (..) *then we remove it. And then, when we have appointments, we bring it back.* This can be seen as an effective use of museum infrastructure, but requires additional coordination between the museum and its audience, and there may not always be alignment of possibilities. For example, a representative from the association SOCINTEGRA reports: (..) *I call the museum, then someone cannot make it, someone is sick, and so on. If the project were permanent, it would of course be more convenient.* An additional shortfall is the need for a private vehicle to visit the museum, as there are no appropriate road signages for the individuals with visual impairment from the train station to the museum.

The ability of people with visual impairments to be independent of an accompanying person and to enjoy the museum experience independently is an essential part of visiting a museum. The project *Sajūtu ceļojums* is structured in such a way that all visitors, including those with visual impairments, can move independently between the stations (aided by connecting cords) and independently perceive information in audio format, supplemented by various elements that stimulate the senses, such as smell and touch. The project's accessibility, enhanced by the multisensory approach, was highly valued by the informants – educators from the school. For instance, one noted, *this is the great thing, that children and any of us can be an active and not a passive participant. And understand, participate, cooperate. It is very important.* However, it should be acknowledged that the social accessibility provided and the aim for the visitor to be independent can also present challenges for people with visual impairments. One of the young participants, reflecting on their experience in this project, revealed that despite the fact that individuals admitted that *here you can touch, hear, and understand everything, but in other museums, everything depends on the accompanying person or guide*, their previous experiences also created frustration, which overshadowed all other accessibility dimensions: *I was more focused not only on the emotions at all the stations but also on how I was going to get everywhere, how everything was going to be... more on that. So, I concentrated more the first time on the technical aspects.*

The successful incorporation of accessibility elements is strongly linked with the involvement of individuals with visual impairment during the creation of projects in museums. In that particular project the educators and individuals working with visually impaired individuals were involved, which could be the middle ground

as most museums created projects just *simply closing our eyes and imagined how it would feel* [Richardson 2019]. In the case of this museum education project, while students from Riga Strazdumuiža Secondary School – Development Center for visually impaired people were not involved in creating its objects from inception, they were invited to test and provide feedback on its content to ensure its suitability for individuals with visual impairments. Moreover, some adjustments were made according to the feedback, for example, a museum object was changed to a replica in order to provide a possibility to touch it without gloves. Nevertheless, not in all cases adjustment was possible due to the late stage of involvement.

The dimension of intellectual accessibility is more remarkably evident within the *Sajūtu ceļojums* project. As previously mentioned, intellectual accessibility refers to adapting informational materials for people with functional impairments, in this case, visual impairments, using elements that allow them to be easily and comprehensively perceived. Informants expressed particular appreciation for the opportunity to physically engage with objects, noting that this tactile experience, coupled with the information conveyed through audio narration, deepens their understanding of the narrative. Informants articulated this sentiment, stating, for example, *I would hardly remember a lot of facts* (..). *But, as far as I can touch everything and feel different sensations, I remembered more about what they liked and didn't like* (..) *how they lived.*

Furthermore, the synergistic effect of 3D accompaniment to the informative audio recordings, accessible through headphones connected to each station, is highlighted by informants: *The incorporation of various sounds, such as doors creaking, clocks ticking, the sea's ambient noise, is commended for enhancing the overall immersive experience and understanding of the environment*. Nevertheless, some informants noted occasional disappointment with the audio quality, citing crackling sounds that intermittently disrupt the enjoyment of the multisensory approach. One informant elucidated that, confronted with these disconcerting sounds, s/he found it necessary to remove his/her headphones, thereby interrupting this immersive multisensory experience.

Delving into the role of the audio format within the project, its creators recognized audio as a fundamental informational format. Following consultations with educators, project creators determined that only one text in Braille would be incorporated among the objects. This decision was motivated by the educators' perspective that not all blind or partially sighted individuals possess a comprehensive understanding of Braille. Contrary to assertions in theoretical materials emphasizing Braille as a crucial element for promoting intellectual accessibility, the project successfully prioritized the prevalence of the audio format and accompanying sensory-tactile stations.

The project *Sajūtu ceļojums* offers visitors emotional accessibility through tactile and auditory experiences that stimulate the imagination, memory, and emotions of the museum visitor. Study found that this dimension remarkably enhanced the overall experience broadening it beyond the museum content and boosting memories and imagination. Most respondents emphasize that the multi-sensory approach used in this project contributed to the formation of emotions: *Here I can actually feel something*, with several young people stressing that the tactile and aromatic coffee bean station created a very calming, relaxing, and meditative feeling. The data from the audio diaries also highlighted the peace that the experience of the project has brought, allowing one to get to know the two poets better – *I felt a great, great inner peace within myself. And it really, really helped me to get to know Rainis and Aspazija in a way that I couldn't forget*. Another reflected that *what will stay with me the most are the feelings and memories of how I perceived everything*.

Respondents noted that the multisensory experience triggered their imagination, for example, at the station, where there was a life-size mannequin of Aspazija dressed in a period costume and accessories, allowed to touch and imagine *Aspazija walking* (..) *gracefully through the streets of Riga, and everyone looking back at her*. Another example shows that the station *Lab of aroma* allowed to reminisce about the childhood – *The world of scents took me back to my home, where there are* (..) *pine trees all around.* (..) *I was already in my childhood with all my senses, running barefoot along the path where my grandmother had planted mint,* (..) *and I met my childhood in that moment.*

Study found that emotional dimension of accessibility was the least criticised as created the personal connection between the museum and its visitor and that the emotional accessibility was highly appreciated by museum visitors without visual impairments. A museum employee explains: *They just wander around the museum quite indifferently. We try to inspire them in the museum, but there's no special reaction*. At the end of the tour, the guide offered the group the *Sajūtu ceļojums*. The museum worker continues: (..) *and during the program, they blossom, emerging as completely different people. The reaction is extremely emotional and appeals to a wide range of ages; they really enjoy it.* The approach also worked well for foreign guests, despite all audio recordings being in Latvian: *It doesn't matter; they sit down and enjoy the meditation. There it is, coffee repeating, coffee, coffee. Sometimes, understanding [the language] is not necessary, just feeling*. Another museum representative adds: *She listens to that 4-minute piece several times, continuing to immerse herself in the coffee experience*. This impact was particularly notable given that the permanent exhibition in the museum is primarily created traditionally without multisensory approach.

Conclusions

The project *Sajūtu ceļojums* has been designed to be physically accessible, allowing visitors to engage with various sensory stations, it also reveals a problematic aspect of usability. The project has been created in a multi-use space and, therefore, must be installed and uninstalled on a regular basis. This creates additional coordination that serves as a barrier, along with the need for private transportation, as the route from public transportation to the museum is not marked for individuals with visual impairments. The involvement of visually impaired individuals not only in the piloting process but also in the production phase is critically important, as is the involvement of teachers or experts who work with visually impaired individuals.

The project demonstrates a strong commitment to intellectual accessibility, and the audio content successfully enhances accessibility. Braille is not widely used within the project, focusing instead on tactile and scent experiences, and audio narration, which were deeply appreciated and highly valued by visitors. Moreover, it reveals that the stimulation of emotions, memory, and imagination through its multisensory stations might play the largest role in successful implementation of the multisensory approach, allowing all visitors – both individuals with visual impairments and those without – to greatly enhance the overall museum experience and form a more personal connection with the content beyond what is provided by the museum.

The study concludes that, although theoretical sources acknowledge that accessibility encompasses multiple dimensions and emphasize the importance of engaging various senses, this research contributes the argument that the emotional dimension of accessibility in museums in combination with intellectual accessibility has the most significant impact on visitors and their positive evaluation of museum accessibility efforts, even when physical accessibility has not been fully implemented.

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A NEED FOR PIED PIPERS? MAKING CONNECTIONS IN A COMMUNITY ARTS SONG-MAKING PROJECT

PhD **Daithí Kearney**
Dundalk Institute of Technology

Abstract

Music and musicking are powerful contributors to a sense and awareness of place. A community music project in 2021 focused on the small town of Dunleer on the east coast of Ireland. Overshadowed by the larger towns of Dundalk and Drogheda to the north and south respectively, Dunleer has a rich history and many opportunities for the local community to engage in the arts. However, despite much talent, the groups and individuals involved are largely disconnected from and sometimes unaware of each other. This paper considers how a participatory, arts-based virtual project that sought to encourage collaboration through artistic endeavour highlighted the potential for greater collaboration between stakeholders to achieve increased participation in the arts and the local community. Drawing on the author's perspective as an artist and lead facilitator, it details the process and critiques the role of various stakeholders in the project, incorporating an autoethnographic approach that focuses on the role of third-party facilitators in community music initiatives.

Keywords: *Community Music, Music and Place, Songwriting, Collaboration, Music Participation*.

Introduction

During a radio interview on 1 September 2021 about a community project I was leading entitled "Songs of Lann Léire", local radio presenter Gerry Kelly described me as a Pied Piper-type figure. Kelly was referring to a mythological figure who

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captivated and led rats and people away from a town by playing music. Although the legends have darker aspects and meanings, his comment was meant as a compliment to me, reflecting my presence as a musical outsider who prompted change in the town. I felt immediately uncomfortable with the focus on my role and made reference to the many other people involved in the project. Nevertheless, the conversation prompted me to reflect critically on the project, which involved the recording of two songs by individuals across the community in Dunleer, a growing town with a population of approximately 2000 people on the east coast of Ireland. Funded by the local authority and undertaken during COVID-19 restrictions on social activities, the project sought to develop a sense and pride of place and community through participating in an arts-based project that focused on local themes. I initiated and led the project as a locally-based artist, although I was not from the town. This paper critically reflects on the project and aims to demonstrate how a community arts project can lead to greater levels of collaboration and connectivity in a community.

My association with Dunleer began when I was appointed organist and choir director for St Brigid's Church in 2017. Beyond the choir, I had little interaction with other aspects of community life aside from visiting the secondary school to give a workshop on Irish traditional music and to facilitate banjo lessons for a few weeks at the Scoraíocht, a local cultural centre. I initially composed one of the songs used in this project, "Brigid's Cloak", for the choir in 2019. It was based on stories and mythology related to the patron saint of the church, St Brigid and the choir sang it for the feast day and through the month of February each year. The second song, "Wee Dunleer", had been composed some time previously by a regular singer in the church, Pat Roche, who wished to share his song with others in the community. Pat's song was inspired by the locality and its people and demonstrated a sense of pride of place. For the project, I created a number of resources including scores, tutorial videos and backing tracks that were shared online, inviting people to learn the songs and submit recordings of themselves performing. To complement the songs, photographs and video of the town were compiled, which were then edited by two professionals and shared as videos on the parish website and social media.

The project placed a strong emphasis on local folklore, heritage and a sense of place or local identity in the songs and videos – "Lann Léire" is the Irish language name for the place, translated as "the church of austerity". The subject matter of the songs referred to Brigid, the matron saint of Ireland with local connections, and other aspects of local life in the place. Tradition holds that Brigid was born in the north of County Louth at Faughart and a legend has it that her sight was restored at a well in Dunleer after an incident where she blinded herself to make her less attractive to potential husbands. Prior to writing the hymn to St Brigid, I had approached the Parish Priest for resources and he provided me with notes that he had on file for the

purposes of liturgy, as well as a recently published book on St Brigid by Noel Kissane entitled *Saint Brigid of Kildare: Life, Legend and Cult* [2017]. Although Kissane's work affords little attention to Brigid's connections with Louth, these resources became the basis for the lyrics of the hymn.

While collaboration was a central aim of the project, the acts of musicking were largely done in isolation owing to COVID-19 related restrictions at the time. My role reflected in part what Maurice Mullen [2022] refers to as "evangelists" in the context of Irish traditional music; I was an advocate for community engagement in the arts and hoped to encourage individuals and groups in Dunleer to participate in a collective arts project. I was an outsider with experiences from other places who called on others to join in promoting musical engagement but I had limited prior connection with members of the community. However, a number of community leaders were already present in the community, each integral to the development of different groups and artforms. They can be termed "sentinel musicians", individuals who have served their society "with vigilance, drawing on heightened sensory powers of perception and an ability to shape sound" [Shelemay 2022: xxv]. As collaboration was a critical aim of this project, it was necessary to understand the complexity of collaborating in the context of COVID-19 restrictions, recognising the benefits of collaboration for creativity and "success" [see Eglite 2023]. Beyond the context presented by the COVID-19 restrictions, many of the learnings outlined in this paper remain relevant but the significance of third-party involvement for the sustainability of community music requires further consideration.

Despite the presence of a number of artists and groups in the town, I observed an unconscious silo mentality that meant many activities in the community happened in isolation and did not cross-fertilise as creative, cultural activities that enhanced the sense of place and community. Many of the groups in the town, including church choir, traditional music group and Irish dancing school, were engaged in arts activities in isolation without collaborating or even being aware of each other's activities. Therefore, I was a "creative broker", as I sought to establish interaction among talented individuals and facilitate collaboration [Tjarve et al. 2021; Eglite 2023].

My reflections on this project are guided by scholarship on community music and the geography of music engaging with music, identity and society. Examining the expression of Scottishness, Nicola Wood highlights the exploration of "the epistemological potential of music as a vehicle for social enquiry" [2012: 198]. Mirroring some of the outcomes of this project, Wood argues that music provides "a medium through which notions of identity and place can be created and lived" [2012: 199]. Like Wood, I am a geographer and: "non-representational thinking is also valuable to me as a geographer because it [albeit implicitly] promotes an awareness of

the social, cultural, political and emotional geographies through and in which social practices are negotiated and performed" [2012: 201]. The importance of music for understanding society is also evident in the work of Jacques Attali [1985] and Edward Said [1991], who argue that we can achieve a greater understanding of the world and what is possible through engagement with the performance of music. Engaging primarily with popular music, Simon Frith [1996] advances an understanding of music as a medium of experience while Tia DeNora [2011] highlights how many musical experiences can be individual and hidden, disconnected from the experiences of others but there are opportunities for sharing. Echoing the work of Lee Higgins [2012], who described community music as a form of hospitality, "Songs of Lann Léire" invited participation from across the community, raising awareness of what was present in that community in terms of the arts, and reflecting the need to create connections within the community, particularly in the context of social restrictions imposed in response to a pandemic.

As an artist, my role is also increasingly complicated, as exemplified in a recent edition of *Culture Crossroads*. While my artistic work is evident in my composition and arrangement of songs, Zemīte et al. recognise the impact of a growing digital market whereby "artists have to invest increasing time and energy in production, networking, administration and coordination – a multiplicity of individual initiatives" [2023: 29]. They draw on the distinction between *artistic work* and the *work of an artist* [Lesage 2005], and my networking with local groups and developing my online presence exemplifies the latter.

