

# MAPPING CULTURE AND CULTURAL INTERACTION IN VIEW OF VALLETTA 2018 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE (ECoC)

VICKI ANN CREMONA  
*University of Malta*

Cultural mapping involves the identification and classification of cultural spaces, activities, and resources. First launched in Britain in the late 1990s, it was described as ‘shorthand for a whole series of analytic methods for collecting and presenting information on the range and scope of the creative industries’ (BOP Consulting 2010: 11).<sup>1</sup> This methodology is a useful means of visualising and communicating the cultural assets of a particular area and is considered a useful tool for cultural planning and policy-making, although it is acknowledged that arts and culture present a more complex picture than is captured through this type of exercise (Deveau & Goodrum 2015: 64). Cultural mapping uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of assessment to identify and describe local resources, in order to ensure the inclusion of all sectors of the community (Bianchini, Ghilardi 2007: 281). In recent years, it has been adopted in Malta in order to satisfy the demand, from within the cultural sector, for an informed framework in planning arts and cultural facilities on the national level. It is also intended to reflect the local councils’ contribution to the sector.

In 2012, Valletta was awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2018. The bid was backed by all of the 68 local councils in Malta and Gozo. Although the European Union has no official policy for culture, it has various cultural programmes; the former ‘Cities of Culture’ programme, now ECoC, is specifically designed to enhance cultural development (Evans, Foord 1999: 55). Following the title award, the Valletta 2018 Foundation was tasked with formulating the bid and is now responsible for the implementation of the programme. The Foundation commissioned a cultural map in view of the lack of information concerning the location of cultural spaces in the Maltese Islands and how these are used. This task became the basis for research collaboration between the Foundation and the University of Malta and was supported by the Ministry responsible for Culture. A Cultural Mapping Working Group, in collaboration with the University of Malta was set up, involving academics from the disciplines of anthropology, the built environment, economics, education, public policy, sociology, history and the performing arts.

A project was developed to analyse the use of public spaces for cultural purposes in Malta and Gozo. Space in this context was given a wide definition that included ‘all spaces across the Maltese islands which are used for cultural purposes, ranging from established cultural venues (such as museums, theatres and heritage sites) to public and open spaces’ comprising streets and squares which are used for community or national celebrations.<sup>2</sup> A series of maps cataloguing most of these cultural public spaces that are used for cultural purposes was drawn up. These maps, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, have been compiled

into a single interactive map of Malta and Gozo ([www.culturemapmalta.com](http://www.culturemapmalta.com)), and made freely available to the general public through a proprietary website. This tool allows researchers, cultural operators, artists and other users to develop the map further by contributing valuable layers of data, which are visually represented on the map.

Parallel to this process, an academic publication researching different aspects of the cultural interaction between space and community was also carried out. It examines how the title is impacting the cultural sector as well as the general public, and assesses citizens' involvement in the creation and appropriation of cultural realities. A concise version of this research, targeting a wide audience, was published in 2016 under the title 'On Culture: Mapping Valletta 2018'. The present book, the first in the Mediterranean Studies Series published in association with the Journal of Mediterranean Studies, presents the full outcome of this research. The aim of this volume is to take Valletta 2018 as a case study, and examine the contemporary cultural scene in Malta from different aspects, in order to better understand the significance and impact that a European Capital of Culture can have on a country's cultural aspirations. The purpose of this collection of studies is to go beyond the identification of geographic locations, and map out the significance of the country's cultural assets, both from the perspective of particular communities, as well as with a view to determining strategic priorities. This introduction is intended to provide the socio-cultural and historical background concerning the ECoC process against which the various initiatives to understand and map out culture in Malta may be laid. It furnishes a general picture of the current cultural environment of the capital city, and traces the institutional developments leading up to the winning of the ECoC title, as well as developments since then.

The research undertaken in these studies has already produced some offshoots. Most notable of these is a systematic audit of theatres in Malta and Gozo, following a pilot study that was carried out – the results of which are reported in this issue (Borg 2016). The audit has given rise to a publication: *Spazji Teatrali. A Catalogue of Theatres in Malta and Gozo*, which maps out more clearly the location, state, and current use of theatre buildings in the two islands. Apart from providing detailed infrastructural and technical information about theatre buildings in Malta, this subsidiary mapping exercise constitutes the first step towards a more comprehensive strategy regarding decentralisation and greater diffusion of the arts on a more local level. It should also help to prioritise possible aid or interventions with regard to improvements, in order to make theatres more attractive and exploitable.