Methodology

Prompted by the radio interview, I invited ten stakeholders from the "Songs of Lann Léire" project to respond by email to a series of questions, which were developed during a reflection phase after the completion of the project. These stakeholders included leaders within various groups and those involved in the production of the videos. The questions focused on their motivation to engage in the "Songs of Lann Léire" project and what they hoped to achieve, the main challenges to participating in the project, their opinions on the process and outcomes of the project, and their willingness to engage in a similar project in the future. I triangulated these responses with my own autoethnographic reflections that focused on my own experience as artist-facilitator and "blow-in" [Kaul 2009] or third-party collaborator.

"Songs of Lann Léire" was a participatory, arts-based project funded by Creative Ireland, a government-led programme established in 2017 that connects people, creativity and wellbeing across Ireland [Creative Ireland 2023], and the local authority, Louth County Council. The funding application was submitted on behalf of various stakeholders by the Parish Priest and stakeholders included the Parish Choir, local

schools, Men's Sheds Group, the Lolo Robinson School of Irish Dancing and the traditional music organisation Scoraíocht Lann Léire. I had prompted the project and developed the application following conversations with various stakeholders but, as an artist, I was advised that the application would be stronger were it to come from a representative of the community. Indeed, I was happy with this. As the idea had originated with the Parish Choir, I approached the Parish Priest, who was happy to support. He had a great interest in local history and folklore and was an advocate for community enhancement.

The aim of the project was quite simple and reflects many community music projects: To bring together members of the community to create a video of two songs composed for the local community and encourage local participation in the arts. In an effort to encourage participation, in addition to inviting contributions in the form of song or music, we invited people to share photographs, drawings and paintings of the town of Dunleer. The song "Brigid's Cloak" could include rhythms typical of Irish dancing and so we sought to include local Irish dancers. The funding allowed for the involvement of a skilled audio and video editor to create videos that could be shared on social media. The videos featured a variety of voices, faces and images of Dunleer.

There were a number of challenges to developing the project, not least the ongoing social restrictions related to COVID-19. My initial motivation for the project was to encourage choir members to continue to engage in musicking. The first idea was grounded in positive experiences with the Oriel Traditional Orchestra, a community orchestra based in the same region who created a number of videos in isolation over the previous two years [Kearney et al. 2021]. This research highlighted in particular the social benefits of musicking and the need to maintain connections during a period when face-to-face rehearsals were not possible. We also recognised that these provided goals to encourage musical development. The emphasis on connecting communities with their places and engaging with local heritage and folklore, influenced my thinking in relation to the project for Dunleer.

Context and Challenges

The seed for the "Songs of Lann Léire" project was a hymn to St Brigid entitled "Brigid's Cloak" that I had composed for the choir in Dunleer, which we first performed in February 2019. The intention was to invite other groups to learn and record the hymn with the choir, albeit it had to be done adhering to restrictions and Public Health guidelines. This placed an emphasis on technology but, informed by what was happening in education and amongst music groups, plans were developed that, it was hoped, would engage a wider cohort of the community than might ordinarily have participated. When discussing the project with others, another

individual who also contributed to music in the church, folk singer Pat Roche, told me of a song entitled "Wee Dunleer" that he had written about the town, which also mentioned St Brigid. He had already taught his song to the Men's Shed group and he was eager to see if we could include it in the project. Guided by Higgins [2012], I said "yes". I was happy to do so as it supported and encouraged participation beyond the choir. Roche was also involved in the Tidy Towns Committee in the town and valued the opportunity to promote the area.

Even though the project was officially led by the parish and included religious references, I did not view the project as one that was explicitly religious. I valued the role of the Parish Priest in the community [see Kearney 2022] but I was very conscious of the extensive discourse on the role of the Catholic Church in contemporary Irish society, often influenced by a need to deal with historical crimes by members of the clergy [Inglis 2017]. Informed by Higgins [2012], I recognised that the community with whom I was engaged with was not static and bounded but rather organic and plural and the project invited individuals and groups whose sense of belonging to the community was varied. My hymn was based on folklore and although Brigid is one of Ireland's patron saints, she is not a canonised saint and in 1969 she was expunged from the list of saints by the Vatican and her feast day of 1 February was revoked. It may be argued that her standing in both religious – being recognised in at least three Christian religions: Roman Catholicism, the Anglican communion, and Eastern Orthodox Catholicism – and non-religious contexts, makes her an appropriate subject for a project that sought to embrace different groups across the community. On this occasion nobody had any objection to the involvement of a church group or religious references. Furthermore, the priest's local knowledge and relationship with the community enabled communication with stakeholders and encouraged some participants.

Process

When funding was awarded, it was necessary to create resources that could be shared and engaged with virtually. I composed arrangements of the two songs and recorded a series of short videos teaching the songs in segments that were shared on Facebook and by email. The arrangements were developed with various stakeholders in mind. While it was presumed that most participants would sing melody, for "Brigid's Cloak", harmonies for alto and bass voices were included in recognition of the singers involved in the Church Choir and Men's Sheds. Prior to the project, the choir had sung "Brigid's Cloak" in unison. Other parts were included based on my knowledge of instrumentalists in the community.

It had been hoped that I would be able to go to the schools as part of the project. This was not initially possible due to restrictions but one of the school teachers in

the Primary School coordinated the project in that space. Children in the school had already created artwork about St Brigid and were encouraged to draw pictures in response to the narrative of "Wee Dunleer", resulting in a display of drawings of various buildings in the town. The teachers of Junior and Senior Infants also incorporated movement by choreographing the chorus of "Brigid's Cloak" and this enhanced the creative experience for the children. The development of artforms beyond singing contributed to enabling the creative potential of every child. Permissions were sought from parents for the children to participate and the majority granted permission for the children to be recorded.

For the recording process, I created two backing tracks to which each participant could record. There was no limit to the number of people who could be involved and the project sought to reach out to all groups in the community, as well as individuals who may feel isolated due to COVID-19 restrictions. Existing structures and community groups assisted in the dissemination of material and encouraging engagement. The parish Facebook page and website were the principal domains for dissemination and a Parish Council member provided invaluable assistance, not only in terms of content but also in relation to release forms and other administrative aspects.

COVID-19 had enforced a greater use of technology across society and this project sought to benefit from increased comfort amongst various demographics with available technology. Participants required access to two electronic devices. They were able to stream/download and listen to the backing track through headphones on one device and record their own performance on another. Most mobile phones were sufficient to facilitate participation. Nevertheless, despite instructions on how to record integrated into tutorial videos for the songs, a number of participants indicated that they were unable to or not confident enough to create videos for submission. For the choir, some members expressed a lack of confidence with technology so individuals and family groups were recorded in the church by me as the choir director. Although they were successful, one of those involved from the Men's Sheds admitted: "At the beginning I didn't think we could get it together especially recording it on the phone."

Ultimately, the majority of those who submitted material were already involved in the church activities, Men's Shed, school and traditional music organisation. In relation to the latter, Scoraíocht Lann Léire, representatives noted that there was a lower-than-expected level of participation and this was adjudged to be based on fatigue with online learning, coming at the end of a period when all activities were virtual and members had expressed a desire to return to social gatherings. For the Primary School, when restrictions eased sufficiently in June 2021, I visited the school on two days. The school was divided so I could not meet all students on one day.

I video recorded the students performing to a backing track played on a speaker in the grounds of the school and soloists were audio recorded in a classroom. The coordinating teacher reflected that the children felt like popstars and film stars for the day.

It was evident that many of the children enjoyed participating in the project but there were some exceptions. As a group, the older pupils in sixth class demonstrated less enthusiasm but it was clear that some, who were naturally inclined towards music and performing, were very engaged and delighted to participate in the activities. While their impending summer holidays and recent "graduation" from Primary School were possible factors in their performance, some children indicated that they did not like singing. The limitations of the project did not allow me to engage with this challenge as I might have liked but in some instances, I asked some of these individuals to monitor the sound levels while others sang. It was possible to find other roles through which they could participate in musicking. A reluctance to sing was not necessarily based on talent – some weak singers were very enthusiastic, and some strong singers required encouragement. The children had differing perspectives on what could be deemed "a good singer".

I compiled the audio, video and photograph files and provided these to music producer Stephanie Caffrey and video editor Luke Malone, both recent graduates of DkIT. They worked separately to edit the visuals and audio, providing me with drafts for commentary. Various stakeholders were also invited to give feedback prior to the release of the videos. In this way, a sense of shared ownership was fostered. Commenting on the production process, film editor Luke Malone noted:

> *"Working remotely on both cuts was a challenge in that communication with other project participants was limited and coordination was difficult at times. Nevertheless, email exchanges, phone calls, and video calls allowed me to overcome this separation from the others and we ultimately produced two music videos of high quality despite the restrictions caused by distance"* [correspondence with author, 1 October 2021].

While audio editor Stephanie Caffrey noted challenges with the quality of some of the audio recordings, often created using mobile phones in poor locations, she valued the community nature of the project:

> *"I am a big advocate for collaborations: whether they're local or global. For me, this year in particular has led to projects where I've created music or worked on projects with musicians from the Louth area and from abroad. It's exciting to work with international musicians but there's always a sense of pride when I work with musicians from my locality. I feel it's important to recognise where you*

come from and as a musician, to celebrate that: because who else will? Celebrating your community and locality is always interesting to other people, and sometimes it's easy to forget that. And I think pride is infectious: when the community sees it's being celebrated, that feeling can spread and cause a general sense of positivity" [correspondence with author, 26 October 2021].

Was it a success?

Having experienced various community music projects and read scholarship and reports in the area, I was a little frustrated with the process, questioning at times my own role and my expectations of the community and various stakeholders. Due to COVID-19, I was unable to meet the various groups in person. This challenges the fundamental relationship in hospitality between the host and the guest, or facilitator and participant as described by Higgins [2012] in the context of Community Music. Given the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, I did not always feel that I was a good host. As I was not familiar to many in the community, it was difficult to engage in encouragement as I might have on previous projects, when face-to-face activities and social gatherings gave impetus and momentum. Using the Parish social media and website allowed the project to attract the attention of a significant cohort from the community but it was more difficult to engage those outside of the established stakeholder groups. Nevertheless, the project brought together many in the parish who had not previously been involved in a project together, albeit only in a virtual capacity.

In terms of the workflow, files were submitted at different times, which was a little frustrating for the audio and video editors. A positive aspect was that when first cuts of both video and audio were completed, elements were identified and new images, video footage and sound files could be incorporated to enhance the video.

While it was hoped that much of the project could be done in a short timeframe before the summer, time was allowed and deadlines extended to try and encourage greater participation. While I visited the Primary School in the weeks immediately preceding their summer break, the secondary school had already begun their summer holidays and the involvement of the secondary school students was not realised as desired. Taking place at the end of a period of online activity, many potential participants were experiencing zoom fatigue and the novelty of participating in online video projects was waning.

There are different measures of success and my own reflections are influenced by the feedback of participants and viewers. One participant noted:

"I have over 50 years of musical experience on stage and in Church since early childhood and I was really taken aback by the wonderful recording that was

produced from the song I wrote. It was my first time seeing one of my songs written in musical notation" [correspondence with author, 7 October 2021].

For others involved, it challenged them to develop their skills in new ways:

"I am not used to making music videos so this project encouraged me to try techniques that I was not familiar with, broadening my skills. I also enjoyed creating something that a small community could be proud of, and it made me feel closer to that community" [correspondence with author, 1 October 2021].

The feedback on social media was largely positive, although the reach was largely within the community connected to the participants or regular attendees at the Church. Ultimately, the community were happy and it highlighted opportunities and a desire for greater collaboration on arts activities in the future. Some stakeholders indicated that although they "do their own thing", they would be very open to joining with others and that themes of local history, heritage and folklore provide obvious areas for exploration.

Conclusions

Uncomfortable with the term "the Pied Piper", it is telling nonetheless that some of the answers from participants to their reason for being involved amounted to, or were literally, "because you asked me". Sometimes there is a need for somebody to initiate an invitation, to provide a form of leadership that mobilises talented individuals within a community and bring them together. There is significant talent and activity in many communities but large scale, collaborative projects require somebody to take the lead. It is not only about money – and some projects require small amounts of financial support – but a lack of awareness of funding, or indeed perhaps poorly communicated funding possibilities or strategies and policies that do not give enough consideration to community and voluntary groups is a significant factor that must be overcome to increase participation and musicking. Small grants for community music projects are very beneficial but often result in short, singular projects that have a limited legacy. While often artist driven, it is expected that groups rather than the artist-facilitator make the applications. Many of these groups are unaware of or lack the experience to avail of the opportunities.

I did not seek to be a Pied Piper but my experience suggests that such a role can enhance communities' abilities to create connections and enhance the social and cultural life of their places. Too many organisations, groups and individual teachers operate in a silo, often without the time and resources to reach out to others. Such connections could enhance the overall experience of their members and students, and create new opportunities that further motivate engagement with the arts.

Furthermore, some of these activities can enhance a pride of place and create links with local folklore, geography and ecology. While this paper raises questions about the sustainability of community music projects and activities in and of themselves, these projects can also contribute to a wider sustainable agenda. If we consider them as events, we can draw on the recent scholarship of Judith Mair and Andrew Smith who argue that "we should focus on how events can contribute to the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of the places which host them" [2021: 1740]. Rather than funding strategies furthering ongoing competition between groups in a community, consideration should be given to the potential of funding third-parties to develop links that involve a greater number of stakeholders. A legacy of this project includes greater awareness of existing opportunities that exist in communities for participation in the arts.

To conclude, one participant wrote:

> *"While we were in the middle of lockdown and nothing to do, this was a great project, and it gave a great lift to the mood of the men in the Shed. Well, it really is a sign of things to come. Because we are not stopping there and hope to have a more permanent men's shed soon where we will devote some time to our next musical endeavour"* [correspondence with author, 7 October 2021].

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"Brigid's Cloak" can be viewed here: http://www.dunleerparish.ie/2021/09/local-song-brigids-cloak/

"Wee Dunleer" can be viewed here: http://www.dunleerparish.ie/2021/09/wee-dunleer/

ART, SCIENCE, AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: CROSSROADS FOR EMERGENCE

Dr. **Sef Hermans** (*PhD*)
International University of La Rioja, Spain

Dr. **Beatriz Pomés Jiménez** (*PhD*)
International University of La Rioja, Spain

Dr. **Igor Saenz Abarzuza** (*PhD*)
Public University of Navarre, Spain

Abstract

This article reflects on how in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, Farout Artistic Research (FAR), in co-creation with composer Dr. Sergio Luque and astrophysicist Dr. Francisco Colomer, designed and created an immersive performance in which new music, astronomy and audience participation intertwine.

The point for the creative process was: *How can we trust our perception if we don't know what we are looking at?*; and through artistic research and transdisciplinary thinking, a second question arose: *What perspectives and new insight emerge if we open up the performance and include the audience as an active and reflective knowledge entity?* In this context, the authors explore the creative tendencies and the intricate design processes of emergence, focusing on the transdisciplinary nature of the performance, embedding the concept of emergence in an interactive symbiotic artistic/scientific performance. The article explains how this exploration is what allows for reflection, new insights, and creation of new knowledge, both from the creators' and the audience participation's perspectives.

Keywords: *Artistic research, Emergence, Music, Audience participation, Science*.

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1. *Telescope II*: A Live Performance in Pandemia

On 17 April 2021, the first audience members arrived at the Museo Universidad de Navarra (Spain). On entering the building, the soundscape of Sergio Luque's *Telescope I* for solo piano greeted them, as they were invited to an immersive performance of astrophysics, new music and audience reflection in three acts. Their journey would be led by the following questions: *How can we trust our perception if we don't know what we are looking at? What can we learn about the complexity of our world from the knowledge generated when science and art interact?* These questions also guided the creation and the performance of *Telescope II:* a performance that seeks to establish an artistic dialogue between astronomy and contemporary music, knowledge and perception between the creators, performers, and the audience. In this way, science, new music, and audience participation and reflection offered three complementary perspectives on the same fundamental questions of our existence.

The performance was commissioned by Museum University of Navarra (Pamplona, Spain) to FAR (Dr. Sef Hermans, Dr. Beatriz Pomés and Dr. Igor Saenz), in cooperation with composer Dr. Sergio Luque and astrophysicist Dr. Francisco Colomer, for their annual cycle *Music Cartographies*. It was premiered amid pandemic restrictions and uncertainties.

The objective of the performance was to find the connection between artistic research and scientific research as a generator for new connective practices and exploration. How do these two fields facilitate emergence and generate new insight, and knowledge through inter and transdisciplinary research inquiries: not only for the creating and performing artists but also for the audience as an active participatory entity. Professor of Artistic Researcher Mika Elo identified as one of the lines of argument in the second phase of artistic research: *both science and art are creative activities, and their mutual difference is a historic variable. Artistic research promotes the convergence of sciences and arts by dismantling the hierarchies between the different processes of knowledge production and by joining in multidisciplinary collaborations* [2022: 12]. Moreover, during the development of *Telescope II*, the guiding question was, how can science and art connect and jointly find a common ground or starting point from which we can reflect on existential but sometimes abstract concepts such as space, time, distance, and perception? Referring to the essence that astrophysicist Dr. Colomer explains in the performance, we do not know if we are alone in the Universe, but what we do know is that we are isolated, and that everything and everybody you know lives on what Carl Sagan once called this *pale blue dot*.

The performance was designed in five stages, as follows:

1) Arrival

From the moment the audience entered the Museum, the sonography was designed to create an immersive environment from the beginning, favoring the coming

to the right mindset for the performance with the soundscape of *Telescope I.* The staff was indicated to fulfill their role as hosts merging with this atmosphere and only to speak if necessary. Entrance and reception took place on the ground floor. The audience members were invited to take at their own choice one of the cards numbered 1–15 and a pen, all displayed on a table. The number on the cards would predetermine their seat in the performance, though they did not know the implication at that time. These cards also included two questions, relating to the existential principles that guided in the performance, and space in the cards to write their answers. They would then walk down the stairs accompanied by scenic lighting and *Telescope I,* across the corridor to a black room where...

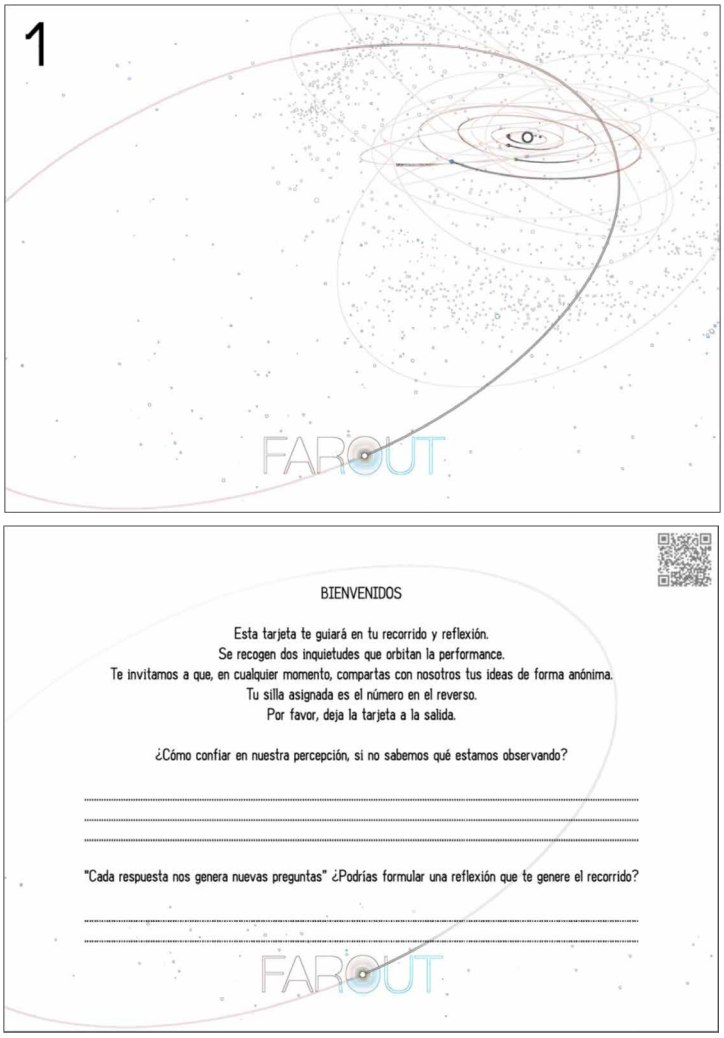

Figure 1. Participatory cards distributed to the audience in *Telescope II*.

2) The documentary: The astrophysical perspective

... the second stage was set. In this exposition room of the museum, a short documentary was projected, in which Dr. Colomer offered the astrophysical perspective and reflection to the performance, building a connection between natural sciences and performing arts. This documentary was created especially for this performance in one of the oldest planetariums in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The goal was to present the audience with the theoretical and conceptual framework, as well as some of the key concepts and questions that had motivated the creation of *Telescope II*. As Dr. Colomer would elaborate: *Is the universe infinite? How did the stars and planets form themselves? Is there any reason for their beauty? Is there a limit to our knowledge? Are we sure about our perception? How much of it depends on randomness? We observe the universe through a window of time. Thanks to the great distances between objects, we can only see them how they were in the past. To give ourselves an idea of these vast distances we use the speed of light as a measure for distance.* (..) *Light has now been traveling through the universe for 13.7 billion light years. In this immense space almost all the universe is empty. All the planets of our solar system fit in the space between the Earth and the Moon.* (..) *The importance of understanding this concept, is as important as understanding the silences in music. This is where we meet. This gives rise to the question, are we alone in the universe? Is it possible that there are other civilizations out there? How can we know? However, the thing we are certain of is, given the enormous vastness of the universe and the separation of the celestial bodies is that: we are very isolated* [Pomés, Hermans & Saenz 2021].

The audience was then invited by Dr. Colomer to continue the tour to the next exhibition space where...

3) *Telescope II*, the sonological reflection on space, time and perception

...the audience finds the musicians displayed in specific positions throughout the room. As mentioned earlier, the number on their card would refer to the numbered seat, which were mixed with the musicians', breaking with what is traditionally conceived as the musician's space. They, the audience, were the performative element *coming on to the stage*, and their positions varied from just sitting next to the pianist, in front of the violinist, or just at the last corner of the room. A white tape connecting all the positions (performers and musicians) depicted the *Draco Constellation,* one of the largest constellations that can be seen with the naked eye at the northern skies. This spatial design revealed another connection between the spatiality of astronomy and performative spaces. Once sat, *Telescope II,* the new music composition by Dr. Sergio Luque was performed: nine minutes of music written for piano and string quartet. Dr. Luque's elaborates on his compositional technique: *This piece was composed with the help of algorithmic composition procedures that combine rules and*

stochastics. I implement my methods for the generation of chords, chord sequences and rhythms in the programming language SuperCollider, as part of a feedback process that is meant to be intuitive and guided by my ear [Pomés, Hermans & Saenz 2021].

Dr. Luque pays attention to the chord's overtones and resonance interaction in order to find the optimal progression for his composition. In this way, with meticulous sensitivity for musical color and resonance differences, he listens to hundreds of sound clusters and chords until he finds the next progression. Therefore, a substantial part of the actual music is what happens in between the notes, when the resonance of the chords interacts with the space or concert hall, creating spontaneous resonances, overtones, and new harmonies.

This revealed yet another connection between both fields: Dr. Luque's music and Dr. Colomer's both seek to explore the space in between, the resonances, the silences. As the astrophysicist explains: *All the planets in our Solar System would fit in the distance between the Earth and the Moon. And if we made a model where the Sun was a sphere with a diameter of one meter, Neptune would be 3 km away and would only be a sphere with a diameter of 3 cm. Therefore, the universe is mainly empty. The importance of understanding this – the importance of understanding the resonances and silences in music –, that's where we both meet* [Pomés, Hermans & Saenz 2021]. In this setting and under these artistic guidances, the position of the listener is key in the perception of these cords, even if he is unaware of this fact.

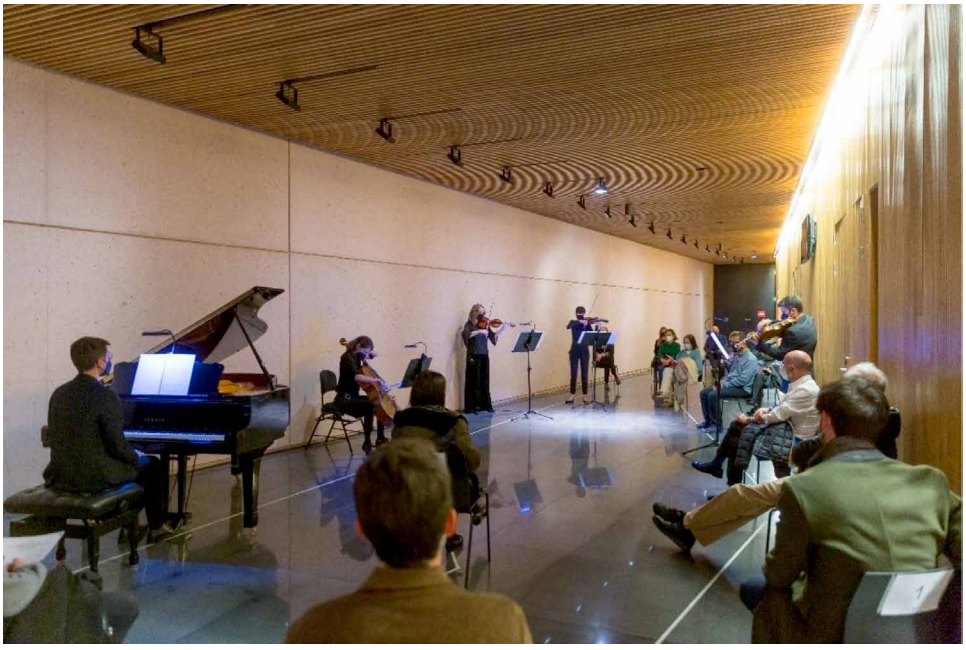

Figure 2. An impression of the performance.

4) The audience's contribution and reflection

Silence is broken for the first time. Dr. Hermans takes the lead in introducing Dr. Luque, seated amongst the musicians and audience members, and invites the audience into the last room, where the *Draco constellation* continues. There, they were invited to an interaction with the composer and FAR team, an exchange of insights, an active reflection of the audience, which was guided by the questions they found on their card and the ideas and concepts planted by the documentary, but not limited to them. In the set-up of the room care was taken to break hierarchical thinking by placing the seats in a circle and mixing the audience with the performers/conceptualizers, although the role of moderator was taken on between the members of FAR. This resulted in the diversification of every conversation that was held. The audiences' perspectives, the knowledge they brought to the conversation and the reflections that they made, illustrated the performance's appeal to the need of reflection on the common questions on human nature and our existence in our universe. Giving a constructive common denominator to our differences in perspectives, conceptual ideas and points of departure.

5) Reflection and analysis

At the end of this journey, cards were collected for further research, and for those audience members who felt eager to contribute, were encouraged to share further insights to a camera prepared to record their reflective contributions.

2. Transdisciplinary Artistic Design

From its inception, *Telescope II* was set out to be of interdisciplinary-transdisciplinary nature. The idea that the interaction in different disciplines and expertise can lead to the generation of new insights and knowledge has been well documented in various disciplines. However, from the onset of the project the concept arose to try to find a way to integrate and use the audience as an active participant in that endeavor. In order to clarify the terminologies and the differences between interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary, we refer to Henry [2021], as cited in [Willison 2021]: 1): *in general, multi-disciplinary refers to comparison of many different disciplinary perspectives; interdisciplinary relates to the integration of knowledge drawn from different disciplines and, with transdisciplinary we refer to the dialectical relationship whereby both integration and opposition of disciplinary knowledge results in new overarching perspectives*. Following the concept of transdisciplinary, since its origins in the 1970s it reifies, not only increasing the scope and comprehensiveness of interdisciplinarity, but also producing knowledge, insight, and analysis at multiple

levels that renders a theoretical framework more suited to analyze complex social problems [Augsburg & Henry 2016].

In the necessary balanced scheme of transdisciplinary projects, we relied on artistic design and artistic research to carefully *integrate and oppose* the commonalities found in science and music, and throughout the process of artistic design. In it we embed the invitation for audience reflection and participation, allowing for new connections and perspectives to surface, for new *overarching perspectives.* However, finding a model and the form for the gathering and collection of this knowledge was not straight forward. Furthermore, finding this sensitive equilibrium had its own challenges: in 2021 Spain (in particular Navarre) was under strict COVID-19 restrictions. The pandemic circumstances and the reality that Government guidelines to the presence of/ or number of audience members in attendance could change at a moment's notice, made it challenging to design the different artistic stages. To comply with the then acting norms, the decision was made to divide the audience of a maximum of 45 people, in three groups of each 15 members, entering in 30-minute intervals of each other. In order to comply with the distance measures then in effect (1.5 m), the audience was positioned in chairs divided over the three rooms, with a set number assigned to them. Furthermore, the decision to shape Dr. Colomer's contribution in the form of a documentary was made after it became obvious that his presence would be a liability for the performance, due to travel restrictions. At the time of development, we were not aware of how or in what way this would affect the design staging, however it did prove itself to be a guiding and essential part of *Telescope II*, in what Candy would label *reflection-on-surprise* [2019].

3. Shaping the Conception: Common Ground Model

In the field of artistic research, methodology is always at the forefront of the discussion. How can we, in a process that often entails multiple identities and shifting paradigms, bring clarity and academic discourse to a process with often unforeseen tendencies that emerge from the interactions between multiple disciplines and artists, in the reality of a flexible performative spectrum. In order to encompass the theoretical framework for the creation and artistic process in the conception of *Telescope II*, we turned to the *Common Ground model for Practice-based research design*, developed by Dr. Falk Hübner [2022]. Hübner clarifies, the common ground model *tries to two seemingly opposing aims: 1) to provide some strictness, precision and clarity; 2) at the same time to be flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen events*. To clarify, the aim of this model is not to incapsulate a rigid theoretical design but is developed to *offer multiple perspectives on how the artistic researcher can think about their desired approaches and methods* [2022: 323].