### **Cultural Interaction – What effects will ECoC have?**

The European Capital of Culture is assigned on the basis of two main criteria, namely (i) the 'European Dimension', which celebrates European diversity while encouraging citizen participation, and (ii) the 'City and Citizens' Dimension' which includes the participation of the city's residents as part of its long-term cultural and social development (European Parliament and Council 2006).

I contend that the fundamental question underlying the organisation of Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is: will the cultural programme that is being prepared have a significant and long-lasting effect on the city's – and the country's – cultural vibrancy? The success or failure of a 'Capital of Culture' designation is measured by the cultural impacts that its programme manages to generate, and whether this succeeds in enhancing the capital's

visibility both at home and abroad, in the medium as much as in the short term. I believe that a successful capital of culture is one that develops new horizons for cultural ambitions and raises cultural standards, in order to foster more interest and awareness within and beyond the local population. It generates high expectations and added motivation for the growth of a cultural environment, giving rise to initiatives that aspire to fostering popular interest, participation and ownership, as well as developing professionalism in the cultural sectors that can lead to the creation of new jobs and enhance business prospects. The development of a capital of culture is also underpinned by continuous research on artistic forms and standards, audience development, as well as socio-economic levels. The importance of legacy of Valletta 2018 is made even more obvious by the fact that citizens' cultural engagement in Malta currently rates as the second-lowest among European countries. 82% of respondents in a 2013 Euro-barometer survey have stated that they had not personally engaged in a cultural activity the previous year, such as playing an instrument, dancing or singing, and generally obtained low percentage rates on a European level with regard to attendance to dance, musical and theatre performances and participation in other cultural activities (European Commission 2013: 7).

The physical space of a city is a fundamental factor in the production of its cultural manifestations, as well as in the weaving of social and political relationships. The extent to which it is appropriated by the persons who inhabit or frequent it, and the ways in which this is done, play a determining role in communal identity and cultural output. The community is a key stakeholder in any capital of culture (Palmer 2004). European-Mediterranean capitals of culture, such as Guimaraes (2012), Maribor (2012), Marseille (2013), Paphos (2017) and Matera (2019),<sup>3</sup> have all seen the title as a means to revitalise their cities through the active cultural participation of their citizens. Marseille created both a Mediterranean and a Euro-Mediterranean dimension by aiming for cultural dialogue that was linked to the Barcelona Process, while maintaining the importance of reinforcing socio-cultural engagement in and with public spaces through citizen participation (McAteer *et al.* 2014: 6). Valletta is already nurturing the Euro-Mediterranean aspect through a series of annual international conferences organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, that have been taking place since 2014, which have provided added research initiatives. The conferences have focused on cultural relations in Europe and the Mediterranean, and have dealt with themes,<sup>4</sup> such as cultural dialogue (2014), cultural mapping (2015) and cities as community spaces (2016). These conferences will continue, certainly up to 2018 and possibly beyond.

The granting of the title of capital of culture places the relationship between citizens and culture under strong scrutiny. The different articles in this issue examine this connection within the Maltese context leading up to Valletta 2018. The authors discuss the dynamics generated by citizens' use of, and interaction with, public and private 'cultural spaces', real and imaginary, as well as potential sites for new cultural infrastructure.

The various chapters provide a picture of the social distribution of cultural space; they outline aspects of culture which are integrated within the social fabric and others which remain largely ignored or receive only marginal interest. The book also examines the role of public and private entities in shaping, exploiting and transforming cultural realities.

### **Valletta's Cultural Reality**

From its origins, Valletta, the capital of the Maltese Islands,<sup>4</sup> was intended as a capital city and an administrative centre. Parliament, as well as the major part of the country's governmental

administration, is situated there. The city also houses Malta's National Library, which comprises an impressive collection of volumes, some of which date back to the early Middle Ages. The National Notarial Archives are also situated in the capital. In recent years, intense restoration programmes on various city buildings have been carried out. Apart from beautifying the city, this work has also brought economic benefits. Many of Valletta's 'palazzi' are now the headquarters of important national and international companies and agencies.

Valletta is traditionally the most popular shopping centre in Malta. Moreover, increased cultural activity in recent years, due to the presence of new theatres and art galleries, and the organisation of festivals have brought added investment to the city. Restaurants and boutique hotels have mushroomed in recent years and the city is becoming a popular destination not only during the daytime for work and shopping, but also at night, for entertainment and leisure (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2015). The city's dwindling local population, which in 2013 stood at 5,700 inhabitants (NSO 2015: 14), has been witnessing a slow process of gentrification. There is a high demand from people from other localities, including foreigners, to reside in the city, while a number of so-called 'Beltn', i.e., persons born and bred in Valletta, cannot afford to purchase property in the city because of the increasing property prices. In contrast, Valletta also contains the largest proportion of social housing on the island, and offers shelter to disadvantaged minorities, including African and Middle Eastern immigrants and refugees.

The city is also a national focal point for cultural activities. It boasts six main theatres,<sup>5</sup> which include the oldest public theatre on the island, known as the Teatru Manoel, that was inaugurated in 1732. It can be claimed that the theatre was the first building entirely dedicated to culture to be erected in the city. As prime cultural spaces, Valletta's theatres host both local and foreign productions; they cater for audiences of different social groups, but on the whole, attract the higher income social categories. One of these theatres is part of a much bigger complex inside the historic building of St James Cavalier that targets creativity in the arts. The building, formerly known as St James Centre for Creativity, is the working base for 'Fondazzjoni Ċentru għall-Kreattività' [Centre for Creativity Foundation]. It has recently been given the title of 'Spazju Kreattiv', a rebranding exercise that is targeted to extend beyond the Cavalier and applied to other spaces where culture and creativity take place. The centre was launched in 2000 as Malta's millennium project. Moreover, art exhibitions, conferences, concerts and other cultural undertakings take place in various places across the city.

The local inhabitants also engage in cultural activities of their own. Valletta is divided roughly into three main districts, each grouped under a specific parish with its own patron saint.<sup>6</sup> Each parish organises a series of activities throughout the year, including cultural and artistic offerings that culminate in the celebration of the saint's feast (Mitchell 2001). The structure and management of the three celebrations have given rise to ancillary organisations that have acquired an important cultural dimension of their very own. Foremost among these are the two philharmonic societies that were both formed in 1874.<sup>7</sup> From these, the two competing bands that grace Valletta's streets during the local parish 'festi' and other celebrations have emerged. Moreover, the parishes hold other important events such as passion plays that are produced during Lent. Another important cultural event is the Good Friday procession that can be traced far back in history, at least to the times of the Knights. Participation in these events gives the local community a 'sense of place' (Richards & Palmer 2010: 401) which persists even amongst those members who have moved to other areas or emigrated, and who return to Valletta to participate in the celebrations of the parish they

identify with. There are also important secular cultural events which include football and its related celebrations and Carnival (Armstrong & Mitchell 2006).

As may be extrapolated from the Valletta Participation Survey (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2015a), high and popular culture exist in Valletta side by side with very little overlap. Very few Valletta residents actually frequent any of the theatres or public and private art galleries. The ‘festi’ attract visitors from outside Valletta, and Carnival is a big crowd puller, but few people from outside Valletta go to watch the ‘passion plays’ or other theatrical fare produced in spaces owned by the Church and managed by – and for – Valletta residents. The fact that high-culture events attract an audience with a higher level of education has been shown to be a general trend in Malta (see Briguglio, this volume). However, research on the ‘festa’ in Malta show that youth ‘who accumulated cultural capital through the education institution’ have the ‘capacity to consume cultural events from heterogeneous realms’ both exclusive and popular; this has been termed as “‘omnivorous’ cultural consumption’ (Visanich 2015: 93–94). This particular social group’s openness to diverse cultural forms may render some of its members cultural brokers who can help create appeal for cultural forms that particular social groupings may not have previously considered.

### **Cultural Infrastructure**

Proper cultural planning aims to encourage public engagement and ownership of cultural initiatives. A Capital of Culture is meant to stimulate a dynamic vision that can capture attention, inspiration and interest at the local level, but that can also contribute to levelling out social inequalities through the involvement of people of different social categories in the planning and elaboration of Valletta as ECoC. This is linked to the creation of programmes and policies which take different factors into account. These should include: the cultural interests and expressions of different social groups and the identification of cultural gaps – not to say void. Such planning should stir interest through shared responsibility that does not compromise on high standards, as well as fill these gaps with the necessary structures and infrastructures. The improvement of a city’s image through its cultural efforts can lead to economic gain, but the EU warns against the instrumentalisation of cultural objectives in the interest of economic targets and monetary gain (Garcia & Cox 2013: 14).