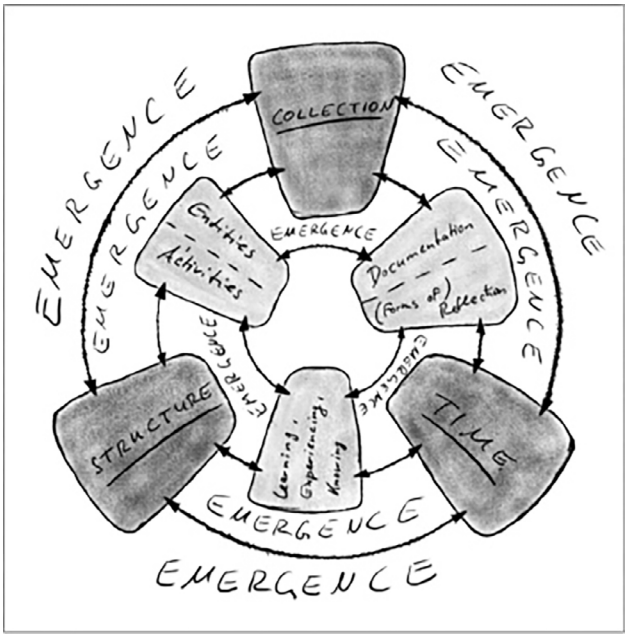

Figure 3. Common ground model [Hübner 2022: 324].

The practice of the creational processes, of ingredients that make up this conception, we now like to give an insight on how the starting point and definition took place.

In the preparation or initial phases of the process of creation, consisted of a series of videoconferences with composer Dr. Luque in summer 2019. In an attempt to find the first conception common nominator, the composer spoke about his newest developments in his music. However, because of sheer coincidence we realized we had the exact same book displayed in both of our bookshelves on the background: *Expanding Universe: Images from the Hubble Telescope* (2015). Our mutual fascination for the images and concepts in astrophysics immediately proved to be the common ground to develop a project together. From this point on, the idea arose to incorporate the astrophysicist Dr. Colomer in the project became obvious and a key definer in the conceptualization.

The next phase of the project was the collection of conceptual materials and ideas. The active conversations between FAR, Dr. Luque and Dr. Colomer, acted as milestones in the research, creation and design of the project. We shared insights, brainstormed, listened to Dr. Colomer's lectures, reflected on the images of the Hubble telescope and images that he provided through The Joint Institute for VLBI ERIC (JIVE) and talked about key concepts. In what could be described as the transfer of propositional and experiential knowledge, we talked about sonology,

new music, the concepts behind Dr. Luque's compositional language, creating an atmosphere for the emergence of new insights. This is what Anderson (1976) would consider the generation of propositional knowledge, that guided decision making in the ideas and concepts that apply to each of our professional and personal decisions in the creation of the work. Dr. Luque explains: *When I was composing, I was imagining, remembering the images of space in order to resolve doubts I had on how to compose a work, how the notes behave themselves, how brilliant or opaque to make the material, the harmonic colors, etc. So, I noticed that I fall back often to the images, to resolve the works, it works as much as an aesthetic answer, to see the symmetry in the universe, the imagination, the way it behaves itself unpredictable. As well as the reflections or questions that emerge knowing the immensity of the universe, how insignificant we are, how the universe does not take us into account* (..). *In other words, I see these images, and what they provoke in me, I try to let my music provoke the same feeling in me* [Pomés, Hermans & Saenz 2021].

In the design of the structure and timing of the performance, Dr. Hermans' *Ingredient model* [2021] proved to be of valuable guidance. The model provides a base to identify and organize the elements, agents, skillsets, to map its relationship with the different creative phases and the elements that emerge from the process. Hermans' model was based on Graham Wallas' *Four Phase Model* (1926) and its further development in Sawyer's *Explaining Creativity. The science of human innovation* (2012). The model gives insights to the skills, knowledge and materials used by the separate identities that take part in the conception of the work, and how these contributions affect the phases of the creative process in direct correlation to the aesthetic and performative demands of the creative process. Although in this production the role dividers were quite clear from the start and the role pattern within the transdisciplinary process was in an approach which Choi and Pak [2008] would describe as working in *parallel or sequential*, each entity was influenced and guided by the overlapping sharing of knowledge and insights. It is hard to pinpoint how and exactly when associative thinking, or inter-, trans-disciplinary thinking might affect the course of the creative processes within the work of each individual contributor, the consequential phases in creation of the work do function as a reflection of these processes.

4. Crossroads to Emergence

The layer of emergence had in the performance proposal a dual function. As it can be seen in the common ground model, emergence can occur during and in between all the named phases. During the phases of conceptualization, preparation, artistic composition, structuring or transdisciplinary balance, but also in the

designed audience participation, where the audience is used as an additional entity and as a vehicle or the generator of new knowledge. Emergence, in the words of Stephen Johnson, is *a form of higher-level knowledge and behaviors, emerging from low or local level interaction in complex systems* [2001: 233]. Peter Cariani continues by saying *the full gamut of emergence encompasses new forms, new material structures, new organizations, new functions, new perspectives, and new aspects of being* [2008: 2]. The possibility for these moments of emersion to arise relies on: a careful artistic design, a balanced interaction of the elements, a guarantee for enough flexibility within the structure, and a constant game between the propositional and the non-propositional elements. It is then that both procedural knowledge and propositional knowledge may occur.

As Niederer defines, *procedural knowledge can be understood as experiential knowledge in action,* while *propositional knowledge can be understood as the norms and principles by which to understand experiential knowledge* [2022: 246]. Following this concept, we understand that the moments of emersion can happen in both the artistic team and the spontaneous participation of the audience at the time of the artistic action. The sum of both approaches results in the final performance as well as the new ideas and questions that emerge from it, and altogether define this project as transdisciplinary.

In *Telescope II*, the audience is invited to reflect on the scientific and artistic matters, and to contribute orally and/or in writing. At the first station of the performance, a participatory card was made available to the audience with two questions that reflect upon perception and the ability to formulate questions as a vehicle to acquire new knowledge. These participatory cards were aimed at feeding their moments of emergence, and so leading to new experiential knowledge in action. Even though, as artistic designers, these moments cannot be predicted, it has been proven that when well-integrated in the performance, it can go beyond expectations. Some of the reflections that were written on the participatory cards as well as in the conversation and audiovisual contributions revolve around common questions on human nature and our existence in our Universe, with topics such as the development of technology, our place in the universe and the relationship to our planet, our ability to progress in knowledge trough curiosity and trust.

Some examples are given:

- *We need to remember that our perception might not be wrong, but it is incomplete, it is not the full reality. And it forces us to develop the ability to trust, that we have lost so much. We need to trust to advance.*
- *How does predisposition influence perception? How does context impact our senses? Even if what we perceive might not be the reality, science and technology*

can support us in the endeavor. Combining both perception and technology is key.

- *How can we perceive the unknown and the abstract? Can we build reality with the sum of everyone's perceptions? Or would it only lead to contradictions? Are contradictions part of the 'everything'?*
- *The combination of images and music made it impossible not to stop and think in this process. It is fascinating that as human beings can be aware of our limitations and yet advance, wonder, and know beyond them.*
- *The 'what' is revealed through perception. And if we know the 'what', perception can confirm. But knowledge emerges always from experience, our own or someone else's. And in this process, asking yourself questions is the key to growth and progress. When we stop wondering, is life over?*
- *Silence and emptiness have created in me an attitude that allows for introspection. While we discover the vastness of the Universe, we can still enjoy its beauty. The abyss is overwhelming, but can also be beautiful.*

We believe that these profound reflections, that combine cognitive processes and spontaneous actions of sharing, go beyond the performance of *Telescope II,* as they show that individual and social actions can be impacted by artistic experience**s**. Therefore, careful collection and analysis of the participatory information is needed to determine to what extend and how it affected the participants, and catalogue the knowledge and reflections gathered. Some of these reflective testimonies have found their way into the ongoing discussions of current and future artistic projects currently under development within FAR collective. A more in-depth analysis and sociological context will be offered in a future publication that focuses on the nature of these social inputs, from the individual to the collective, to further develop the ideas on culture as a vehicle for education and social transformation and connectivity.

Conclusions

The creation of *Telescope II* followed two lines of research leading to emergence crossroads, which could be seen as independent from each other, but are also intrinsically intertwined.

Firstly, the artistic creation and design of the performance itself. This encompasses the conceptualization of the performance, the creation of all the integral elements that conformed it (music composition, scientific documentary, spatial design), as well as the timing and transitions between these elements from a transdisciplinary approach, leading to the generation of insight and knowledge. This emergence crossroad occurred within the crafting methods, and the different creative

phases of artistic research. In *Telescope II* that new insight was produced not only by the interaction of the artistic and scientific languages, but by adding the audience emergent reflections into the equation. The duality in the emergence and reflective tendencies that this transdisciplinary approach entailed meant that art and science opened doors for new insights and the generation of an experience in which the commonalities and connectivity of the processes were centralized and expanded upon.

Secondly, the participatory dimension of the performance, through the participatory cards and interactions with the audience. The conceptual design was based on the initial idea of some form of active and/or immersive participation of the audience in a non-conventional performance setting. In other words, we wanted the audience to have time to walk, think, talk, and reset their (pre)conceived conceptions of a performance. Following that motivation, the final design invited the audience on a journey through various carefully connected spaces of the Museum, favoring the audience to submerge themselves in the atmosphere and sonological aesthetics, giving them the chance to calmly enter the mindset and time to activate cognitive processes on the matter, reflect and wonder. The objective was to incorporate the audience as an active knowledge-contributor in the performance model, creating an ideal environment in which audience participation and emergence could occur. In this line of thought, Michaels states: *If there is a contender that seems most associated with practice-based research, it seems to me that this is in the area of reflective/reflexive practice or action research* [2022: 48]. The audience members, in their diversity, are also entities which have their own propositional knowledge, procedural knowledge and experiential knowledge, that have shown to have a homogenous trade in their personalities, which is the curiosity and eagerness to know, share and learn.

The creation and performance of *Telescope II* showed that a carefully curated combination of both lines of research can expand artistic experience beyond our senses, impact our vision on the world while generating new insights and overarching our predetermined perspectives. And from there, new curiosities emerge.

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PUBLIC LIBRARY IN TODAY'S WORLD – SOCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS

Dr.iur. **Inga Kudeikina**
Riga Stradiņš University
Mg.iur. **Sanita Kitajeva**
Riga Stradiņš University

Abstract

Libraries have a long history. They existed ever since writing began. Historical transformation affected not only the contents of libraries, but also their form, mission, functions and services. With changing times and societies, evolving information and communication technologies, and contrary to predictions that libraries might lose their role and disappear altogether, they have changed along with the needs, demands and habits of society, learned to draw on new technologies, so forming a completely new understanding of libraries, their definition and role in today's educational, cultural, political and social environment. Development of the library sector was affected also by global changes and crises, but libraries were able to respond to challenges and use them as an opportunity for development, positive changes and transformation. This was mainly thanks to a user-oriented approach pursued by libraries, putting people and their needs, demands and rights at the heart of library activities. This forms a new culture of libraries, taking the place of their old philosophy, which was collection-oriented. Libraries provide free access to information, knowledge, education, cultural heritage and cultural events, and play a key role in science, lifelong learning, developing digital skills, improving literacy and information literacy in society, strengthening democracy and ensuring civic participation, promoting the use of creative potential, and ensuring access to state and municipal services. Thus, the phenomenon of today's library is associated with

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both accumulating and preserving cultural heritage and taking part in securing an individual's social and civil rights.

The article analyses the phenomenon of the public library as a cultural establishment, its role in meeting the social needs of society, and problems of legislation in the sustainable development of library activities. The focus of the article is on public libraries, as their main task is to provide services to the entire society. The analysis of the legal framework was carried out in the context of Latvia, observing the international framework. This is necessary to understand how the legal framework can ensure the development of libraries. Following the mission of libraries to act for the public good and to put people and their needs at the heart of library activities, the legal framework for libraries should reflect and protect public interests and an individual's right to information, freedom of expression and association, diversity of opinion and belief, artistic freedom, equal treatment, culture and education. A narrow understanding of library functions can restrict the right of access to information, education, culture and social services. The legislator should introduce library functions in the legal framework by including also a social aspect, clarifying and expanding information, educational and cultural functions.

Keywords: *library, cultural space, cultural heritage, civil rights, social rights*.

Introduction

Considering the multi-functional role of libraries in sustainability of society, a state's positive duty is to develop a legal framework that would provide the legal basis that is necessary for the functioning of public libraries, including financing. The legal framework should serve as the legal basis for the effective functioning of libraries, the safeguarding of public interests and rights, and the justification of necessary funding. Libraries should be strengthened both legally and in practice as institutions securing the effective functioning and needs of a democratic society, as mechanisms for strengthening democratic values, as contemporary and multi-functional information, cultural, educational and social centres.

Trends for the development of public libraries are defined *in Public Library Manifesto 2022* issued by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (hereinafter – IFLA), according to which the public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users [IFLA 2022]. The role of libraries in community's life, lifelong learning and development of civil society is thus underscored. These are three pillars forming a sustainable, socially responsible and prosperous society. These trends should underpin public library legislation. In Latvia, public libraries

are governed by the *Library Law* [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1998] and relevant Cabinet regulations, such as the *Norms of Financing Needed for Library Activities* [Ministru kabinets 2001], the *Norms of the Material and Technical Basis of Libraries* [Ministru kabinets 2001a], *the Regulation for the Accreditation of Libraries* [Ministru kabinets 2006], etc. Theoretically, the legislation is comprehensive, while practice is revealing certain deficiencies associated with the application of these rules. For instance, the list of library functions provided in the legislation has become obsolete, which hinders libraries in obtaining financing they need, meanwhile conferring upon local governments a wide discretion to open and shut down libraries, and, in certain situations, municipal budget availability prevails over society's cultural and social needs. By highlighting the role of the public library in community's and society's life, policy planners and politicians need to be alerted to the existing problems in order to facilitate the improvement of the legal framework in line with the needs of contemporary society in the public library sector. The impact of private libraries on providing important functions to society is less. The differences can be seen in features, availability, resource management and target audience. Private libraries can be created with a specific purpose or on a topic of interest to their founders or members. Public libraries, on the other hand, serve the general public and are oriented towards general access to information. Private libraries usually serve specific groups with special interests and needs. The scope of the public interest dictates that the focus of the article is on public libraries.