Up to the recent past, cultural planning was carried out rather erratically in various parts of Europe. In the UK, strategic initiatives focused on infrastructure, but there was no national cultural plan or strategy (Evans & Foord 2008: 69). In Malta, culture has never boasted of a dedicated ministry, but has always been tagged on to other areas of administration that were deemed more important and consequently, took up the lion’s share of the ministerial budget – such as education, tourism, youth, environment and justice. Cultural planning took a more focused direction with the setting up of the then Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (now Arts Council Malta) the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage, and Heritage Malta in 2002. This direction was reinforced by the promulgation of a law on cultural heritage in 2002, and later on, by the elaboration of a National Cultural Policy that was launched in 2011. This policy had the ambitious vision of transforming ‘cultural and creative activity into the most dynamic facet of Malta’s socio-economic life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ (2011: 9). The policy listed various public and private cultural stakeholders; it provided guidelines for cultural engagement and focused on the cultural development needs of the country. The document was to be followed up

by a series of strategies which were to outline the actions and initiatives, including legislative ones that would benefit the country's cultural sector, as well as put in place an evaluation process of the measures taken. In 2012, a Creative Economy Strategy was elaborated. This strategy represents the first formal recognition of Malta's cultural and creative industries and delineates the cultural contributors to the Gross Domestic Product. The Creative Economy Working Group, which worked on this strategy, had been set up as a joint collaboration between the Ministries responsible for Finance and Culture. Throughout the process the two bidding documents for Valletta 2018 were submitted and selected (pre-selection bid 2011 and final selection bid in 2012).

A change in Government in 2013 brought about some changes in cultural governance. In December 2015, a national cultural strategy was launched under the title 'Create 2020 Strategy 2016–2020'. The strategy places Valletta 2018 as the 'fulcrum' of its plan; its declared intention is to work both towards 2018 itself, and its legacy (Arts Council Malta 2015: 11).

### **The Bid for the Capital of Culture**

Valletta's bid for Capital of Culture was prepared by a Foundation that was purposely formed by its founders, the Valletta Local Council and the Association of Local Councils. An Inter-Ministerial Commission for the European Capital of Culture (IMC-ECOC) was set up in 2009 to provide support to the event, and the Local Councils of Malta and Gozo signed a Charter which came into force on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010, agreeing to support Valletta's application for the ECOC in 2018. The charter is a clear indication of the symbolic breaching of the capital's city walls, in an effort to create national solidarity and support, rather than a 'main city versus the rest' nexus (Baldacchino 2014: 7).

The pre-selection bid book for the ECOC title underlined the theme of 'environment of exchange', arguing that 'environments create the conditions for different types of exchange', and can 'transform, modify, or re-inspire forms of exchange' (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2011: 9). It outlined eight complementary thematic areas that would promote cultural regeneration; these were later brought down to four.

The bid was presented for pre-selection in January 2012. The pre-selection meeting was held in Valletta on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Eleven members of the Malta Selection Panel were present – six of the seven members nominated by the European Institutions and five of the six members nominated by the Maltese Minister for Culture as set out in Article 6 of Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24<sup>th</sup> October 2006.<sup>8</sup> As one of the Maltese members, I was the *rapporteur* for the panel, and monitored the process as it evolved. The reasons for submitting a bid were clearly outlined in the first selection, as is stated the following paragraphs of the panel's report:

'...through ECOC, Valletta wished to bridge the divide between the two realities of the city – the daytime busy administrative capital, with its lure of shops and cafés and the declining indigenous community, with its manifest creative assets, but also its current difficult socio-economic realities – by transforming the city through a process that would foster public involvement at all levels.

Being subsumed by its own heritage, the city explained that it intended to use cutting-edge arts and culture to create a self-generative and self-sustaining present and future which would clearly show that this is not a declining city. It intended also to use its heritage, which formed an intrinsic

part of its grand narratives, as a springboard for the future, to create sound cultural infrastructures and promote cultural education for young people in order to drive the city's regeneration' (Malta Selection Panel Report 2012a: 4).

In providing its recommendations for the final selection, the panel noted that 'culture had never been a main focus in Malta's national budget, which might be a weakness for the long-term development of the country through culture' (Malta Selection Panel 2012a: 4). Among its recommendations, it also requested clear demonstration of artistic autonomy from the administrative structures and more information about how bottom-up involvement was being targeted and nurtured. It insisted on the necessity to develop further the European dimension, and on establishing clear targets for the legacy that the capital of culture was to bequeath to Valletta in particular, and the Maltese islands in general.

A second bid book was submitted for the final selection, where it was stated that 'if Valletta is granted the title, it aims to consolidate past and current efforts and investment, and enhance them with a five-year plan for capacity building, cultural infrastructure and the development of technological means' (Valletta 2018 Foundation 2012: 11). In the final selection process, the panel stated that the cultural ambition of the bid needed to be raised and expressed the following advice:

'More awareness of, interest in and commitment to the European Capital of Culture by the citizens of Valletta needs to be developed. This criterion needs to be spread across the whole population especially due to the welcome involvement of the wider region. Citizens from all spheres should be seen not simply as potential spectators and receivers, but as participants in the European Capital of Culture. In view of this, the Foundation needs to plan and focus more clearly on the build-up programme to the actual 2018 celebrations, focusing on managing demand, as well as raising the level of what is on offer. Access to culture, increase of practice and level of improvement are key issues that need to be addressed more coherently' (2012b: 4).