Public library yesterday, today and tomorrow

As institutions, libraries initially ensure the collection, accumulation, keeping and systematisation of cultural and historical sources. The first libraries were located in palaces and temples but they were not open to the public and were confined only to the ruling class [Pettegree, Weduwen 2021]. Libraries retained their elite status for a long time. Researchers demark the development of public libraries by the following stages: in the Middle Ages, books were still expensive to produce and acquire, they had the status of a prestigious and valuable item, a work of art as the highest expression of visual art; in the Renaissance period, science, art and literature flourished, the value system of society changed, marking a new era also in the existence of libraries. In Europe, the number of universities, where medicine, law, philosophy and theology were taught, grew rapidly. Universities took over the formation of libraries from monasteries. The invention of printing technology in the 15th century was the greatest revolution and pivotal point in the history of books and libraries; also, the expansion of libraries and the demand for books were fuelled by the growth in the world population, the development of education and literacy, emerging new ways and routes of book transportation

[Pettegree, Weduwen 2021]. It can be concluded that the development of libraries is linked both to technological progress, which created objective prerequisites for the development of libraries' technical facilities, and to social and cultural changes in society, which enabled an increasing number of people to use the opportunities brought by libraries.

The post-World War II library can be seen as the landmark in the development of modern library. This period marks a rapid change in human consciousness, in the transformation of the perception of rights as a value, and in the library as an institution that provides resources necessary for an individual's development. Meanwhile, technology is also evolving rapidly, with the advent of technological tools that did not exist before – the Internet and, more recently, artificial intelligence. Information, communication and digital technologies were developing during the 20th century, and their evolution continues in the 21st century at an unthinkable pace; they are becoming even more complex and advanced, thereby posing challenges for both the library – not to lose its role – and the legislator – to predict potential development scenarios to be in a position to provide the appropriate legislation. Based on the recent count, there were more than 400,000 public libraries in the world in 2022 [IFLA 2022a].

The mission of public libraries is to serve the society. This is a statutory obligation. The National Library of Latvia is of special importance in the structure of Latvian public libraries. As follows from the legal framework – "*The National Library of Latvia is a universal research library of the Republic of Latvia which is generally accessible by the public and serves for the intellectual development of the whole nation*" [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1992].

Public and research libraries serve important but different functions in society. Both are essential for education, access to information and cultural preservation, but their target audiences, resources and services differ.

Both public and research libraries are very important, and each contributes in its own way to public education, cultural preservation and access to information. Public libraries are more oriented towards broad public involvement and daily needs, while scientific libraries are specialized in supporting academic and research works. The phenomenon of the National Library of Latvia is the ability to combine both the traditional public and scientific library missions. The third part of Article 1 of the Law "On the National Library of Latvia" [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1992] states that "*the National Library of Latvia is a part of the national wealth of the Republic of Latvia*". It obliges the state to provide the National Library of Latvia with adequate resources. On the other hand, the contribution of the National Library of Latvia to society is the provision of diverse and regular educational, cultural, social and other events necessary for society.

In order to achieve the goal of the law and ensure the development of libraries, the *Library Industry Strategy 2023–2027* has been adopted. The overarching goal of the library industry strategy for 2023–2027 is "*to develop libraries as an excellent resource for smart and sustainable societal growth, which ensures preservation and accessibility of Latvia's cultural heritage, improves society's literacy and information literacy, ensures civic participation and supports cultural, educational and scientific processes, promotes the use of creative potential, strengthening social cohesion and resilience, ensures the provision of state and local government services*" [Latvijas Bibliotēku padome 2023]. The strategic goals of the library industry are: 1) to promote the sustainability of the library industry; 2) promote renewal and professional development of library specialists; 3) ensures the availability of cultural, educational and research resources and services; 4) promote public participation in cultural, educational and research processes. When applying the relevant legal framework, it is necessary to be guided by the set goals. Strategic goals reflect the direction of libraries towards ensuring people's well-being, building a socially responsible state and meeting the needs of a democratic state.

The role of the modern library in social communication

Today's library has evolved far from the original and longest-lasting conception of the library as a physical space for collecting, preserving and accessing information, which prevailed in its history. Historical transformation affected not only the contents of libraries, but also their outward appearance, mission, functions and services. With changing times, eras, societies and political regimes, evolving information and communication technologies, and contrary to predictions that libraries might lose their role and disappear altogether, they have changed along with the needs, demands and habits of society, learned to draw on new technologies, so forming a completely new understanding of libraries, their definition and role in today's educational, cultural, information and social environment. Development of the library sector was affected also by global changes and crises, but libraries were able to respond to challenges and use them as an opportunity for their development, positive changes and transformation. Not only have the mission, functions and tasks of libraries changed, but also their outward appearance. Library professionals and researchers conclude that libraries today are more than just physical spaces; they are community hubs, a platform and even a social movement [Lankes 2019]. It is hard not to concur with this opinion because libraries have evolved from being initially perceived as a physical space whose core function is to accumulate printed matter to open and public sites with a much broader array of functions and interdisciplinary nature, bringing together culture, education, information, technology and social area. The legal treatment of certain matters is lagging behind what is actually needed in library

legislation. According to Article 2(1) of *the Library Law*, this law deals with public relationships in the field of libraries in order to ensure the operation of libraries and to facilitate the preservation and development of Latvia's cultural heritage [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1998]. This provision shows that the purpose of the law is defined narrowly, omitting international legal relationships and the transnational role of the library, as well as disregarding the role of the library as a community hub. The future role of the library is linked to a wider use of technology, which undoubtedly calls for an appropriate legislation in place.

Development perspective

The biggest global industry association – IFLA, which maintains close links with the UN and other international organisations, determines professional trends and sets standards for library services, provides the following definition of public libraries in its recent trend report 2021: "*Public libraries are a worldwide phenomenon. Libraries occur in a variety of societies, in differing cultures and at different stages of development. Although the varied contexts in which libraries operate inevitably result in differences in the services provided, and the way those services are delivered, libraries normally have characteristics in common, which can be defined as follows. A public library is an organisation established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organisation. It provides access to knowledge, information, lifelong learning, and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment. The primary purpose of the public library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinion*" [IFLA 2022b].

The library of the future is based on the orientation of values towards securing human rights, both social rights and fundamental rights related to active citizenship, participation in social processes, lifelong learning and, of course, access to cultural heritage. There is an opinion in scientific literature which describes the library today and gives a preview of the library of tomorrow: "*We can view the library as a social phenomenon with a specific social mission, which is necessary for the development of society. The library is a multi-functional institution participating in social processes*" [Sporāne 2016]. Strengthening the social role of the library is a future challenge associated with library activities.

Role of the public library in today's civil society – Library in the protection of human rights

Libraries are predominantly educational, information and cultural institutions. In the 21st century, this function of libraries is perceived and interpreted in the broad sense. In addition, the library sector is characterised by the synergy and interaction of educational, information and cultural functions, which overlap, strengthen and supplement each other and cannot often be isolated from each other. As part of their information function, libraries provide access to high-quality, diverse and unique information resources and services. By supplying comprehensive information, the public library facilitates the involvement of society in the solution of major issues and important decision-making processes. A major function of public libraries is to bridge the gap between the information rich and the information poor by providing public access [edited by Koontz & Gubbin 2010]. Bridging the social gap and securing equal rights undeniably contribute to social peace, which is essential in the context of sustainability of both society and the state.

The understanding of rights starts with awareness, and it indeed requires literacy, whose promotion is now a voluntary initiative of the library. The role of the library in this educational aspect is underestimated, and it is not dealt with by law at a sufficient level. Nor is the libraries' capacity in supporting formal education used at the system level. Despite evidence of the role of libraries in the educational process, public libraries often have difficulties in proving their role and introducing it in educational guidelines and policies [Goulding 2017].

Promoting literacy and education overall as functions of the library are not the only areas that have largely been overlooked. Human rights also represent an area where libraries already have their contribution, which however can be greater. Based on their essence and underlying principles, public libraries are oriented towards the public good, meeting public needs and public accessibility.

Human rights as those promoted by libraries are referred to in the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto: "*The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, poor digital or computer skills, poor literacy abilities or people in hospital or prison. All age groups must find material relevant to their needs*" [IFLA 2022]. Latvian legislation provides for the right to equal treatment, non-discrimination in having access to library services and their accessibility. Article 15(1)(8) of *the Library Law* lays down that each library has a duty "*to provide opportunities for library users to use the library services regardless of their gender, age, race, nationality, physical status, place of residence*

and location, and other factors as well as to develop appropriate equipment for the use of the library by persons with reduced mobility and visual impairments" [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1998]. The principle of equality is consistently reflected in legislation. There are no difficulties with interpreting this principle, but it should be emphasised that in practice the services of libraries should be accessible financially, physically, functionally and digitally.

People's rights to freedom of thought, conscience and expression are ensured by public libraries through broad information resources, which present different opinions, experiences, ideas and views. Collections should not be subject to any form of censorship. These principles are enshrined in the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto [IFLA 2022].

Library for culture and education

In the 21st century, libraries have evolved also as social centres, places for meetings, socialisation, exchange of ideas and co-creation. This role of libraries is particularly important in remote areas and regions, where the library may sometimes be the only available public cultural place and social centre. A well-used library building will make a significant contribution to the vitality of an urban area and be an important learning and social communication centre and meeting place, particularly in scattered rural areas [IFLA 2010]. Thus, libraries are among institutions that directly ensure the people's right to freedom of assembly and association with others. These rights are enshrined in both international documents, such as Article 11 of the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* [Council of Europe 1950], and national laws, such as Article 102 of *the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia* [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1922]. Although this social function of libraries is being implemented in practice and is essential in the context of human rights, it is not specifically referred to in the Library Law, which hinders the development of public libraries in this field.

The role of libraries in education should also be emphasised. Libraries are educational institutions, and their core functions include building public education and fostering science, as defined also in *the Library Law* [Latvijas Republikas Saeima 1998].

All these functions of the public library are causally interlinked, so driving the development of a civil and democratic society. Libraries provide access to high-quality, diverse and unique information resources and services, including information raising awareness of an individual's rights and fundamental rights, and of how they can be exercised and safeguarded.

In their capacity as cultural establishments, libraries provide cultural content and its accessibility, preserve heritage and facilitate the creation of new cultural

values. *The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia* has held that dignified life and minimum subsistence income comprise also a minimum level of involvement in social life and opportunities to meet cultural needs and participate in the political life of the country, in order to ensure that everyone is a full member of society [Latvijas Republikas Satversmes tiesa 2020].

In the library industry, there is a synergy and interaction of educational, informative and cultural functions, where they overlap, reinforce and complement each other, often they are indistinguishable from each other. Libraries offer an accessible and convenient opportunity to access culture and participate in cultural life, including by providing online events. They provide spaces for cultural activities, implement cultural events, supplement the library collection with cultural novelties, reflect the cultural diversity of the local society and support local cultural traditions.

Various events are provided by the National Library of Latvia. Ludmila Macpane, Head of the Branch Literature Centre of the Latvian National Library, *said that various cultural events can be related to research projects in which the library is involved, as well as discussions and readings, as well as those that accompany the library's exhibitions or publications. The National Library of Latvia regularly organizes seminars, discussions and readings also outside the library premises, for example, in municipal libraries or educational institutions. Conferences organized by clients are also held in the premises of the National Library of Latvia. Several cultural events are held every month. Current information is available on the library's website and social networks. As L. Macpane points out, it is difficult to single out one type of measures. Exhibitions and public lectures are well attended. As examples, L. Macpane cites the March 27, 2024 seminar "Artificial intelligence and education in the future", the anthropology reading series of the Latvian Association of Anthropologists "Stories about man", etc*. [Macpane 2024].

It can be concluded that the contribution of the library as a whole and the National Library of Latvia to education and culture is significant, giving the wider public the opportunity to participate in cultural and educational events.

Libraries should be recognised as important institutions, which contribute to a state's positive duty to ensure human rights. For instance, it would not be possible to effectively ensure the right to information without the participation of libraries. National legislation dealing with the library sector provides for library functions regarding the right to equal treatment, to freedom of expression and opinion, to information, education and culture, while the scope of these functions may be understood in various ways. The legal framework does not expressly or sufficiently refer to the social and communication function of libraries, which is related to the right of association.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that nowadays the public library with its historical functions has transformed into an important pillar of civil society. The multiplicity of public library functions is a key driver of their evolution by constantly developing new services, implementing the values of an inclusive society, and caring for cultural heritage. Meanwhile, the multiplicity poses a number of challenges, both in terms of technological development, which requires financial and human resource investments, and the adequacy of the legal framework. Latvia's public libraries are increasingly becoming aware of their role in improving the quality of life of citizens and are linking their activities to sustainable development strategies of relevant municipalities, towns or cities [Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka 2021]. It is a positive sign and also a signal to policy planners that adequate resources need to be provided. Public library services are based on a number of core tasks related to information, literacy, education, inclusion, civic participation and culture. By pursuing these important tasks, public libraries contribute to achieving sustainable development goals and to building a more just, humane and sustainable society.

Clarifying the definition and functions of libraries would ensure a more uniform range of services and facilities provided by libraries across the country, thus promoting the equal treatment of all library customers. Public libraries and their existence in a commercialised world are a phenomenon, providing access to high-quality, valuable, global knowledge and information, e-services and technologies, but one criticism is that the financing of libraries is not among priorities.

It is in public interests that libraries remain in existence and continue their development as places that implement and safeguard human rights, are inclusive, promote a more cohesive society, serve as a platform for various opinions and ideas. The interaction between the library and society contributes to the development of a democratic state and society, maintains and strengthens fundamental democratic values, and builds a better, safer and more prosperous life of society. Therefore, these values and rights should be consolidated by all available means, including legal tools. Legislation does not show the social nature of libraries and their real mission and functions, so they are perceived as voluntary and optional. The social aspect of libraries is linked to the right of association, making it possible for libraries to function as a common public space, a centre of communication, a place for discussions and meetings. Differences in the perception of the functions of libraries lead to differences in financing and supply of resources, staff remuneration, and the inequality of libraries, their development and the range and quality of information resources and services offered, so that people from different regions are not provided with equal opportunities. To eliminate this situation and strengthen the status of public libraries, relevant amendments need to be made to

the Library Law. It is expected that, with adequate financial and human resources prescribed by law, public libraries would develop even more dynamically, safely and sustainably, thus contributing significantly to the development of society.

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HATE CRIMES AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON: THE EXPERIENCE OF LATVIAN SOCIETY

Docent Dr.iur. **Ēriks Treļs**
State Police College, Latvia
Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia
Docent Dr.iur. **Ivans Jānis Mihailovs**
Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia
Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia

Abstract

Changes in the international situation during the last decades have become the reason for new conflicts and aggravations at the national level. The 2015 European migrant crisis (Refugee crisis), 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine have become a catalyst for increase in hate crimes. In order to recognize the criminal offense as a hate crime in the sense of the Latvian regulatory framework, it is necessary to establish two criteria: (a) the composition of the criminal offence is included in the Criminal Law; (b) a motive of hatred against a particular protected group of society can be stated in the criminal offence. It is the motive – hate or prejudice – that distinguishes hate crimes from other types of crimes.