The panel approved the artistic structure that had been put in place,<sup>9</sup> and encouraged the appointment of a team member with a background in school reform, in order to advocate changes in the school curriculum and in the teaching of culture which would reinforce the legacy of the capital of culture.

The current administration of the Valletta 2018 Foundation feels that it has 'managed to improve the recognition and positive feel of Valletta carrying the ECoC title. This has been generated through more effective use of online and offline media channels, across different media' (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2015b: 10). It affirms that a study commissioned by the Foundation and carried out by National Statistics Office shows that these efforts have attained positive results, given that 66% of the population is aware of the ECoC programme, while 92% believe that Valletta is changing for the better (2015: 10). The positive impact of online news was also registered by ECoC hosts such as Turku 2011, Maribor 2012, and Guimaraes 2012 (Garcia, Cox 2013: 13).

The independent monitoring panel appointed by the European Commission, which is tasked to help Valletta in its preparations leading up to the title year, strongly advised that the programme 'should differ from normal business not only in size and scope but also in artistic and cultural quality terms' (Monitoring & Advisory Panel 2015: 5), which were to be given priority.

**‘Buying Culture’ versus ‘Generating Cultural Growth’**

The Valletta 2018 Foundation, like other ECoCs has to face various challenges in developing the process towards Valletta as an ECoC in 2018 and beyond. As stated previously, the build-up to an ECoC and the process that takes place along the year that the city is ‘a capital of culture’ are intended to act as a catalyst for cultural development, resulting in long-term effects on people’s lives and livelihoods. Regeneration is to be viewed not only in economic terms, but also in terms of growth of citizens’ well-being, stimulating interest in the city’s cultural offer and offering new perceptions and developments of the city’s cultural structures and infrastructures. This also implies consistent political commitment to the whole project. Research shows that changes in local, regional or national governments often create rather controversial and drastic changes to the ECoC implementation (Garcia & Cox 2013: 174 and ECORYS 2012: 22). Following the selection of Valletta as an ECoC in 2012 and the subsequent change in government in 2013, the Valletta 2018 project remained mostly consistent to its bidding documents, with some of the original Management members taking on new designations within management and/or artistic functions.

However, the project’s long-term success can only be guaranteed by citizens’ involvement in both the ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ processes. It is only when citizens claim ownership of a project, or of salient parts of it, that an ECoC can produce sustainable effects, because structures and activities can only be maintained beyond the ECoC year through ongoing citizen participation. What is certain is that whereas it is easy to ‘buy’ culture to populate a programme, it is far more difficult to stimulate cultural growth. It is even more challenging to create a vision aspiring to excellence that could actually lead to the cultivation of ‘best practices’ which could serve as an example to other ECoCs.

The Valletta 2018 Foundation’s Strategic Plan 2013–2015 also marked the initial evaluation of the development of a vision that stated explicitly: ‘The overall vision of the Valletta 2018 Foundation is to make Valletta a great city.’ (Valletta 2018 Foundation 2013: 36. It adopted an inclusive approach to culture that took into consideration both tangible and intangible forms of culture. Its objectives were to transform Valletta into a creative city, improve its quality of life through culture, stimulate awareness of Malta’s diverse cultural identities, and collaborate to excellence in culture and the arts. Malta’s Economic Vision document 2014–2020 underlines the importance of achieving excellence, which should be the main goal for all cultural programming for Valletta Capital of Culture:

Excellence must become the hallmark of Malta’s businesses and enterprises irrespective of the economic sector they are operating in. A culture of excellence is a determination and disposition to excel: a commitment to be the best. Excellence is a way of being and thinking: a culture of excellence is a premeditated choice and a commitment to go beyond the ordinary or ‘averageness’ (MCCEI 2014: 35).

Excellence may be defined as best practice, by means of strategic planning capability and superior performance. A cultural programme, specifically designed for ECoC, may therefore be seen as a development tool that brings new vitality into the cultural and everyday life of the host city and the country, while generating a greater sense of European belonging within the citizens. This ambitious objective is the reason why the ECoC programme is stretched across a year, in order to clearly distinguish it from a festival-type set-up. The length of time allows for more initiatives that can provide for greater cultural contribution to the city’s life through both



infrastructural developments and citizen participation; it permits more direct participation in cultural dialogue between state and citizen stakeholders with the aim of exchange leading to transformation and improvement. An innovative approach, aiming for excellence, provides an opportunity to expand cultural cooperation within and beyond the country itself. It is a way for citizens to get to know, or to know better, other European cultural realities. The aims of a capital of culture are, at the very least, to motivate interest in other cultural realities and at best, develop new trends in cultural output which can lead to cultural collaboration and ideally, more closeness among European citizens that can nurture further the dimension of a European identity. Striving to achieve these goals constitutes the driving force behind all efforts to make Valletta 2018 an unmitigated success.

### **Legacy**

As Evans and Foord claim: ‘The chronology of city planning, viewed in terms of “culture”, illustrates the key paradigms which typify the treatment of larger scale cultural facilities and zones’ (2008: 72). The major declared aim of Liverpool ECoC 2008 may be extended to any participating capital: that of ensuring participation in cultural activities and the increase of residents’ cultural interests which, ultimately, should enhance the sustainability of the Capital of Culture (Liu 2014: 989).

Valletta 2018, as capital of culture, is a first step towards the development of a clear direction of what Malta wishes to achieve on the cultural level within a defined timeline. Cultural planning beyond the 2018 deadline offers an opportunity to evaluate the cultural strengths and aspirations of Valletta’s community, as well as those of Malta’s artistic and cultural communities, and create structures that can make the two live and work well together. If the right planning and infrastructure are developed, Valletta could provide the blueprint for a wider strategic plan for the whole nation that takes into account the particular features of local cultural realities and establish targets that will stimulate active cultural participation as well as help Maltese art take a leap of quality which can hold its own against other European artistic endeavours.

In order to plan strategically, it is essential to have a clear picture of the structures and infrastructures that are linked to the arts, as well as citizens’ thinking with regard to different artistic sectors. Certain initiatives have taken place in this regard.<sup>10</sup> This volume sets out to provide a bigger picture, and to suggest possible ways forward that can be taken up in a comprehensive national cultural plan. The various authors tackle Maltese culture from very different angles. The variety of aspects that are offered by the individual discussions of specific cultural realities, are a clear indication of the broad area of study and research that a capital of culture has to take into account when creating its programme and the strategies to implement it.

Colin Borg examines the way the National Cultural Policy is being perceived by the Local Councils, and whether there is any effective policy implementation within the different local communities. He examines the relationship between cultural policy and other policy areas, and questions whether the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ is really taking place, and the impacts of local policy on the cultural life and involvement of citizens.

Ruben Borg assesses the resources and shortcomings of theatre spaces in Malta and Gozo through a methodology that targets a detailed expert appraisal of the quality of the spaces. The results of this pilot study, which are discussed in his article, have led to a more extensive project comprising a comprehensive evaluation in Malta of existing theatres in the Maltese

Islands. The aim of the study is to establish a priority list with regard to restoration or infrastructural development of theatre spaces, in order to ensure that these can assume more fully a catalysing role within the community in a process of cultural decentralisation.

JosAnn Cutajar and John Vella tackle the citizens' appropriation of their space, and the cultural and economic benefits that may derive from this. The author takes Bormla (Cospicua) as a case study: one of the three cities situated in the area known as 'Cottonera' that is located across the harbour from Valletta. They show how citizen awareness and direct participation in decision-making can be the motivating factor for concrete action that can benefit the community at large. The flexibility of this methodology can easily be adapted to Valletta, and would be susceptible to providing a valuable legacy for Valletta's inhabitants.

William Zammit examines the condition of state-run libraries and print collections in Valletta and proposes a series of measures to improve or radically modify existing standards, particularly with regard to the National Library. Such initiatives could be launched as part of the build-up to Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018 and continue to be developed afterwards.

A detailed study by Marie Briguglio which focuses on citizens' well-being, assesses the response and involvement of the people of Valletta in the build-up to 2018. The author's analysis helps to shed light on cultural participation in, as well as indifference to cultural initiatives, and singles out areas where work on ECoC should be intensified, if Valletta is to reap a cultural legacy from its stint as ECoC.

Carmel Borg and Peter Mayo discuss museums from a critical cultural studies and leftist viewpoint, focusing particularly on the national project concerning the relocation and redevelopment of the National Museum of Fine Arts, which was launched immediately after the awarding of the title. This project, bearing the suggestive acronym of MUŻA (Muse), is developing new lines of thinking with regard to the national collection, which is to be transferred to a more prominent site in Valletta, and the ways the public may be encouraged to view and interact with it.