Prejudice is a negative assessment of a social group and its members. These are objectively unfounded assumptions and erroneous generalizations that, in the opinion of the offender, separate the representatives of this group from the rest of society. Persistent prejudices are called stereotypes. Unlike prejudice, stereotypes are not necessarily negative in nature. However, stereotypes are not based on objective truth either. It follows from court practice that hate crimes were directed against several groups of Latvian society: against ethnic groups (Latvians, Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Gypsies or Roma, etc.), against representatives of various religious denominations, against asylum seekers, against people from other countries, against

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sexual minorities as well as against other groups. Stereotypes are often based on personal or negative cultural experiences of previous generations.

In this context, it can be mentioned that it is specifically culture that is the basic factor according to which it is possible to understand, identify and reduce hate speech. Professor Aleksandrs Krugļevskis believed that with a change in cultural understanding, expanding public participation in cultural processes, the level of legal awareness will rise and tendencies, intentions to commit a criminal offense will disappear. Criminal law as a cultural factor creates a system that corresponds to the level of education and culture of the people. The above also corresponds to the vision of Latvia's cohesive society policy "Guidelines for Cohesive and Active Civil Society 2021–2027": mutual trust, participation, and cooperation between different social groups have improved among Latvian residents, and the level of tolerance has increased, stereotypes and prejudices against different social group representatives have decreased.

Statistical data show that since the start of the war in Ukraine, the number of registered hate crimes in Latvia has increased. These show the relevance of the chosen topic. The authors of the article offer their vision of the problem of hate crimes, studying hate crimes as a cultural phenomenon, paying special attention to the experience of Latvian society in this area.

Keywords: *Latvian society, culture, stereotypes, prejudice, hate crimes.*

Introduction

The Preamble of the Constitution (*Satversme*) of the Republic of Latvia notices: "The State of Latvia (..) has been established by uniting historical Latvian lands and on the basis of the unwavering will of the Latvian nation to have its own State and its inalienable right of self-determination in order to guarantee the existence and development of the Latvian nation, its language and culture throughout the centuries, to ensure freedom and promote welfare of the people of Latvia and each individual. (..) the identity of Latvia in the European cultural space has been shaped by Latvian and Liv traditions, Latvian folk wisdom, the Latvian language, universal human and Christian values. Loyalty to Latvia, the Latvian language as the only official language, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, honesty, work ethic, and family are the foundations of a cohesive society" [Amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia 2014].

Commenting on this norm, Professor Ringolds Balodis pointed out that it contains various specific constitutional obligations of the individual, the purpose of which is to ensure the existence and functioning of the state [Balodis 2014]. Among

other things, this includes willingness to protect the state, to care about the growth of the state, the development of society and culture.

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the hostilities in its territory contributed to the activities of persons disloyal to the Republic of Latvia, including the dissemination of hostile content both in the Internet environment and in public places during unauthorised events [Treļs 2022]. Such illegal activities threaten public security in the country, divide the society of Latvia and can become a catalyst for violent crime. The topicality of the topic is determined both by the current situation in the world and in the Republic of Latvia.

Analysing the statistical data on the criminal offences that were recorded until 1 January 2024 it should be stated that within ten years (from 1 January 2014 to 1 January 2024) 88 criminal proceedings were initiated according to Section 78 "Triggering of National, Ethnic and Racial Hatred" of the Criminal Law (in 2014 – 8, in 2015 – 10, in 2016 – 6, in 2017 – 1, in 2018 – 7, in 2019 – 5, in 2020 – 5, in 2021 – 4, in 2022 – 32, in 2023 – 10), 34 criminal proceedings according to Section 150 "Incitement of Social Hatred and Enmity" of the Criminal Law (after 25 September, 2014) (in 2015 – 1, in 2016 – 5, in 2017 – 2, in 2018 – 0, in 2019 – 2, in 2020 – 11, in 2021 – 6, in 2022 – 6, in 2023 – 1). The data of the Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia show that from 1 July 2009, when the amendments to the Criminal Law, which provided the responsibility for the public glorification of genocide, crime against humanity, crime against peace or war crime, came into force, until January 1, 2022, Section 74.[1] "Acquittal of Genocide, Crime against Humanity, Crime against Peace and War Crime" of the Criminal Law was applied in practice 7 times (in 2014 – 1, in 2018 – 2, in 2019 – 2, in 2020 – 1, in 2021 – 1). The situation changed in a very dramatic, negative direction, in 2022, when 28 regarding Section 74.[1], 32 – regarding Section 78, 6 – regarding Section 81 "Invitation Directed against the Republic of Latvia" and 6 – regarding Section 150 of the Criminal Law were initiated. In 2023, there has been a decline: 14 criminal proceedings were initiated under Section 74.[1], 10 – Section 78, 2 – Section 81 and 1 – Section 150.

The aim of the article is to study hate crimes as a cultural phenomenon, paying special attention to the experience of Latvian society in this area.

The central research question of the paper is: Does culture, cultural specificity matter in the identification of hate crimes?

The interdisciplinary analysis of the theme is performed using the following general research methods of analysis and comparison, causal discovery, analysis and synthesis. The authors conduct a study using methods of interpreting the rules of law adopted in legal science: grammatical, historical, comparative, teleological method.

Prejudice and Stereotypes as One of the Causes of Social Division

Prejudices and stereotypes, rooted in culture, traditions and origins, have existed in Latvian society since ancient times. For example, Latvian folklorist Krišjānis Barons (1835–1923) recorded the following Latvian folksongs (Latvian: *Latvju dainas*) in the 19th century:

33525

Gypsy taught me
(*Čigāns mani izmācīja*)
His cheap craft:
(*Savu lētu amatiņu:*)
To beat horses, to cheat people,
(*Zirgus mīt, ļaudis krāpt,*)
To catch lambs in the bushes
(Pa krūmiem jērus ķert)

[Barons, Vissendorfs 1915: 191].

34301

Jew has planted a radish
(*Žīdiņš rutku iestādījis*)
In his rose garden;
(*Savā rožu dārziņā;*)
The Russian comes, pulls out the radish,
(*Atnāk Krievs, izrauj rutku,*)
Hurts the Jew.
(*Žīdam skādi padarīja.*)

[Barons, Vissendorfs 1915: 433].

Prejudice today is defined as a negative assessment of a national, ethnic, racial, religious or social group and its members. These are objectively unfounded assumptions about a person, a group of people or a social phenomenon. Prejudices are based on incorrect or erroneous generalizations, as well as a strict and unwavering attitude, and their emergence is facilitated by social distance – the separation of the lives of groups that differ by social status, nationality, religion, etc. [Kolčanovs, Zankovska-Odiņa, Zālītis 2010].

Stereotypes, on the other hand, are persistent prejudices. Stereotypes are general, simplified, persistent ideas about various social, including ethnic groups, with their characteristics. Stereotypes are formed in the process of people's social cognition

and categorization of social phenomena. They are not based on objective truth, but on rather subjective, often unverifiable statements and assumptions. In public, stereotypes are quite common, for example, the belief that "all Gypsies are thieves" or that "all Muslims are terrorists".

Although prejudices and stereotypes are generally not considered to be views deliberately aimed at inciting national, ethnic, racial, religious or social hatred or discord, they may become a motive for such a crime, and therefore the dissemination of such views is not desirable [Treļs 2016].

Prejudices and stereotypes are characteristic of all groups of society, including law enforcement officers. As an example of such a phenomenon, the authors of the study "Social Emotional Competence and Professional Ethics: Professional Challenges of the Police Officer in a Multicultural Society" cite a situation in which representatives of a certain nationality, especially if they avoid communication with other groups in society, are perceived as potential offenders, solely based on historically and culturally formed prejudices [Treļs, Mihailovs, Matisāns 2023]. At the same time, when receiving information from representatives of the same nationality about a crime committed against them, such a report is not properly evaluated, assuming that the crime was caused by the victim's own behaviour. The study concludes that the detection of racism and other forms of intentional discrimination is not possible if the culture of the institution allows the preservation of stereotypes within the police and the practices based not on objective data, but on prejudices.

Prejudice against or hatred towards individuals or groups because of their ethnic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability or other features, according to representatives of Latvian Centre for Human Rights, is the basis of hate crimes [LCHR 2008]. A victim of a criminal offense can be one, several persons or a group of people who are combined with one of the mentioned characteristics. An intentional tortfeasor (Latin: *animus injuriandi*) chooses these persons based on one of these characteristics. Hate crimes are criminal acts committed with a bias motive. It is this motive that makes hate crimes different from other crimes [ODIHR 2009].

In the Latvian Literary Language Dictionary, a term "hate" is explained as follows: 1. Deep and persistent feelings, which are characterized by an unfavourable, condemning, even combative attitude (usually towards people, phenomena in society). (..) 2. Quarrels, disagreements, also infidelity [LLLD 1984]. In the comments of the Criminal Law, "hate is described as feelings characterized by malice, intense dislike, enmity, unfavorability (towards someone), while intolerance is defined as an unjustified negative attitude towards people, their way of life, beliefs, feelings, customs" [Krastiņš, Liholaja 2022].

Hate Crimes Term and its Definition in Latvia

The term "hate crime" can be traced back to 1985, when United States Representatives John Conyers, Barbara Kennelly, and Mario Biaggi, who cosponsored the bill that became the federal "Hate Crime Statistics Act". This term is often used these days.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) provided a working definition of Hate Crime:

A) any criminal offence, including offences against persons or property, where the victim, premises, or target of the offence is selected because of a real or perceived connection, attachment, affiliation, support, or membership of a group as defined in part B.

B) A group may be based upon a characteristic common to its members, such as real or perceived "race", national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or others similar factor [ODIHR 2008].

To assess the severity of the hatred, possible elements may include the cruelty or intent of the statement or harm advocated, the frequency, quantity and extent of the communication [HCHR 2013]. In this regard, a six-part threshold test was proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for expressions considered as criminal offences: (a) context, (b) speaker, (c) intent, (d) content and form, (e) extent of the speech act, and (f) likelihood, including imminence.

As associate professor Kristīne Dupate rightly points out, the countries of the European Union use different characteristics and classifications for the typology of hate crimes and they are determined by the cultural context and the social structure of the society [Dupate 2023]. The term "hate crimes" is not legally established in the Republic of Latvia [Treļs 2019]. This means that application of these crimes cannot go beyond the Criminal Law: Only a person who is guilty of committing a criminal offence, that is, one who deliberately (intentionally) or through negligence has committed an offence which is set out in the Criminal Law and which has all the constituent elements of a criminal offence, may be held criminally liable and punished [Section 1].

It is indicated in the study carried out by the office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia that if it necessary to identify whether the particular criminal offence is a "hate crime" within the meaning of Latvian laws and regulations, it is necessary to establish two criteria: (a) the composition of the criminal offence is included in the Criminal Law; (b) a motive of hatred against a particular protected group of society can be stated in the criminal offence [Ombudsman 2016].

The term "hate crimes" is usually used in Latvia in a narrower sense with regard to Section 78 and Section 150 of the Criminal Law. The term "hate crimes" in addition to mentioned Sections 78 and 150 of the Criminal Law in a broader sense is made by Section 71.[1] "Invitation to Genocide", Section 74.[1], Section 77 "Invitation to War of Aggression", Section 79.[6] "Justification of Terrorism, Invitation to Terrorism and Terrorism Threats", Section 81 "Invitation Directed against the Republic of Latvia", Section 149.[1] "Violation of the Prohibition of Discrimination" etc. norms of the Criminal Law. Some of the sections referred to may be regarded as "hate crimes" with the reservation that the motive for a criminal offence qualified by the relevant section was hatred, for example, against the people of Latvia, or any other social group. In addition, Section 48 (1) "Aggravating Circumstances" paragraph 14 of the Criminal Law gives the possibility to apply the term "hate crimes" also to other sections of the Criminal Law: The following may be considered to be aggravating circumstances (..) the criminal offence was committed due to racist, national, ethnic, or religious motives or due to social hatred. At the same time, it should be noted that the opinions of Latvian scientists and experts on the scope of hate crimes in the sense of the Criminal Law differ.

There are a number of concepts that are closely related to hate crime: genocide, terrorism and violent extremism, anti-discrimination laws, hate speech that denigrates a person's honour or dignity [ODIHR 2022]. Nevertheless, according to experts of the ODIHR's, these are distinct concepts, and legislation or policies related to these concepts should not be confused with hate crime laws. Although the mentioned explanation from ODIHR's drew the line between hate crimes and other criminal offences, this line is not always clearly visible. As Associate Professor of Law Lu-in Wang has observed, "Each of these areas is a context in which, as with hate crimes, the law has tended to exceptionalize the motivations and conduct of perpetrators" [Wang 2002]. According to the authors of the article, the motive of the offence plays a decisive role here. In addition, responsibility for violating the prohibition of discrimination is provided for in another section – Section 149.[1] of the Criminal Law.

One of the sections of the Criminal Law, which is usually mentioned in Latvia as a hate crime in a narrower sense is Section 78, which states:

(1) For a person who commits acts directed towards triggering national, ethnic, racial or religious hatred or enmity, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to three years or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

(2) For a person who commits the same acts, if they have been committed by a group of persons or a public official, or a responsible employee of an undertaking (company) or organisation, or if they have been committed using an automated data

processing system (i. e., the Internet – *Authors' note*), the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to five years or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

(3) For committing the act provided for in Paragraph one of this Section, if it is related to violence or threats or if it is committed by an organised group, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to ten years, with or without probationary supervision for a period of up to three years.

The second section of the Criminal Law which is usually mentioned in Latvia as a hate crime in a narrower sense is Section 150, which states:

(1) For a person who commits an act oriented towards inciting hatred or enmity depending on the gender, age, disability of a person or any other characteristics, if substantial harm has been caused thereby, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to one year or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

(2) For the criminal offence provided for in Paragraph one of this Section, if it has been committed by a public official, or a responsible employee of an undertaking (company) or organisation, or a group of persons, or if it is committed using an automated data processing system, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to three years or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

(3) For the act provided for in Paragraph one of this Section, if it is related to violence or threats, or the criminal offence provided for in Paragraph one of this Section, if it has been committed by an organised group, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to four years or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

It is indicated in the study carried out by the office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia that the groups of persons protected by Section 150 of the Criminal Law, against whom it is most often possible to state actions aimed at incitement of social hatred and enmity, are LGBT+ people, asylum seekers, refugees, homeless people and other vulnerable groups [Ombudsman 2016]. In addition to the social groups mentioned, other social groups are also protected by the current regulatory framework, with the reservation that they are endangered and the need for their protection is stipulated in the regulatory acts.

Determining the criteria not mentioned in Section 150 of the Criminal Law is possible through interpretation methods [Treļs 2017]. Thus, in the interpretation, it should be taken into account that Latvia is a member of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the EU), which is bound by EU law. When creating a catalogue of criteria with interpretation methods, the regulatory framework binding on Latvia, which reflects the EU countries' common understanding of

human rights, must be followed. No EU member state can afford such rights or such an understanding that would be in sharp conflict with this common legal basis. Moreover, it is culture, cultural characteristics and differences that can form the basis of the criteria that would allow more precise identification of groups against which unlawful acts based on hatred and discord are carried out.

Situation in Latvia

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia concluded: Latvia is the only place in the world where the existence and development of the Latvian language and together with it the existence of the main nation may be guaranteed [Constitutional Court 2001]. The Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia also states that the people of Latvia include both citizens of Latvia and members of the Latvian nation [Supreme Court 2014]. Explaining this opinion, Ringolds Balodis points out that the people of Latvia should be understood as all citizens of Latvia, regardless of nationality, and members of the Latvian nation, regardless of citizenship [Balodis 2014]. Moreover, the two groups largely but not completely overlap. In addition to the above, R. Balodis concludes that the manifestations of Latvia's Latvian national character are connected especially with the institute of citizenship, with the state's constitutional obligation to guarantee the existence and development of the Latvian nation, its language and culture, with the constitutional status of the state language, accordingly summarizing that the Constitution (*Satversme*) of the Republic of Latvia is a national phenomenon connected, firstly, with Latvian statehood, secondly, with the great stabilizing influence on civil society, and thirdly, with national identity. And it is the Latvian language and cultural space that form the basis of national identity [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030].

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia rightly states, freedom of expression is not absolute and does not mean permissiveness [Constitutional Court, October 2003]. The Constitution (*Satversme*) of the Republic of Latvia and the international instruments on human rights allow restrictions to the right. The State may determine restrictions to freedom of expression in cases when the right of the persons to freedom of expression may affect rights of other persons as well as in cases when freedom of expression creates clear and direct threat to the society [Constitutional Court, June 2003].

The Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia's judicial practice compilation "Hate speech and freedom of expression (Case-law in criminal cases on Sections 74.[1], 78, 150 of the Criminal Law)" analyses 42 Latvian court rulings: 39 rulings (in 25 criminal cases) on Article 78 of the Criminal Law and 2 judgments on Article 150 of the Criminal Law, at the same time stating that in the mentioned period one court

judgment was made according to Article 74.[1] of the Criminal Law [Supreme Court 2018].

Analysing Case-law in criminal cases on Sections 74.[1], 78, 150 of the Criminal Law the authors come to the conclusion that the main source of spreading hate speech is the Internet. Out of 25 examined criminal cases, 24 were about bringing persons to criminal responsibility according to the second part of Article 78 of the Criminal Law for actions aimed at inciting national, ethnic, racial or religious hatred or discord using an automated data processing system. Hatred was directed against various ethnic and religious groups: 10 – Jews, 8 – Latvians, 3 – Russians, 1 – Roma, 1 – Muslims, 1 – Blacks [Supreme Court 2018].

23 persons were found guilty of the criminal offense provided for in the second part of Article 78 of the Criminal Law: 1 woman and 22 men. Thus, this crime is committed by a statistically average 41-year-old man, which contradicts the prevailing beliefs in society that this type of crime is more often committed by teenagers.

In the following years, the list of groups that were victims of hate crimes was supplemented with other groups, and after the year 2018, the issue of inciting hatred against LGBTQ+ people came to the fore. Non-governmental organizations' representatives were confused by the cases when, while investigating these incidents, State Police officials evaluated comments of similar content differently. Thus, on August 6, 2020, a criminal trial was initiated under Section 150 of the Criminal Law for the comment "those [*expletive*] need to put a bullet in their heads", but for the comment "On the wall, a bullet in the head of [*expletive*]" on May 10, 2019, a decision was made to refuse to initiate criminal proceedings due to the absence of a criminal offense. Due to the first of the mentioned cases, on August 26, 2021, the Zemgale District Court found the person who wrote this comment guilty and sentenced him to imprisonment for four months, with a probationary period of six months [Zemgale District Court 26.08.2021]. Solutions of a similar nature also appear regarding the comments: "Two [*expletive*] – shoot (gun icon)" – on August 12, 2020, criminal proceedings were initiated under Section 150 of the Criminal Law and "to shoot and peace, there's nothing to do with those [*expletive*]" – On November 4, 2020, a decision was made to refuse to initiate criminal proceedings. In the first case, the court verdict also followed: on February 2, 2021, the Zemgale District Court applied a similar punishment – sentenced to imprisonment for four months, with a probationary period for six months [Zemgale District Court 02.02.2021]. Therefore, it can be concluded that, unlike the practice of the State Police, the court has been consistent in its judgments.

The situation on national and international level changed on February 24, 2022, when Russia's armed forces invaded Ukraine. The events in Ukraine are a catalyst for the fact that some Latvian scientists and legal practitioners have begun to look at the

phenomenon of hate crimes much more broadly than before, applying this concept to several articles of the Criminal Law, and defining this event in the context of, for example, such social groups as "Ukrainian people" [Treļs 2022]. In the opinion of the authors, one should not confuse "Ukraine's people" and "Ukrainian people", especially considering that the first of the mentioned concepts is broader and includes Ukrainian citizens of all nationalities. The constitutionally established concept of "Latvia's nation" and the concept of "Latvian nation" included in it should be evaluated by analogy.

From the beginning of the war in Ukraine Latvian State Security Service initiated several criminal proceedings following both Section 74.[1] and Section 78 of the Criminal Law. Sometimes an offence committed by a person constitutes the ideal common set of offences, i. e., corresponds to the characteristics of a number of different interrelated criminal offences. For example, one comment includes information that glorifies and justifies aggression of Russia against Ukraine and at the same time triggers hatred against Ukrainian nationals.

On May 21, 2022, the Latvian State Security Service informed the society, that since February 24, 2022, when Russia's armed forces invaded Ukraine, the Latvian State Security Service has initiated 17 criminal proceedings in relation to hate speech, while two proceedings were taken over from the State Police [VDD 2022]. From these 19 proceedings, eight were initiated pursuant to two Sections of the Criminal Law, i. e., for public glorifying and acquittal of genocide, crimes against humanity and peace and war crimes (Section 74.[1]) and activities aimed at triggering national hatred or enmity (Section 78). Six proceedings were enacted pursuant to elements constituting the crime stipulated in Section 74.[1] of the Criminal Law, whereas five – pursuant to elements constituting the crime stipulated in Section 78 of the Criminal Law. From February 24, 2022, the situation has also changed regarding the application of Section 74.[1] of the Criminal Law, and the number of criminal proceedings initiated in three months exceeded the statistical indicators of the last thirteen years twice.

In the territory of the Republic of Latvia, hate crimes are mainly manifested in the form of hate speech, posting offensive comments and publications on the Internet, by using an automated data processing system to carry out actions aimed at triggering hatred or enmity.

Conclusion

The concept of "hate crime" is not legally established in the Republic of Latvia. Therefore, for the identification of hate crimes in the countries of the European Union, different characteristics and classifications for the typology of hate crimes are used. The authors of the article join K. Dupate's conclusions that the determination

of the mentioned conditions depends on the cultural context and the social structure of the society. This means that only by evaluating the specified offense or statement in the wider cultural context, it is possible to qualify it as criminal. In order to recognize the criminal offense as a hate crime in the sense of the Latvian regulatory framework, it is necessary to establish two criteria: (a) the composition of the criminal offence is included in the Criminal Law; (b) a motive of hatred against a particular protected group of society can be stated in the criminal offence.

Therefore, when evaluating hate crimes, the cultural context is important, i. e. the action is evaluated by analysing a wide set of (cultural) circumstances, which include cultural and historical peculiarities, the specifics of public life, the level of tolerance towards violence and expressions of hatred, etc. The place and time when certain statements are made or a criminal act is committed is also relevant. In addition to the above, the Rabat Plan offers six-part for national courts to consider when assessing whether a specific instance of speech ought to be prohibited or punished as incitement. These factors are the context, speaker, intent, content and form, extent of the speech act, and likelihood, including imminence.

Freedom of speech encompasses several aspects, including the right to debate, comment on events, be a journalist and operate on social media, as well as freedom of cultural expression. However, it is not absolute and may be limited in order to protect the rights of others, including cultural rights. In this context, a situation may arise that a statement or action depending on society, place, time will be evaluated as a norm in some cultural circumstances, and as a violation in others. In addition, when evaluating hate crimes, the theories and practices of intercultural communication should also be taken into account, characterizing the cooperation of representatives of different cultures.

In this context, it can be mentioned that it is specifically culture that is the basic factor according to which it is possible to understand, identify and reduce hate speech. Professor Aleksandrs Kruglevskis believed that with a change in cultural understanding, expanding public participation in cultural processes, the level of legal awareness will rise and tendencies, intentions to commit a criminal offense will disappear [Mihailovs 2004]. Criminal law as a cultural factor creates a system that corresponds to the level of education and culture of the people.

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BRITAIN'S STRIVING FOR GREATNESS: ITS REFLECTION IN LANGUAGE AND POLITICS

PhD, Professor Emerita, **Anita Naciscione**
Latvian Academy of Culture

Abstract

This paper is an interdisciplinary study of British political discourse. It attempts to examine how British greatness emerged and developed over the centuries. Changes in the official use of British terminology are highlighted as a reflection of dwindling historical greatness: *the British Empire* > *The British Commonwealth* (1931); *The British Commonwealth* > *The Commonwealth* (1949); *Great Britain* > *Britain* (UK for short). The idea of British greatness flourished during the Brexit period (2016–2020). Special attention is paid to stylistic changes in Brexit discourses, reflecting political events and developments. My analysis discloses the role of frequent creative use of phraseological units, e. g., *a leap in the dark, to eat one's cake and have it, to kick the can down the road* etc. It offers insight into sustained creative use of metaphor as a reflection of painful and tortuous processes. I rely on findings of cognitive linguistics on thought and language [Gibbs 1999: 16–23].

This paper aims to explore the notion of British greatness, its origin and development over centuries, and the role it has played in Brexit-related events and processes. The study focuses on the interplay of history, politics and language, illustrating how figurative expressions are ingrained in a nation's cultural fabric and linguistic landscape.

Keywords: *British Empire, British exceptionalism, sustained metaphor, 2016 UK Referendum*.

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CULTURE CROSSROADS

Introduction

The theme of my article commands an interdisciplinary approach, involving research on metaphor and its creative stylistic use in political discourse, in conjunction with applied scholarship in the field of politics. I have drawn theoretical conclusions, applying the key tenets of both cognitive linguistics about the significance of the inextricable interrelation between thought and language on the one hand [Gibbs 2008; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989], and insights from a cognitive stylistic perspective on the other. Cognitive stylistics forms an integral part of cognitive linguistics, exploring figurative language and figurative meaning construction in discourse. In the cognitive stylistic framework, a stylistic technique, e. g. a metaphor, is regarded as a structure of thought and a tool of cognitive inference, applicable in novel instantiations of figurative thought [Naciscione 2010; 2020: 274].

For this research, empirical material of creative use of figurative thought has been chosen from my own collection of Brexit discourses, drawn from media texts, political speeches in the House of Commons, debates in the EU, analytical articles, videos, and cartoons. I have also drawn upon my academic and research experience I acquired when teaching the courses "British Studies" and "Cognitive Stylistics" at the Latvian Academy of Culture.

I have relied on the critical metaphor analysis method, developed by Charteris-Black. This method underscores the role of social cognition and the need of a broader social context for analysis [Charteris-Black 2014: 153–157]. Thus, the method is concerned with increasing awareness of the social aspects of language use. I fully agree that the study of social factors is essential in discourse analysis. However, historical, political, and cultural aspects of language use may also prove fundamental to analysis of a novel form and meaning in creative stylistic instantiations. I have used the method of interpretative empirical case studies, which enable me to explore intricate figurative use in Brexit discourses.

Analysis of my empirical material allows me to draw generalisations not only about political events, developments, and constant changes, but also to focus on sustained use of recurrent extended metaphors in Brexit discourses throughout the Brexit period as a reflection of the ongoing complexity and gravity of the challenges Britain had to face. Cognitive linguists have proved that metaphors reveal "multiple facets of human experience" [Gibbs 2017: 7], including political discourse in all its variety.

Novel creative use of recurrent metaphors reveals how people conceptualise changes in the external world and highlight their experiences and opinions. Cognitive linguistics has established an inseparable link between the mind, figurative thought, and language, including stylistic use of metaphorical language in political discourse.

Gibbs argues that contemporary political discourse is packed full of metaphors, many of which reveal important aspects of the figurative nature of political thought. Moreover, metaphors act as powerful persuasive devices [Gibbs 1994: 140–141].

A cognitive approach to research on extension of figurative meaning yields insights into use of extended metaphor from a cross-discourse perspective. Extension of figurative meaning discloses the workings of the human mind and provides sustainability of metaphorical thought and language, sustaining the narrative and creating a metaphorical continuum.

I will start with an overview of the early stages of British greatness and its further developments, as background information plays a significant part in comprehension and analysis of political discourse, reflecting the course of events and interpreting values.

Colonisation: A brief insight

British greatness stems from expansion and dominance in the world. As a seafaring nation, England was lured by commercial ambitions. The British Empire began to take shape during the early 17th century. The first British colony in North America was Jamestown, Virginia, established in 1607. In North America, the number of British colonies reached 13 which existed up to 1776 when they began their struggle for full independence from the British crown.

Once success was gained in North America, colonial expansion developed on a much broader scale. The flourishing era of the British Empire was the period from 1815 to 1914. Queen Victoria, glorified as the mother of the British Empire, was turned into an imperial symbol. The metaphor "the sun never sets on the British Empire" was accepted as a piece of unquestionable truth. Wismayer points out that "in the late 19th century the English were rulers of the waves, and England was the cradle of the industrial revolution, creating the largest empire in history" [Wismayer 2017]. For the British Empire, colonies were a source of wealth, provided by colonial natural resources, raw materials, slave and indentured labour, and slave trade.

The further destiny of the British Empire and its imperial footprints are best seen in use of the English language, as language is not only a reflection of a way of thinking, forming opinions and making judgements but also of changes introduced in the real world, well reflected in political terminology. Let me highlight some changes in official English terms, which disclose the fading historical greatness of the UK since World War I.

After World War I, the British Empire declined rapidly. The UK was left weakened and was not strong enough to govern the Empire. However, the UK was determined to maintain a dominant position, exercising control over its territories. Moreover, the term "empire" had unwelcome connotations, implying inequality,

and hinting at the fact that the empire was formed as a result of a conquest and subjugation. Therefore, the British Commonwealth was formed in 1926, implying that all its members were equal. It was in 1931 that the British Parliament passed the Statute of Westminster, introducing the term "the British Commonwealth of Nations", usually called "the British Commonwealth". Thus, a change of name was effected: *the British Empire* > *The British Commonwealth*.

After World War II, many British Commonwealth countries sought independence, and the association experienced a steady decline. In 1947 India gained independence. This was a major blow to the UK as it signified the collapse of British imperial power. The London Declaration of 1949 stipulated another change, and "the British Commonwealth of Nations" became "the Commonwealth of Nations", or "the Commonwealth" for short: *The British Commonwealth* > *The Commonwealth*. In this way, the offensive term "Empire" was replaced by the inoffensive term "the Commonwealth", which is an international association and a community, founded for the common good. Stylistically, this is a clear-cut case of use of political euphemism whose purpose is to avoid unpleasantness and follow the politeness principle[1].