Next and last is Jean-Paul Baldacchino, who presents a case-study concerning dance in Malta, and focuses particularly on the development of Argentine tango. Through his discussion, he shows how private initiative has created a cultural reality without any external financial help or infrastructural support, and how these aspects continue to be absent in its growth. His case-study serves as a concrete example of areas that cultural strategies need to pay more attention to, while elaborating on ways to assist a cultural community that respond to its particular needs.

Editing this volume has allowed me to acquire new insights into Malta's cultural reality, and together with the authors, to work towards a vision that could help Valletta Capital of Culture become an important milestone in Malta's cultural development. I augur that Valletta, as a European Capital of Culture in 2018 can produce a shared vision that is ambitious, forward-looking and of European relevance, involving a wide stakeholder base, that is supplemented by research. If the arts and culture are to claim a more vital position within Maltese society and its institutions, Valletta 2018 is duty-bound to leave a vibrant legacy that will positively impact the cultural reality of the Maltese Islands for many years to come, and may offer an example of cultural development to other European Capitals of Culture.

## Notes

1. The term ‘cultural industries’ was coined to provide a new perspective to arts and culture as generators of economic activity, and included industrial activities with their roots in culture and creativity, such as architecture, advertising and the manufacture and sale of creative goods.
2. See Valletta 2018 Foundation website, <http://valletta2018.org/cultural-programme/cultural-mapping/#sthashAnNcuGVj.dpuf>
3. Malta shares the title ‘European Capital of Culture with Leeuwarden’, Netherlands, in 2018.
4. The foundation stone of Valletta was laid on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1566, barely six months after a three-month siege laid by the Ottoman Empire against the Knights of St John and the Maltese, who managed to repel the Ottoman army (Parker *et al.* 2005: 11). The city, conceived as a triumphal monument, originally laid out according to a grid plan typical of Renaissance cities, was enhanced by beautiful baroque churches and ‘palazzi’, some of which were later modified by the British. Its city entrance has recently been redesigned by the Italian architect, Renzo Piano, who also designed the Parliament building.
5. These are: the Teatru Manoel, Mediterranean Conference Centre theatre, Malta Valletta Campus Theatre, St James Cavalier theatre, Pjazza Teatru Rjal and City Theatre. There is also a small theatre space that has been adapted in the crypt of St Dominic’s Parish church.
6. The three parishes are: St Paul’s, St Dominic’s and St Augustine’s. There are also a number of additional churches and chapels that fall within the jurisdiction of these parishes.
7. These are the La Vallette Philharmonic Society, and the King’s Own Philharmonic Society; the latter owes its present name to its patronage by King Edward VII.
8. The Members were the following: representing the European Institutions: Dr Manfred Gaulhofer (Chairperson), The Hon. Minister Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Sir Jeremy Isaacs, Mr Steve Green, Mr Jordi Pardo, Mr Constantin Chiriac. Minister Hennicot-Schoepges was replaced by Ms Elisabeth Vitouch in the final selection; the Maltese Panel: Prof. Joe Friggieri (vice-chairperson), Prof. Vicki Ann Cremona (rapporteur), Prof. Richard England, Ms Cynthia De Giorgio, Mr Sandro Zerafa (members). Two other members were unable to attend due to illness.
9. An artistic director, the internationally renowned orchestra conductor, organist and pianist Wayne Marshall and seven Maltese artistic programme directors had been appointed. Following elections in March 2013, the artistic team’s contracts were not renewed. A new artistic director, Mario Philip Azzopardi, was later selected from an open call and put in charge of six public events. In 2016, Airan Berg, former artistic director for the performing arts for the Linz 2009 Capital of Culture was appointed as International Artistic Advisor to the Foundation to work on the overall artistic aspect with regard to the international dimension of the programme.

## References

- Arts Council Malta 2015. *Create 2020 Strategy 2016–2020*. [online] Available at: [http://www.maltaculture.com/files/uploads/misc/English-Create2020\\_web.pdf](http://www.maltaculture.com/files/uploads/misc/English-Create2020_web.pdf) [Accessed 15/1/2017].
- Armstrong, G. & Mitchell, J. 2006. Six Trophies and a Funeral: Performance and Football in the City of Valletta. *City and Society* **18(2)**: 180–206.
- Baldacchino, G. 2014. Capital and Port Cities on Small Islands Sallying Forth Beyond Their Walls: A Mediterranean Exercise. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* **23(2)**: 2–15.
- Bianchini, F. & Ghilardi, L. 2007. Thinking culturally about place. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* **3(4)**: 280–286.
- BOP Consulting. 2010. *Mapping the Creative Industries: A Toolkit*. London: British Council.
- Cremona, V. A.; Borg, R. P.; Chetcuti, K.; Buhagiar, S. 2017. *Spazji Teatrali. A Catalogue of Theatres in Malta and Gozo: 2016 Edition*. Malta: The Valletta 2018 Foundation together with Arts Council Malta.

- Deveau, D. & Goodrum, A. 2015. Mapping Culture in the Waterloo Region: Exploring Dispersed Cultural Communities and Clustered Cultural Scenes in a Medium-sized City Region. *Culture and Local Governance* **5(1-2)**: 61–82.
- ECORYS 2012. *Ex-post evaluation of 2011 European Capitals of Culture: Final report for the European Commission*. ECORYS: United Kingdom. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/files/ecoc-2011-evaluation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/files/ecoc-2011-evaluation_en.pdf) [Accessed: 20/1/2017].
- European Commission 2013. *Special Eurobarometer 399, Cultural Access and Participation Report*, [online] Available at: [ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_399\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf). [Accessed 17/1/2017].
- Evans, G. & Foord, J. 2008. Cultural mapping and sustainable communities: Planning for the Arts revisited. *Cultural Trends* **17(2)**: 65–96.
- Garcia, B. & Cox, T. 2013. *European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies And Long-Term Effects*. Brussels, European Parliament, DG for Internal Policies. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT\\_ET\(2013\)513985\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT_ET(2013)513985_EN.pdf) [Accessed 19/1/2017].
- Liu, Yi-De 2014. Socio-Cultural Impacts of Major Event: Evidence from the 2008 European Capital of Culture, Liverpool. *Social Indicators Research* **115(3)**: 983–998.
- The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry (MCCEI) 2014. *Economic Vision for Malta 2014–2020*. Valletta: MCCEI. [online] Available at: <https://iconfinancemalta.blob.core.windows.net/libx-128-public/Tags/General/Economic%20Vision%20for%20Malta%202014-2020%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf> [Accessed: 16/1/2017].
- McAteer, N.; Rampton J.; France, J.; Tajtáková, M. & Lehouelleur, S. 2014. *Ex-post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture. Final Report for the European Commission DG Education and Culture. December 2014*. Luxembourg, European Commission. [Online] Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_399\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf). [Accessed: 15/2/2016].
- Mitchell, J. 2002. *Ambivalent Europeans*. London and New York: Routledge.
- National Cultural Policy, Malta 2011. Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism, the Environment and Culture.
- National Statistics Office 2015. *Demographic Review 2013*. Valletta: NSO.
- Palmer/Rae Associates 2004. *European Cities and Capitals of Culture*. Brussels, Palmer-Rae.
- Monitoring and Advisory Panel 2015. *Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel, Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018, First Monitoring Meeting*. Brussels: European Capital of Culture. [Online] Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/malta-monitoring\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/malta-monitoring_en.pdf) [Accessed: 12/1/2016].
- Parker, J.; Stafford, E.; Vella Bonavita, R. 2005. Enarrant Caeli! An astrologer at the foundation of Valletta, Malta. *Treasures of Malta* **11(2)**: 11–14.
- Richards, G. & Palmer, R. 2010. *Eventful cities: Cultural management and urban revitalization*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Malta Selection Panel 2012a. *Preselection report for the Nomination of the European Capital of Culture 2018 in Malta, Valletta, 17–18 January 2012*. [Online] Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/preselection-report-malta\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/preselection-report-malta_en.pdf) [Accessed: 15/2/2016].
- Malta Selection Panel 2012b. *Final Report, Selection of the European Capital of Culture for 2018, Valletta, 11 November 2012*. [Online] Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/panel-report-malta\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/panel-report-malta_en.pdf). [Accessed 15/2/2016].
- Valletta 2018 Foundation 2011. *V.18. An Environment of Exchange. Proposed Application for the Title of European Capital of Culture*. Malta, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011.
- 2012. *Imagine 18, Final Application for the Title of European Capital of Culture 2018 in Malta*, September 2012.
- 2018. *Foundation 2013 Strategic Plan 2013–2015*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013, unpublished.

- 2018. Foundation 2015a *Valletta Participation Survey*.
- Valletta 2018 Foundation 2015b. Formal Monitoring Meeting Report, 15 September 2015. [online] Available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/wpx6ok7mf8tnet2/Valletta%202018%20-%20Formal%20Monitoring%202015.pdf?dl=0> [Accessed: 12/2/2016].
- Visanich, V. 2015. Festa Fandom: Individualised Youth and Cultural Consumption. In *Young People and the 'Festa' in Malta*, (ed.) A. Azzopardi, Mqabba, Malta: Society of St Mary and King George Band Club.