Thus, the main purpose of the Commonwealth was to promote international cooperation and to advance development in member countries. However, the process of disintegration continued, so that by the late 1960s most of Britain's territories had become independent countries. Britain lost its dominant position in the Commonwealth. It merely became one among the members of the Commonwealth. Former greatness had turned into the setting sun. Britain frequently resorted to the use of masterfully crafted political euphemisms to mitigate the disturbing effect of the fact.

In the post-war period, the British economy required a large number of immigrant workers. The British Nationality Act 1948 allowed free entry into Britain for all Commonwealth citizens. This resulted in mass migration to the "mother country" in the 1950s and 1960s. The large immigrant population made a positive contribution to the UK economy while, at the same time, immigration caused considerable problems and concerns. In Britain, the legacy of immigration forms part of the post-colonial present.

As to the English language, it has yet to come to terms with Britain's colonial legacy: some imperial thinking still lingers on. This is manifest in several areas in Britain. E.g., it appears in the names of some orders and medals awarded by the ruling monarch: OBE – the Order of the British Empire; KBE – Knight of the British

[1] A euphemism is a stylistic technique that is used to cover up the unembellished and unaltered truth, which may sound unpleasant or offensive, for instance, when the fall of the empire is presented as a deliberate dismissal of its former colonies with a grace unique in history.

Empire; Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. The names of some institutions still contain the epithet "imperial" in their name, such as The London Imperial Medical College. The Imperial College London, focusing on science, engineering, medicine, and business, is called "Imperial" for short.

Imperial units were first defined in the British Weights and Measures Act 1824. Imperial measures were replaced by the metric system in the UK in 1971. Yet the imperial terms still linger in the people's collective memory. The British people buy their cheese in pounds and ounces, their milk and beer in pints and their petrol in gallons. Fruit and vegetables are frequently sold by the pound. Is the use of imperial measurements just a tradition? Or perhaps old habits die hard. There is little hope that British people will drop imperial measurements and start thinking in the metric system in the near future.

Subjugation and dominance in the British Isles: A diachronic view

The early history of England goes back to the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the south and east of the British Isles after the Romans left Britain in 450 AD. The Anglo-Saxons were Germanic tribes, and they called their new country *Englaland* (OE) after the biggest of their tribes – the Angles. The Anglo-Saxons never invaded Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland, which remained Celtic. England was founded as a kingdom in 927 AD.

It was in 1169 when England started the conquest of Ireland. In 1171 King Henry II landed in the north of Ireland with a large army and colonised all Ireland. However, the name of England was not changed at the time. Ireland was fully conquered in the 16th and 17th centuries. Thus, in effect Ireland was England's first colony; it was neither Newfoundland nor Jamestown.

In the late 13th century, King Edward I started the conquest of Wales, claiming it as a territory of England. The conquest lasted from 1277 till 1283 when Wales was annexed to England. No change of the name of the country was introduced. King Edward I made his new-born son the Prince of Wales.

The first period of the English invasion of Scotland lasted from 1174 till 1296. This was followed by numerous other invasions. In 1650 Oliver Cromwell led an invasion, which resulted in the occupation of all Scotland. The name of England was changed by the Act of Union in 1707, passed by the Parliament of England: *England > the United Kingdom of Great Britain*. Thus, England had conquered all the island of Great Britain. Richard Price points out that from its very beginning the very idea of Britain was an imperial construction. Britain itself was a result of the process of English imperialism [Price 2006: 602].

The full subjugation of Ireland took a long period of time. Great Britain annexed Ireland and Parliament was joined to the British Parliament. In reality, the Irish

Parliament was abolished in 1801. It is important to note the use of the political euphemism "joined" instead of "abolished". "The Act of Union" is another political euphemism as there was no mutual consent. Ireland was forcibly integrated into the United Kingdom of Great Britain. The official name of Great Britain was changed again: *the United Kingdom of Great Britain* > *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*.

The Irish War of Independence lasted from the Easter Rising in 1916 until 1922 when Ireland finally gained independence except for Northern Ireland, which remained part of Great Britain. Another change of name followed: *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* > *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, which is the present full name of the UK. Changes in terminology reveal the latest political developments in the country and shape its identity. The notion of greatness is closely linked not only with the pursuit of success in conquests but also with myths of supremacy and exceptionalism. "The idea of supremacy over other nations is deep rooted in British subconsciousness, also called British exceptionalism" [Tilford 2017].

An insight into Brexit: The notion of *greatness*

Winston Churchill wrote in 1930, "We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked but not comprised. We are interested and associated, but not absorbed" [Churchill 1930]. Hence, Brexit started well before 2016. Churchill was a firm believer in Britain's greatness, and his ideas seem to have settled in British minds. This finally came to the fore in the 2016 UK Referendum. Bonnet argues that Churchill and his image shaped Brexit. Churchill's overbearing influence created the Churchillian myth. The way Brexiteers made the most of the Churchill myth is aptly called the Churchill factor, a factor that influenced the result of the Referendum and the Brexit debate [Bonnet 2020: 65].

The idea of Britain's greatness was upheld by those British political leaders whose objective was to restore the United Kingdom as a sovereign, independent country by exiting the European Union. In 1950 Margaret Thatcher presented her political platform in her *General Election Address*, saying, "We are proud of the British Commonwealth and Empire". She also emphasised the importance of the issue of enhancing Britain's greatness: "We Conservatives are not afraid to face the future whatever problem it entails, because it is our earnest desire to make *Great* Britain *great* again" [Thatcher 1950]. Stylistically, the phrase "to make *Great* Britain *great* again" forms a pun, which invariably emerges as the result of using one word in two meanings in the same context. Puns are intended to create a special effect, thus boosting memorability. In her later activities, Thatcher was strictly against any closer union with the European Union.

Nigel Farage, an ardent anti-EU campaigner, played a key role in the Leave campaign before the UK 2016 Referendum. His forceful and emotional speeches kept spreading right-wing Eurosceptic ideas. The Leave side was led by powerful nationalist messages: "I want my country back!", "Take back control", and above all "MAKE BRITAIN GREAT AGAIN", echoing Donald Trump's rhetoric. High quality Nigel Farage gifts and merchandise with the latter slogan were on sale: not only caps, but also designer T-shirts, mugs, stickers, posters and more with the aim of creating nostalgia for a great and successful future. The visual representation of these messages is not merely a tool of political marketing; it pursues a cognitive aim: to persuade people by enhancing their perception and comprehension, motivated by the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS BELIEVING. The aim of Farage's campaign was to impress the idea of greatness on the visual memory of the people. Rudolf Arnheim, a prominent cognitive psychologist, developed the concepts of visual thinking and visual perception as cognitive activities. Arnheim argues that perceiving and thinking are indivisibly intertwined [1969].

Reiteration of the key idea of greatness throughout the Brexit period is a stylistic technique to imprint the vision in people's minds by reasserting and sustaining it: leaving means thriving outside the European Union. Theresa May offered a vision of global Britain in 2017 [Harrington 2017]. In her mind, the British economy was to flourish as never before, and it was to have a trading masterplan: "Empire 2.0". Wismayer calls it "the emotional residue of lost empire" [Wismayer 2017]. In his keynote speech to the British Parliament in 2019, Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged that Brexit would "make our great United Kingdom the greatest place in the world" [Reuters 26.07.2019].

Johnson resorts to reiteration of "great" and its hyperbolic use in the superlative degree for emphasis. In this way, the keyword "great" becomes the magic catchword that would lead Britain to prosperity and make Britain the greatest place on earth.

Use of sustained metaphor in representation of Brexit: A cognitive stylistic view

Throughout the whole Brexit period, political speakers and analysts resorted to use of sustained metaphorical thought to uncover unexpected, frequently excruciating developments and processes. Metaphor has been recognised as a technique of reasoning and argumentation in perceptual and conceptual understanding of experience. It is a powerful tool in political media discourse. Research on sustainability of political thought has been done in the framework of cognitive stylistics, exploring figurative language and construction of figurative meaning in discourse. Cognitive stylistics, in comparison to conventional stylistics, views the stylistic technique of metaphor

not only as a pattern of language but first and foremost as a structure of thought [Naciscione 2020: 274].

Cognitive semantic analysis of Brexit discourses allows me to offer an insight into the sustained creative use of recurrent powerful metaphors as a reflection of the distressing developments since 2016, e. g. *marriage and divorce*, *a leap in the dark*, *to eat one's cake and have it*, *cherry picking*, *the clock is ticking*, *back to square one, to kick the can down the road*, *cliff edge, a level playing field*.

Interestingly, the striking metaphors *marriage* and *divorce*, denoting Britain's entry into and her withdrawal from the EU, appeared in the media well before the 2016 UK Referendum. A Bloomberg video, entitled *Brexit – A messy divorce or a disastrous marriage?* argues that Britain is flirting with divorce from the European Union, one of the world's most powerful trading blocs [Bloomberg 03.03.2016].

The use of extended metaphor[1] in Tim Lister's analytical article *Brexit: An often rocky marriage ends in sudden divorce*[2] [Lister 25.06.2016] uncovers the tortured and burdensome relationship between the UK and the EU over the whole length of the UK's membership in the EU:

(1) "*As marriages go, 43 years is not bad. But ever since Britain and Europe tied the knot in 1973, the relationship has been a tortured one with accusations of infidelity* (..) *on both sides.*
The lengthy courtship had none of the sulfuric resentment of the divorce that would follow four decades later (..) *The honeymoon didn't last* (..)" [Lister 25.06.2016].

Harold Wilson's Labour government demanded a renegotiation of *the pre-nup* just two years after the British flag was raised over the European Community's headquarters on January 1, 1973:

(2) "*Cracks started to show. Once again, the marriage was on the rocks. Thatcher seethed against plans for the ever-closer union. "No, no, no," she famously told the House of Commons in 1990*" [Lister 25.06.2016].

Let me take a closer look at the use of the proverb *You can't have your cake and eat it.* This has been recurrent in a great deal of media discourse covering Brexit. It reveals the political position of the two conflicting sides in the UK-EU negotiations.

[1] Extended metaphor is one of the resources to convey sustained human experience. It is an instantial stylistic technique, involving a string of images sustained and tied together by the base metaphor, creating a cohesive network of associative metaphorical bonds. The metaphorical sub-images are linked metonymically by associations of contiguity [Naciscione 2016: 264].

[2] In this paper, all underlining is mine, used to highlight the metaphor and its creative use in discourse.

The proverb *You can't have your cake and eat it* attracted attention early in 2016 when Boris Johnson announced that he was backing the Brexit campaign. He voiced his vision of leaving the EU and keeping the benefits of its membership at the same time: "I am *pro having my cake and pro eating it*"[1]. The media were quick to respond: "*No, Boris, you can't have your Brexit cake and eat it too*" [White 2016]. Criticism was raised against Johnson's political stance, mainly by opponents of Brexit. Moreover, this proverb appeared in innumerable creative instantiations in various speeches, articles, caricatures, and cartoons, both humorous and sarcastic. This metaphorical thought was sustained in Brexit discourses for almost five years.

In the Brexit talks, the proverb *You can't have your cake and eat it* was used to illustrate the attempt by the British negotiating team headed by Theresa May to keep the benefits of the EU, at the same time being independent of the EU: out of the four freedoms enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, Theresa May picked free trade, leaving the other freedoms out. To rebut this political move, President of the European Council Donald Tusk resorted to irony, extending the metaphor *You can't have your cake and eat it* in his Speech at the European Policy Centre on 13 October 2016:

(3) "*In fact, the words uttered by one of the leading campaigners for Brexit and proponents of the "cake philosophy" was pure illusion: that one can have the EU cake and eat it too. To all who believe in it, I propose a simple experiment. Buy a cake, eat it, and see if it is still there on the plate.*
The brutal truth is that Brexit will be a loss for all of us. There will be no cakes on the table.
For anyone. There will be only salt and vinegar" [Tusk 13.10.2016].

To sum up, Brexit discourses display recurrent use of sustained metaphors that highlight the dramatic events and developments on Britain's way out of the EU. Moreover, creative use is genuinely thought-provoking: it engages the mind. In sustained use, the metaphor is not lost; it undergoes creative changes, determined by the thought and the context. Britain's desperate attempts show that the British authorities may have finally realised that they are losing the privileges and benefits which EU membership involves. Thus, for the United Kingdom, regaining greatness is much further down the road than ever before.

While Britain has been making efforts to strengthen its position at the international level and establish new international trade links, the danger of a possible break-up has been lurking at home. In the United Kingdom, cracks between

[1] The phraseological unit is a stable, cohesive combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning [Naciscione 2010: 8].

England and the other three countries had existed before; however, after Brexit they have become more visible and audible. George Monbiot's article "*That creaking sound? It's the United Kingdom starting to break apart*" claims that the creaking sound is made by the United Kingdom starting to break apart [Monbiot 05.05.2021.]. It is interior disunity that aggravates the situation, constituting a major danger for the British claim to greatness. The headline commands attention by use of a novel onomatopoeic metaphor, which is extended in the sub-headline. In the article, the situation is illustrated by a visual representation, featuring a UK map, where the four countries are clearly delineated by visible cracks, thus extending the initial metaphor, and creating a visual pun.

Monbiot [05.05.2021]. Illustration: Sébastien Thibault.

Each country is marked by their national flag with no Union Jack in sight. Furthermore, the initial metaphor is extended in the text of the article: *That creaking sound? It's the ship of state starting to break up*, metaphorically signifying the breakup of the UK. It is interior disunity that aggravates the situation, constituting a major danger for the British claim to greatness.

Conclusion

Each aspect of Britain has its own history, leaving footprints in identity, language, and way of thinking. The idea of British greatness is deep-seated. It goes back to expansion in the British Isles and the early days of the British Empire. The

assumption of greatness has played a significant role in Brexit processes and its outcome. Brexiteers saw Brexit as a way to end the alleged domination of the EU over the UK and open up ways to make Britain great again on a global scale.

My empirical material reveals that metaphor is a powerful persuasive technique, applicable in different types of political discourse. It enhances the impact of an analytical article or a political speech, serving argumentation and memorability by highlighting and interpreting the message. Extended metaphors are used to convey sustained political and human experiences, conflicts, clashes, and changes, which emerge in the world. They play a significant role by presenting and developing argumentation with the aim of making a point and driving it home. Political arguments convince us, seeking to serve as a drive for reasoning and persuasion. Cognitive stylistic analysis examines the sustained creative use of metaphor in political discourse, shedding light on the role of frequent creative use of phraseological units and extended metaphors to portray British striving for greatness and its manifestation in Brexit related events. Thus, creative stylistic use of figurative language, metaphor in particular, works to achieve political ends. Political discourses reflect changes in and attitudes to political and social issues and events, and hence changes and developments in Britain, the British way of thinking and the British mindset.

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